



Mask for Danger

By DONALD HAMILTON

Why should Young believe anything Elizabeth Wilson told him? She had killed one man and kidnaped another. Did he have any reason to believe she wouldn't kill him?

The Story: Late at night, LIEUTENANT DAVID YOUNG was hitchhiking south to Norfolk to report for active duty with the Navy. He'd had one war, and he wasn't happy about going back in for another.

Young never got to Norfolk. He picked up a ride with a man who introduced himself as LAWRENCE WILSON. Wilson was interested in boats, and showed Young a picture of a sailboat he'd designed for a girl called BUNNY. Young leaned forward to see it better, and then something struck him on the back of the head. He came to, much later, in a Maryland hospital, with his face and head in heavy bandages. He had been found in the wrecked car, dressed in Wilson's clothes. The nurses and doctors were calling him "Mr. Wilson." There were even flowers from Bunny. A DR. BOB HENSHAW came into the room, greeted him familiarly as "Larry," and had him carried to a car outside. The driver of the car was Wilson's wife, ELIZABETH, and she said, "I reckon you must feel like you're being kidnaped, Mr. Young."

He woke up next morning in Wilson's bedroom, overlooking Chesapeake Bay. Bunny, despite Elizabeth's protests, forced her way in to see him. Elizabeth stood behind her with a gun, and Young knew Bunny would be in danger if she revealed that she knew he wasn't Wilson. But she gave no sign. After she'd gone, Elizabeth told Young that Bunny's full name was BONITA DECKER, and that Wilson planned to marry her after he and Elizabeth were divorced.

Dr. Henshaw, who was obviously deeply involved with Elizabeth, told Young she hadn't seen Wilson since he was fired from his government job for security reasons a year before. He threatened to expose Young as a Navy deserter, and offered him money to go on masquerading as Wilson. "You must impersonate Mr. Wilson for a while," Henshaw said, "because he is dead."

II

YOU say Wilson's dead?" Young whispered. Dr. Henshaw looked at the doctor's black bag he was holding as if he had never seen it before and was mildly curious about what might be inside it. Then he set it gently back on the dresser and thrust his hands deep into his pockets, facing Young, who watched him from the bed.

"Mrs. Wilson called me," the doctor said, "late that night; the night her husband tried to kill you. When I arrived, she was close to hysterics. Wilson was lying in the front hall with a bullet through his head. I made certain of his condition; then I got her to tell me what had happened. Her husband had forced his way into the house with a wild story of running away from something and killing somebody. He was almost incoherent at first; then he had a drink or two and calmed down a little. He said that he had thrown his pursuers off the track; he had tricked them neatly; he had fixed it so everybody was going to think he was dead. But he had to have a place to hide out until he could leave the country. There was something he had to wait for, he told Elizabeth; she had to hide him until it came. He was abusive and threatening; if she didn't help him, if she let him be caught, he was going to see

In Elizabeth's hand was the little pistol he had seen that morning. It was, presumably, the gun with which she had shot her husband

that she was dragged into whatever trouble came to him. She stood up to him. She said that since he was her husband she would not call the police, but that he had to leave. He struck her. She ran upstairs and got the gun and told him again to leave. He laughed at her and tried to take the gun away from her. The gun went off."

Henshaw walked abruptly across the room to the drawing board in the corner and stood for a moment staring down at the sketch the dead man had left there.

Presently he said, "Consider our position, Mr. Young. Think of the terrible ordeal Mrs. Wilson was facing. The police and newspapers— Here was a dead man at her feet to whom she owed nothing. As a husband he had treated her contemptibly, there was evidence to indicate that he had been disloyal to his country or he would not have been asked to resign his position with the Navy Department, and he was a self-confessed murderer. *And this man had just been bragging how cleverly he had used another man's body to fake his own 'death' in an automobile accident!* Can you blame us for taking the easy way out? I helped her dispose of her husband's body, Mr. Young. Not very ethical for a physician, I suppose, but sometimes the man takes precedence over the doctor."

"She waited here to hear from the state police about the 'accident.' When the telephone rang it was, instead, the Rogerstown Hospital calling to tell her that her 'husband' had been seriously injured, but was going to be all right." Henshaw laughed briefly. "You can imagine our feelings, Mr. Young! We had just disposed of the body of the real Larry Wilson. It was too late to retreat. All we could do was wait for some strange man to wake up in the hospital and arouse the police by giving his real name and accusing Larry of trying to kill him. When you didn't speak out, when it became apparent that you were keeping quiet for reasons of your own—"

Young started to protest, but checked himself. "—we took the chance of bringing you here," the doctor said. "Larry had hoped to use you to prove that he was dead. We thought we could persuade you to help us prove that he was still alive."

"I see," Young whispered. "So you're offering me five thousand dollars to stay here and keep on making like Larry Wilson so nobody'll know he's been killed."

"Yes."

"And after a while, Mrs. Wilson's 'husband' just goes on a trip somewhere and doesn't come back."

"That's right."

"What if I say no?" Young whispered. "What if I don't want to spend the rest of my life waiting for somebody to tap me on the shoulder and take me back to answer a charge of deserting from the U.S. Navy? Right now, in spite of your fancy psychology, Doc, I'm just an officer with a good record who's a couple of days late in reporting for duty because he got smashed up in an accident. They're not going to send me to Portsmouth for that. But if I take your five thousand bucks and beat it for good—"

The doctor turned away from the drawing board and came back to the dresser; there was something annoying, Young thought, in the way the older man never seemed to stay still very long when you looked right at him. Now Henshaw stood by the

dresser, nervously stuffing tobacco into an ancient pipe with a curved stem; abruptly he straightened up and shoved the pipe back into his coat pocket.

"I guess I'm not a very good conspirator, Mr. Young," he said. "This is pretty far out of my line. I confess it hasn't helped my digestion any." He looked at Young for a moment, as if he could read the younger man's expression through the mask of bandages. "I'm afraid you don't understand the situation clearly. You can't refuse to help us. I—I warned you I'd stop at nothing to protect Mrs. Wilson—"

"Go ahead and protect her, Doc," Young said. "Just call the shore patrol first and have them come and get me."

"Very few physicians like to be called Doc, Mr. Young," the doctor said quietly. "And if I call anybody, it will not be the shore patrol but the local police, to arrest you for murder."

Young pushed himself up in the bed.

"Don't be stubborn, Mr. Young," the doctor said. "Can't you see that I may have to make a choice between you and Mrs. Wilson? And do you really think I'd let her be arrested by the police when I can give them you?"

"But—"

"If I do, who's going to believe you when you accuse her?" the doctor asked softly. "You don't seem to realize your position, Mr. Young. You're the man who was found in Lawrence Wilson's wrecked car, wearing his clothes, with his watch on your wrist and his wallet in your pocket. There was quite a bit of money in the wallet, as I recall. Who's going to believe that Mr. Wilson, whose family has lived around here for generations, staged an unprovoked attack on a stranger he'd picked up along the road, changed clothes with this man, and then came running home to be shot to death by his own wife? Do you think the police will pay any attention to this crazy yarn, when the logical theory is that it was the hitchhiker—a man panic-stricken at the thought of being called back into the armed forces—who murdered Mr. Wilson for his car and clothes and money, and then, perhaps injured in the struggle, cracked up the car trying to get away? And then, waking up in the hospital to find himself identified as the man he'd killed, he didn't dare speak out."

After a moment Young whispered, "They'd want the body, Doc. To make it good, you'd have to give them the body. Not around here, where I couldn't possibly have hid it, but somewhere along the highway—"

Henshaw picked up his bag. "How do you know where I put the body, Mr. Young? And suppose it's never found—is that going to help you a great deal? Even if you're not convicted of murder, you'll still find yourself spending most of the remainder of your life in jail on lesser charges. Think it over, Mr. Young." He went out.

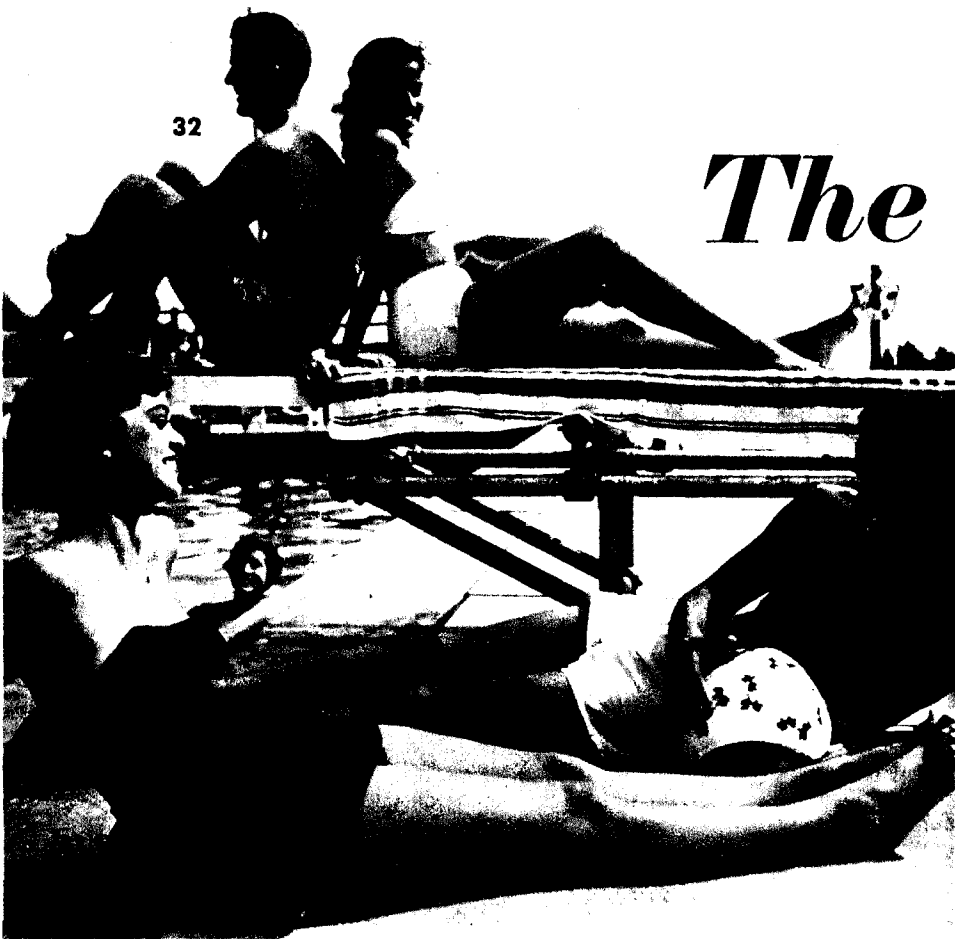
After the door had closed, Young stirred, pushing himself painfully along the bed to where he could look out through the open window at the foot of it. He crouched there, waiting. Presently the doctor came out the front door, almost directly below him, and walked down the brick steps to the parked car without haste: a stocky middle-aged man in a brown suit that needed pressing. He put the bag away into the rear of the car and stood for a moment deliberately (Continued on page 36)

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD FORSBURG

The Y.M.C.A. - A Century

Now 100 years old, the organization operates camps, gyms, colleges, playgrounds, fights juvenile crime. And of its 3,650,000 members, 300,000 are women

By JHAN and JUNE ROBBINS

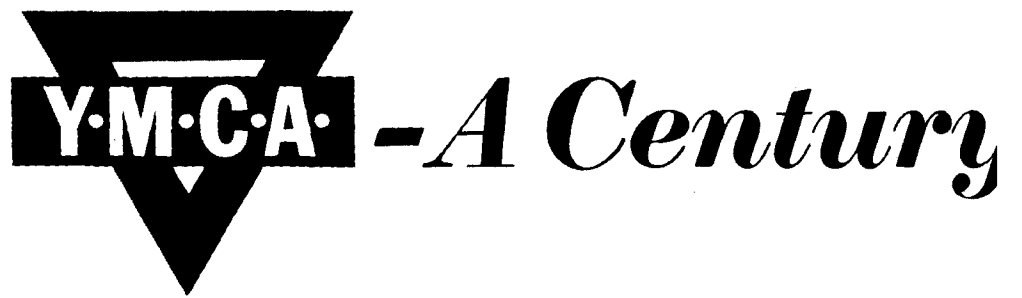
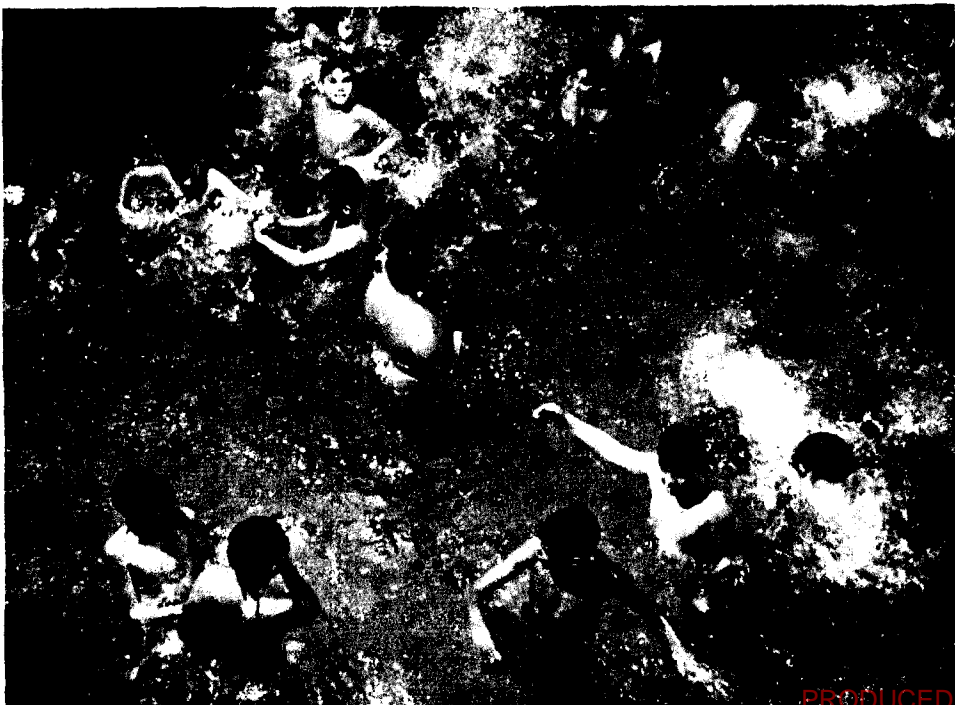


Providing vacation spots for young adults as well as children is a major activity. This happy scene is at the Reading, Pa., Y center



Indian Guides leaders present a historical pageant for children at Y Camp Copneconic (Bread from Water). The camp is at Flint, Michigan

The ol' tiled swimmin' hole is a feature of Y buildings the country over. Last year, in 600 of them, a half million were taught to swim



MOTORING through the Midwest a few months ago, a middle-aged businessman brightened visibly as the lights of Joliet, Illinois, loomed up on the highway. Rounding a corner a few minutes later, he was even happier to encounter the neon sign of the local Y.M.C.A. The day had been dry and dusty, and Y's the country over are famous for their showers.

The attractive, modern lobby of the building was deserted when he entered but, with the assurance of an old Y member, he shouldered his bag and headed upstairs.

A few seconds later he descended hastily, his face beet-red, and scuttled out on the sidewalk. He grabbed the arm of a local policeman.

"What goes on in this town?" he demanded. "That's the Y.M.C.A. over there and it's full of women!"

For nearly a century, while many other organizations yielded to the foot-in-the-door maneuverings of the ladies, the Young Men's Christian Association, by virtue of its very name, succeeded in remaining exclusively male. But the struggle, though prolonged, was not victorious. Several years ago, women were permitted to join. This year, celebrating its 100th anniversary in this country, the Y looked over its membership roster and discovered that of its 3,650,000 members and participants almost 300,000 are women.

Many of its activities are coeducational, and a few Y buildings have "ladies' day" once or twice a week when men are absolutely not admitted to the buildings of the Young Men's Christian Association. In Joliet, Illinois, the women have a brand-new \$300,000 building all their own. Next door is the older, less stream-

lined edifice still reserved for men. It is not yet referred to locally as the "men's branch."

The confusion in nomenclature resulting from the admission of females to membership doesn't bother anyone at the Y.M.C.A. Nor were they disturbed when the Young Women's Christian Association, their unaffiliated counterpart, announced that they were opening some of their clubs to men. Thus far, no extensive raiding has taken place on either side.

The Y.M.C.A.'s move, according to officials of the organization, was spurred partly from a genuine desire to share its enviable physical and cultural equipment with women in communities where separate and equal facilities did not exist. Another motive was the same one that impels movie houses to give away free dishes. Young men are fond of young women, the Y.M.C.A. has discovered. They are more pliable when the gentler sex is around and far more likely to be interested in programs stressing self-improvement and community service. And many leaders believe that a one-sex organization of youths and young adults cannot be fully effective in character education and development.

Eager to Sign Up New Members

In the century of brotherhood which the Y.M.C.A. is now celebrating in the U.S. and Canada, Y leaders have worked with the purposefulness of frontier missionaries. In the early days a few zealots even met trainloads of young men coming into the cities to seek their fortunes and signed them on the dotted line as fast as they could scribble. Some stood outside church doors and enthusiastically signed

U.S. trains run on schedule because workers in Railroad Y's wake the crews in time to make trips. Here men rest at Y in Pennsylvania Station, New York City

