

Little Orphan Island

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By BILL STAPLETON

Cheju-do, Korea

THIS is a small story that comes out of the blood and terror of the war in Korea. But it has big meaning. It is the story of Air Chaplain Lt. Colonel Russell L. Blaisdell of Fort Worth, Texas, who came to Korea to help servicemen keep faith with God, and wound up by proving His existence to war-scarred kids.

A Presbyterian chaplain attached to Fifth Air Force Headquarters in the Korean theater, Colonel Blaisdell is largely responsible for taking hundreds of hurt and homeless kids out of the city of Seoul when it was ravaged last December for the second time in the Korean war. Starting with almost nothing but his own courage, he got them to the safety of Cheju-do—an island about 70 miles off the west coast of battered Korea.

Before the Chinese Communists drove American forces out, Blaisdell and Colonel Wallace I. Wolverton, senior chaplain of the Tenth Air Force, with the help of the mayor of Seoul, set up a mu-

nicipal aid center for orphans. Everybody helped: the American and Korean Red Cross, the Catholic and Protestant missions, and Fifth Air Force personnel. The center was soon handling 50 children a day. But, suddenly, the evacuation order came. Blaisdell and his Korean waifs had to get out.

"By December 15th," says Colonel Blaisdell, "I had 950 children and 110 workers with 30,000 pounds of provisions sitting on the shore at Inchon waiting for a boat. It never came. I called the already overburdened Fifth Air Force, and in one almost miraculous half hour, they arranged for 16 C-54s to fly us to Cheju-do. But the trucks I needed to get us to Kimpo airfield never came, either. I was really scared."

The gentle chaplain wasn't too frightened to steal trucks from dock details though. With them he moved his kids to Kimpo and got them to Cheju-do just as Red guns were barking across Seoul.

On Cheju-do a woman entered the picture. Mrs.

On Soon Whang was appointed director of the new orphanage. In short order, this quiet, firm woman, whose husband and son were both killed in the Korean fighting, was saving the kids from hunger, sleeplessness, filth, disease and fright.

Today, there are beds for all on the island of Cheju-do—though they are only wooden slats barely raised above the floor. And there are quilts—one for each group of five children. There is food and water—though water on this little 15-by-40-mile island is scarce and precious. And packages of food and medicine are arriving daily from U.S. donors. All in all, Cheju-do brings comfort and happiness to children who would otherwise have been sacrificed on their own doorsteps.

Maybe the reward for all of this is hearing the Korean kids sing Jesus Loves Me. Maybe it is in seeing sickness disappear and fright calm into playfulness. Maybe it is in realizing that God is in His Heaven after all.

THE END

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



In an old schoolroom on Cheju-do, Lt. Col. Blaisdell and On Soon Whang hold kids for regular check-up by Korean Dr. Chai Ok Kim



Scared eyes, battered faces, listlessness characterized children of Seoul when they came to Cheju-do. Today they are happier



In hospital, Korean nurse holds back tears as she tries to comfort a little girl who was facing death from bronchial pneumonia

Says Lt. Colonel Blaisdell: "Most of the children in an age group from infancy to 14 years still vividly remember the exciting day at Kimpo airfield, when 16 C-54 Skymasters of the U.S. Air Force lined up to carry them to what has become a child's wonderland of sympathy"

On Cheju-do all Americans now rate kisses. O. M. Izquierdo, major in Civil Assistance Command, gets full payment from one orphan





If the milkman
takes a tumble
on my steps...



if my terrier
nips a
neighbor...



if my pitch-shot
pops a player...



if my Alex
bumps a body
with his bike...

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his horse to drop back alongside Private Lakin. "Kids don't need tying," he said. He reached out and plucked the boy from in front of Private Lakin and laid him, face down, across the withers of his own horse and smacked him sharply. Then he set him back on the pillow. The boy sat still, very still. Sergeant Houck pushed his left hand into his left side pocket and pulled out a fistful of small hard biscuits. He passed these to Private Lakin. "Stick one of these in his mouth when he gets restless."

Sergeant Houck urged his horse forward until he was beside the woman once more. She had turned her head to watch and she stared sidewise at him for a long moment, then looked straight forward again.

They came to the settlement in the same order: the woman and Sergeant Houck side by side in the lead, Private Lakin and the boy tagging behind at a respectful distance. Sergeant Houck dismounted and helped the woman down and handed the boy to her. He saw Private Lakin looking wistfully at the painted front of the settlement's one saloon and tapped him on one knee. "Scat," he said and watched Private Lakin turn his horse and ride off, leading the other two horses.

Then he led the woman into the squat frame building that served as general store and post office and stage stop. He settled the woman and her child on a preserved-goods box and went to the counter to arrange for their fares. When he came back to sit on another box near her, the entire permanent male population of the settlement was assembled just inside the door, all eleven of them staring at the woman.

"... that's the one..."
"... an Indian had her..."
"... shows in the kid..."

Sergeant Houck looked at the woman. She was staring at the floor and the blood was leaving her face. He started to rise and felt her hand on his arm. She had leaned over quickly and clutched his sleeve.

"Please," she said. "Don't make trouble account of me."

"Trouble?" said Sergeant Houck. "No trouble." He stood up and confronted the fidgeting men by the door. "I've seen kids around this place. Some of them small. This one needs decent clothes and the store here doesn't stock them."

The men stared at him, startled, and then at the wide-eyed boy in his clean but patched skimpy cloth covering. Five or six of them went out through the door and disappeared in various directions. The others scattered through the store. Sergeant Houck stood sentinel, relaxed and quiet, by his box, and those who had gone out straggled back, several embarrassed and empty-handed, the rest proud with their offerings. Sergeant Houck took the boy from the woman's lap and stood him on his box. He measured the offerings against the small body and chose a small red checked shirt and a small pair of overalls. He set the one pair of small scuffed shoes aside. "Kids don't need shoes," he said. "Only in winter."

WHEN the coach rolled in, it was empty and they had it to themselves for the first hours. Dust drifted steadily through the windows and the silence inside was a persistent thing. The woman did not want to talk. She had lost all liking for it and would speak only when necessary. And Sergeant Houck used words with a natural economy, for the sole simple purpose of conveying or obtaining information that he regarded as pertinent to the business immediately in hand. Only once did he speak during these hours and then only to set a fact straight in his mind. He kept his eyes fixed on the scenery outside as he spoke.

"Did he treat you all right?"
The woman made no pretense of misunderstanding him. "Yes," she said.

The coach rolled on and the dust drifted. "He beat me once," she said and four full

Sergeant Houck

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

minutes passed before she finished the thought. "Maybe it was right. I wouldn't work."

They stopped for a quick meal at a lonely ranch house and ate in silence while the man there helped the driver change horses. It was two mail stops later, at the next change, that another passenger climbed in and plopped his battered suitcase and himself on the front seat opposite them. He was of medium height and plump. He wore city clothes and had quick eyes and features that seemed small in the plumpness of his face. He took out a handkerchief and wiped his face and took off his hat to wipe all the way up his forehead. He laid the hat on top of the suitcase and moved restlessly on the seat, trying to find a comfortable position.

"You three together?"

"Yes," said Sergeant Houck.

"Your wife then?"

"No," said Sergeant Houck. He looked out the window on his side and studied the far horizon.

THE coach rolled on and the man's quick eyes examined the three of them and came to rest on the woman's feet.

"Begging your pardon, lady, but why do you wear those things? Moccasins, aren't they? They more comfortable?"

She shrank back further in the seat and the blood began to leave her face.

"No offense, lady," said the man. "I just wondered—" He stopped. Sergeant Houck was looking at him.

"Dust's bad," said Sergeant Houck. "And the flies this time of year. Best to keep your mouth closed." He looked out the window again, and the only sounds were the running beat of the hoofs and the creakings of the old coach.

A front wheel struck a stone and the coach jolted up at an angle and lurched sideways and the boy gave a small whimper. The woman pulled him onto her lap.

"Say," said the man. "Where'd you ever pick up that kid? Looks like—" He stopped. Sergeant Houck was reaching up and rapping against the top of the coach. The driver's voice could be heard shouting at the horses and the coach stopped. One of the doors opened and the driver peered in. Instinctively he picked Sergeant Houck.

"What's the trouble, soldier?"

"No trouble," said Sergeant Houck. "Our friend here wants to ride up with you." He looked at the plump man. "Less dust up there. It's healthy and gives a good view."

"Now, wait a minute," said the man.

"Where'd you get the idea—"

"Healthy," said Sergeant Houck.

The driver looked at the bleak, impassive hardness of Sergeant Houck and at the twitching softness of the plump man. "Reckon it would be," he said. "Come along. I'll boost you up."

The coach rolled along the false-fronted one street of a mushroom town and stopped before a frame building tagged Hotel. One of the coach doors opened and the plump man retrieved his hat and suitcase and scuttled into the building. The driver appeared at the coach door. "Last meal here before the night run," he said.

When they came out, the shadows were long and fresh horses had been harnessed. As they settled themselves again, a new driver, whip in hand, climbed up to the high seat and gathered the reins into his left hand. The whip cracked and the coach lurched forward and a young man ran out of the low building across the street carrying a saddle. He ran alongside and heaved the saddle up on the roof inside the guard-rail. He pulled at the door and managed to scramble in as the coach picked up speed. He dropped onto the front seat, puffing deeply. "Evening, ma'am," he said between puffs. "And you, general." He leaned forward to slap the boy gently along the jaw. "And you too, bub."

Sergeant Houck looked at the lean young

man, at the faded Levis tucked into high-heeled boots, the plaid shirt, the amiable competent young face. He grunted a greeting, unintelligible but a pleasant sound.

"A man's legs ain't made for running," said the young man. "Just to fork a horse. That last drink was near too long."

"The Army'd put some starch in those legs," said Sergeant Houck.

"Maybe. Maybe that's why I ain't in the Army." The young man sat quietly, relaxed to the jolting of the coach. "Is there some other topic of genteel conversation you folks'd want to worry some?"

"No," said Sergeant Houck.

"Then maybe you'll pardon me," said the young man. "I hoofed it a lot of miles today." He worked hard at his boots and at last got them off and tucked them out of the way on the floor. He hitched himself up and over on the seat until he was resting on one hip. He put an arm on the window sill and cradled his head on it. His head dropped down and he was asleep.

Sergeant Houck felt a small bump on his left side. The boy had toppled against him. Sergeant Houck set the small body across his lap with the head nestled into the crook of his right arm. He leaned his head down and heard the soft little last sigh as drowsiness overcame the boy. He looked sidewise at the woman and dimly made out the outline of her head falling forward and jerking back up and he reached his left arm along the top of the seat until his hand touched her far shoulder. He felt her shoulder stiffen and then relax as she moved closer and leaned toward him. He slipped down lower in the seat so that her head could reach his shoulder and he felt the gentle touch of her brown hair on his neck above his shirt collar. He waited patiently and at last he could tell by her steady deep breathing that all fright had left her and all her thoughts were stilled.

The coach reached a rutted stretch and began to sway and the young man stirred and began to slide on the smooth leather of his seat. Sergeant Houck put up a foot and braced it against the seat edge and the young man's body rested against it. Sergeant Houck leaned his head back on the top of the seat. The stars came out in the clear sky and the running beat of the hoofs had the rhythm of a cavalry squad at a steady trot and gradually Sergeant Houck softened slightly into sleep.

SERGEANT HOUCK awoke, as always, all at once and aware. The coach had stopped. From the sounds outside, fresh horses were being buckled into the traces. The first light of dawn was creeping into the coach. He raised his head and he realized that he was stiff.

The young man was awake. He was inspecting the vast leather sole of Sergeant Houck's shoe. His eyes flicked up and met Sergeant Houck's eyes and he grinned.

"That's impressive footwear," he whispered. "You'd need starch in the legs with hoofs like that." He sat up and stretched, long and reaching, like a lazy young animal. "Hell," he whispered again. "You must be stiff as a branding iron." He took hold of Sergeant Houck's leg at the knee and hoisted it slightly so that Sergeant Houck could bend it and ease the foot down to the floor without disturbing the sleeping woman leaning against him. He stretched out both hands and gently lifted the sleeping boy from Sergeant Houck's lap and sat back with the boy in his arms. The young man studied the boy's face. "Can't be yours," he whispered.

"No," whispered Sergeant Houck.

"Must have some Indian strain."

"Yes."

The young man whispered down at the sleeping boy. "You can't help that, can you, bub?"

"No," said Sergeant Houck suddenly, out loud. "He can't."

Collier's for July 14, 1951

The woman jerked upright and pulled over to the window on her side, rubbing at her eyes. The boy woke up, wide awake on the instant, and saw the unfamiliar face above him and began to squirm violently. The young man clamped his arms tighter. "Morning, ma'am," he said. "Looks like I ain't such a good nursemaid."

Sergeant Houck reached out a hand and picked up the boy by a grip on the small overalls and deposited him in a sitting position on the seat beside the young man. The boy sat very still.

THE sun climbed into plain view and now the coach was stirring the dust of a well-worn road. It stopped where another road crossed and the young man inside pulled on his boots. He bobbed his head in the direction of a group of low buildings up the side road. "Think I'll try it there. They'll be peeling broncs about now and the foreman knows I can sit a saddle." He opened a door and jumped to the ground and turned to poke his head in. "Hope you make it right," he said. "Wherever you're heading." The door closed and he could be heard scrambling up the back of the coach to get his saddle. There was a thump as he and the saddle hit the ground and then voices began outside, rising in tone.

Sergeant Houck pushed his head through the window beside him. The young man and the driver were facing each other over the saddle. The young man was pulling the pockets of his Levis inside out. "Lookahere, Will," he said. "You know I'll kick in soon as I have some cash. Hell, I've hooked rides with you before."

"Not now no more," said the driver. "The company's sore. They hear of this they'd have my job. I'll have to hold the saddle."

"You touch that saddle and they'll pick you up in pieces from here to breakfast."

Sergeant Houck fumbled for his inside jacket pocket. He whistled. The two men turned. He looked hard at the young man. "There's something on the seat in here. Must have slipped out of your pocket."

The young man leaned in and saw the two silver dollars on the hard seat and looked up at Sergeant Houck. "You've been in spots yourself," he said.

"Yes," said Sergeant Houck.

The young man grinned. He picked up the two coins in one hand and swung the other to slap Sergeant Houck's leg, sharp and stinging and grateful. "Age ain't hurting you any, general," he said.

The coach started up and the woman looked at Sergeant Houck. The minutes passed and still she looked at him.

"If I'd had brains enough to get married," he said, "might be I'd have had a son. Might have been one like that."

The woman looked away, out her window. She reached up to pat at her hair and the firm line of her lips softened in the tiny imperceptible beginnings of a smile. The minutes passed and Sergeant Houck stirred again. "It's the upbringing that counts," he said and settled into silent immobility, watching the miles go by.

It was near noon when they stopped in Laramie and Sergeant Houck handed the woman out and tucked the boy under one arm and led the way to the waiting room. He settled the woman and the boy in two chairs and left them. He was back soon, driving a light buckboard wagon drawn by a pair of deep-barreled chestnuts. The wagon bed was well padded with layers of empty burlap bags. He went into the waiting room and picked up the boy and beckoned to the woman to follow. He put the boy down on the burlap bags and helped the woman up on the driving seat.

"Straight out the road, they tell me," he said. "About fifteen miles. Then right along the creek. Can't miss it."

He stood by the wagon, staring along the road. The woman leaned from the seat and clutched at his shoulder. Her voice was high and frightened. "You're going with me?" Her fingers clung to his service jacket. "Please! You've got to!"

Sergeant Houck put a hand over hers on his shoulder and released her fingers. "Yes. I'm going." He put the child in her lap and stepped to the seat and took the reins. The wagon moved forward.

"You're afraid," he said.

"They haven't told him," she said, "about the boy."

Sergeant Houck's hands tightened on the reins and the horses slowed to a walk. He clucked sharply to them and slapped the reins on their backs and they quickened again into a trot. The wagon topped a slight rise and the road sloped downward for a long stretch to where the green of trees and tall bushes showed in the distance. A jack rabbit started from the scrub growth by the roadside and leaped high and leveled out, a gray-brown streak. The horses shied and broke rhythm and quieted to a walk under



the firm pressure of the reins. Sergeant Houck kept them at a walk, easing the heat out of their muscles, down the long slope to the trees. He let them step into the creek up to their knees and dip their muzzles in the clear running water. The front wheels of the wagon were in the creek and he reached behind him to find a tin dipper tucked among the burlap bags and leaned far out to dip up water for the woman and the boy and himself. He backed the team out of the creek and swung them into the wagon ruts leading along the bank to the right.

The creek was on their left and the sun was behind them, warm on their backs, and the shadows of the horses pushed ahead. The shadows were longer, stretching farther ahead, when they rounded a bend along the creek and the buildings came in sight, the two-room cabin and the several lean-to sheds and the rickety pole corral. A man was standing by one of the sheds and when Sergeant Houck stopped the team he came toward them and stopped about twenty feet away. He was not young, perhaps in his middle thirties, but with the young look of a man on whom the years have made no mark except that of the simple passing of time. He was tall, soft and loose-jointed in build, and indecisive in manner and movement. His eyes wavered as he looked at the woman, and the fingers of his hand hanging limp at his sides twitched as he waited for her to speak.

She climbed down her side of the wagon and faced him. She stood straight and the sun behind her shone on her hair. "Well, Fred," she said. "I'm here."

"Cora," he said. "It's been a long time, Cora. I didn't know you'd come so soon."

"Why didn't you come get me? Why didn't you, Fred?"

"I didn't rightly know what to do, Cora. It was all so mixed up. Thinking you were dead. Then hearing about you. And what happened. I had to think about things. And I couldn't get away easy. I was going to try maybe next week."

"I hoped you'd come. Right away when you heard."

His body twisted uneasily while his feet remained flat and motionless on the ground. "Your hair's still pretty," he said. "The way it used to be."

Something like a sob caught in her throat and she started toward him. Sergeant Houck stepped down on the other side of the wagon and walked off to the creek and knelt to bend and wash the dust from his face. He stood drying his face with a handkerchief and watching the little eddies of the current around several stones in the creek. He heard the voices behind him.

"Wait, Fred. There's something you have to know."

"That kid? What's it doing here with you?"

"It's mine, Fred."

"Yours? Where'd you get it?"

"It's my child. Mine."

There was silence and then the man's voice, bewildered, hurt. "So it's really true what they said. About that Indian."

"Yes. He bought me. By their rules I belonged to him. I wouldn't be alive and here now, any other way. I didn't have any say about it."

There was silence again and then the man spoke, self-pity creeping into his tone. "I didn't count on anything like this."

Sergeant Houck walked back to the wagon. The woman seemed relieved at the interruption. "This is Sergeant Houck," she said. "He brought me all the way."

The man nodded his head and raised a hand to shove back the sandy hair that kept falling forward on his forehead. "I suppose I ought to thank you, soldier. All that trouble."

"No trouble," said Sergeant Houck.

The man pushed at the ground in front of him with one shoe, poking the toe into the dirt and studying it. "I suppose we ought to go inside. It's near suppertime. I guess you'll be taking a meal here, soldier, before you start back to town."

"Right," said Sergeant Houck. "And I'm tired. I'll stay the night, too. Start in the morning. Sleep in one of those sheds."

The man pushed at the ground more vigorously. The little pile of dirt in front of his shoe seemed to interest him a great deal. "All right, soldier. Sorry there're no quarters inside." He turned quickly and started for the cabin.

THE woman took the boy from the wagon and followed him. Sergeant Houck unharnessed the horses and led them to the creek for a drink and to the corral and let them through the gate. He walked quietly to the cabin doorway and stopped just outside.

"For God's sake, Cora," the man was saying, "I don't see why you had to bring that kid with you. You could have told me about it. I didn't have to see him."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, now we've got the problem of how to get rid of him. Have to find a mission or some place that'll take him. Why didn't you leave him where he came from?"

"No! He's mine!"

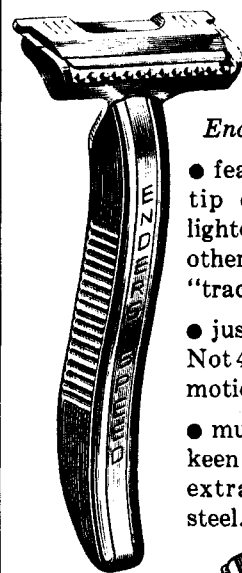
"Good God, Cora! Are you crazy? Think you can foist off a thing like that on me?"

Sergeant Houck stepped through the doorway. "Thought I heard something about supper," he said. He looked around the small room, then let his eyes rest on the

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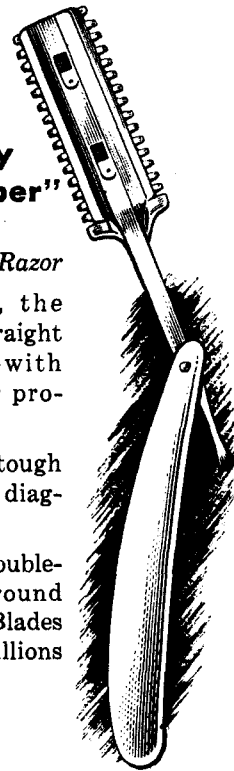
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man. "I see the makings on those shelves. Come along, Mr. Sutliff. A woman doesn't want men cluttering about when she's getting a meal. Show me your place before it gets dark."

He stood, waiting, and the man scraped at the floor with one foot and slowly stood up and went with him.

THEY were well beyond earshot of the cabin when Sergeant Houck spoke again. "How long were you married? Before it happened?"

"Six years," said the man. "No, seven. It was seven when we lost the last place and headed this way with the train."

"Seven years," said Sergeant Houck. "And no child."

"It just didn't happen. I don't know why." The man stopped and looked sharply at Sergeant Houck. "Oh. So that's the way you're looking at it."

"Yes," said Sergeant Houck. "Now you've got one. A son."

"Not mine," said the man. "You can talk. It's not your wife. It's bad enough thinking of taking an Indian's leavings." He wiped his lips on his sleeve and spat in disgust. "I'll be damned if I'll take his kid."

"Not his any more. He's dead."

"Look, man. Look how it'd be. A damned little half-breed. Around all the time to make me remember what she did. A reminder of things I'd want to forget."

"Could be a reminder that she had some mighty hard going. And maybe come through the better for it."

"She had hard going! What about me? Thinking she was dead. Getting used to that. Maybe thinking of another woman. Then she comes back—and an Indian kid with her. What does that make me?"

"Could make you a man," said Sergeant Houck. "Think it over." He turned away and went to the corral and leaned on the rail, watching the horses roll the sweat-itches out of the dry sod. The man went slowly down by the creek and stood on the bank, pushing at the dirt with one shoe and kicking small pebbles into the water. The sun, holding to the horizon rim, dropped suddenly out of sight and dusk came swiftly to blur the outlines of the buildings. The woman appeared in the doorway and called and they went in. There was simple food on the table and the woman stood beside it. "I've already fed him," she said and moved her head toward the door to the inner room.

Sergeant Houck ate steadily and reached to refill his plate. The man picked briefly at the food before him and stopped, and the woman ate nothing at all. The man put his hands on the table edge and pushed back and stood up. He went to a side shelf and took a bottle and two thick cups and set them by his plate. He filled the cups a third full from the bottle and shoved one along the table boards toward Sergeant Houck. He lifted the other. His voice was bitter. "Happy home-coming," he said. He waited and Sergeant Houck took the other cup and they drank. The man lifted the bottle and poured himself another drink.

The woman looked quickly at him and away. "Please, Fred."

The man paid no attention. He reached with the bottle toward the other cup.

"No," said Sergeant Houck.

The man shrugged. "You can think better on whisky. Sharpens the mind." He set the bottle down and took his cup and drained it. Sergeant Houck fumbled in his right side pocket and found a short straight straw there and pulled it out and put one end in his mouth and chewed slowly on it. The man and the woman sat still, opposite each other at the table, and seemed to forget his quiet presence. They stared everywhere except at each other. Yet their attention was plainly concentrated on each other. The man spoke first. His voice was restrained, carrying conscious patience.

"Look, Cora. You wouldn't want to do that to me. You can't mean what you said before."

Her voice was determined. "He's mine."

"Now, Cora. You don't want to push it

too far. A man can take just so much. I didn't know what to do after I heard about you. But I was all ready to forgive you. And now you—"

"Forgive me!" She knocked against her chair rising to her feet. Hurt and bewilderment made her voice ragged as she repeated the words. "Forgive me?" She turned and ran into the inner room. The handleless door banged shut behind her.

The man stared after her and shook his head and reached again for the bottle.

"Enough's enough," said Sergeant Houck.

The man shrugged in quick irritation. "For you maybe," he said and poured himself another drink. "Is there any reason you should be nosing in on this?"

"My orders," said Sergeant Houck, "were to deliver them safely. Both of them."

"You've done that," said the man. He lifted the cup and drained it and set it down carefully. "They're here."

"Yes," said Sergeant Houck. "They're here." He stood up and stepped to the outside door and looked into the night. He

be careful, maybe I won't take you back."

"Maybe I don't want you to!"

"So damn' finicky all of a sudden! After being with that Indian and maybe a lot more!"

Sergeant Houck stepped through the doorway. The man's back was to him, and he spun him around and his right hand smacked against the side of the man's face and sent him staggering against the wall.

"Forgetting your manners won't help," said Sergeant Houck. He looked around, and the woman had disappeared into the inner room. The man leaned against the wall, rubbing his cheek, and she came out, the boy in her arms, and ran toward the outer door.

"Cora!" the man shouted. "Cora!"

She stopped, a brief hesitation in flight. "I don't belong to you," she said and was gone through the doorway. The man pushed out from the wall and started after her and the great bulk of Sergeant Houck blocked the way.

"You heard her," said Sergeant Houck.

VIP'S WAR



COLLIER'S

VIRGIL PARTCH

waited a moment until his eyes were accustomed to the darkness and could distinguish objects faintly in the starlight. He stepped out and went to the pile of straw behind one of the sheds and took an armload and carried it back by the cabin and dropped it at the foot of a tree by one corner. He sat on it, his legs stretched out, his shoulders against the tree, and broke off a straw stem and chewed slowly on it. After a while his jaws stopped their slow slight movement and his head sank forward and his eyes closed.

SERGEANT HOUCK woke up abruptly. He was on his feet in a moment, and listening. He heard the faint sound of voices in the cabin, indistinct but rising as the tension rose in them. He went toward the doorway and stopped just short of the rectangle of light from the lamp.

"You're not going to have anything to do with me!" The woman's voice was harsh with stubborn anger. "Not until this has been settled right!"

"Aw, come on, Cora." The man's voice was fuzzy, slow-paced. "We'll talk about that in the morning."

"No!"

"All right!" Sudden fury made the man's voice shake. "You want it settled now! Well, it's settled! We're getting rid of that damn' kid first thing tomorrow!"

"No!"

"What gave you the idea you've got any say around here after what you did? I'm the one to say what's to be done. You don't

"She doesn't belong to anybody now. Nobody but that boy."

The man stared at him and some of the fury went out of his eyes and he stumbled to his chair at the table and reached for the bottle. Sergeant Houck watched him a moment, then turned and quietly went outside. He walked toward the corral and as he passed the second shed, she came out of the darker shadows and her voice, low and intense, whispered at him.

"I've got to go. I can't stay here."

Sergeant Houck nodded and went on to the corral. He harnessed the horses quickly and with a minimum of sound. He finished buckling the traces and stood straight and looked toward the cabin. He walked to the doorway and stepped inside. The man was leaning forward in his chair, his elbows on the table, staring at the empty bottle.

"It's finished," said Sergeant Houck.

"She's leaving now."

The man shook his head and pushed at the bottle with one forefinger. "She can't do that." He looked up at Sergeant Houck and sudden rage began to show in his eyes. "She can't do that! She's my wife!"

"Not any more," said Sergeant Houck.

"Best forget she ever came back." He started toward the door and heard the sharp sound of the chair scraping on the floor behind him. The man's voice rose, shrilling up almost into a shriek.

"Stop!" The man rushed to the wall rack and grabbed the rifle there and held it low and aimed it at Sergeant Houck. "Stop!" He was breathing deeply and he fought for

control of his voice. "You're not going to take her away!"

Sergeant Houck turned slowly. He stood still, a motionless granite shape in the lamp-light.

"Threatening an Army man," said Sergeant Houck. "And with an empty gun."

The man wavered and his eyes flicked down at the rifle. In the second of indecision Sergeant Houck plunged toward him and one huge hand grasped the gun barrel and pushed it aside and the shot thudded harmlessly into the cabin wall. He wrenched the gun from the man's grasp and his other hand took the man by the shirt front and pushed him down into the chair.

"No more of that," said Sergeant Houck. "Best sit quiet." He looked around the room and found the box of cartridges on a shelf and he took this with the rifle and went to the door. "Look around in the morning and you'll find these." He went outside and tossed the gun up on the roof of one of the sheds and dropped the little box by the pile of straw and kicked some straw over it. He went to the wagon and stood by it and the woman came out of the darkness, carrying the boy.

THE wagon wheels rolled silently. The small creakings of the wagon body and the thudding rhythm of the horses' hoofs were distinct, isolated sounds in the night. The creek was on their right and they followed the road back the way they had come. The woman moved on the seat, shifting the boy's weight from one arm to the other, until Sergeant Houck took him by the overalls and lifted him and reached behind to lay him on the burlap bags. "A good boy," he said. "Has the Indian way of taking things without yapping. A good way."

The thin new tracks in the dust unwound endlessly under the wheels and the waning moon climbed through the scattered bushes and trees along the creek.

"I have relatives in Missouri," said the woman. "I could go there."

Sergeant Houck fumbled in his side pocket and found a straw and put this in his mouth and chewed slowly on it. "Is that what you want?"

"No."

They came to the main-road crossing and swung left and the dust thickened under the horses' hoofs. The lean dark shape of a coyote slipped from the brush on one side and bounded along the road and disappeared on the other side.

"I'm forty-seven," said Sergeant Houck. "Nearly thirty of that in the Army. Makes a man rough."

The woman looked straight ahead and a small smile showed in the corners of her mouth.

"Four months," said Sergeant Houck, "and this last hitch's done. I'm thinking of homesteading on out in the Territory." He chewed on the straw and took it between a thumb and forefinger and flipped it away. "You could get a room at the settlement."

"I could," said the woman. The horses slowed to a walk, breathing deeply, and he let them hold the steady, plodding pace. Far off a coyote howled and others caught the signal and the sounds echoed back and forth in the distance and died away into the night silence.

"Four months," said Sergeant Houck. "That's not so long."

"No," said the woman. "Not too long."

A breeze stirred across the brush and she put out a hand and touched his shoulder. Her fingers moved down along his upper arm and curved over the big muscles there and the warmth of them sank through the cloth of his worn service jacket. She dropped her hand in her lap again and looked ahead along the ribbon of the road. He clucked to the horses and urged them again into a trot and the small creakings of the wagon body and the dulled rhythm of the hoofs were gentle sounds in the night.

The late moon climbed and its pale light shone slantwise down on the moving wagon, on the sleeping boy and the woman looking straight ahead, and on the great solid figure of Sergeant Houck. **THE END**

Parade Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

than the others just to show that he was the boss. They swung into another narrow street and halfway along there was an opening into another long street, which went away from the sun.

On either side this street was bounded by two-story half-bricked houses with their doorsteps right on the narrow paths flanking the macadam. They were nice houses and you knew from the appearance of them that their owners were poor and maybe honest, but clean in the main, because the curtains behind the windowpanes were of white starched lace shown off by a bowl of the inevitable geraniums.

THE street was remarkable for only one thing: that was the figure of the small boy who stood in the center of it, halfway up and watching from his distance the colorful conglomeration passing him below. His hair was red and his eyes were blue and his face was very pale. Everybody knows that people with red hair have pale complexions if they haven't very red ones. There is no in-between with red hair. But even allowing for that, the boy's face was much paler than nature had intended it to be. The face was thin and the shoulders in the red gansey were narrow. It was only when you allowed your eyes to travel down that you noticed the heavy bandage where the kneecap should have been and the steel brace with the bright new straps. You understood then, perhaps, why he was so thin and looked so pale.

It was one of Mico's junior satellites who drew his attention to the figure in the street, just before the band had passed by the opening.

"Mico! Mico!" he screamed. "It's Joe! Lookit Joe! He's out! They musta let 'm out!"

Mico glanced at him. He couldn't hear. "What is it, Snitch?" he asked, his hand to his ear.

Snitch, despairing of making himself understood by word of mouth, pointed frantically to the fast disappearing opening. Mico screwed his head around to take a look, spotted the figure of Joe and left the procession with a leap.

"Hey, fellas," he roared, "it's Joe! Joe is back!" and he dived into the throng, promptly followed by seven or eight of his fellows. The band watched their departure with relief in their eyes, and as they passed on, you could almost hear a sigh of relief being squeezed from the instruments.

Joe, his eyes shining a little, was soon surrounded by boys; by Mico, taller than any of them except poor, skinny Joe, and Snitch the smallest of them, his jerseyed arm rising constantly to wipe a freely running nose. Then Pakey, Padneen, and John Willie, the three brothers whose eventual death on the gallows was predicted by harassed parents in the neighborhood; and Yank, so called because he still wore the trousers of a sailor suit which a fond aunt in America had sent him for Christmas; and a small, very fat boy known as Dripping for obvious reasons.

All talking at once they were: "Jay, Joe, what did they do t' y? Whin did they let y' out, Joe? Jay, Joe look at the yoke on the leg! What's it for, Joe? Jay, isn't it a wonder?"

Joe felt good. It seemed a long time ago that he had gone to hospital. It was only six months, but it was like that many years. He had been the leader of them then, with Mico number two. Now Mico was the big noise. But Joe didn't mind. Just to be out again. To see them. Their faces excited with seeing him. It was great. It was all past. The pain in the knee that he couldn't understand; going to hospital with fear in his heart—he had seen so many people from the street going to that hospital, and the next thing you were walking behind them and they stiff in wooden boxes being carried in a hearse with the horses in front

and white yokes around their necks and their hoofs polished. He had been waiting all the time to be carried out in the wooden box so that when they told him they would have to take off his kneecap and after that he would be all right, he didn't mind. Anything at all, so that he wouldn't die and not see the fellas any more.

He was as good as new now. Just that it was a bit of a nuisance to have your leg in the brace, so that you couldn't run very fast, or walk very fast for that matter. It was funny to think that you would never have a knee like other fellas, that your leg would never bend in the middle again, but it didn't matter now, with the fellas around him. It was worth it all to see them. Forget the pain in the white bed and the smell of stuff all around you that never went away, so that even the scent of the flowers outside seemed to be tainted with it. Now, with the sun shining out of the blue sky and the fellas all around asking questions and carrying on, what did it all matter? Divil a thing really.

He walked about a bit to show them how the brace worked.

"See the way it's stuck into the heel of the boot, fellas," he pointed out. "It comes up here on your leg and y' strap it. See!" He pulled up the leg of his trousers to show it to them.

"Jay" and "Jayney" and more colorful words issued from them in a splurge of admiration and envy. "Jayney, isn't it well for you, Joe?" Mico said with his voice wistful. "None at all of the fellas this side of the town has a brace. Have yeh no knee at all, Joe?"

"No," said Joe proudly. "They cut off me knee altogether."

"Jaykers!" they chorused again.

"Walk about a bit'll we see it workin', Joe," suggested Mico.

So Joe took his steps, having to lift the brace a little in the air and swing it in a circle to get his bad leg ahead of the other. They were thrilled with this and proceeded to imitate him, stiffening one leg at the knee and swinging it in a semicircle. The band, whose music had faded into the distance, was forgotten as they went around in a ring after Joe.

But Joe suddenly felt very tired, and the sweat which broke out on his forehead was cold, so he stretched his bad leg in front of him and sat on the edge of the hot concrete path. They squatted around him and plied him with questions. Was it bad havin' his knee cut off? No, it wasn't, because they

put a yoke over your kisser and you breathe in and you go to sleep and when you wake up the job's done, and there y'are. After, it's a bit sore. What did he get to eat? Was it good stuff or bad stuff? Oh, good! Eggs and milk and every day a sweet after dinner. A what after dinner? A sweet—y'know, the sort of stuff big shots have, red jelly in a sort of saucer plate and white stuff with it that melted in your mouth. Jay, imagine that! And apples and oranges every day near, and fellas in the ward with him that made him presents of this and that, sweets and chocolate and things. Oh, terrifico! Jay, they wished they had to go to hospital and get their knees cut off and get jelly and the white stuff and all the other rackets. And a grand steel brace at the end of it all. All for nix, too.

Joe felt very good. He hadn't been expecting this at all. Here he was a sort of hero to be envied, and he half expecting to be a bit jeered at, as a sort of unfit person who was defective in the body. He knew from experience in this neighborhood what it meant to have weak eyes, say. "Four eyes" you were called, and they would pinch your steel-framed glasses and jeer at your fumbling around to find them, and when they had reduced you to weak tears you would get them back again. If your legs were defective you would be called "Hoppity," and if you had a squint you would be called "Gunner." Now, here he was, his fears laid at rest, the hero of the hour, and the fellas practically jealous of the evil that had befallen him.

Half an hour at least they were sitting there, closely questioning him and surmising and telling him the news of things they had done since he went away, and then faintly in the distance could be heard the sound of the band returning from the parade.

It was Snitch who was the first to notice it.

"Whist, lads," said he, stopping the talk. "Is that the band comin' back again?"

They listened.

"That's it, all right," said Pakey. "Are they goin' t' come back the same way?" Yank asked.

"Sure," said Mico, "they always do. Don't they, Joe?"

"They always did," said Joe, picturing to himself hearing the band at home when he might be sitting down to his tea, maybe, stuffing bread and jam into his mouth, and he would swallow off the scalding tea, his mother berating him and saying: "Time enough, time enough you'll be out to see

the damn' band. Eat your bread slow! Drink your tea slow! You'll end up with a bad stomach like your father, so you will!" But he wouldn't have the patience to finish anything. He'd be out the door and flying down the street, twisting around the corner, chewing the last bit, and out of the other houses the other kids would be coming, stuffing their mouths, roaring through it, "Hi, Joe, wait for me, Joe, wait for me!" But Joe couldn't wait. He was very fleet and he'd always be the first there to join the band or watch a dogfight or a man fight or two cats fighting on a tin roof.

A restlessness came over the boys as the strains of the band became louder and louder. Joe could feel it and he could feel his own heart thumping. They all rose to their feet and instinctively turned their heads toward the end of the street where at any moment the band would appear. Then Snitch started running without a word. You couldn't blame Snitch in a way. He was so small that he had to have a good head start of the others if he wanted to end up anywhere near them.

"Hi, Snitch!" Mico yelled, but Snitch just dug his chin deeper into his neck and ran on.

"After'm, fellas!" roared Padneen, taking the lead.

The others whooped and chased after Padneen. All except Mico.

"Hey, what about Joe?" Mico yelled after them.

They paid not the least attention.

Mico looked at Joe.

"Come on, Joe, run!" he said.

"All right, Mico," said Joe, lifting his braced leg and swinging it in a semicircle. He hopped a few steps at a fast pace. Mico, ahead of him, half turned, running sideways, looking back at him. Joe halted. He felt his heart thumping and he knew his face was paler.

"Run, Joe, run!" said Mico more urgently, sensing the imminent appearance of the band.

"All right, Mico," said Joe, starting up again. A few steps at a fast pace.

"That's it, Joe," Mico encouraged him. "Faster! Faster!"

Joe stopped. His strained eyes looked at Mico and there was an appeal in them.

"I can't, Mico," said Joe, "I can't run."

"You can, a course," said Mico, still moving away, turning his head to see how close the band might be. "Come on, Joe, you can do it, so you can!"

Joe just stood there in the center of the road and shook his head.

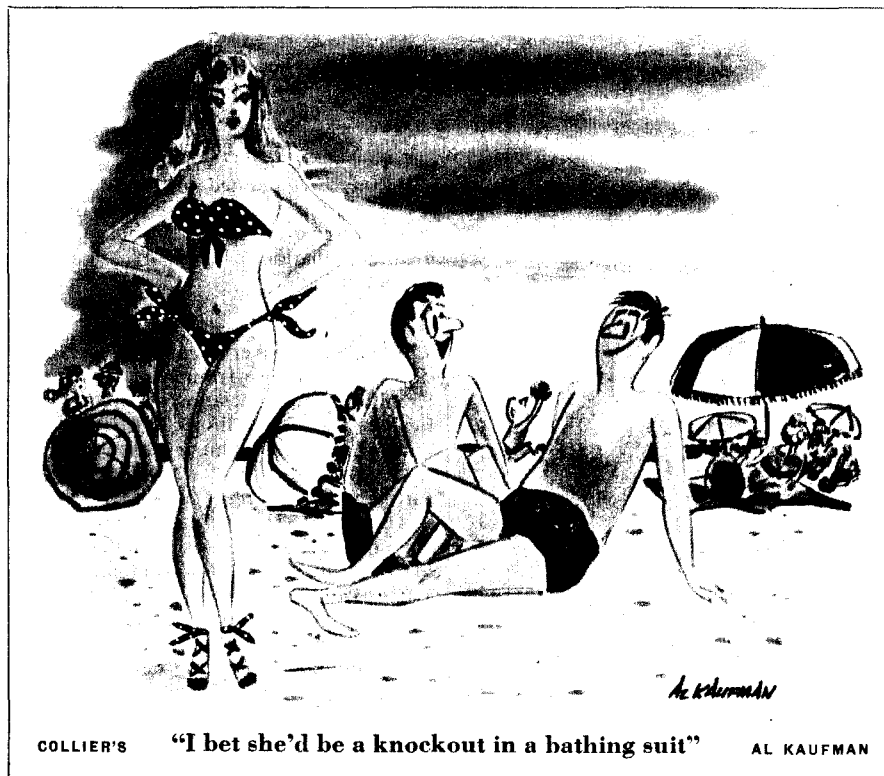
"Ah, come on, Joe, for God's sake!" said Mico impatiently. He looked toward the end of the street. The head of the band parade was already appearing around the corner. Mico gave Joe a last look. "Are y' comin', Joe?" he asked, and then he turned his head away finally and bolted down the street.

MICO'S back became smaller and smaller, as Joe watched. He saw the mouth of the street being filled with the bodies of the children, and the sun reflecting blindingly from the polished instruments. He saw the tall figure of Mico pressing and pushing until he had reached the head of the procession, where he arched his body and swung an imaginary baton.

The noise and the hoots and the cheers and the singing passed by and left only the echo behind them.

Joe stood there a little longer and then he sat painfully on the path. He was alone. He couldn't check the hotness behind his eyes, the empty feeling in his wasted body. He pressed the palms of his almost transparent hands into the sun-heated pavement and he prayed desperately. Very deep inside himself with his eyes tight shut, he prayed: "Please, Jesus Christ, don't let them call me Hoppity. Please don't let them call me Hoppity."

THE END



COLLIER'S

"I bet she'd be a knockout in a bathing suit"

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Week's Mail

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

(May 26th), illustrated by the excellent pictures by Chen Chi. I have heard favorable comments from a number of friends and feel that you should know that this type of illustration and article is of real interest to your readers.

I hope that you will give us more Chen Chi in succeeding issues.

ROLAND ELLIOTT, New York, N. Y.

... I enjoyed Chen Chi's excellent paintings of Chicago except that, to my literal mind, the Adler Planetarium seemed a little too fanciful. It looks as if it were floating in mist above a swampy meadow. Actually, its surroundings are quite citified.

KARL H. BAUER, Chicago, Ill.

... COVER PICTURE THIS WEEK BEST I HAVE SEEN I STOOD THERE YESTERDAY BUT HOW CAN VESSELS FADE THROUGH MICHIGAN AVENUE BRIDGE PLEASE EDIT.

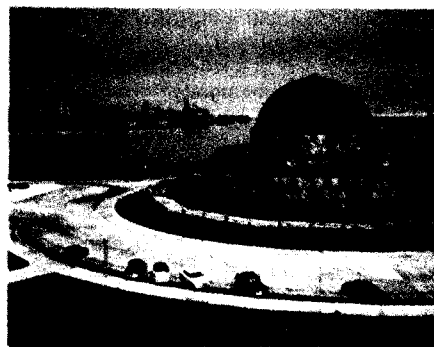
DR. L. B. KRATZ, Cincinnati, Ohio

Tom Fransioli's cover was well edited. The excursion boat doesn't go through the Michigan Avenue bridge—but it could if it wanted to. Like the other 15 Chicago bridges, the one shown on the cover opens in the middle, permitting passageway for boats.

Wanted in Washington

EDITOR: To say that I am puzzled about the actions and the attitude of our State Department, is putting it rather mildly. But in the article by Seymour Freidin The Man Who Says No to Stalin (May 26th), I find the answer to all our problems insofar as the State Department is concerned. Why not import Karl Gruber, Austria's Foreign Minister, and make him our Secretary of State? Here is a man among the puny statesmen of the world! Honest, bold and uncompromising in the very midst of his enemies, this man is such a man as America needs. When we compare him with the "yes-men" and "fancy pants" in our government, it should make you, as it does me, blush with shame.

REV. WILLIAM M. REED, Salisbury, Md.



Planetarium: Chen Chi vs. camera

48 States of Mind

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

just as well that Captain Homer O. Bringle didn't show up. The Captain, five times a runner-up but never a winner, announced that he'd win this time or eat the man who beat him. Mr. Wally Haenel won—134 fried smelts—and not only departed under his own power but shook hands all around and delivered a ringing patriotic address. Mr. Haenel might have stopped at 115, one better than the record, but a television camera arrived as he downed the 110th and he obligingly polished off another platter.

★ ★ ★

There was so much applause in Cleveland, Ohio, when the United Automobile Workers came out flatly against organized gambling that an equally vigorous and virtuous declaration seems to have been overlooked. The UAW also denounced polygamy. We phoned our UAW man who explained that this was done while the delegates were drawing up resolutions condemning inflation. "Polygamy," he told us, "is inflation too."

★ ★ ★

Whenever a government agency wants to stall on anything—from a note from the Kremlin to a denunciation by Congressman Featherfinder at a Lions luncheon in No Lady Junction, Wyoming—it announces it is "studying" the matter. In the State Department they were "studying" a recent survey of the Minnesota Poll of Public Opinion. Minnesota had found that only 51 per cent of her adult population could locate Korea on the map; 53 per cent managed to find Germany, but only 46 per cent knew where Formosa was. China was more familiar, 64 per cent being able to locate that perishing country. After "studying" this discouraging state of affairs for some time, a striped-pants conferee sighed: "If Minnesota reflects the situation in the

rest of the country, what's everybody been yelling about for the past year?"

★ ★ ★

Think you're tough? Think you can take it? Okay. Our money is on Mr. Demetrius H. Pitchonis, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There's a man who can stand up under punishment and like it. Mr. Pitchonis keeps 300 birds in his bedroom—parakeets, Japanese nightingales, Brazilian cardinals, finches, blue jays, parrots, thrushes and 17 varieties of canaries. Mr. Pitchonis permits some to fly about his room at will. Others prefer the privacy of their cages. Mr. Pitchonis is a calm, well-preserved man of sixty-three, a condition he ascribes to getting plenty of sleep and having a pleasant hobby. We, weakling that we are, couldn't get to sleep for hours just thinking of Mr. Pitchonis and his 300 roommates. And then we dreamed about them.

★ ★ ★

If they said it once, they've said it a thousand times. Patrolmen J. D. Stevenson and M. J. Wise, of the Dallas Police Department, were convinced that their churches could do much more about crime prevention. Said so, too. Dallas will soon see exactly what they meant. Both have resigned to become Baptist ministers.

★ ★ ★

We almost forgot to tell you we met a man in Washington who, having been cleared by the FBI, had been working for the government for a month when the FBI called on him again. They were very nice about it, but said that in checking the form he made out before going to work he had overlooked answering one question. The question: "Are you able to lift heavy packages?" He's in the Treasury Department.

Collier's for July 14, 1951

General Ike's Miracle Man

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

Somehow he managed to maintain his usual poise during those days, even when it looked as though the fugitive government and everyone with it would be caught in the Nazi-Soviet nutcracker.

The only precaution he took was to carry his revolver—a .38-caliber police positive—in a specially made shoulder holster tucked under his pin stripe.

A Telegram with Good News

One day, in a primitive village of southern Poland, Biddle went to call on Foreign Minister Jozef Beck, who had set up his office in a stable. The ambassador had good news—a telegram from President Roosevelt offering the Poles \$50,000 worth of sorely needed medical supplies.

Just as he stepped into the stall where Beck had his desk, a shell exploded outside and the blast blew the telegram out of Biddle's hand. Both men bent down to pick it up—and the American Ambassador's gun fell on the floor.

"The Foreign Minister looked a bit startled," Biddle recalls, "and I must say I was rather nonplused myself."

Smiling, Beck returned the gun, then reached into his hip pocket and drew out his own pistol.

"It's a bit awkward wearing it back there," he told Biddle. "Do you suppose I could borrow your holster for a day and have one made like it?"

Biddle no longer packs a gun to work; he keeps it at home—a two-story house near Ike's recently completed headquarters a few miles west of Paris. There he's settled down for as long as necessary with his young Canadian-born wife, Margaret, and their two children. Their son, named after his father, but better known as Antonio—is two and a half, and Margaret, Jr., is still in the cradle.

Mrs. Biddle shares her husband's knack for handling delicate European sensibilities. During the war, when still in her twenties, she was Canadian representative on General Eisenhower's civil affairs staff; later as a director of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Germany, she was responsible for sending the first group of displaced persons back to America. Biddle met her in 1945 and married her a year later.

It was at Eisenhower's request that Biddle became one of the nucleus of hand-picked officers assigned to SHAPE last winter. He'd been serving in Washington

as the Department of the Army's Foreign Liaison Officer when he was suddenly ordered to fly to Europe on three days' notice, to prepare the way for Ike's dramatic inspection trip of the Allied military forces.

An enormous job confronted Biddle when he landed in Paris last January 5th. There was a twofold purpose to Eisenhower's trip: he wanted to see whether Western Europe had the physical and moral resources on which to build a common defense force; and he hoped to stiffen our Allies' will to resist by imparting his own confidence to peoples and statesmen alike. At the time, the free world's morale was at a low ebb. A wave of defeatism had swept over Europe like a clammy fog in the wake of the first massive Chinese offensive in Korea. The Reds seemed unbeatable and anxious millions were toying with the concept of "neutrality" as a means of appeasing the Kremlin.

Biddle's task was to work out all arrangements for Ike's whirlwind, businesslike tour without giving any nation the feeling that it was being slighted. In the prevailing atmosphere, it was not an easy assignment.

"We had to be very careful of national sensitivities," one of the advance party recalled later. "The least brush-off, which might result from natural pressure, could easily have ruined General Ike's conferences before they got under way. Thank Heaven Tony was with us. I hate to think of what might have happened."

Cutting Down on Ceremony

The problem was complicated by the necessity for speed. "General Eisenhower told me in Washington he wanted to make every minute count on his trip," Biddle explained. "That meant cutting down official parties and ceremonies to a minimum. I had to make this plain to all sorts of officials in Europe who wanted to give him the usual VIP treatment."

Biddle makes the assignment sound casual. But take it from the officers who accompanied him, this was a delicate, harassing and potentially explosive mission.

At every airport where the Army C-54 bearing Biddle and his contingent alighted, groups of men and women rushed forward when the door opened. As Biddle came down the stairs, he'd be surrounded by old friends happily pumping his hand and embracing him. Government officials, civic leaders and ordinary citizens who had met him once or twice—all were delighted to



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COLLIER'S

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Collier's for July 14, 1951

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see Biddle again and they wanted to show their enthusiasm by showering invitations on him for Eisenhower.

"The requests came like a storm," Colonel John Virden, a member of the inspection team, told us. "This society and that group were all waiting to hear General Ike. They stood around with such hopeful expressions that I didn't know what to say. If we accepted one twentieth of all those invitations, General Ike would never have got any work done."

Then Biddle intervened. Informally, and with hearty good fellowship, he accepted virtually every invitation—with reservations. It would be a pleasure, he told all the prospective hosts, if there was time. They had to remember, though, that time was most important and General Eisenhower wanted to use it all to discuss mutual defense.

"Tony, you just tell us what you want and we'll do it," was the invariable reply.

So sensitive feelings were spared, old friendships were strengthened and General Eisenhower was able to proceed to each Atlantic Pact nation to talk business with only the barest minimum time out for ceremony. The trip was a great success.

"General Ike," Biddle tells you, "has given all of us a sense of urgency without anxiety. He has inspired Europe with a sense of confidence and reassurance. General Ike hasn't just made allies. He's made good friends."

That's something at which Biddle is a past master—making and keeping friends. In his years of service as soldier and diplomat, Tony Biddle has made more friends for the United States than perhaps any other man at a comparable level in public service.

"Chalk it up to his charm and his calm," a tough combat officer explained. "Tony isn't a socialite smoothie. He's rugged in a rugged situation and he has a tremendous sense of right and wrong."

Fistic Skill Acquired Early

Biddle started out making friends early in life. By the time he progressed to St. Paul's school in Concord, New Hampshire, he was the idol of small boys in Philadelphia because he was so handy with his fists. His father, the fabulous Colonel Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, who was teaching Marines jujitsu when he was sixty-seven, saw to it that he learned the hard way.

When Biddle was ten, his athletic father had him mix with the heavyweight champion, Bob Fitzsimmons. Philadelphia Jack O'Brien, a frequent visitor at the Biddle home, coached the youth and acted as the elder Biddle's second in bouts the colonel staged with leading professionals at garden parties. At St. Paul's, where his formal education ended, Tony Biddle acquired lifelong friends by licking every bully in the school. He's still a fine boxer and likes a few fast rounds occasionally to keep trim.

He emerged from World War I a captain, but never got overseas. Between graduation from St. Paul's and the war he was married to Mary Duke of the tobacco family. They had a son, Anthony J. Drexel Biddle III (who got so tired of being confused with his father and grandfather that he changed his name to Nicholas), and a daughter, now Mrs. Josiah Trent.

In the roaring twenties, Biddle acquired the gloss, graceful charm and easy approach that have since distinguished his manner. He joined 22 clubs and was a director of 11 corporations simultaneously. Before the depression hit, he also bought and managed a Belgian middleweight, Rene DeVos, who fought in New York's Madison Square Garden.

Biddle started his public service career in earnest 20 years ago when he toured Europe and reported on police systems to J. Edgar Hoover. His analysis of European methods contributed importantly toward the reorganization of the FBI.

Following his second marriage to the daughter of Colonel William Boyce Thompson, a Montana millionaire, Biddle

turned on his charm for Franklin D. Roosevelt's first campaign, shocking most of his Republican family. His diplomatic career began modestly enough as Minister to Norway in 1935. Members of the Norwegian Labor government were soon on first-name terms with him, and King Haakon would call and leave word that "Haakon telephoned."

In 1937, Biddle became Ambassador to Poland, which was even then being squeezed in the vise of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. When war came, throngs in Warsaw demanded that he show himself, although the United States was then neutral. Biddle solved the delicate neutrality issue by appearing on a balcony with his hands clasped above his head, like a main-eventer in a prize ring. The crowd loved it.

The tragedy of total war forced Biddle and his embassy staff to flee with the Polish government. A year later he was again fleeing the Nazis, this time as envoy extraordinary to the French government on its hasty retreat from Paris to Bordeaux.

Technically neutral, Biddle tried by every dodge he could think up to bolster the French government's will to carry on. He would be seen with Premier Paul Reynaud and would deliberately stop and chat with French ministers. Meanwhile, he was working round-the-clock to get thousands of war-stranded Americans passage home. With the co-operation of the American Embassies in Spain and Portugal, Biddle worked out a program whereby American refugees went over into Spain, and thence to Portugal, where they were put on ships.

His amazing vitality carried him through that grueling period. Some months after the fall of France, Biddle was back in the U.S., reporting to the State Department.

Embattled Britain was then fighting alone and helping to sustain resistance in occupied countries by offering facilities to governments-in-exile. No career diplomat volunteered to serve these governments. Through remarkable coincidence Biddle was the only man proposed for the job and the only one who wanted it. By the time he returned to Britain and had the feel of his new post, he was America's busiest envoy. Every day for three years he talked with

Norwegians, Dutch, Czechs, Belgians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Luxembourgers and Poles. So closely did Biddle identify himself with the exiles' problems that a State Department official complained: "Biddle sounds as if he's the Greek Foreign Minister one hour, the Belgian the next."

Early in 1944, Biddle quit the diplomatic service and went on active duty as a colonel with Eisenhower's headquarters—Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAPE)—as deputy chief of the European Allied Contact Section.

After the successful invasion of France, Biddle's myriad friendships paid off. Allied lines of communication, fluid with the rapid advances, were tying down at least three combat divisions for guard duty. Biddle sounded out his exiled Polish friends. Together they organized 50,000 Poles to police communications, thus releasing combat divisions badly needed for the offensive within Germany.

After the war, Biddle stayed in Germany as chief of the Allied Contact Division for American Headquarters. DPs, victims of both the Russians and the Germans, sought his help and he divided his time between aiding them and watching conniving Soviet delegations who tried with threats and force to repatriate people they wanted back in the Soviet Union.

Once, a group of men appeared at his offices, presented themselves as a repatriation team and wanted to go off immediately on a tour of the U.S. zone. Biddle welcomed them, asked them to sign a register and excused himself briefly. He checked the names with a file, learned that about half were Soviet MVD officers and packed them off to the Russian sector of Berlin.

"He did it so well that even the Russians didn't know what happened until they were back in their territory," one of Biddle's friends recalled.

In his present job, Biddle no longer meets Russians, even socially. They give SHAPE a wide berth.

Biddle is as trim and vigorous as ever. He weighs 183 pounds, the same as when he was boxing for the Liberty Loan drive 34 years ago. Officers 20 to 30 years his junior remark wryly that Biddle is apt to

run them into the ground before he realizes the kind of pace he sets.

"I'm terribly sorry," he said one night to a National Military Representative who was working on a report. "I hadn't realized it was eight o'clock and we've been here since eight this morning. I'll finish that myself."

Two hours later, after dinner, the NMR looked into Biddle's office out of curiosity. He was chatting away and reminiscing with two Belgians who had dropped by to visit their old friend. Biddle is scrupulously careful not to ignore anybody, especially Atlantic Pact nationals.

The Medal He Failed to Wear

That's why he wears nine rows of ribbons on his tunic. To the casual observer that may appear ostentatious. Biddle, however, doesn't indulge in showmanship. Once General Anders, Polish Resistance hero, stared at the decorations on Biddle's uniform. The medal awarded Biddle by the pre-Communist Polish government was missing.

"Don't you love us any more?" Anders asked. It's the only time on record that Biddle ever blushed, and he has since worn all his decorations to avoid any more gentle reprimands from his friends.

Biddle's working day sometimes begins long before he ever reaches his office. Often a visitor from any one of a dozen or more countries can be found seated in Biddle's home in the morning, waiting for him to waken. Quite frequently the visitor has nothing to do with SHAPE, but just knew Biddle somewhere in Europe.

That starts the procession of visitors. Biddle listens to all the house callers, makes notes of their needs and then goes off to headquarters. A flustered junior American officer, spotting him, will come in with a question that needs a quick answer. Lieutenant Colonel Vincent Usera, of New York, who has served with Biddle in the past, heads the officer off.

"I've got to find out the exchange rate between French francs and Dutch guildens," the man tells Usera. Consulting the morning papers on his desk, Usera gives him a quick answer.

Next comes Italy's Colonel Sforza, speaking in the volatile English slang that he acquired while a prisoner of war in Georgia.

"Gotta see General Biddle," Sforza says excitedly. "Left some duplicates with him."

Usera fishes the dupes out of a desk. "Came within a whisker of losing them, eh?" comments Sforza, proudly emphasizing the colloquialism. In walks Norwegian Colonel Wettre from an office next door. SHAPE's Plans & Operations Division has asked for maps of artillery units in Norway.

Usera sends the Norwegian into Biddle's office. Biddle is talking to two French officers but greets Wettre as if he hadn't seen him for years. Sforza says hello and Biddle replies: "My dear Francesco." Wettre asks if Biddle has seen the P&O request.

Biddle has. All staff requests for information from the member nations are routed through Biddle, to the proper NMR. Wettre says the maps are expected momentarily. They will be brought by courier from Oslo and turned over to Wettre, who in turn will give them to Biddle. Then Biddle sends them to Plans & Operations.

"So it goes," Biddle told us later, "with every request. They all come through here. Certainly, it's lots of work, hard work, but it's worth every ounce of energy."

We asked him if he believed that another war in Europe was unavoidable.

He leaned forward, suddenly earnest. "I'm sure of one thing," he replied, "if anything can prevent war, SHAPE will—with all the military, economic and moral power it commands."

War or no war, SHAPE's become a living, working example of how free nations can co-operate against a common danger. And it's men like Tony Biddle who will keep it living and working until the danger is past.

THE END



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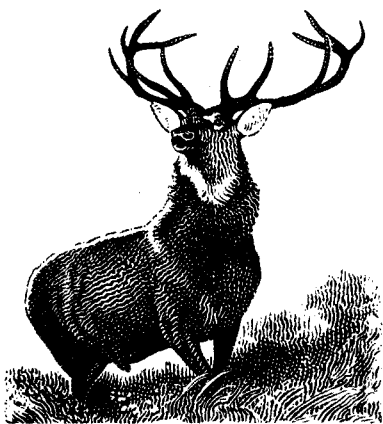


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Reel Sport—Pike, Pickerel and Musky

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

and a minimum of skill. The wooden plug sailed about 75 feet out into the lake, but no backlash resulted, which seemed to leave him surprised but pleased. He began retrieving the lure; it had moved only a few feet when there was a heavy, underwater swirl, the rod tip snapped sharply downward, and the reel handles began drumming a tattoo on his knuckles.

"I say!" He paused to suck a burned thumb, the result of too much pressure on the whirling spool. "They do have large bass here. This one seems to be entangling itself in the weeds. I shall probably get wet trying to maneuver him into the clear."

I reserved my opinion on the species of the fish, for the strike had seemed far too heavy for a local bass. Probably a large northern pike or a small musky.

A Skillful British Angler

My British friend waded out until the water lapped his knees and began putting pressure on the fish. He may have been a stranger to that particular tackle, but the man was an accomplished angler. The fish was taking an erratic course through a thick weed bed, and too much pressure by the angler would have parted the line. After five minutes the fish halted, still in the weeds, so the angler's only recourse was to move toward it. He waded out until he was hip-deep, spooling in line as he moved.

When the Britisher reached the tangle of the weeds near the fish, I saw him peer into the water and part the submarine growth with his landing net. An instant later he threw the rod from him, cast the net high into the air, and churned for shore.

"A monster!" he gasped. "Several feet long, head like a crocodile, and a mouth full of teeth. I thought barracudas were found only in warm waters."

I pointed out that he had probably hooked either a musky or pike.

"Now that I recall," he panted, "John did mention something about pike and muskies, but I assumed they were small fish. I've fished only for salmon."

The disturbance in the weed bed started up again, indicating that the fish was still hooked. When my guide—who had watched the proceedings with something bordering on hysteria—had recovered, I suggested he accompany the Briton to the weed bed and try to recover the rod with his gaff hook. After a brief period of probing, the rod was recovered, and although the fish had peeled off more line, the hooks had held. Once out of the weeds, the musky made a long run, then cleared the water in a twisting leap. The Britisher managed to keep a fairly tight line, and eventually he worked the fish within reach of my guide's gaff.

The "monster" proved to be a 26-pound musky—certainly no record-breaker, but one many a hapless seeker would have considered a real prize.

The Briton's uncertainty over the identity of his fish reflects a somewhat similar situation that exists among anglers who should know better. A number of them confuse the musky with the big northern pike, and some carry this confusion to the ultimate by also calling a large pickerel a pike. Much of this chaotic terminology is traceable to the Ojibway Indians who gave the musky its name; the word stems from their "mashkinoje," meaning "great pike." The big fish is properly called the muskellunge, but it also has a number of other Indian and local variants which add further to the confusion—including masca-longe, maskinonge, musquellunge, tiger musky, blue pike, Allegheny River pike, Chautauqua pike, great pike, lunge, jack pike and Ohio River pike.

The pike, in turn, is variously known as the giant pickerel, grass pike, great northern pike, jackfish, lake pickerel and spotted pike—and the pickerel is sometimes called

POISSON LANDRE

2 lbs. pickerel
1 tomato
2 tablespoons melted butter
2 tablespoons flour
pinch of dried basil
pinch of dried marjoram
½ clove garlic, minced
1 cup white wine

Make a sauce by blending butter, flour, basil, marjoram, garlic and wine. Place pickerel in a buttered casserole, pour the wine sauce over it, then cover with slices of tomato. Bake for 45 minutes in a 350-degree oven, then serve.

the banded pickerel, barred pickerel, chain pickerel, black pike, duck-billed pike, grass pike, green pike, jack, snake pike and red-finned pike.

While all three of these fish are close relatives, being members of the *Esox* family, they are distinctly different. There is a very simple rule to follow in making an accurate identification, as the painting accompanying this article illustrates. The pickerel's scales cover its cheeks and gill covers; the pike has scales on the cheeks, but on only the upper half of the gill covers; on the musky, both the cheeks and gill covers are only half scaled.

Of course, these differences are not always easy to detect at a glance. In habit, habitat, appearance and appetite, the difference between the musky, pike and pickerel is primarily one of size. The pike is inclined to range more than the musky in its search for food, and the pickerel wanders more widely than the pike. The common feeding ground of all three, however, is the weed bed. While the pickerel and pike often lie in the shallows, the musky normally likes to have from 10 to 15 feet of water over him, especially in the summer, when surface water is too warm for his taste. During the warm weather, when musky fishing is unproductive inshore, live bait or an artificial lure, fished 20 to 30 feet deep, will often bring results.

The pickerel is more widely distributed than his cousins, being found in lakes and rivers from Canada to Florida, as far west as central Texas, and thence up the Mississippi Valley. Both pike and muskies seem to prefer the colder waters of the North, and pike are taken in numbers as far north as Alaska. Needless to say, they are more unpopular than the other two, for in Alaska they eat both salmon eggs and young salmon. On the broad, flat prairies of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta there are sections where a bounty is paid on pike, for they are waterfowl predators. This is the important continental nesting ground for waterfowl, and a pike can gobble up a half-grown duckling. In fact, all three of these fish will eat practically anything that moves—including frogs, swimming rodents and turtles.

The fish, in turn, are eaten by humans. The pike and muskies are not as popular with the gourmet as the pickerel, which can be a real delicacy when properly prepared. Many years ago, while duck shooting on Lac St. Pierre in Canada, I stayed at a small inn operated by a Frenchwoman whose culinary feats attracted as many Americans as the wild-fowling.

One evening, after a long, cold day on the marsh, we were served a fish course that caused every wild-fowler at the table to forget the roast duck he had anticipated. I invaded the sacred precincts of the kitchen to obtain the name of the fish and the

recipe. The "poisson Landre" turned out to be pickerel, and for those anglers who fancy themselves as two-fisted cooks (and most of them do) the recipe is printed with this article.

Although the pickerel is the most delectable of the three, the muskellunge is the one most sought after by anglers. With the possible exception of a big bluefish, a salt-water scrapper, no fish exhibits greater fury over so long a period of time as the hooked musky.

The fish's first reaction to restraint usually takes the form of a crashing surface leap, for the musky is the only member of the *Esox* family who is inclined to battle on the surface. This initial leap may merely be the first of a series, but often the fish follows the first jump by a long run, which is as likely to be straight toward the angler as away from him. When assorted runs, leaps and underwater contortions have failed to free the fish from restraint, it may go to the bottom and sulk. If there happens to be a fallen tree under the water the musky often seeks sanctuary in this tangle.

As in all other forms of angling, the first rule is a tight line, but it is not always possible to follow this precept during the course of a long fight with a big musky. The angler is alternately thumbing the spool of his reel, to slow down the fish and avoid losing all his line, and reeling frantically to keep the line tight.

Both the musky and the pike share another characteristic of the bluefish—they do not relax and quit merely upon being hauled into a boat or onto the shore.

To quell one of these twisting, thrashing, snapping fighters after it has technically been "landed," many anglers carry along a "persuader" or "priest." This is a stout blackjack with a lead core, with which they can quiet the fish with a blow just behind the head.

At one time it was common practice among musky enthusiasts to carry a .22-caliber pistol, for quelling a big fish when boated or beached. Fish killed in this manner are outlawed for entry in contests or for "record," so the practice has been abandoned by most anglers. Also, many discovered that while the bullet does a quick job, it does not always stop in the musky, but often continues on through the bottom of the boat. There are times when a hole of this nature can be something of a problem.

Canoe Sustained Most Damage

A friend, fishing one of the Wisconsin lakes last summer, managed to heave a fine musky into his canoe without the aid of a gaff. But while the fish was thrashing around in the frail craft, the fisherman realized he had forgotten to bring along a persuader. He did have a long-bladed sheath knife, however, so he threw himself on the big fish and began stabbing at its head. In his eagerness and excitement he was rather erratic in his stabs, and in the process of quieting the fish he put a half-dozen holes in the bottom of the canoe. The fact that he had to swim for the shore, towing the canoe with the musky inside, assumed minor importance when he watched the pointer on the scales climb to the 40-pound mark.

Although the muskies are distributed through the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence watershed, and a subspecies is found in New York's Chautauqua Lake, they are not sufficiently plentiful to be termed "abundant" in any wide area. Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and New York provide the most productive musky fishing in this country, and Ontario is the center for Canadian angling.

The largest musky on record is the 102-pounder netted from Minocqua Lake, in Wisconsin, 50 years ago. The rod and reel records, which have been moving upward for the past 15 years, have a 69-pound 11-

Collier's for July 14, 1951

ounce fish in first place. These records have been hotly contested during the past few years, with two enthusiasts, Percy P. Haver, of Detroit, and Louis Spray, of Rice Lake, Wisconsin, providing much of this heat.

In June, 1938, Haver set a new record with a 56-pound 7-ounce fish, but in August, 1939, Spray landed a 59½-pounder. In October of that year, another angler upped the record to 60½ pounds. The following August, Spray proved his persistence by bringing in a 61-pound 13-ounce musky; but Haver topped this with a 62½-pounder. In July, 1949, Cal Johnson, of Ashland, Wisconsin, landed a 67½-pounder, but was able to hold the record only until October, when Spray edged him out with a fish 2 pounds and 3 ounces heavier. To provide a clear picture of the size of this fish, it was 63½ inches long and 31¼ inches in girth. That is a big fish on light tackle, whether taken from fresh or salt water.

Few Big Muskies Are Landed

Not many muskies scaling over 40 pounds are taken in the course of a year. A number of small ones are landed, but thousands of anglers who devote several weeks each season to the specialized pursuit of these fish have never passed the 30-pound mark. Despite the pressure of this fishing, and the large number of fish taken, no apparent inroads have been made on the musky population. Like other members of the Esoc tribe, the musky is a prolific parent, and an adult female will provide from 100,000 to 300,000 eggs each year.

A large percentage of these eggs are devoured by other predatory fish and, as one musky angler pointed out, "It's a good thing, too; otherwise all of us would be up to our hips in muskies."

Pike, although they are one of our largest fresh-water game fish, drop well below the musky in weight. The record for northern pike is held by a New Yorker, Peter Dubuc, who was as surprised as the rest of the angling world when he hauled a 46-pound 2-ounce fish out of the Sacandaga Reservoir in New York in 1940. Pickerel, the small cousins, usually range from one to three pounds, but the record fish (at first thought to be a pike) was the 9-pounder produced from Green Pond in New Jersey.

The general fishing season for pike and muskies ranges from mid-May to November. Pickerel, of course, are fair game all year round, and millions are taken through the ice.

During the heat of the summer, with its resulting high water temperatures, all three of these fish seem less responsive to the angler's offerings, whether in the form of bait or lures. At one time, the prevalent explanation for the poor midsummer fishing was that the teeth of the fish were loose during this period. While this has been exploded another reason has been advanced which may be backed up by logic.

The musky specialists concentrate their efforts in areas where the fish are likely to be found. They know the musky, being a "lurker," is inclined to hole up in a shadowy cavern on the edge of a weed bed, alongside a sunken log, or under a ledge. There he rests quietly, awaiting his dinner. Under normal conditions, the rim of a weed bed seems to be most attractive to both muskies and pike, and not without reason.

Weed beds are the rearing grounds for millions of tiny insects and other minute organisms that provide food for minnows. The minnows go there to feed, the larger fish go there to feed on the minnows, and the pike and muskies hide there in wait for these fish. During the hot weather the minnows often move to deeper water during the day, so it is natural that the predators would follow them. This is, at least, a reasonable explanation for the absence of the pike and muskies from their normal haunts. The fact that they are often caught in deep water during this period offers additional support for the theory.

Once an angler locates a big musky, he can be almost certain to find it again in that general area a week or a month later,

or even the following year, provided some other angler has not hooked and landed the fish first. A musky hooked is not a musky landed, and many of the big ones have scars or even embedded hooks as testimony of this. One Ontario guide admitted he knew the approximate location of at least a dozen big fish, knowledge which he employed as a stock in trade.

"After one of my sports has fished a couple of days without results, and is beginning to show signs of discouragement," he explained, "I decide his spirits need a tonic. I take him to one of the spots where I know a big musky is hiding out, and tell him approximately where to cast and how to handle the lure. Naturally, the fish are not always in a feeding mood, so at times I have to move on to one of my other secret spots. Usually, out of five or six places I get at least one musky to provide my sport with some excitement. This not only encourages him, but gives me quite a reputation as a guide. If a few of the sports happen to be lucky or especially skillful, I have to hunt up some new spots."

Almost any type of fresh-water tackle, including the fly rod, is adequate for handling pickerel; but for the big pike and muskies a heavier rod and stouter line are preferred. The pickerel provides more sport on a three- to five-ounce fly rod, and tends to make a sporting contest of what might otherwise be a routine heave-and-haul.

Even the musky fishermen turn to the fly rod on occasion, but most of them will admit that it is far from a satisfactory outfit for taking big fish. In the first place, even a nine-foot seven-ounce fly rod is inadequate for casting a large lure any distance, and if the hooked fish happens to run for a thick weed bed or a submerged tangle of limbs, the angler is placed at a definite disadvantage. Also, both pike and muskies are more inclined to grab a lure that is retrieved fast and steadily, a procedure which is almost impossible with the fly rod.

A few anglers are inclined toward the other extreme. I have seen some trolling rods and reels that would have been adequate for landing 200-pound tuna. Such outfits lose few fish that are hooked, but the anglers using them lose much of the pleasure which more sporting tackle provides.

The experienced anglers seem to favor a five- to six-foot bait-casting rod, either of the traditional split bamboo, or of one of the new materials, such as processed glass or beryllium copper. With this, they use a regulation bait-casting reel loaded with 20- to 30-pound test line. In recent years, new, light reels equipped with a star drag have been developed and are widely used for this angling. The patent brake on these reels has saved many an angler a burned thumb during the long run of a big fish, and it has the further advantage of permitting the angler to keep his fingers on the reel handle. This insures an instant retrieve when the fish decides to reverse its course.

Old-Timers Favor Heavy Lures

The spinning outfit, with its fixed-spool reel, has become increasingly popular for this fishing, and is especially adaptable for pickerel, but most of the old-timers insist that the regulation bait-casting outfit is more satisfactory. While it is important to get a long cast with a light lure in some fishing, they point out that both pike and musky like big lures, which are heavy enough to make a long cast possible using a conventional reel.

The time-honored theory concerning a "big bait for big fish" has some application in this fishing, and some of the lures used are as large as those favored by surf casters for taking big striped bass and channel bass. Many anglers insist that a large spoon, with a feather or bucktail-trimmed tail hook, will tempt one of the tigers to strike when other lures fail. Regardless of the bait or lure used, an eight- or 10-inch leader of thin cable or stainless steel wire is essential, for the large, sharp teeth of these fish will saw through the stoutest line.

Although many of the specialists prefer

artificial lures, most of them will resort to bait when these bring no response, and it is generally acknowledged that no bait so attracts a big pike or musky as a fresh 10-inch sucker, fished alive or trolled. This bait often proves productive during midsummer, when lures are unable to coax a response from the big fish.

If you watch a bass fisherman, you will see him retrieve his lure slowly and in sharp jerks. The man with experience in pike and musky fishing will use a straight, fast retrieve under most conditions. Often these fish will follow a lure until it is almost at the boat or shore, then grab it with a smashing lunge that can be very disconcerting to the angler who does not anticipate it. This typical, vicious strike may cause the hooks to engage, but the veteran will always set up sharply on the fish, for they are known for their hard, bony mouths. If the hook has not been set past the barb, the fish may throw it on its first frantic flurry.

In playing these fish, the first rule—as in other fishing—is to keep a tight line and put on all the pressure the tackle will bear, without "horsing" the fish. When the fish is played out and brought within a few feet of the angler there is often a final burst of activity when the fish realizes the proximity of its enemy. This has cost many an angler a prize fish.

Danger of Hand Injuries

With the big fish defeated, a gaff is preferable to a net for the landing process, and it is not unsporting if a companion handles the gaff. It may happen that neither gaff nor net is handy; although some fish can be handled by slipping the fingers under the gill covers, you'd better not try this with a musky or pike. You not only risk losing a lot of skin from your hand, but you may find yourself impaled by some of the gang hooks on the lure when the fish shakes its head. There is but one safe-and-sane method of grasping one of these big scrapers—by placing the thumb and middle finger in the eye sockets. This procedure is advisable whether the fish is alive or dead.

I once watched an angler beach a 35-pounder. He had fairly stout tackle, so he took advantage of the musky's twisting contortions to bring it five or six feet above the water's edge. He then proceeded to throw common sense and caution to the winds by grasping the big fish with both hands just above the tail. That man was determined, and he hung on, but it almost shook his teeth loose. His guide, who should have been handling the gaff, was beaching the boat, and apparently was too surprised by the spectacle to lend a hand. After watching the angler drag his vibrating prize 20 feet inland, the guide sat down, rested his head on his knees, and sobbed with laughter for five minutes. (It's a safe bet that there was one guide who received a very meager gratuity at the end of that day's fishing.)

In waters where muskies or pike are plentiful, there is not much point in trying for other species of fish. Both of these Esoc have tremendous appetites, and it takes a lot of food to keep them happy. Bass and walleyes seem to survive in fair numbers under such conditions, apparently because they have learned to avoid the "lurking areas" of the tigers. But many an angler, fishing for lesser quarry, has hooked a bass or walleye only to have it grabbed by a pike or musky while he was bringing it in. Occasionally, the angler will be using tackle sufficiently stout to handle the big fish, and will possess the knowledge or skill necessary to cope with the situation, but too often the result is a broken rod or a reel stripped of line.

But whether he makes his catch intentionally or by accident, no angler who has ever had the experience of hooking a large pike, pickerel or musky will complain that these fish are lacking in spirit. Any one of them promises the fisherman an exciting afternoon. And there is another angle to be considered: you probably can find some sport right near home—if you cast for the fresh-water sharks.

THE END

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The Bermuda Shorts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Urban, the Florentine Blouse ads, and she arranged the lower part of her face into a set of photogenic dimples and her eyes into speculative appraisal.

"Publishing?" Linda said. "Do you know Fred Cooper at Witright? Or Buddy Malone at Moncrief? I think Buddy's a terror. I saw him at the Stearns Ranson party just last week with Cynthia..."

Ted wrestled Jeff Boyer for the heaviest bags.

"I met Malone once," he said. "I'm at Moncrief, too. But I don't know the others. I'm in the textbook end, you see. I sell them to colleges and places. You know."

"Textbooks!" Linda said. "I never knew Moncrief published them. How really wild. Think of Buddy Malone and Algebra for the Second Grade. Marvelous. And you sell them! I never even knew they were sold. You just go to school and there they are. You'll have to tell me all about it."

SHE turned to Helen Boyer and began an animated discussion of what somebody named Bennett had said about somebody named Lichen or Moss or something, to somebody named Quent.

Ted felt a little less off balance as Jeff pointed out the houses of celebrities on the drive from the station and he liked the remodeled barn, where he was assigned a cellar bedroom with a dresser made from an old wine press.

He liked the Boyer children. He liked the huge field-stone fireplace with a comfortable couch in front of it. He liked, very much, the cool but comfortable elegance of Linda in a pair of gray slacks and a blouse of warm brick orange, but when she and the Boyers combined their stores of small talk, and were joined by the Traynors, a neighboring commercial artist and his textile-weaving wife who came over for dinner, his defensiveness returned.

"Ted Morrow?" Sandy Traynor, the textile-weaving wife, said. "You are the one who writes those television shows?"

"No," Ted said. "I'm a book salesman."

"He's in publishing," Helen Boyer said. Through dinner, and after dinner over drinks, the talk was divided between expressions of love for lower Connecticut and anecdotes about a loose agglomeration of people whom Ted knew vaguely or felt he ought to know at least vaguely. It was an article of faith, like the sanctity of motherhood or the fidelity of dogs, that southeastern Connecticut was paradise.

"Don't you love it up here, Ted?" Sandy Traynor asked. "Country all around and only an hour from New York."

"If you fly," Jeff Boyer said. "Nobody up here ever mentions the time to and from the station, Ted. Still, say even an hour and a half, and it's still wonderful."

"Say about an hour and twenty minutes from our place," Henry Traynor, the commercial artist said. "And if you don't go through the village, Jeff..." He and Jeff were off on a discussion of mileage and short cuts. Helen and Sandy and Linda were shrieking about a misadventure that a girl they knew had suffered at a party.

Ted swirled the diluted bourbon in his glass. He could pay lip service to Connecticut quite sincerely, but he felt uncertain about betraying the fact that the reason he liked it so much was that it reminded him sharply of eastern Ohio.

It was a relief when the Traynors left, after the sixth shocked look at their watches and the fourth worried dissertation on baby sitters.

"I'm about ready to fold, myself," Jeff Boyer said. "But don't let that stop anybody else."

"I'm dead," Linda said. "Honestly, it's

been such fun. And I want to rest up for tomorrow. If it isn't swimming weather, I'll spit."

They all had a last nightcap in the kitchen, and Helen pulled Ted aside to find out how he had liked Linda.

"She's lovely," he said, inadequately.

"I knew you two would get along," Helen said. "Linda was up before, but there was only that horrible Bassett boy. The one that married Cora. What's-her-name last week. From Philadelphia."

"Both of you," Helen said, raising her voice and speaking to both Ted and Linda, "get up any time you feel like it. Mrs. Bogulyubov will be in early to get breakfast and start her cleaning, so you can eat any time, but actually we sleep forever on Saturdays, so don't stomp."

Ted found the ancient four-poster in his bedroom soft and inviting. He had time only to wonder if this was the kind of week end he had heard about where a diaphanously clothed Linda would come tapping at his door, before he was asleep.

He was on the defensive again, but in a simpler and more human fashion, at seven fifteen the next morning when a scuttering at his door woke him up. Through a bleary



eye he could see the door swing wide enough to reveal Kristi and Michael Boyer.

"Hello, man," Kristi said. "You wad see our kitty cat?" Michael said. A ginger cat, dangling from one of Michael's arms, added a plaintive mewing to the soft sounds of the rural morning.

Ted said good morning, as distinctly as he could at that early hour, to Kristi, Michael, and the ginger cat. Then he rolled over and tried to close his eyes tightly enough to shut out the sun that streamed, only slightly filtered, through the monk's-cloth curtains. He was aware of a scrabbling sound under his bed.

"Kitty cat's got mad's socks," Michael said happily.

"Here kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty," came Kristi's voice in a high, monotonous chant. It, like the scrabbling, came from under Ted's bed. Ted opened his eyes.

"Hello, mad," Michael said. "Kitty got your socks. Kristi's udder bed, too."

Ted sighed and got up. He stretched and grabbed his shaving kit from the high-boy at the end of the bed. As he moved down the hall to the bathroom he was aware of Michael, Kristi, and the ginger cat trailing him. He darted into the bathroom and slammed the door.

When he was shaved and fully awake, the uncrowded morning took on a solitary charm. There was nobody to talk to, or to talk at him, or to worry about. He exchanged good mornings with Mrs. Bogulyubov, the square Yugoslav in the kitchen. "Coffee soon," Mrs. Bogulyubov said.

Ted nodded thanks and wandered out to

the Boyers' sloping lawn, where you could almost taste the morning sun. He sprawled on the grass and closed his eyes. This was the life, the wonderful drowsy life. He was suddenly aware of a nearby sound, and then a furred, shrieking mass was deposited on his stomach. The ginger cat. There were cries of muffled merriment from Michael and Kristi.

Ted's eyes were still sightless from sun bathing, but now he was on the defensive in a reassuringly tangible way. He lashed about him savagely with both arms. His right arm struck something soft and movable and the morning was split with howls. "Hitting a child," a cool voice said. "A small child. Really!"

Ted looked around. He saw a happy Kristi, a bewildered ginger cat, an anguished Michael, and a girl in a striped T-shirt and blue jeans with a formidable bundle of books under one arm.

"Really!" the girl repeated. Her hair was blonde, and the blue jeans fitted her marvelously well. She was probably Therese Trelawney, the Viennese slacks ads.

"I'm sorry," Ted mumbled. "I didn't know who it was. Had my eyes closed. Might have been a dog, or Jeff pulling a gag—anything. C'mere, Mike." Michael redoubled his caterwauling and ran to the girl, burrowing his head against her thigh.

"Tell the man you're sorry, Mike," the girl said. "He's sorry and he won't hit you any more."

Michael looked thoroughly unconvinced, and Ted was cynical of the girl's appeal. But Michael, still snuffling, after a whispered conversation with the girl, marched over and held out his hand.

"Sorry," Michael said. "Sorry, poddeder."

"What is this—magic?" Ted asked the girl. Michael had retreated again and the girl came close enough to whisper to Ted: "I told him you were Hopalong Cassidy's buddy. Play it up." Then, in a normal voice, she said, "It's compensation for any lack of struggle they have. For food and affection and all that, you know. Mussorki says. There are no bad

children; there is only unequal distribution of facilities for healthy action and reaction."

"Yes?" Ted said. Her speech was a little more comprehensible than Linda's and Helen's, but still specialized.

"I'm Mary Lee Tate," the girl said. "I suppose you're a guest of the Boyers. Some of them are very interesting. I help with the kids. I have four sisters and we have a sort of sitters' monopoly around here. Come along, Mike, Kristi. Let's see what Mrs. Bogulyubov has for breakfast."

"I'm heading for that coffee smell myself," Ted said. The company of an average and attractive girl looked promising.

In the sunny kitchen he found the week end's tension leaving him. Coffee, eggs, and bacon helped. So did listening to Mary Lee's and Mrs. Bogulyubov's small talk of local events and personalities.

"What did you mean about the Boyers' interesting guests?" he asked Mary Lee. "Do you think I'm one of them?"

"I just meant that—well, the guests usually have to be something. Or not so much that as that the Boyers have to place them properly in their orbit," Mary Lee said. "I didn't mean anything penetrating, but you just looked a little more comfortable, less self-conscious lying there on the grass. That is, until the cat landed."

"You watched them do it!" Ted said indignantly. "You just stood there!"

"It was their idea," Mary Lee said. "They were entitled to see the results."

Helen Boyer, Jeff and Linda arrived then. Linda looking cool and ravishing in white shorts and a man's yellow shirt.

"What an early bird," Helen said to Ted. "I see you've met Mary Lee. Ted's in publishing. Mary Lee, this is Linda Urban. She models. Mary Lee's our total treasure. Her father is a simply wonderful painter. But fine art, not commercial."

The newcomers settled themselves around the table.

"You can take the children out, Mary Lee," Helen said. "Michael's found an animal hole of some sort back of the garage and he's dying to show it to you." Mary Lee closed the book she had been looking at, and went to collect the children.

"What a wonderful figure that girl has!" Linda said after Mary Lee and the children had left. She said it with professional and unaffected appreciation.

"She's an amazing child," Helen said. "Her mother's dead and I'm sure Papa Tate doesn't have a sou. He persists in painting very academic things. Woodsy, you know. But she and the other four girls flourish—scholarships and all that. And Mary Lee's grand with the children. I think she majors in them. The Traynors'll be over in less than an hour. And then the lovely beach."

The feeling of the evening before came back to Ted as the others talked. Abby had said this and Lou had said that and Herman was going to do Alan's next play and wasn't it a shame about CBS and Walter?

"I think I'll change into something a little more beachy," Ted said finally, pushing his chair back. "Just be a sec."

Back in his bedroom he rummaged through his suitcase and got out the Bermuda-bought shorts. He had bought them in Hamilton on the last day of his last vacation before becoming a working citizen. He pulled the trunks over legs just pink from last week end's visit to Jones Beach.

AND now, his entrance in the shorts into the Boyers' living room seemed to be a culmination of the nagging ineptitude that had started as far back as Grand Central. Maybe not that bad, but the shorts had been anything but successful. Sitting beside Linda on the couch, he felt more out of place than ever.

"Colorful is the word for them, not Bermuda," Linda said firmly. "I'll bet you got the idea from one of your book jackets."

"Not from a textbook anyway," Ted said. "I can't see something like this on Misapplications of Green Belt Planning, or on Sibling Relationships."

"You don't mean Schmid on Sibling Relationships?" Mary Lee cried from the floor, where she was playing with Kristi. "That's the one, but—" Ted said.

"Mr. Morrow's in publishing," Helen said.

"You mean you publish Schmid?" Mary Lee said.

"I don't publish it," Ted said. "Moncrief does. I just work for them."

"But it's absolutely my favorite," Mary Lee said. "We use it in Child Psych and Guidance. You know the chapter where he explains the relationship of the youngest child in the family of more than three to his older sisters as being Oedipal rather than brotherly?"

Ted, with the background of many sales conversations, did remember something of the sort. "That's sort of oversimplifying it," he said. "What Schmid really says—"

Mary Lee abandoned the children and took Ted to herself. He looked vaguely for help from Helen and Linda or Jeff, but they were cantering off on a discussion of whether somebody named Dan really had as much money as he pretended to have. And Ted, engrossed in what had promised to be a dull conversation, soon found himself less interested in their help.

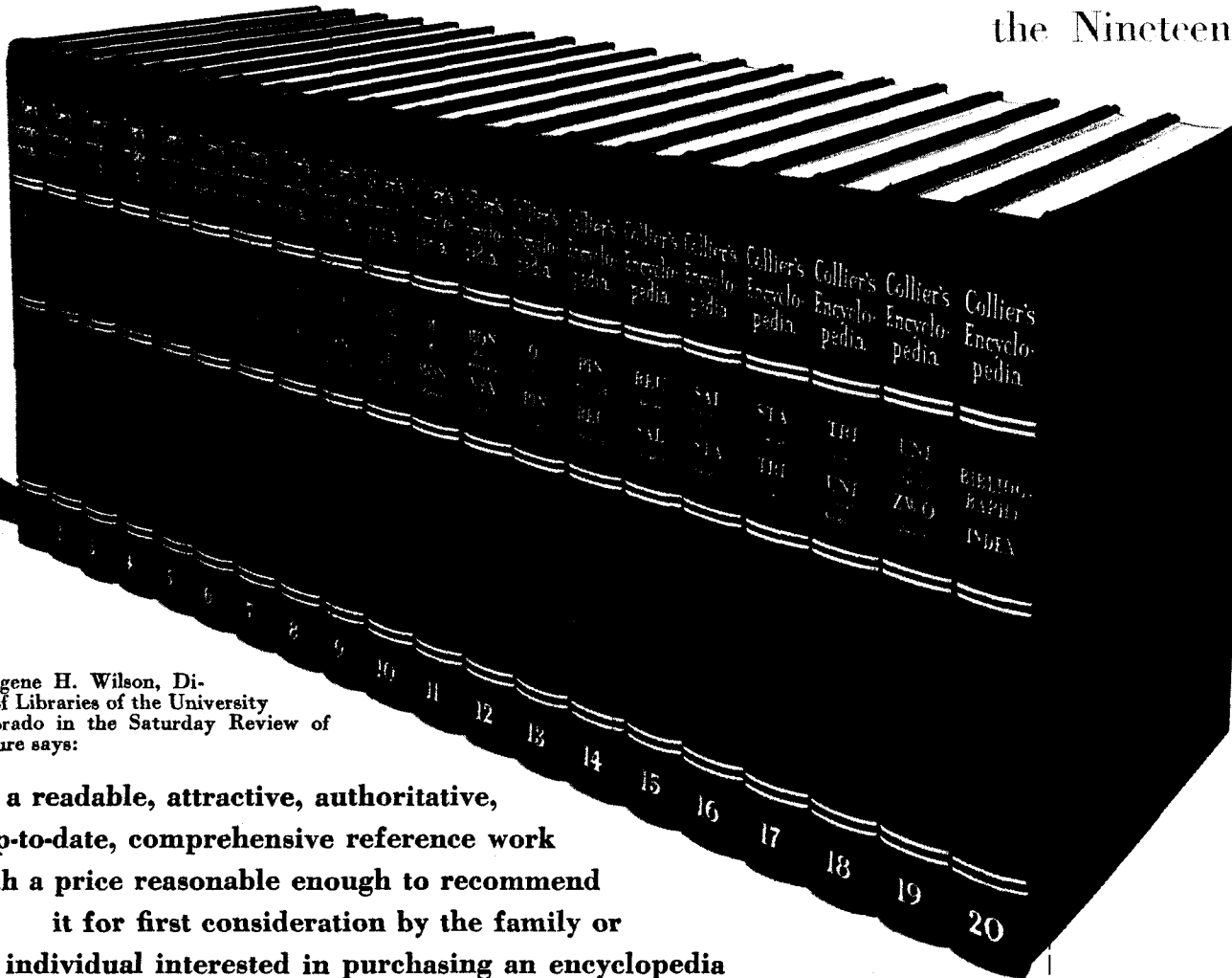
He and Mary Lee were through three chapters of Schmid before the honking of a horn announced the Traynors.

"We'll go with them," Helen said to Ted. "You and Linda take the jeep and follow

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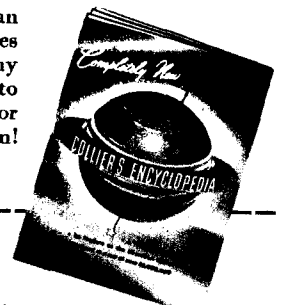
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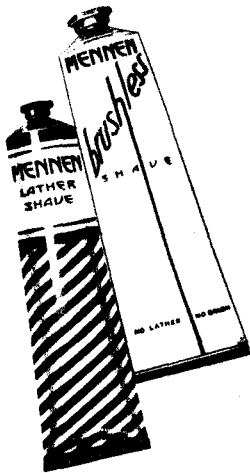
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us. Linda knows the way if you lose us."

"Uh, yes," Ted said. To Mary Lee he said, "But really, you're missing the difference between family life in the city and in the suburbs. He makes it very clear—"

"Come along, professor," Linda said, tapping his shoulder. "Let family life in the suburbs wait. The beach won't."

"I'll tell you what I mean some other time," Ted said. He grabbed the towel Helen had given him and followed Linda to the jeep.

"What was all that?" Linda asked as they headed down toward the Sound. "You were miles away."

"Just one of our books. I guess I got kind of involved. Child psychology stuff."

"Child psychology," Linda said. "I just can't get interested. Analysis, now, I think is fascinating. I've never been analyzed myself, of course. But I know this one analyst, and the things I could tell you about him—personally, I mean—would freeze your blood. Left, here, and then just beyond those trees."

THE Boyers and the Traynors were established in a comfortable clutter of blankets, hampers, sun-tan oil and towels and dark glasses and magazines.

"You know those Ryans," Sandy Traynor was saying to Helen. "Hello, kids. The new ones on the highway just beyond the turnoff. Well, he's the Bob Ryan who was mixed up with Honey Hunter two years ago. The one who made all the money with some plastic thing. For toilets, I think it was."

Jeff and Henry were off on a discussion of their own. "Wanted thirty-four fifty for it," Jeff said. "So I told him what he could do with it. And then I bought it."

"You going in?" Ted asked Linda. He felt the conversational snare closing in again.

"Of course," she said. "Race you."

Linda had removed the shirt and the cotton pants to reveal a sleek bathing suit. A photograph of her running down the beach toward the surf would undoubtedly have sold muffins, bulldozers, wine, gasoline, clinical thermometers, soap, gargle, axle grease, or even bathing suits to millions of stimulated customers. Ted ran after her, and caught up with her just as they hit the water.

The first impact of the cold waves had them breathless. They shouldered into deeper water together, laughing and spluttering, then dived shallowly and were swimming.

Once they were in, the water seemed almost warm. Linda was a good swimmer and followed Ted out beyond the raft and within hailing distance of the small sailboats that plowed along the shore.

"This is good," Ted said. They both floated on their backs, paddling and kicking lazily.

"Wonderful. Oof!" Linda choked on a tiny wave. They swam some more, floated again, dived, and ducked each other, and Ted felt happy and almost at peace with the world.

"I'm an inland boy," he said. "I guess I said last night. Ohio. But I love this salt-water stuff. Only kind of swimming there is."

"Only kind," Linda agreed. "And up here. Not Florida or hot places. I like it when it makes you tingle. Hey!" Another, larger wave caught her.

"Want to go back after some of Helen's food?" Ted asked.

"I'm about ready," Linda said. "Just one more quick swim. Try and catch me."

She took off in a flurry of white foam and Ted moved quickly after her. Head down and arms flailing, he didn't hear her shout and would have swum on past her if she hadn't grabbed his foot. He spluttered to a stop.

"I said, 'It's Arthur Raleigh!'" she boomed in his ear, then waved at a trim catboat sailing near them. "Hey! Hey! Art!"

Ted emptied his mouth of water and regained his breath. "Who's he?" he said.

"Art director. Advertising," Linda said. "Hey! Art! Art!"

The boat changed direction and bore down on them. A tousled blond man in Basque trousers and a pale-blue shirt leaned over the side to look at them.

"By all that's holy, Linda Urban!" he cried. "Heave to. Hard aport. Whatever you're supposed to say. Come on over." He headed the catboat into the wind, and Linda, followed by Ted, swam over to the side.

"Haven't seen you since the Charmure account," Raleigh said. "You're looking very good." It was said in the same professional tone as Linda's earlier remark about Mary Lee.

"Still the most attractive cheekbones in America. Anyway in the East," Raleigh said.

"This is Ted Morrow," Linda said. "We're staying with the Boyers. You know, Helen and Jeff."

"Hiya," Raleigh said.

A wave caught Ted and he nodded, or bobbed, acknowledgment.

"I hear you're doing Taffies now," Linda said. "I think the layouts have improved a million."

"Yeah, got rid of all that chi-chi of Gordon's," Raleigh said.

"He's gone over to Brewer-Bayer," Linda said. "With Rudi."

"Oh, Rudi," Raleigh said. "I suppose you haven't seen Schnitzel?"

"My God," Linda said, and she and Raleigh laughed themselves into a state.

And Ted found his comfortable, companionable sea transformed into the Boyers' living room, or some other secret society.

"Come aboard," Raleigh said. "You can scramble up okay. It's a little close company but we can make it. We've got a lot to catch up on."

Linda grasped the side of the boat and Raleigh gave her a hand. Glistening and handsome, she climbed aboard, shaking her short hair back from her forehead. Ted clambered after her and managed to get his left leg over without tipping the boat.

AS HE moved his right leg up to consolidate his position, disaster struck. The tiny, rending noise was lost in the sound of the luffing sail, but to Ted it sounded like the trumpets of doom. The Bermuda shorts were giving way, and giving way in the least tenable of strategic positions, the unprotected flank.

Ted splashed his left leg back into the water. "Hey!" he cried.

"Marlowe's back at B.V.G.D. & R.," Linda was saying to Raleigh. "What's that, Ted?"

"I've had an accident," Ted explained. "My trunks. They split."

"Well, of all things," Linda said. "Climb aboard and let's see."

"I don't think I better climb aboard," Ted said. "The accident's rather extensive—uh—and I'm sort of afraid to swim."

"Dear Lord," Linda said. Her expression held the unblaming but annoyed rancor of a dog owner when his puppy misbehaves. "Art, what do we do?"

Raleigh looked both amused and annoyed. "We'll just have to tow him as close to shore as we can and signal the Boyers to come and rescue him with a towel," he said. "You hang on to the stern, son."

Their progress to shore was successful and humiliating. Jeff Boyer swam out with a peach-colored towel and laughed dutifully when the disaster was explained.

"I'm stealing Linda from you for a little while, if you don't mind," Raleigh said to him. "We're having an old home week—a lot to talk about."

The Boyers and Traynors were relieved when Ted was sure he remembered the way home and could take the jeep back and change. He hardly interrupted the salon in progress.

Driving the jeep, he was alone with his self-disgust, a feeling which was tinged with a mounting anger at himself, but also at Linda, at the Boyers, at Raleigh, the Traynors, and the week end. After all, it

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was an accident. It was even funny in a way. But it wasn't funny at all, when it happened to you; it was just clumsy, like stumbling on a dance floor or spilling soup at a formal dinner. Ted felt at one with all the nervous people in the ads for self-improvement courses. He turned the jeep into the Boyers' drive, parked on the gravel, and, clutching the towel about his midriff, stalked heavily into the living room.

BEFORE the open picture window, Mary Lee and the children were building a village of blocks. Michael looked up, saw the towel, and crowded delightedly.

"Fuddy mad!" Michael said.

"Mama's towel!" Kristi said.

"Shut up, both of you," Ted said.

"What on earth happened?" Mary Lee asked.

"My shorts, or trunks. Ripped them climbing on a lousy art director's boat. Rudis and Gordons and Schnitzels. Pfui. Most attractive cheekbones in America. I'm going to throw them out. The shorts. Only an hour from town. James Melton lives just down the road." He strode toward the stairs leading to his bedroom.

Mary Lee stopped him.

"You shouldn't throw them away," she said. "They're wonderful material. I could tell that the first time I saw them. Don't be so upset. Why don't you just take them off and let me sew them? Please. After you put something else on," she added with a smile.

"Well, all right," Ted said.

He went down to the bedroom and put the gray flannels back on. He really felt like throwing the trunks away, but the girl was right. It would be childish. There wasn't anything wrong with the trunks, and before this noon he had liked them. He slung them over his arm and went back upstairs.

"If you're sure it's not too much trouble," he said. "I'll borrow a pair of Jeff's trunks to go back to the beach."

"This'll only take a minute," Mary Lee said. "Kristi, you and Michael go on with the firehouse. I think you ought to make it bigger, so more firemen can live in it."

She already had Helen Boyer's sewing bag open and was examining the rip carefully.

"Just along the seam," she said. "It'll be as good as new. You must have been a sight." She looked at him candidly and giggled. Ted found himself laughing a little, too.

"I had camouflage," he explained. "The whole Atlantic Ocean, or the Sound. And then Helen's towel." He told the story of the accident, somewhat exaggerating his own nonchalance, and it became much less tragic as Mary Lee laughed with him.

"I know Raleigh," she said. "He's quite nice, really, but very much one of the local mob. How long have you known the Boyers?"

Ted thought. "About three weeks. It was swell of Helen to ask me up. Why?"

"Well, you're not typical," Mary Lee said, biting off an end of thread. "Of the mob, that is. I like the Boyers, but I see them a lot and a lot of their guests, and they run pretty much to a pattern. Like I said this morning. And you aren't it."

"I don't know if I get you," Ted said, uncomfortably. "You mean I'm not smart, or I dress funny, like the shorts?"

"Don't be silly. It's just that they're all so sort of mass-produced, but for the quality trade, and they're always so busy giving each other the right answers, and not so much even showing off as going through the approved motions. You're yourself, I think. You seem slower alongside them, but that's only because you're not so mechanical. Slower, but in a nice way." Her head was bent over the sewing, and she glanced up at Ted.

"That's a backhanded compliment," he said. "I haven't been in New York long and this is the first time I've been up here. It takes a while to get used to a new crowd."

Mary Lee let the trunks drop. "You moron," she said. "You don't understand

a thing I've been saying. You don't want to be like them, do you? It's good the way you are. Not being slow, but being yourself. They're just like people who repeat radio jokes, only they get their jokes and funny stories from cocktail parties and special columns and things. Secondhand, instead of third or fourth, but no more original. You can see that, can't you?" She forced Ted to look at her and kept a challenge in her eyes.

"You're right," he said, and suddenly he knew she was. "You know, the funny feeling I've had all week end, I thought was my fault. Now I see it isn't anybody's fault. It's just that I don't care too much about the things they talk about. I was being bored, instead of out of place."

"Whoa! Now don't start getting all superior," Mary Lee said. She picked up the shorts, gave the seam a few finishing stitches, and tugged it to test her handiwork. "It's like the children in the psych book. It isn't that one group is better than the other, it's just that they aren't the same. And why should that worry anybody? Here, these ought to be okay now."

Ted took the shorts and tugged at them dubiously. "You think they'll hold?"

"Of course they will. They'd hold an elephant."

"Well, thanks," Ted said. "Thanks a lot. I guess I'd better change and get going before Jeff and Helen think I'm lost." He turned hesitantly to go back to the bedroom. "You'll be around, won't you?" he asked. "When we come back from the beach. And tomorrow." A lot of things he wanted to talk about, and not to the Boyers and Linda, crowded his mind.

"Look," Mary Lee said, "I just had an idea. Could you give me a lift to the beach? I can call one of my sisters to take care of the kids. We often switch shifts. And we have a boat, an old sailing dinghy, down there, if you'd like to try a sail. I got it after the last hurricane. Found it on the beach and claimed it according to the laws of salvage. That is, if you'd like to."

"It's a great idea," Ted said. "D'you think the Boyers would mind?"

"Oh, they like it informal—the more so the better," Mary Lee said.

"Good," Ted said. "You call your sister while I change."

A few minutes later, the cowbell at the door clanged and Mary Lee called, "Come in, Ceel." A younger Mary Lee came through the door. She too wore blue jeans and carried a bundle of books under one arm. Ted could detect his own firm's edition of Mansheim's Mineralogy. "This is Ted Morrow. My sister Lucille," Mary Lee said.

"He the one you were talking about?" Lucille asked, and Mary Lee blushed.

WELL out in the Sound, the dinghy rolled in a trough of the waves, sail slack. Mary Lee, sleek and comfortable as a wet seal, curled at Ted's feet.

"And if the Boyers don't ask you up next week end," she said, "why, you can come up and stay with us. There's so many of us that there's always room for guests. And I know Father will love you because you don't talk Art. And be sure to bring the shorts with you." . . .

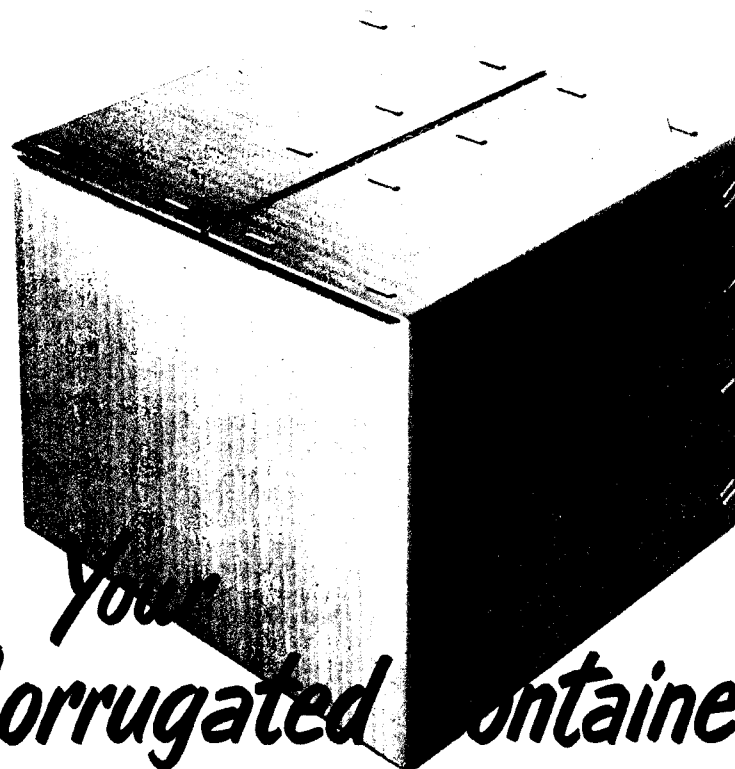
On the beach, Helen Boyer reached for a sandwich in the wicker hamper. "I think it's just perfectly right," she said to Sandy Traynor. "Mary Lee and Ted. He was beginning to worry me a little. We can have him up week end after next. But it still leaves Linda at a loose end. What do you think of Howie Sickles?"

"Nyah," Sandy said. "Too brokerish. But how about Ed Marks?" They put their heads together happily under the beach umbrella, deaf to Jeff's and Henry's continuing discussion of the black market. . . .

Ted, in the stern of the dinghy, let his eyes close. Mary Lee's head rested against his bright, beautifully repaired trunks.

"How long does it take—actually, I mean—to commute to New York from here?" he asked in a happy mumble.

THE END



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SCHNOZZOLA!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

"Frank," said Clayton, "you and I are not going to have any words about this. I'm going to cut this pot up just the way you want it, and we're going to pay you for the apartment. But as far as I'm concerned, I'm backing out of the combination."

Durante interposed, "Not without me, you're not, Lou. Wherever you go, I go." And Eddie Jackson said, "I'm going too."

"Well, then," said Clayton, "I'll tell you right now. This combination stays as Clayton, Jackson and Durante—and from here on we're going to move and move big."

The team wasn't long out of work. The next day, Clayton left a floating dice game and walked up Broadway for a bit of air.

Dickering with the Quaker

Somewhere near the Astor, he chanced to hear a greeting thrown his way by "the Quaker," a man so called because he shook like a bowl of gelatin whenever rough lads threatened to muss up his face. The Quaker owned a controlling interest in the Dover Club at Fifty-first Street and Sixth Avenue.

"We'll sign your trio up for two weeks as a tryout," the Quaker offered, after some preliminaries.

Clayton asked for three thousand dollars. "Don't make me laugh!" said the Quaker. "We only do three thousand business, tops." Then he countered, "I'll give you seventeen hundred and fifty a week and fifty per cent of all over ten thousand."

"That's a pretty good spread you're taking for yourself," Clayton said. "But I like the combination, and I'll take a draw."

When a Broadway gentleman said he would "take a draw," it meant he would commit either his bank roll or his personal safety, or both, to a hazardous undertaking.

Clayton later said of the Dover Club venture: "The first week we did seventeen thousand five hundred dollars. That meant seventeen hundred and fifty salary for the trio, plus thirty-seven hundred and fifty of the business over the ten-grand guarantee—in all, over five thousand for the week."

The Quaker called the trio to his office. "You first ast for three thousand a week. So, I'm giving you the three."

"Oh, no!" Clayton replied. "Now that I see the kind of business we're doing, I'd like a different proposition."

"Well," said the Quaker, "how would you like fifty per cent of the place?"

"There's three of us," Clayton said. "There's only one of yourself. Instead of taking fifty per cent, we'll take sixty per cent of the place, with a drawing account of two hundred dollars apiece, nobody ever to touch the big pot till the first of each month; and I'm to be president and treasurer. I'll take the receipts out of that cash box every morning. And I'm going to hold out five thousand in case we take a fall."

The Quaker surrendered. "It's a deal." Clayton, Jackson and Durante stayed at the Dover Club for a season and a half. To use Clayton's phrase, the four partners "cut up" a total of \$258,000 the first year.

The comedy at the Dover Club might be described as catch-as-catch-can. There was hat throwing, piano breaking, and general pandemonium centering around the mad little clown with the big nose and the prowling walk, ably abetted by his two partners. Clayton looked like an Indian. He would affix feathers to a hatband, and together with Jackson, also dressed up as an Indian, would scream, "The Americans are coming!" The velvet portieres then would part at the entrance to the club to reveal additional "Indians" in ludicrous poses. Sometimes, such celebrities as Paul Whiteman, Ted Lewis, Eddie Cantor and George Jessel would take part in these tableaux, and Jimmy would flap his arms in mock mortification and cry out hoarsely: "Everybody's trying to get into the act!"

Durante and Clayton had earlier worked

out a routine that they used whenever a young couple entered the room; the two men would dash off the dance floor, and Jim would seize the fellow's arm while Clayton grabbed the girl's. Instead of leading them to one table, they would separate the pair; Durante would sit down with the man, then exclaim in sudden astonishment: "What happened? I come in here with a girl!"

As at the Club Durant, the clientele at the Dover occasionally posed a problem. Headwaiter Leon Emken (later of the Manhattan night club Leon & Eddie's) made sure each night that warring racketeers were seated safely apart. He created barriers by assigning socialites to tables in the midst of the Rover Boys of the underworld, on the theory that the smart-set patrons would put a damper on gangland tempers.

And gangland tempers were running high in those days. One reason was the introduction of a new racket, a form of kidnaping known as "the snatch." The procedure was to capture moneyed gamblers, club owners or bootleggers, and hold them for ransom under threat of torture or death. The victims very seldom reported the facts to the police. Their friends paid off and then waited until matters could be rectified in consonance with their own code: a set of teeth for a tooth.

One day, Durante got a note threatening him with kidnaping unless he paid \$25,000 to "someone who will get in touch."

"There was only one way you could kidnap Jimmy Durante," Clayton said, recalling the incident years later. "That was you'd have to get me out of the way, because I'd have to die first. So when Jimmy would drive home from the Dover Club I would tail him in my own car. And I said, 'Don't worry, Jim. I'll be behind you right up to your door in Flushing.'"

Street Blocked by a Sedan

Then, one night Clayton stayed home with a severe cold. When, early next morning, Jimmy drove his car into the Flushing street on which he lived, a sedan went past him, then halted on the road, broadside.

Durante is an excellent driver. He put on his brakes, quickly shifted the gears to reverse, backed away, then turned and raced off, his horn going full blast, toward the Queensborough Bridge. He had glimpsed three men in the sedan. They did not follow him, perhaps because it was broad daylight and traffic was growing

thick. After half an hour of cruising, Jimmy went on home.

When Durante told Clayton of this, Lou made inquiries along Broadway. He became satisfied that Vincent Coll had been in this car.

Broadway knew "Mad Dog" Coll, a member of the Dutch Schultz bootlegging mob, as the most irresponsible, unpredictable and desperate outlaw of them all—a savage man-killer. Although he had "the frozen stare," he was on the whole a good-looking fellow, barely twenty years old, with pompadour hair and even white teeth.

Clayton, furious at the attempt to kidnap Durante, wanted at first to kill Coll. Jimmy made him promise not to try this and advised him to stay away from the Mad Dog. Clayton ignored the advice. One afternoon, unarmed except for his spring-blade pocketknife, he invaded Coll's hangout in the Bronx; he found the Mad Dog playing pinochle in a back room.

Clayton, ignoring the other players, looked Coll in the eye, and asked quietly, "Do you know anything about that sour bid to snatch Jimmy Durante?"

Perhaps ten seconds went by as the men stared at each other. Then Clayton said, "Maybe you're hard of hearing."

Coll affected a smile. "I got no way of knowing what's on your mind, Lou."

"Here's what's on my mind," Clayton said. "Anybody that merely touches Jimmy Durante will be beaten to death by these." He held out his strong hands. "And if that certain party has got good white teeth, that person won't ever eat again with their own teeth. Clayton will nail him, by appointment or otherwise."

He then stalked out of the cardroom, his back to the Mad Dog and his gorillas.

Broadway bubbled over with the news that Lou Clayton had faced down the killer. A few days later, Coll saw Clayton in front of Lindy's and approached with a toothy smile. "Lou, you got me all wrong."

"Maybe I have, and maybe I haven't," Clayton replied shortly.

Coll put on his most charming manner. "Lou, I just happened to see Benevolent Charlie, and he told me to tell you he wants to see you right off about something. I got my car right across the street."

"Benevolent Charlie always knows where to find me," Lou said. "If he wants me, the telephone has been invented a long while."

Clayton turned away contemptuously and hailed a taxicab, first making sure, as he

always did, that he knew the driver. At the Dover Club he telephoned Benevolent Charlie, who informed him, "Why, no, Lou, I never saw the Mad Dog today whatsoever, and I didn't say I wanted to see you, which of course I'm always glad to. What he wanted was to take you for a ride, to save his pride from the other day. Watch your step." But neither Clayton nor Durante was ever troubled by Coll again.

Nevertheless, Jimmy seemed destined to get into jams—on his own hook when no other way was available.

Two Cops After Evidence

One night, two Broadway detectives, a Lieutenant W. and a side-kick known along the Main Stem as "Camera Eye," walked into the club and seated themselves at a table. Lieutenant W. had gone to grade school with Durante, and liked him. Nevertheless, he was a police officer with a job to do. On this night, he called Clayton over. "I want to buy a drink."

"What will it be?" Clayton inquired. "Ginger ale, sarsaparilla?"

The officer rose from his chair, furious. "You know I want whisky!"

"You must know we don't serve whisky," replied Clayton. "It's against the law."

The lieutenant pointed to one of the waiters. "What's that he's serving?"

"Oh," replied Clayton, "that's ginger ale."

"I want to see Durante," said the cop.

Clayton signaled everyone to be on the alert, and went off, ostensibly to find Durante. In the kitchen he said to his partners, "Look, that copper is going to cause trouble; don't let anyone, under any conditions, serve him a drink."

Durante objected to this. "Now look, Lou, I went to school with the guy. Why don't we be nice to him?"

"Because he's out to get us."

"But," said Durante, "we were pals when we were kids. He couldn't! This time you're dead wrong."

Jimmy went out to see his old schoolmate. The lieutenant complained bitterly about Clayton's rudeness. He said all he wanted was a bracer for himself and Camera Eye. Schnozzola personally got two drinks and served them. Whereupon his former schoolmate brought a bottle from his pocket. Into it he poured the drinks for evidence. "All right, Jim, get your hat and coat. We're going to headquarters."

Durante was agast at this disloyalty. Accompanied by Clayton and the two cops, he went to police headquarters, where he was booked. Clayton, who had stuffed \$4,000, the night's receipts, in his pockets, asked the sergeant not to lock up Jimmy but to let him out on bail. The sergeant fixed bail at \$2,000 and Clayton peeled that amount from his roll.

Next day Jim was tried in special sessions court. Sentence was suspended, but it was ruled that if he ever was caught serving another drink, he would have to go to jail.

"I'm brandied as a criminal!" moaned Durante.

The Schnozz never served another drink—except in his home, and then only after prohibition had been repealed. He said, "Lou, that's twice I've been a sap. I'll never go against your judgment again."

In the summer of 1926, the Durantes headed for their favorite haven, Clear Lake in California. They spent a restful few months there and started back to New York much refreshed. However, a certain amount of confusion is always present in the cheerful Durante; on the eastbound train he sighted a firebreak—a pathlike clearing blazed across a mountain to minimize the danger of forest fire—and commented to his startled fellow passengers: "Can you imagine anybody driving a car up those steep roads?"

The embarrassed Jeanne promptly got up

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from her chair and left the Schnozz to talk his way out of that predicament as best he could. Jimmy, now aware that he had erred, rose to the occasion nobly.

The blunder was understandable, he explained to those sitting near him. "You see, us professors don't get out of the chemical lavatory too often."

The 1926 fall season at the Dover Club was fated to be the team's final one there. It opened auspiciously, with the club rapidly becoming one of the city's most prosperous, but it ended catastrophically in a New Year's Eve brawl that lasted for one incredible hour and left the place a total wreck.

Gangdom Hobnobs with Society

That evening started as a great one for the club. Society folk and underworld denizens, admitted at a cover charge of \$25 a head, jammed the floor and grew more and more merry as the grape flowed. Among those present were a towering, powerful, easygoing gambler called Great Pete; the notorious money-man and fixer Arnold Rothstein; and Mr. and Mrs. Legs Diamond.

Diamond was a rough chap who during a short lifetime had collected and retained some 32 bullets in his body, or approximately as much lead as is contained in the east window of Westminster Abbey. (It was said that he liked to swim, but never dared try it in his adult years.)

For various reasons, relations were strained between Diamond's wife, Alice, and Great Pete, who had once paid court to her widowed mother. However, overcome by the happiness of the season, Pete determined to make a nice gesture; at midnight he approached the Diamonds' table to offer his best wishes for the New Year.

His intentions were misunderstood. Mrs. Diamond said a few harsh words, and her bullet-laden husband rose to his feet to remonstrate with Great Pete. As they conversed, Alice Diamond picked up a wine bottle and shattered it over Pete's head. The battle was on.

Henchmen of the two main disputants rushed to the fray. Rothstein, who had been sitting with the Diamonds and might have prevented further disorder, ducked out (an act for which Clayton never forgave him). In a few moments there was a free-for-all. A great rose-colored wall-hanging came loose and enveloped several of the combatants, adding to their fury. Women screamed. The detectives present called for their guns, but Clayton refused to check them out of the icebox. Plates skimmed overhead and tables overturned. The cash register toppled.

There was a general stampede for the cloakroom and the street, joined—as was their custom—by Durante and Jackson.

It was after 1:00 A.M. when the last casualty was removed from the premises, and the weary Clayton found himself standing in the middle of a complete shambles looking at the empty cash register. The guests had departed without paying their checks; Lou later estimated that the club had lost \$20,000 in unpaid bills alone.

So far as Clayton, Jackson and Durante were concerned, that washed up their venture at the Dover Club. "I'm quitting," Lou told the Quaker. "And when I quit, my partners quit." At Jimmy's insistence, the trio gave two weeks' notice—time enough to split up the season's take.

To Jeanne Durante, there was a lesson to be learned from the troupe's experience at the Dover. She asked her husband to promise never to buy into another speak-easy. He agreed.

Clayton went along with this decision, and laid plans to book the team for the rest of the season at an asking price of \$3,000 a week, \$1,000 each.

"It will only be a matter of time," he said, "till I jack that salary up."

Accordingly, the Thursday after the closing of the Dover the team opened at the Parody Club on East Forty-eighth Street, at \$3,000 a week. Leon Emken, the headwaiter, drummer Jack Roth and pianist

Harry Donnelly went along to the luxuriously furnished basement club, which Jimmy always referred to afterward as "my upholstered cellar."

Despite the excellent salaries they were drawing and the richness of their surroundings, Jimmy and Eddie Jackson were constantly short of ready cash—not because they spent it wildly, but because their wives saw to it that they never had a chance to do so (a precaution of which Clayton thoroughly approved). As a result, both men quietly held out small sums from their wives. As this private hoard mounted, they worried about where to keep it.

One day Durante went to Jackson in some excitement. "I just read about an employee with a wooden leg out in the Denver mint," he said. "He got away with thousands in gold by sticking it in his leg!" "So what?" asked Eddie.

Jimmy looked around carefully to make sure they weren't overheard, and then said delightedly: "Charlie Cooper, the doorman, has a wooden leg!"

lette, tonight, Eddie," said Carbar Frank. "I got a system."

"Well," Jackson said, "you and I know one another for years. How about giving me that system?"

"All right, if you won't tell a soul. You play seven, eleven, thirteen, nineteen and twenty-nine. Stick to 'em for about an hour only, and you can't miss."

Jackson informed Durante of this, and the Schnozzola became excited. "After the first show, Eddie, we'll slip away from Lou and put twenty dollars apiece on the wheel."

Strangely, the two men had difficulty getting into the gambling room; they had to bribe the doorman \$10 before he'd let them by. Then they tried to buy yellow chips, and were told there weren't any. There weren't any green chips, either; or white ones. At this point, Jimmy began to feel something was wrong. "Let's go see the boss," he said to Jackson.

In Benevolent Charlie's sanctum, Durante got right to the point. "Eddie and me want to play a little roulette," he com-

In the washroom, Durante said, "Now take your leg off."

"In here?"

"Right here," the Schnozz commanded. "We want to make good on an IOU before Clayton gets wise."

"But suppose somebody comes in when I'm doing it, and . . ."

"Nix," said Jackson. "Do you want to keep your job?"

The losers withdrew enough money to pay up at the casino, and Durante decided to take out an extra five hundred. Later that morning, he knocked at Eddie's door. "Where is Charlie Cooper staying? I dropped seven hundred more, and I got to pay an IOU for two C's."

Both Jimmy and Eddie were thoroughly chastened when, the next day, Clayton got them in a corner. "Smart guys, eh? Well, I knew all about it, and I let you get roughed around on purpose. You've gotta learn, if you play long enough against the percentage the house takes on each spin of the wheel, you're bound to get knocked out. Had enough?" They had.

(It was this father-to-sons attitude of Clayton's that once prompted Bugs Baer to comment that Durante and Jackson were "scared to death" of the third partner. Today, Jimmy admits it readily. "Yeah, that's right. But there's a big 'but' there. I'd argue with him and he'd fight even when I was right. But then I'd say, 'Lou, take this deal, will you please?' And he'd say after he'd looked at me a while, 'Jimmy, if that's the way you want it, that's the way it's gonna be.' Even if he would lose fifty thousand on the deal, he'd want me to be happy. That was the main thing with Lou.")

Although the incident at Benevolent Charlie's casino taught Jimmy not to gamble, he decided he ought to handle his own money. He told Jeanne he felt "left out of things" as he watched other Broadway gentlemen peel off big bank notes in public.

Holdup in a Doctor's Office

So it was that on one October day in 1927, when Jimmy took his wife to the office of Dr. Shirley Wynne for a physical checkup, he had a thousand-dollar bill nestled proudly in his pocket. Jeanne was carrying a velvet handbag with \$40 in it.

As the Durantes waited in the outer office, four armed bandits walked in and said, "Stand up against the wall!"

One of the holdup men stayed behind in the reception room while the other bandits went into the examination room, where a male patient was lying face down on a table, unclad except for his undershirt. The gang leader told Dr. Wynne to stand against the wall and warned the patient not to move a muscle. The fourth robber now herded the Durantes and the receptionist into the examination room.

Jimmy, outraged, addressed the terrified man on the table. "There's ladies present! Can't you put your pants on?"

The leader of the bandits advanced on Jim as though to shoot him. "Shut up! And stand back!"

At that point, Mrs. Durante suddenly collapsed. As Jimmy moved to help his stricken wife, he was hurled against the wall. "Another move out of you," the leader said to the Schnozz, "and I'll shoot that big nose right off your face!"

"But my wife, she may be dead!" Durante protested. Then, in a magnificent *non sequitur*, he blurted out, "And besides, this is awful unmodest as a situation."

The robbers took Dr. Wynne's valuables and Jimmy's thousand dollars, and found the patient's wallet in his pants. One of the men shook Mrs. Durante, but decided to let her stay on the floor.

After they had gone, the patient draped himself in a sheet, and Dr. Wynne prepared to minister to Mrs. Durante. She amazed everyone by springing to her feet with a giggle, triumphantly exhibiting her velvet bag. She had thrown it beneath the examination table while pretending to faint, and had hidden her rings in her mouth.

While Dr. Wynne was notifying the



"Fifty dollars for a hat? That would buy enough food to feed the family for a couple of days, Edith!"

The pair rushed to find Cooper, who worked after hours as Jackson's chauffeur. He agreed, after no little persuasion, to keep the secret money inside his artificial limb. "But," he stipulated, "it's got to be folding money. No coins."

Clayton preferred to keep his partners without funds because, among other things, they had a penchant for gambling—along with easy-mark dispositions. He laid down a flat ban against their risking any money with professional gamblers.

He was therefore a little uneasy when, after the Parody Club had closed for the summer of 1927, the team was offered a two-week engagement at \$5,000 a week by Clayton's old friend Benevolent Charlie, who operated a gambling casino and restaurant at Saratoga.

"I want one thing clear," Clayton told Charlie before agreeing to terms. "Never under any circumstances are you to let Jimmy or Eddie play the wheel or shoot craps in your room. If any gambling is done, I'll do it."

"They'll be safe," said Charlie.

The Durante troupe had been at the Saratoga spa for two or three nights when Jackson met an ex-trolley car conductor known in gambling circles as Carbar Frank. As this gentleman emerged from the gambling room, Eddie said, "How did you make out, Frank?"

"I rung up a whole lot of fares on rou-

plained, "and they don't want to sell us any chips." He turned to Jackson. "Eddie, show him that forty dollars." Then he asked, "What's wrong with our money? Ain't it any good?"

Benevolent Charlie cleared his throat. "I'll tell you the truth, boys," he said. "Lou Clayton don't want you to play. I told all the dealers and the manager not to let you lose any money out there."

"But, Charlie!" the Schnozz cried out. "Jackson's got a system!"

Benevolent Charlie laughed. "Go ahead," he said.

Within an hour, Jackson and Durante had won \$400. The next night they returned to the tables again and took down another three or four hundred. After their third successful evening, Durante said, "Eddie, I'd like to try my own system just once."

"You go ahead," said Jackson. "I'm sticking to a sure thing."

Almost immediately, both men started losing. By the time the night was over, they had gone through all their winnings, had lost the original \$40, and had signed IOUs for \$1,500.

"I only hope Clayton don't find out," mourned Durante. Then suddenly he brightened as he thought of banker-chauffeur Charlie Cooper.

They found their friend outside the casino. "Charlie," Jimmy said, "come into the washroom with us a minute."

police, the Schnozz looked at his wife and said, "Toots, I guess I shouldn't handle our money after all." Some weeks after the holdup, the bandits were arrested, and Durante got his money back.

Money was, in fact, becoming less and less a problem for the Durantes. Under Clayton's guidance, the team was prospering and was able to turn down engagements it once would have jumped at. At all times, Clayton held out for as much as he could get, and he would coolly penalize those who didn't accept his first offer.

The trio wanted to take a stab at vaudeville. Jimmy was especially anxious to play the Palace Theater, which was to vaudeville entertainers what the Boston Symphony is to a violin player. At an early stage of the Parody Club engagement, Clayton negotiated briefly with the Palace management, but they snorted when he asked \$3,000. "Who knows you?" they asked. "You'll find out," said Clayton.

Another Bid from the Palace

Sometime later, the theater offered Clayton, Jackson and Durante a place on the bill. Clayton upped the price to \$3,500. Jimmy exploded, but Clayton held firm. "You tend to the joke department," he said. "The next time they ask, the salary will be five grand."

When the team finally broke into vaudeville it was at Loew's State Theater, three blocks north of the Parody Club—for \$3,500 a week. Clayton and Jackson had had vaudeville experience, but Jimmy had none. They rehearsed diligently for their four-show-a-day stint, and during their two-week appearance broke all records.

Other offers began coming in on the basis of this showing—including one from the Palace booking agent at \$3,500 a week. "The price," said Clayton, "is five grand."

Jimmy screamed, "Take it, take it!"

"Five grand," said Clayton.

Finally, the Palace management found itself in a spot. One of its headliners at that time was the late great comedienne Fanny Brice. She fell ill, and the theater, now in desperate need of a replacement, approached Clayton once again. He calmly quoted a figure of \$5,500, and then said:

"I'll tell you what. We'll take a draw with you. If we go in there and do business, you give us fifty-five hundred. If we don't break your house record, then you don't owe us a quarter."

The manager nodded. "You've got a deal, except we'll pay five thousand anyhow. If you break the record held by Beatrice Lillie, we'll give you a bonus of five hundred."

The trio was billed in the spot next to closing. They were supposed to do 40 minutes, but the audiences would not let them off stage for an hour and a half. The Palace decided to cancel the last act, for no one could follow the Schnozzola and his partners. They broke all records that first week, received their bonus, and were held over for three successive weeks.

Despite Clayton's insistence that the trio get all the money he felt it deserved, there were plenty of people along Broadway ready to testify that they never sought a cent more. One of these was the celebrated impresario, C. B. Dillingham. He had sought out Lou with a suggestion that the team appear in a forthcoming musical, whose book was to be written by playwright William Anthony McGuire. Clayton agreed, and a contract was signed.

Some time later, when there was no further word about the project, Clayton paid a call on Dillingham. The producer said the show hadn't materialized. "Suppose," he said, "I give you ten thousand dollars and we tear up the contract. I don't know when McGuire's going to give me the book."

That was perfectly satisfactory to Clayton, but it troubled Durante. When Christmas of 1927 rolled around, he said, "Lou, you know that ten thousand we got from Mr. Dillingham? Well, he's such a swell guy, and we've done nothing for that dough. Suppose we give him back that check?"

Jackson agreed; and Clayton sent the money back to Dillingham, and with it a note: "Please accept this as a Christmas present from the Three Sawdust Bums of Broadway."

Dillingham, a true gentleman, spread the story all over town. Durante was relieved to be free of the money. "I like to be a giver," he said, "not a taker."

The Schnozz was still to make his mark in musical comedy and in films. Furthermore, he had yet to tour the country in vaudeville. Exciting, hilarious experiences were ahead; you can read all about them in next week's Collier's. Be sure to order a copy at your local newsstand right away



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Why was I born?

by Paul Dunn



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"Oh! My driver's license!"

STANLEY & JANICE BERENSTAIN

COLLIER'S

Mask for Danger

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

"Ready aft. Take her away, Lieutenant. Starboard your helm when you're clear."

It took him a moment to interpret the instructions; in the Navy the order would have been given as "Left rudder." Then the boat was moving forward and, as the stern cleared, swinging under his hand. "Course?"

"Just follow the buoys out. No tricks, Lieutenant. Turn out the cabin lights; the second switch from the top. We'll dispense with running lights tonight. You can take her up to sixteen hundred r.p.m."

"Sixteen hundred."
"Steady as you go now."
"Steady, aye-aye."

He had almost forgotten where he was and who was with him. It did not matter for the moment that a gun was aimed at his back. He was doing something he had once done well and loved doing; and it was coming back to him as if he had never been away. There had never been anything to be afraid of, he told himself; his fears had been as imaginary as the Lawrence Wilson by whom he had thought himself pursued and persecuted, a man already a week dead and buried! Then two things happened at once: as they came out beyond the shelter of the point the boat rose abruptly to a cross swell, and at the same time the cold engine hesitated and coughed. The faint jar coupled with the very minor explosion seemed to take him back over the years to a night when he had felt a great ship pause, and watched the flight deck go up in a towering column of flame, before the blast swept him off his feet.

After a while he found himself in the cockpit being very sick into the cruiser's wake. He straightened up and wiped his mouth with his handkerchief. He felt weak and shaken and bitterly ashamed. Henshaw was standing in the deckhouse doorway and Elizabeth was steering. Young noticed for the first time that they were towing the doctor's outboard-equipped rowboat astern.

Somebody spoke from the darkness by his feet: "Dramamine's supposed to cure it."

He looked down at Bonita Decker; even in the darkness he could see that she was wet and muddy.

"Seasickness, I mean," she said, and held up her hand. He helped her to her feet and she pulled distastefully at her wet clothes. "It certainly took you all of a sudden."

Henshaw, in the doorway, laughed. "The lieutenant isn't seasick. He's just frightened. He's allergic to boats. A rather peculiar complaint for a naval officer."

Young was aware of the quick glance the red-haired girl gave him.

"Let's get inside," the doctor said. "You take the wheel, Miss Decker; Mr. Young might have another attack, and Elizabeth seems to be steering us all over the Bay."

HE COULD feel the steady vibration of the engine through his body; one of the deckhouse windows rattled softly and constantly behind him. The throbbing note of the exhaust mingled with the hissing rush of water past the boat's hull; he was aware of all these noises, and he could feel himself tighten up painfully whenever there was a minute change in any of them.

He thought bitterly that he ought to be grateful; by keeping him from reporting for duty, by bringing him here, these people had at least saved him from making a fool of himself on shipboard where somebody might have been depending on him. He thought wryly that the only thing to be done with a naval officer in his condition was to take him out and shoot him; which, he suspected, was exactly what Henshaw had in mind. Somehow the idea did not terrify him particularly. You could face these simple, straightforward fears; what the hell, there was nothing wrong in being scared of getting killed, and anybody who pretended he wasn't was a liar. It was the terrors that grew out of the kinks in your own mind, set off by things that bothered

nobody else, that made you feel like crawling into a hole and blowing your own brains out. When you lost your lunch when an engine backfired slightly or found yourself cringing at the smell of gasoline . . .

He saw the can, then. It had been placed handy, right inside the door; a one-gallon can painted red, the kind you might use to carry extra fuel for an outboard motor. He had to swallow hard to choke down a sudden wave of nausea, as he understood what Henshaw was planning for them; and he found himself edging along the seat away from the door and the red-painted can that seemed to glow faintly in the darkness.

"David!"

Elizabeth had been sitting on the other side of the cabin; but now she was beside him, clinging to his arm. He saw her glance uneasily forward to where Hen-

ant," the doctor said loudly. "She's on the winning side; but the trouble with our Elizabeth is, she's never quite sure which side is going to win." Suddenly he turned and took hold of her, seizing a handful of the front of her suit with a shockingly casual contempt. He lifted her off the seat like that. "Where's the gun?"

"What, honey?" she gasped.

"The gun you took away from him!"

"Oh—I reckon it fell in the corner when she—"

HENSHAW studied her for a moment, then gave her a quick, brutal shake. A heavy object slid out of some secret hiding place inside her clothes and bounced on the floor. Before Elizabeth could recover or Young could move, the doctor had kicked the weapon out of range. He backed away



COLLIER'S

"Stop that! When I ask for a couple of dollars, try to be a little less humorous!"

DAVE GERARD

shaw, his back turned momentarily, leaned over the small girl in the helmsman's seat.

"Oh, David!" she whispered. "I declare I'm sorry. I couldn't help—I!"

He realized that she was apologizing for what she had done when he first stepped inside the deckhouse. There was a curious, dreamlike quality to everything that was happening; and he was no longer shocked by her appearance, not even when he saw—that he had not had time to notice before—that her left eye was swollen almost shut, and that her lips were puffed.

"David, you've got to help! He caught me, honey!" she gasped, pitching her voice below the rumble of the motor under their feet. "He caught me; I never even got to the highway! He beat me to make me tell what I'd told you, honey! All day I've been lying tied up in his dirty old cellar. Look at me, honey! Look what he's done to my face! Look at my suit. And my white shoes in his filthy old boat!"

He watched her bruised mouth, pleading for sympathy, with a complete lack of concern; all over the world people were starving and dying and this girl with the beat-up face was worrying about a pair of shoes!

"Look, Mrs. Wilson," he said, "what side are you on, anyway?"

There was a laugh above them, and they looked up to see Henshaw watching them. "Don't embarrass her by asking, Lieuten-

ant," the doctor said loudly. "She's on the winning side; but the trouble with our Elizabeth is, she's never quite sure which side is going to win." Suddenly he turned and took hold of her, seizing a handful of the front of her suit with a shockingly casual contempt. He lifted her off the seat like that. "Where's the gun?"

Young did not look at the disheveled girl beside him, but he knew with bitter certainty that he had missed an opportunity: she had been offering to sell out; she had just wanted a little sympathy first. She had been about to give him back the gun she had taken from him; but he had been too slow, too scornful, too concerned with his own miseries, to catch on in time.

He watched the doctor returning—a big man, but bald and a little paunchy, still in the worn brown suit with the sagging pockets that was his badge of frugal respectability. "There goes old Doc Henshaw," people would say; "he's not much of a doctor but he won't do you no harm and his people been around these parts for a long time." Out of the corner of his eye, Young saw the girl at the wheel look back over her shoulder; he thought he saw fear on her face before she turned away again.

There was something rather terrifying about the sight of this unimportant man, a relative failure in his own world, who had managed viciously to change that world in such a way as to make himself, at least for tonight, important and powerful. It made you, Young thought, wonder fearfully how many others there could be like

this; not the dupes, not the misguided, fanatic idealists, but the nasty little people indulging in secret treachery against the society in which they lived, in the hope of transforming it into one in which they would be a little bigger; one in which the people they envied would be a little smaller.

What's it to you? he thought, and he could not help letting his glance touch, briefly, the red can inside the cabin door. The sight of it made his stomach knot up inside him with the knowledge of what was coming. *What's it to you? You're not going to be there!*

He licked his lips. "Dr. Henshaw?"

The doctor turned back from checking the course. "Yes?"

"I don't get it," he said. "Where does—did Larry Wilson fit in, anyway?"

The confession of ignorance made Henshaw smile in the darkness. "It's very simple," he said. "He didn't. He just happened to be married to Elizabeth."

Bonita Decker turned her head quickly. "Then you admit Larry wasn't—"

Henshaw said, "When Elizabeth's husband was refused security clearance—Well, we know who our people are, of course. And we knew that Wilson wasn't one of them. It followed that either a genuine mistake had been made—which would have been a rather startling coincidence, under the circumstances—or that he had come under suspicion, not because of any activities of his own, but simply because of his wife's affiliations. You can see that a government agency might be reluctant to employ a man, however loyal himself, whose wife was suspected of being a member of an espionage ring. We took it as a warning, and immediately curtailed all our activities here drastically, hoping to allay whatever suspicion had been aroused, in order that we might save this outlet for one final, truly important operation to which we had been assigned because of our nearness to Washington." The doctor patted his bulging coat pocket. "The mission we're on tonight, Lieutenant."

"Which is—?"

HENSHAW laughed and shook his head. "Even if I knew the details, which I don't, I'd hardly share them with you. Even though . . ."

"Even though what?"

"Even though the information would hardly do you any good," Henshaw said.

Young was aware of the red can, but did not look at it. "I can guess what you mean," he said, making his voice even. "You didn't bring us out here just to make four for bridge. Tell me, Dr. Henshaw, just what the hell were your activities?"

The doctor was ready enough to talk of this, even eager, like a man who had had to hide his cleverness too long from the world. "Do you remember the Japanese sampans that operated in Pacific waters before the last war? Little ocean-going fishing craft that had a habit of casually turning up in the neighborhood of important naval maneuvers, commanded by surprisingly well-educated officers who owned expensive cameras? Well," Henshaw said, "it occurred to, uh, certain people that the Japanese idea could be improved upon. Instead of a fishing boat of foreign registry, substitute a small, obviously American, pleasure craft complete with patent water closet and sun-tan lotion. Oh, not the gold-plated luxury yacht with captain and stewards; but the kind of battered third- and fourth-hand little family cruiser or auxiliary that makes the Coast Guard work overtime; the kind that's always running aground, or breaking down, or getting innocently lost in prohibited waters. Naturally these boats had to be given places to file their reports; places where they could also pick up messages to be delivered, say to passing freighters offshore. Such a station might be a boat yard where a workman had seen The Light; or a dockside

Collier's for July 14, 1951

store; or perhaps even a cove on a pleasant water-front estate where the maid or house-boy or gardener, or even the lady of the house, had, or could be persuaded to develop, the romantic habit of strolling along the beach at night. If the lady of the house was dissatisfied and resentful because of certain unfulfilled social ambitions—

Elizabeth Wilson stirred, but did not speak.

"—it might not be difficult," Henshaw said, "for a respectable, middle-aged professional man—an innocuous sort of person, really—to suggest a way in which she might get back at all these people who had snubbed her, by discovering a passion for night air on certain nights in the week. A little hard on expensive slippers, but very good for the frustrated bitterness of a beautiful, ambitious woman. And there was nothing to it, really. After all, the old fool was too crazy about her to let anything happen to her; and he really demanded very little, and could be put off with even less!"

THE boat ran on through the night steadily. Elizabeth Wilson hid her beaten face in her hands. Henshaw cleared his throat, and turned to look at the compass dial over the shoulder of the red-haired girl at the wheel.

"East southeast, Miss Decker," he said softly. "You seem to keep working westward. I may not be a crackjack yachtsman like you—I never had time to learn; my family lost all its money, you'll recall—but I'm quite aware that Harness Point Shoal is over to starboard. Let's stay clear of it, shall we?" Without warning he rapped the smaller girl smartly above the ear with the barrel of his revolver. "Let's," he said.

Young saw Bonita Decker sway dizzily from the blow, clinging to the wheel to keep from falling. The boat ran off course and straightened out again. And it wasn't as if the man were crazy, Young thought; any more than anybody who had ever suppressed a brutal impulse. He was just on a little jag of doing what he damn well pleased, and this was what he pleased.

"Wilson," Young said.

"What?"

"What about Wilson, Doctor?"

"Oh, Wilson was a fool," Henshaw said, still pleased to talk. "Well, not really a fool, but reckless. Knowing himself to be a loyal and upright citizen, Lawrence Wilson apparently came to the same conclusion that we had reached: that he must have lost his job on account of his wife. He determined to find out why; to clear himself. I suppose, with the help of Miss Decker here. They had a boat built as an excuse for spending a lot of time on the water, presumably tuning up and experimenting for the races, actually keeping watch on the cove. I suppose Elizabeth's nocturnal strolls had attracted her husband's attention. We knew all about it, of course; it was pretty obvious. As I have said, we weren't doing much, so most of their time was wasted on innocent craft. However, one of our boats had not received the instructions to stay away; it came in one day toward fall. Although we got rid of it quickly, Wilson must have spotted it. He apparently traced it to a yard in the New York area. We did not realize this at the time."

The doctor leaned forward to check on the compass. "That's better, Miss Decker," he said. He sat down behind her, facing Young and Elizabeth across the narrow cabin, with the gun resting on his knees. "We had been alerted from Washington," he said, and patted his pocket again. "We had been told that this was almost ready for delivery—when into the middle of our plans, four nights ago, walked Elizabeth's husband to confront his wife with the proof of his own innocence and her guilt. He had really managed to get his hands on an amazing amount of evidence: if he had gone direct to the FBI the result would have been

havoc. Fortunately, consumed with bitterness and hatred for the woman who had betrayed him as well as her own country—that was the way he put it, wasn't it, Elizabeth?—he couldn't resist the impulse to gloat. He had to show her the information: push it in her lovely face. I don't think it really occurred to the man that he was doing anything dangerous; you can, I suppose, be convinced that your wife is an enemy agent without really facing the fact that she might be capable of shooting you if confronted with the evidence."

"But I didn't!" Elizabeth said quickly, raising her head.

"But you called me and I did," the doctor said smoothly. "Which, in the eyes of the law, amounts to the same thing. As a matter of fact, I doubt if even Larry noticed a significant difference."

"I declare I didn't know you were going to—"

"I doubt that," Henshaw said. "You were pretty badly frightened, as I recall; you hadn't any desire to go to jail for treason. I'll grant that you probably didn't think of all the consequences; but then, you never do, Elizabeth, or you wouldn't be here in that bedraggled condition. You'd have given me credit for enough intelligence to know you'd bolt. Anyway," he said, "we disposed of the body, which had a bullet hole in it; and then had to get rid of the car in such a way as to indicate, if possible, that Larry had never been near the house that night. I drove the coupé and Elizabeth followed in the station wagon to pick me up."

"When I saw the lieutenant by the roadside, obviously willing to accept a lift, it occurred to me that he was just about the right height and coloring; and that if I could manage to wreck the car and plant in it an unidentifiable body without a bullet hole, which Elizabeth and I, as Wilson's wife and doctor, could later identify positively as that of Lawrence Wilson—"

"Only my head was a little too hard," Young said. "You're a doctor; how did you happen to miss that I wasn't dead?"

Henshaw hesitated. "Well, Elizabeth was getting ready to have hysterics and— Well, it was an oversight."

At the wheel, Bonita Decker laughed. "He was probably so scared he couldn't hear anything but his own pulse," she said.

"It was an oversight," Henshaw repeated stiffly. He stood up. "There'll be no oversights tonight."

The red-haired girl said, without turning. "No, they don't like them where you're going, do they? That's where people get liquidated for their oversights, isn't it?"

Young's hands tightened, waiting for the doctor to strike out in anger; but Henshaw only laughed. "You seem to be under a

misapprehension. Miss Decker. What makes you think I'm going anywhere? I'm a fumbling, middle-aged G.P. just doing my best to keep from killing my patients with my incompetence. What have I got to do with missing objects of international importance? I was out in my boat tonight, certainly; it's common knowledge that I'm being made a fool of by the lovely, unscrupulous, young Mrs. Wilson; and that I visit her as often as she will let me.

"Tonight I, uh, drifted around to see whether she might not be willing to give her sick husband an extra dose of sedative and come down to meet me; I was startled to find the Wilson boat gone from the dock. I was even a little worried, since I knew that Mrs. Wilson was not capable of handling a boat that size, and that her husband was not really well enough, after his accident, to take one out yet. Yes, I'll admit I was a little jealous, too. I even searched around a bit in the estuary in my little outboard. Naturally, when I heard the explosion out toward the Bay and saw the flames shoot up, I, like everybody else with a boat for miles around, headed for the scene as fast as possible—"

Young said, "I see. You're going back." Something happened to him as he said it; something that had nothing to do with the fact that the doctor had at least put his fears into words.

Henshaw said, "Of course I'll be suspected, I'll be searched, I'll be questioned, my unhappy affair with Mrs. Wilson will become public knowledge, and everybody will be tolerantly pleased at the fact that old Doc Henshaw had the gumption to get himself mixed up with a pretty girl who turned out to be a spy." He laughed.

The boat ran on through the darkness, fast enough to pound a little against the light, southeasterly chop. A little odor of gasoline seemed to reach Young from the red one-gallon can by the deckhouse doorway; and his mouth went suddenly dry as he realized what he had to do, not because he cared what Henshaw had in his pocket, but because the man himself had to be stopped. He had done enough damage to enough people already.

YOUNG watched him turn to check their position, bending over the small girl in the helmsman's seat, whose short red hair was now drying in a spiky fringe about her head, but still wet enough in back to dampen the wilted collar of her jacket. Young could not see her face at all, and he had no idea what she was thinking or feeling, and didn't know whether or not she was afraid. He thought she probably was; most intelligent people were, faced with death, and she seemed like a bright kid. He hoped that she might get out of it somehow; the rest of them, including himself, did not matter.

He saw Elizabeth watching him, pushing the unkempt dark hair out of her eyes to look, as he started to ease his way aft. Then Henshaw turned back to look at them, and he was still, and the girl beside him buried her face in her hands again.

Henshaw turned forward to look at the compass, and Young found the can with his foot and drew it toward him gently. It made a scraping sound that seemed to scream for attention, but the doctor did not look up for a moment; and when he raised his head it was with the same leisurely checking-up movement he had used before. Young reached down into the darkness beside him and found the cap. He waited until the doctor, seating himself, glanced down at the weapon in his hand. Then he unscrewed the cap quickly. When he looked up, Henshaw was watching him.

"What—"

The sharp gasoline smell came up to him strongly, sickening him; he gave the can a convulsive kick away from him and heard the first burping gurgle as the liquid flooded out over

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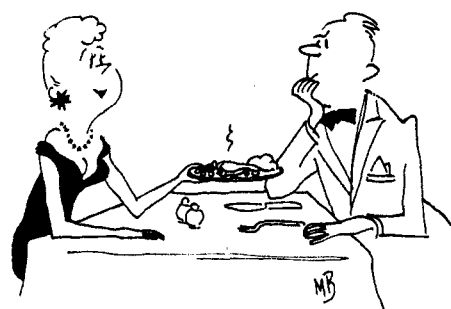
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Who Dat?

Ah, my darling wife, tonight
You are a vision of delight.
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Admire your sleek coiffure and clothes—
And as you pass my dinner plate,
I hasten to interrogate:
O figment of my mind, fair myth,
Who's the cream-smear, curled,
Bathrobed dame I eat my breakfast with?

—DOROTHY B. GRISWOLD

the deckhouse floor. He heard himself shout something unintelligible to the girl at the wheel as he threw himself forward. She glanced around, and he felt her put the boat into a tight right turn that added to his momentum at the same time as it threw the doctor back into the seat on the port side of the cabin. Then he landed on top of the other man.

Henshaw threw him off onto the floor and kicked him in the chest. Young felt the pain blaze through the already bruised muscles; for a moment he could not move, but he was aware of the bigger man starting aft toward the can that had already half emptied itself. The cabin was full of the dizzying odor of gasoline; Young could feel it in his mouth and nose. He was conscious of the racket of the engine directly below him; and in his mind was a clear picture of at least six spark plugs firing steadily while the volatile, explosive fuel dripped down through the cracks onto the hot cylinders.

The girl at the wheel cut the switch and the engine stopped. Young crawled to his feet painfully.

"Decker," he gasped. "Out the forward hatch, over the side, and start swimming. Tell them—south end of Elder Island. The boat is the Marbeth. Don't pay any attention to that cap gun. If he fires it, he'll blow us all sky-high." He felt a little drunk and rather dizzy. He put himself in Henshaw's way as the bigger man started forward. "On your way, Red!"

Behind him, he heard the girl run to the forward part of the boat. Henshaw feinted with the gun barrel as if to strike at his head; then drove a left smartly into Young's ribs instead, and, as Young doubled up, threw him aside and went past. Young picked himself off Elizabeth Wilson's lap, gasping for breath. He was aware, for a moment, of the older girl's disfigured face staring up at him. She was frightened, and her terror only annoyed him. He was scared himself without having to look at fear in anybody else.

He heard footsteps on the forward deck, running; and a splash. In the companionway, Henshaw cocked the big revolver in his hand. His face was white and ugly.

"Come here. Start the motor! Head after her."

"There's a gallon of gas in the bilge, Doc!" Young said breathlessly. "The first spark will set it off; that goes for that gun of yours, too."

Too late, he realized that the other man did not believe him, or, rather, was too angry to understand what he was being told. Young threw himself desperately backward, toward the cabin doorway; he saw the gun discharge but did not feel the bullet; instead the spurt of fire seemed to grow and grow, with a swelling rush of sound that carried him back and up.

HE CAME to the surface gasping, was aware of the light and heat of the fire even before he had opened his eyes to see the Amberjack a boat length away burning fiercely amidships. Young could see nobody swimming; if the doctor or Elizabeth Wilson had managed to escape, they were on the side of the boat away from him. There was certainly nobody alive in the deckhouse now; at least, he thought grimly, you could hope for their sake that there wasn't.

The water came up to strangle him. He fought to the surface again and began to struggle out of the path of the burning hull, that was drifting down on him. He found himself thinking that a man with his experience should really know enough not to be caught downwind of a sinking vessel.

He spotted a floating kapok cushion and swam clumsily to it and clung to it, resting. He was weak and battered and rather dazed, but he was aware of a sense of accomplishment, and he felt curiously peaceful and unconcerned about his own predicament. Somebody was bound to see the fire and come out to investigate. Presently he heard the sound of a boat's bow cutting the water nearby, and the rumble of engines.

"There's one of them," a voice called. "Steady as you go."

A blinding searchlight found him. A big hull slid out of the darkness almost on top of him; he heard the engines go into reverse and instinctively drew up his feet to keep them out of the near propeller. For a moment it seemed as if a dozen people were trying to beat him to death with boat hooks from above; then he was jerked roughly upward. He was surprised to discover that there was something wrong with his arm; when they twisted it, he fainted.

He came to consciousness again almost immediately. He was lying on deck and somebody said, "This man is wounded."

"What happened, Young?" somebody else asked. "Did anybody else get off?"

He did not ask how the second man knew his name. It was difficult to speak. He licked his lips. "The redheaded kid," he whispered. "Decker . . ."

"Yes, we picked her up. What about Henshaw and Mrs. Wilson?"

"I don't know," Young whispered. "I don't think so." He remembered something. "A boat called the Marbeth. South end of Elder Island. . ."

"Thanks, Miss Decker told us. They're being taken care of."

Young saw the girl then. She was standing by the pilothouse, watching him. She had apparently shed most of her clothes to swim; to all appearances she was wearing nothing but an oversized pea jacket somebody had lent her. She looked small and tired and cold, and a little embarrassed by having so little on.

The man who had questioned Young was asking somebody if there were any chance of getting the fire under control; and the other person suggested dryly that they might try spitting on it.

"Haven't we got any fire extinguishers on board?"

"Mister, a little C-O-Two ain't going to faze that fire; and besides, the tanks are due to go any minute now."

There was a pause. Everybody seemed to be watching the burning cruiser. There were other boats around now. Young tried to sit up and the man working on his arm told him sharply to lie still. Then there was a sound and a breath of warm air, and the sky was very bright for a moment. Gradually the light died away.

Somebody said, "Well, if it was on that boat, it's gone now."

The man who had done most of the talking stood at the rail without moving. He swore softly. "I don't mind its burning up; it should have been burned long ago. Why do they leave stuff like that lying around, anyway? I suppose so they can raise hell with us when it gets stolen." He sighed. "But just how am I going to be sure? Well, get the boat raised in the morning. Make sure all three bodies are accounted for and see what you can find on them."

"Three?" Young said, startled. He glanced at the small bare-legged girl by the pilothouse, to reassure himself that she was all right. He found that he still felt kind of responsible for her.

THE man by the rail turned to look at him. "Miss Decker stumbled over a woman's body in the forward stateroom. We think it must have been a nurse named Peters who's been missing most of the day."

"She was at the house this morning."

"I know. Henshaw must have picked her up as she was leaving. He was tying up all the loose ends, I guess. He wasn't going to leave anybody around who had any suspicions. As if we hadn't been watching him for eighteen months."

"If you were watching him," Young said, "how did he manage to kill this woman without your knowing it?"

"Watching' is a relative term, Lieutenant," the man said. "There are lots of people we 'watch' by checking up on them once a week, or once a month. Of course, if somebody had called us in time we might have saved her life."

Young didn't say anything. The man stood looking down at him; a tall man, a little older than Young was, with an athletic, competent air that was mingled, Young thought, with a faint touch of uneasiness: the man was no sailor and it worried him a little to find himself in charge of a nautical operation, although he was trying not to let anybody know it.

He said abruptly, "Well, I'm going to have to search you."

"Go ahead," Young said.

The man knelt beside him. Presently he said, "Miss Decker says you did some quick

thinking on that boat, Lieutenant. She seems to think we ought to give you a medal or something."

Young did not look toward the small figure by the pilothouse. He asked, "And what do you think?"

The man glanced at him. "Frankly, I don't know. It seems to me you were in a hell of a place for an officer of the U.S. Navy, and I haven't yet quite figured out how you managed to get yourself into a mess like that. I'd say it was probably about time you did some quick thinking. I think we'll just give you credit for a good retrieve. Do you know what I'm looking for?" he asked in the same tone of voice.

Young said, "What Henshaw had in his pocket, I suppose."

"And what was that?" No particular emphasis was given to the question, yet Young was aware of a sudden sense of danger.

He said carefully and truthfully, "I don't know what it was. He wouldn't tell us. It was a big secret."

The man kneeling beside him hesitated, clearly trying to decide whether or not to believe him.

"You haven't any ideas at all about it, Lieutenant?"

Young shook his head.

The other man said, "That's fine. If you feel any coming on, sometime, take a quick drink or go for a walk. Kiss a girl. Kick your commanding officer in the pants. Anything to put it out of your mind. Okay?"

"Okay," Young whispered.

SOME days later he walked down from the big white house to which they had brought him, to the dock below. The bluff here was not as steep as it had been at the Wilson place, but it was steep enough to remind him that he was barely out of bed. It seemed to him a long time since he had been strong enough to walk down a flight of steps without having to be careful not to stumble, and it was awkward trying to maintain his balance with his right arm in a sling.

The girl had brought her boat in from its mooring. It was made fast alongside the dock, and she was working in the cockpit. Her short red hair was bright in the sun. She was barefooted and wearing only a halter and a pair of faded, paint-splashed jeans rolled above her knees.

"Hello," he said.

She looked up, the varnish brush poised in her hand. "Oh," she said. "You're up."

"Uh-huh."

She looked at him critically. "That's not a bad nose," she said. "I don't know what you're worrying about. Makes you look virile, or something."

"Am I worrying?"

"Mother said you were scowling at yourself in the mirror after Dr. Knight left. Making perfectly dreadful faces," she said. She tiptoed away so she wouldn't disturb you."

"Your mother's been swell," Young said.

"She's all right," the girl said calmly. She glanced up at him again. "Uniform and everything," she said. "Are you going somewhere?"

"Yes. I'm leaving in half an hour." There was a little pause. He gestured toward the brush in her hand. "Carry on."

"I'll be through in a minute," she said. "Take those shoes off if you're coming aboard."

Young grinned and worked his feet out of his shoes and stepped down to the shining deck of the little sloop to watch her. She was touching up a place on the varnished hatch cover where some damage had already been sanded smooth.

Bonita said without looking around, "Can you imagine anybody driving a big tack right into the middle of some bright-work? He even pounded it in with a winch handle!"

"Oh," Young said. "You mean the note that brought you to the house that night?" She did not answer; and after a moment he said, "Then you suspected it wasn't from Larry Wilson?"

BUTCH



"It's some guy who says he's your lookout man. He's been arrested for stealing cherries from my tree"

COLLIER'S

LARRY REYNOLDS

"I knew it wasn't from Larry," she said. "Somebody might be able to convince me Larry was a traitor and a spy; but he was a sailor and he loved boats and he'd never dream of marking up a nicely varnished hatch cover just to leave a note for somebody!"

Young said, "Then it was you who called the FBI? That's how they happened to be so handy?"

She said, "I may be an idealistic sap, Mr. Young, but I can use a telephone."

"Then why did you come to the house at all?"

"They seemed to think it would be a good idea for me to play along with him. Besides, I was curious."

"Curious?"

"Yes," she said without turning her head. "I wanted to know where you fitted in. And what was wrong with you."

"Is something wrong with me?"

"Well, something was, wasn't it? You looked to me like a man who was just crawling with neuroses."

"How do I look now?"

"I don't know," she said, clearly a little embarrassed. "I didn't mean—I'm sorry. It's none of my business, really." She changed the subject. "I really can't believe that it happened like that. Dr. Henshaw—"

"I know," Young said.

"But it was as if he'd changed into a different person! I mean, I can remember him taking my temperature and giving me a lollipop when I was a kid and Mother brought me to his office because our doctor was out of town. Whatever happened to him to make him— Well, I suppose it's no use wondering. But it kind of scares you, doesn't it? Like somebody had lifted a lid and given you a peek into— Ugh!" She shivered. "What are you looking at?" she asked abruptly, glancing at him.

He was studying the tidy decks of the little sloop. "What the hell were you doing all that sailing for?" he asked. "Every time I looked out the window of that house, there you were, sailing by. And there was always a rat's-nest of gear on deck; it made a very poor impression on me."

Bonita flushed a little. "I—it was just an idea." She shivered again. "Come to think of it, I guess it was kind of gruesome. I had an old grapple and a couple of coils of line. I thought—I knew they'd done something to Larry; and that chain disappearing like that—well, they wouldn't have needed the chain if they'd buried him ashore, would they? I thought if they saw me going out—if she thought I was looking for—for the body, she might lose her nerve." She shoved the hatch cover back and dropped the brush into a can on the bridge deck and turned to look at Young. "They found him, you know. Larry. That FBI man was just here and told me. They—picked him up while they were dragging for the other bodies. They found all of them, finally."

YOUNG found it difficult to think of these grim happenings seriously; they seemed distant and unreal. It was hard to remember that four people had died violently, and that the two of them talking together had come very close to dying too.

It was warm and pleasant on the little boat, which, in the sheltered cove, had just enough motion to let you know you were afloat. Young watched the girl begin to clean the brush she had been using. Her bare shoulders had a warm glow from the sun and were richly freckled.

"Were you in love with her?" Bonita said.

"What?" he asked, startled.

"Elizabeth," Bonita said. "Were you in love with her?"

Sometimes she said things that made her seem very young indeed. "No," he said shortly. "Were you in love with him?"

"With Larry?" She hesitated. "I don't know. I wanted to help him; somebody had to help him." After a moment she said, "It's kind of hard to—*to respect* a man who's made a sap of himself over somebody you know is just no good. I mean, it kind of makes you wonder what he sees in you."

Young said, "But we weren't talking about respect."

Bonita flushed. After a moment she began to wrap up the cleaned brush in a piece of brown paper.

"We're supposed to forget everything," she said. "That man said that as far as we're concerned it simply didn't happen. That's nice to know, isn't it?"

Young said, "Uh-huh."

"They're telling the newspapers it was just an accident. Now that they've found—Larry's body, they're making it look as if he and the others just took a midnight ride in the boat and it blew up."

Young asked, "Did the guy say if he'd found whatever it was he was looking for?"

"I think he found it. But he didn't say definitely, and we're not supposed to talk about it or even think about it. I wonder what—" She checked herself and laughed. "You know, I can't help thinking it's kind of silly. All this secrecy. Grown men running around saying hush-hush-forget-you-ever-saw-me. I'd better keep quiet, hadn't I? I sound positively subversive." She glanced at Young. "What will they do to you?"

"I don't know," he said. "The way I get it, I have a reprimand coming for being late in reporting and for getting involved in this mess. But, thanks to your build-up, they seem to think I deserve a commendation for what happened on the boat."

BONITA said rather stiffly, "I just told the truth about what you did. I wasn't trying to build you up. Why should I?"

Young said, "Well, whatever you told them, it helped. I guess I just report for duty and keep my mouth shut and watch out nobody else picks me up along the road."

She fitted the lid carefully to the can of varnish and pressed it down before she spoke. "Do you know where you're going from Norfolk?"

"Not yet."

"Are you—worried about it?"

He glanced at her, ready to tell her to mind her own business; but something in her attitude stopped him. He realized that there was a complicated kind of relationship between them; it wasn't entirely friendly yet, but it gave her the right to ask.

"Not much," he said, not quite truthfully. "What good is worrying going to do?"

"Would you—be relieved if they gave you shore duty?"

He looked at her irritably. As a matter of fact, he knew that he would be extremely disappointed if he were given shore duty; he had gone through a lot to make a very small stride toward regaining confidence in himself, and he did not want to lose what he had gained, sitting behind a desk somewhere. But you couldn't say a thing like that; it would sound phony.

He said, "Did you ever know a naval officer—aside from a few eager beavers—who didn't want a nice soft berth ashore? What am I supposed to be—a hero just because I kicked over a can of gasoline?"

Bonita looked at him steadily for a moment; then she laughed. "All right, sailor," she said, rising, and he realized it was time to go. She wiped her hand clean and held it out to him, a little awkwardly. "Well," she said, "well, drop around sometime when you're on leave."

Taking her hand, he understood that it was not a casual invitation but one she had thought over carefully, deciding whether or not she would like to see him again.

He said, just as carefully, "Thanks. I might do that."

As he stepped up to the dock and bent over to put his shoes back on, the sloop's auxiliary motor started up abruptly behind him. The sound startled him, but he finished tying the laces—clumsily because of the sling—before he straightened up and looked around. Bonita was casting off the dock line forward, not looking at him. He realized that she had put him through a kind of test and was a little ashamed of herself. He grinned and threw off the line aft, dropping it into the cockpit, and walked away up the dock, feeling better than he had for a long time.

THE END

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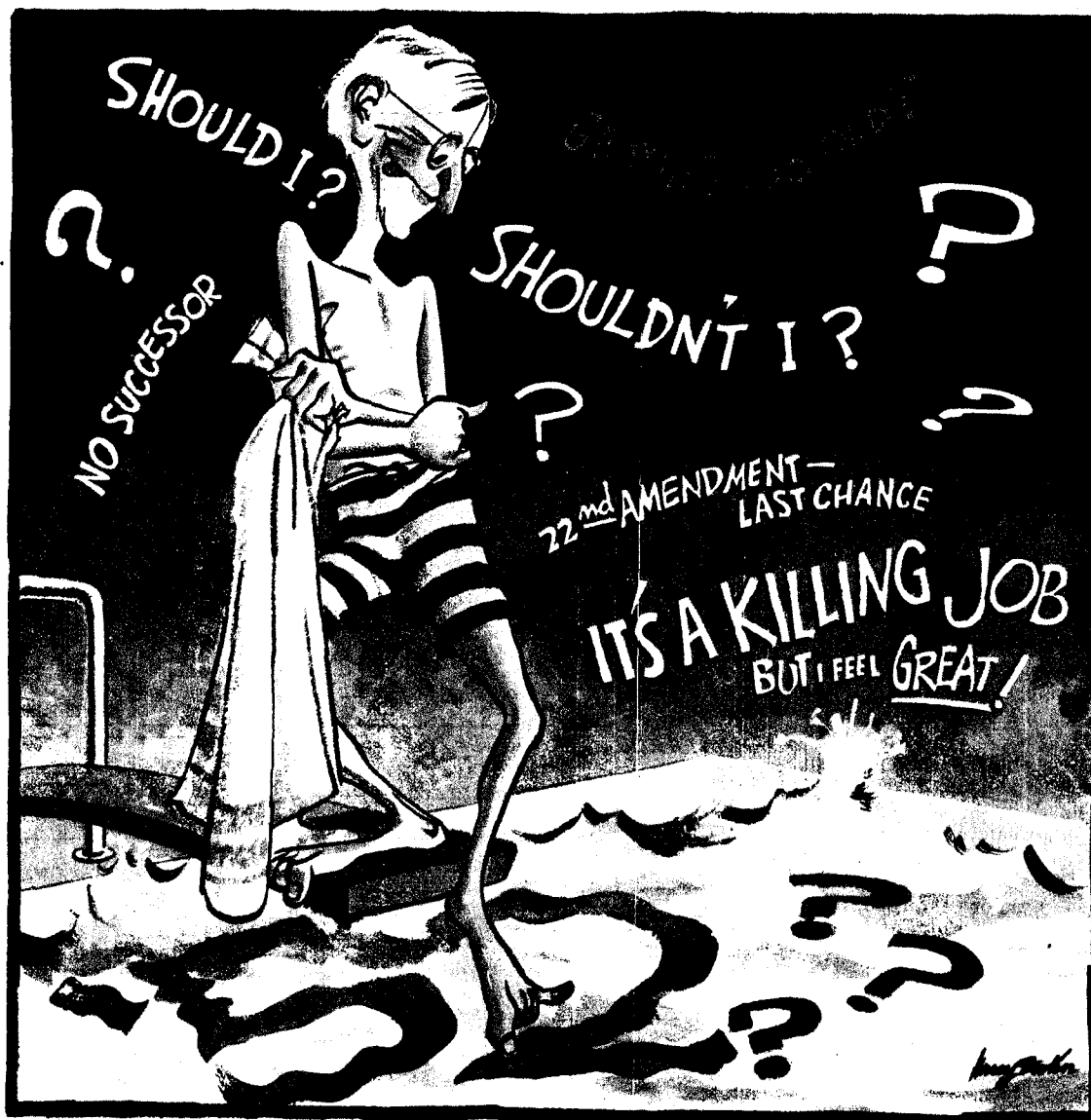
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HARRY DEVLIN

Please Don't Do It, Harry

ABOUT A YEAR FROM NOW the country will know who the starters are in the 1952 Presidential race. We think Mr. Truman will be one of them. We hope he will not be.

The chief reason for our thinking that the President will run again is the fact that he is not grooming a successor. In this he resembles his predecessor. President Roosevelt, over a period of 12 years, refused to designate a political heir and, in the end, gave a casual and negative nod to Mr. Truman, a running mate picked by party leaders for his casual and negative inoffensiveness and availability.

Mr. Truman's closest associates are certainly not Presidential timber. And we can imagine that, for this very reason, they are urging him to make another try for it. It is to their interest to do so. As things stand now, they never had it so good. And if the President doesn't run again, they will be faced with no alternative but the dreary prospect of having to go to work.

There are several reasons why we believe that Mr. Truman should retire in January of '53. The least important, probably, is his age, although he would be nearly 73 at the end of a second full term. There are plenty of men—men like Churchill, Hoover, Baruch, MacArthur—who have passed the Biblical deadline of earthly life without loss of wisdom or usefulness. But they are not in the Presidency. And the Presidency today is a killing job.

The comfortable days are gone when Calvin Coolidge could take a serene after-luncheon nap in his White House office. The weight of office certainly killed Franklin Roosevelt after 13 burdensome years. Mr. Truman, by seeking another term, would be courting the hazards of a 12-year stretch. His chipper self-confidence today seems to denote good health. He owes it to himself to preserve it.

The chipper self-confidence, however, is also a sign of what this magazine believes is Mr. Truman's temperamental unfitness for four more years in the White House. He has shown, with passing time, an increasing testiness and sense of infallibility which his natural gifts would hardly seem to warrant. In minor positions he has countenanced pettiness and buffoonery on the part of his personal staff, and kept men on in spite of plenty of signs of public revulsion. He has maintained a too-steadfast loyalty to men whose offenses were far more serious than the abuse of a favored position in the inner circle.

The President's sense of infallibility, it seems to us, has led him to tailor policies to fit politics on matters of major importance. We recall, in this connection, an article by Dr. Edwin G. Nourse, which Collier's published early last year, in which the distinguished economist explained why he had to resign as the first chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Dr. Nourse wrote that during his three years on the

council, Mr. Truman never spent a single hour with his advisers, nor did he indicate that he had ever read their reports. It was also made plain to Dr. Nourse that he was expected to make his economic theories support Mr. Truman's party line. He was not to be a seeker after economic truth but an administration stooge.

This same sense of infallibility seems lately to have made Mr. Truman confuse disagreement with disloyalty. John Hersey, in his profile of Mr. Truman in the *New Yorker* magazine, quoted the President as saying the following, on the day of the first big Chinese push: "We can blame the liars for the fix we are in this very morning. It's at least partly the result of their vicious, lying campaign. What has appeared in our press, along with the defeat of our leaders in the Senate (in the 1950 elections), has made the world believe that the American people are not behind our foreign policy—and I don't think the Communists would ever have dared to do this thing in Korea if it hadn't been for that belief."

That strikes us as a remarkable triumph of partisanship over statesmanship. And elsewhere in the article, Mr. Hersey credited Mr. Truman with this observation: "I tell you, we've got to stop this name-calling. It weakens us here in this country. What we've got to do is persuade people to lay off personalities and talk about issues."

The speaker, it might be recalled, is the author of the much-publicized letter to a Washington music critic, and the awardee of honorary S.O.B. degrees to newspapermen. He is the man who has variously described those who question his judgment as "selfish interests" (mentioned 18 times in a short Labor Day address), "timid people," "penny pinchers," "old fogies," "sour critics," "privileged few" and "robber barons."

Such impatience with even honest differences of opinion does not increase public confidence in the quality and firmness of national leadership. And it does not tend to heal the division in public opinion which is based primarily on issues rather than on personalities.

Then there is the matter of the 22d Amendment. Mr. Truman is technically exempt from the limit of two Presidential terms which this amendment imposes. We do not think that he is morally exempt. For the people have given notice that they now consider that it was a mistake to let Mr. Roosevelt break the no-third-term tradition. He stayed on far beyond his peak of strength and efficiency. But as he grew weaker, the desire of those about him to perpetuate themselves in power grew stronger, and remains strong today. It is a natural desire but, after so long a time, an unhealthy one. We see its effects all about us, in gangster-ridden political machines, in Mr. Truman's pardon of such offenders as Boston's Mayor Curley, in the smelly scandal of Democratic politics in Missouri, in unpunished corruption, in the general laxity of political morals.

A year from next January Mr. Truman will have served less than three months short of two full terms. That is enough. Since the wishes of his countrymen regarding Presidential tenure have been so clearly expressed, we hope he will accede to them. The country, we believe, is badly in need of a change, and wants one. (In saying this, we are not coming out for a yet-unchosen, sight-unseen Republican candidate.)

Collier's has often differed with Mr. Truman, but we have never questioned his patriotism. We now believe that it is his patriotic duty to retire at the end of his present term.

Collier's for July 14, 1951