

THE KILLARNEY COLLIE

By ERIC HATCH

The story of a boy and his dog, and of the judge who had been ordered to punish them—whether they were guilty or not

THE judge sat behind the bench of justice, lulled half asleep by the dull droning of the electric fans and the lawyers' voices, and was glad he was an American. He was glad because had he, for instance, been English, he would, in spite of the heat, have had to be wearing a wig instead of just his light black robe. That would have been unbearable. As it was, the magistrates court in this teeming inland city was like a furnace.

He drew a pad toward him and picked up a pencil and began to draw pictures of fish. Sometimes he drew water around them, sometimes, although it took more effort, a cake of ice beneath them. Half listening to the voices he thought about the three-o'clock train to Lake Marble. He hoped to Heaven he could catch that train. It would get him up to the lake and his camp and

his family in time for a swim. He missed his family badly during these summer weeks and worried about them—especially about the boy.

He lifted his eyes from his pad and briefly surveyed the room. It was filled with a scattering of bored, sweltering spectators, a bored cub reporter from the Clarion, the court clerk and stenographer, two bailiffs and assorted perspiring policemen. Below the bench sat two angry-looking Portuguese-American women backed by their lawyers. The women glared at each other. The lawyers, looking browbeaten, like husbands, stared listlessly at the bench.

Why the devil, thought the judge, won't that damned defense lawyer move for dismissal so I can grant it and get 'em out of here and get on to the next case and catch my train?

Then, like a strain of sweet music, he heard the defense lawyer say, "—move that this case be dismissed."

"Dismissed," said the judge. "Next case!" Judge Baranca glanced at a page of notes in his own handwriting.

"Dog bite," he read. "Newsstand operator. Name, Mulroy. Dog owned by nephew of same name who works at stand. Dog nonrabid but probably dangerous. Charged with harboring vicious animal and maintaining a nuisance. Possibly so. Check this part carefully. Third offense."

He was still looking at the notes when the court stenographer reached up and placed an envelope before him. He opened it, took out a slip of paper and read: "Okay with J. throw the book at this
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Presently he lifted a tear-streaked face. "Could you not blame me instead of him?" he said. "He's just a dog. He doesn't understand about laws and things. Let him go"

ILLUSTRATED BY BARBARA SCHWINN





It was a masterpiece of forger's art which he produced; he had never done better. As he gave it a final scrutiny, a chill prickling swept over him