

NUGGET

THE MAN'S WORLD

MAY SIXTY CENTS



a new story by
PIETRO DI DONATO

incredible wizardry from
THE WORLD OF WAX

The noble cigar:
MAN'S LAST REFUGE

mostly outrageous:
MANY OTHER THINGS!



April 13, 1895, at ten in the morning the Trapani courthouse was crowded for the trial of the mafia monks.

Three Capuchins and a ^{CRETAN} Certin youth had been apprehended as the ring that had terrorized the Trapani, Sicily area.

Curious outsiders, Italian and foreign, had come to take in the trial, conviction, sentence and execution.

On the mainland this trial would have made for a commercial and festive atmosphere welcoming the tourists and their purses, but, the people of Trapani regarded the visitors as impertinent intruders upon the scene of a strictly private Sicilian affair.

The courthouse and jail had been a small mosque, recalling the days of the Arabic domination. Except for the section set apart for dignitaries and the nobility, the squalid Court of Assizes was packed with peasants, fishermen, salt and sulphur mine workers and their women folk.

The Court was to be presided over by the King's President and jury from Rome, as the case involved also the murder of a Carabineer, one of the King's Dragoon Guards. Furthermore, it would have been impossible to have assembled a Sicilian President and jury as the local authorities well-respected and knew the vengeance of the mafia.

The high and the low studied each other, the society ladies, painted, powdered and perfumed, wearing the latest Parisian fashions, and their gentlemen in British suits, impeccable linen, cravats and polished boots, and the native women all in plain black cotton and mantillas, and their men in homespun black woolen suits and hobnailed shoes, many of whom had heavy golden pendants dangling from their ears. Some of the Trapani women were tall with blue, clear Norman eyes, others with faces seen on Greek coins, a few with flaming red hair and slate-colored eyes, descendants of Phonician pirates, but most were dark with ebony curled hair, deep-set eyes like African olives, aquiline nose, even white teeth and perfect red mouth of the Saracen.

Before the trial began the closeness was intolerable. The sirocco, the burning southeast wind hailing from the deserts of Africa, was blanketing the air of the courtroom. A thick stench, a mixture of stable and sweat, a stink of goats, a fustiness of filthy animals, and the throat-drying acrid smell of sulphur, was filling the room. The Trapanesi hardly noticed it, but the outsiders, the nosey, busy-bodies, were uncomfortable and could barely breathe.

SICILIAN VESPERS by Pietro di Donato

Catalano of Trapani, lawyer and avowed Siciliophile, had chosen to represent the accused though he knew it was hopeless and would end in a public hanging, except possibly for the young barefoot defendant, Manuzza, who was not a monk but an orphaned ward of the Capuchins. Catalano dreamed of an independent Sicilian Republic, and was the author of the anti-Monarchy diatribes signed, "Sicilian Gadfly."

The Carabineers, with their double-breasted dark blue, brass-buttoned uniforms, belted sabers and Napoleonic hats, led the chained prisoners, white-bearded Father Superior All Saints, greybeards Brothers Crucifix and Blessing, and young Manuzza into the caged dock. Sixteen year old Manuzza, dressed in peasant clothes, was short and swarthy with sunken eyes and a square fierce face. He was called "Manuzza" because his left arm was considerably shorter than his right. Some of the women, shading their eyes with mantillas, sighed, "Ah, the poor motherless child...!"

Behind and above the solemnly robed President was a painting of a dark breasty Madonna suckling a fat Arab urchin.

When Petrosilo, the Inspector who had prepared the trap for the monks, appeared, the people looked at him coldly and made the sign of the evil eye against him. Petrosilo had been a puppeteer in Trapani, afterwards an actor, and known as "the man of many disguises." Then, pretending to study theatre in Milan, he became one of the King's secret police. Amongst the spectators, Petrosilo's brother, Nunzio, a police-hater like the rest, spat contemptuously on the floor in his direction, and the people nodded approval. A woman whispered, "Someday God will pay that Judas, Petrosilo, for this!"

After the first formalities, the jury sworn in, the prisoners identified, the President ordered the Clerk to read the charges. The prisoners were charged with having committed gross violations of human law and offenses against the sovereign state with acts of willful and deliberate deception, intimidation, extortion and murders.

Petrosilo, witness for the State, related the anatomy of the web of circumstances, clues and actions that enmeshed the criminals. In secrecy he had gathered facts from mafia-victimized owners of olive, almond and grape estates, salt works, sulphur mines, commerce and tuna fishing fleets who fearfully and reluctantly confided to him.

Throughout the years the extortions were of the same pattern; a note wrapped

around a stone, thrown through the window after midnight, with a message written in blood demanding an exorbitant sum of gold, or kidnaping, torture and death, and signed, "The Thirteen."

"The Thirteen" were reputedly the brigand Titta Marullo and his twelve "disciples." Whereabouts in the mountain fastness were "The Thirteen?" Had the people seen Titta Marullo? Living persons and not legends commit crimes. Whenever questioned the people withdrew into their shells. Many of the poor when in dire distress mysteriously received the help of money and would not reveal from whence. The people obeyed the code of "Omerta"—that is—"the turning of the back" upon police interrogation. Certain victims, recalcitrant and refusing to pay the demands of the mafia, disappeared. The leg and boot of wealthy La Rosa was found by fishermen in the belly of a shark; the skeleton of the landowner Corsi was discovered in a lime pit—rosary in hand. A consistent characteristic of the pattern was that somehow Padre All Saints' aid was sought and he always played the heroic, compassionate, endangered intermediary; alleging to meet the mafia in the obscurity of the deep woods blindfolded to prayerfully negotiate for the wellbeing of the victim.

Petrosilo testified, "I consulted with Dr. Cesare Lombroso, the noted criminologist, and his ^{suspicions} ~~suspicion~~ tallied with mine regarding the apparent "good samaritan" monks of Trapani.

Petrosilo painstakingly traced marked gold pieces back to Padre All Saints, and uncovered that ransom monies had gone into investments and properties on the mainland in the name of one "Antonio Soma." The hushed description of "Antonio Soma," though in secular garb, was identical with Padre All Saints. Petrosilo realized that the only way to nail the monks was to catch them in an actual deed. He had to bide his time. The opportunity came when young Orza, an impoverished noble, returned to Trapani with a greedy, elderly rich wife, Gesualdina. While Orza spent his time as a playboy she bought and acquired the monopoly of the irrigation system and heartlessly raised the price of the scarce and precious water vital to the small farmers. The Orzas received a 'note' with the dread circle and centered dot from "The Thirteen." Gesualdina contacted Petrosilo. He told her to pretend to comply—to beg Padre All Saints to intercede and bargain down the sum demanded—to play his "most Christian" part and see that she saved money and that no harm came to her and Orza. When she visited Padre All Saints and threw herself

in distress at his feet Padre All Saints was pleased by the seemingly evident prospect of easy success, and bestowed upon her his reverent blessings.

With his usual consummate acting Padre All Saints plied back and forth from the Orzas to the pretended "Thirteen."

He informed them that God had heard their prayers—"The Thirteen" would accept a lesser amount and not hurt a hair of their heads. The date was set for Padre All Saints to pick up the gold and placate the terrible "Thirteen."

In reflecting, Padre All Saints felt it had all gone too smoothly, for he knew Gesualdina valued money above all things—above life itself. He sensed her duplicity—decided to take no chances—to go an hour or so earlier—destroy the Orzas, and rifle their riches to the tune of more than that which he had sought.

He, the two monks and Manuzza arrived at the Orzas at dusk, before the time they were anticipated by Petrosilo.

They swiftly cut the throats of Orza and his wife, and were eagerly about to search for the gold. Hearing the Orzas agonizing screams, Petrosilo and his Carabineers came upon the monks through the door and windows. In their desperate attempt to escape the monks succeeded in killing one of the Carabineers. It took six staunch Carabineers to overpower and bind the white-bearded Padre All Saints.

The monks loot was found in the Capuchin catacombs cached among the hooded, seated dead. Prodded about other crimes and of Titta Marullo and the "Twelve Disciples," they remained silent.

"You hooked your fish," said Padre All Saints, sermon-like, "The weir you fashioned, worked. You netted us in the act of murder. With your God-given eyes you saw us suppress Christian lives. The rest follows, ^{litany} ~~litany~~. I played with the fires of hell. I got scorched. You will hang me. There's no more to be said except, that I will not hang easily or in a pleasing manner as since birth I never had a neck."

Standing in the dock, not bothering to flick the swarms of flies from his head and face, Manuzza drew pity from even the Court. As foundlings he and a twin brother had been abandoned at the entrance of the monastery, and raised by the monks.

"I obey what I am told. I was told that God Almighty is my father and Mary the Madonna is my mother. At the feast of Santa Rosalia, before the fireworks, for a penny a gypsy told me my brother and me came from two almonds placed in the belly-button of a virgin—but I am too

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VESPER (Continued from page 24) stupid to understand. The Brothers order me, "Manuzza, be humble like the ass, and stamp on your forehead 'Silence—Obedience.' They say my brother, who is dead, is a saint. I believe just what I am told, and yet, when me and my brother slept together on straw he wet me." His words provoked laughter that irked the dignity of the Court.

In the rear of the courtroom, her beautiful face hidden by a mourning veil, was Rosa Maria, the clandestine wife of Padre All Saints, who had fathered her three girls. To her he was "Papa." For years he had lived the dual life of holy man and devil. Twice a month, on donkey back, and attended by Manuzza, he left the monastery and went up to the mountain wilderness, supposedly to bring the sacraments and charity to the isolated shepherd and goatherd families. It was said that Padre All Saints went like Moses up the mountain to talk to God.

In the distant past upon this mountain, among the gigantic bleak limestone rock the shepherds worshiped Venus Erycina, who by moonlight was adored in erotic mysteries.

High on the dizzying slope, scanning the African sea, under the parching sun, amongst the sprinkling of almond trees, aged, gnarled oaks, olive trunks, sage and wild mint, caper and liquorice and tall poplars, in the side of the mountain, part cave and hut of dry rock walls with roof of thatch, lived Rosa Maria, her daughters Stella, Luna and Terra, and her mother Maragrazia. Originally, widow Maragrazia serviced the monk, but when Rosa Maria became fourteen Maragrazia relinquished her position and ordered Rosa Maria to go to bed with the monk.

When Rosa Maria was unwell Maragrazia would bathe herself and get in bed with "Papa."

In Maragrazia's skyey roost there was a surplus of the good things of life and not the stark traditional want that had been her lot before "Papa." With his visits his ass was laden with salted fish, flour, olive oil, wine, condiments, delicacies, fine petticoats, dresses and gold; for which Maragrazia counted her blessings. Upon arriving "Papa" would fondle Rosa Maria and their three daughters, help Manuzza unload the sacks from the ass, and change from his brown hood and cassock and sandals to the shepherd's easy rough wear.

The nearest neighbors, an arduous half hour's climb away, were the gentle young shepherd Lollo Zirafa and his wife Arabella. In Rosa Maria's eyes Lollo was comely as the morning sun.

Lollo and Titta Marullo had been felici-

citous little godfathers to each other since childhood. Titta Marullo, the feared mafia brigand, the dangerous man of hair-trigger cock's temper, knife and gun, had an unswerving brotherly affection for Lollo and trusted him with his very life.

"Papa" was the haloed boss of Titta Marullo and his men. He was infallible. Absolute respect and obedience was accorded him.

Titta Marullo's hideout was farther up the mountain near the snow-line of Mount Venus in the large "Cave of the Ear," a cavern almost inaccessible and so formed by time and nature that footsteps and voices from far below could be distinctly heard.

"Papa" reveled as a pagan on the mountain. With Rosa Maria and his band he conversed in a dark emotional tongue spoken with ancient melody. Away from monastery and chapel; removed from the social order of Christianity's Judiac conscience, with Venus' mountain as cathedral, and baldachino of blazing blue sky and mystic opal night "Papa" lived life's true vehemence of early man. For "Papa" whole lambs were spitted, dressed with mountain herbs and roasted over the glowing ashes of almond wood, and wine was drunk from goatskins.

Rosa Maria was revolted by "Papa" in bed; like having a horny, virile old goat atop her. But "Papa" had Satan's power that fascinated, conquered and ruled and made her have climaxes—as her heart and flesh and dream said, "Lollo, Lollo."

"Papa" lectured her as though she were an understanding postulant. His thoughts were as real and cruel as birth pains, burning brush, jagged rocks. On the mountain he was the Anti-Christ, his own God, the solipsist saying, "The Gods are unicorns whom no one has ever seen, nor has a single soul come back from the dead. We are all children of the incest of Eve and her sons, or the issue of monkeys."

It is a life of eat or be eaten, as in the jungle, sea, and on field of warring men. What else does the good shepherd care for and raise his sheep if not to shear them for wool and then butcher them for his belly's meat? My world begins and ends with me." To Rosa Maria he grinningly said, "The face is the index of desires. The eye betrays. Titta Marullo burns and erects for you. But you lust for Lollo. There was only one way: if Lollo Titta Marullo will not kill me to obtain you because I am his brain. After I die Tita Marullo will take you. Then his life will be in jeopardy for you will undo him as your thighs and belly and fig ache for Lollo."

There was "Papa" in his hooded brown Capuchin habit, chained hand foot, sitting on the bench in the caged dock. With death imminent he still wore his chuckling enigmatic mask. Rosa Marie's sole feeling was of obliged gratitude for the security and daughters he had provided. She fingered the many gold coins sewn in layers in her petticoat. She would be released soon from "Papa."

Bloodthirsty Titta Marullo would immediately claim her. With Lollo in her breast she would be Titta Marullo's chattel, living the uncertain life of the hunted. Titta Marullo had blind faith in Lillo. There was only one way: if Lollo would have it; to violate the code and betray him and The Twelve to the police, and flee to America.

Defense counsel Catalano addressed the court.

"If you depart from our island without having realized the mentality, passion and psyche of the Sicilian, you will have defeated the aspiration of your ethical, moral and universal aim."

"Bravo" shouted a peasant, "We don't know what the manure you're talking about, but give the mainlanders hell anyway!"

"Sicily had been the victim of tyranny longer than any people on earth. The Sicilian has borne the oppression of the Greek, Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine, Arabian, Norman, Swabian, Angevin and Spanish swords. For my repressed, socially crushed people the mafia evolved as a secret government with an honorable code of silence, family structure, blood rites and inner society of their very own—"

The President reminded Catalano that they were not in a university

"Mr. President, I do not condone the crimes of the accused, nor do I suppose the Court will mercifully spare their lives, but this is a circumstance of Italians judging Sicilians. The men of the mafia come from and are abetted by the impoverished masses. The illiterate Sicilian instinctively knows more about the poetic realities of life than the educated and cultured He sees the God-created soil, laws, advantages and well-fed police in the hands of the rich. He knows he has been the hapless pawn of popes, emperors and insolent nobles. He dwells with gnawing hunger from the womb to the grave. Either he cowardly submits and starves, or manfully plays the brigand. He reasons, "Is there a difference between soldiers and thieves? As the King's soldier he is exposed to maiming and death without recompense for his family, and so as a fisherman, toiler of the earth or miner. Thus he asserts his fearless masculinity,

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SICILIAN VESPERS

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experience and exhilaration within the romantic adventures of the mafia. The good people in this courtroom do not feel sympathy for the murdered Gesualdina. Orza, a userer, an outsider who acquired the irrigation system by stealth and doubled the price of water, crucifying the small struggling farmers. Illustrious sirs, the common folk present are the very same souls of the Sicilian Vespers!"

The elegant people could not bear the heat, insects and strong smells. They left, content to sightsee until the hangings before departure.

Catalano, desirous of being the number one author of his beloved Sicily, lyricized the lowly Sicilian.

"He is not persuaded by logic but by surges of emotion. He is jealous of his independence and intolerant of any interference, has pride and disdain and when crossed by circumstances takes refuge in violent and terrible reaction. His woman must live cloistered in funeral black from head to foot, with baby at breast and rosary in hand. Our people though fatalists make a fable out of reality, in an atmosphere of sorcery, in a climate of satyrs, of Genesis and Apocalypse where man reveals his elementary and primordial impulses, the present being everything, and all life as an improvisation, encompassing and easily living between the pendulum of beatitudes and beastialities, and appreciating the devil out of respect to God who saw fit to create and perpetuate the devil."

Why, asked Catalano, had Garibaldi upon liberating the island from the Spaniards, opened all the prisons and let loose the convicts to roam and settle at will? Why had the Kingdom established in Sicily penal colonies for criminals from the mainland? After serving their sentences thousands of men of heady bold blood remained and married. All factors combined, what else could the world expect?

The following day, Holy Thursday, the President advised Catalano that neither God or the King were on trial but callous mafia killers. He forbade him further irrelevant rhetoric and commanded him to sum up the defense; the King's Court, Jury, and professional hangman being anxious to return home to the mainland for the Easter feast.

As a final gesture on behalf of the accused, Catalano appealed to the jury's Christian sensibilities.

Was not evil the other side of the human coin and related to good as night to day? Were not all happenings according to God's will? Were not all things and events predestined by the Creator for His

own reason?

Catalano told how much Padre All Saints had done for the once run down monastery and of his many compassionate and generous deeds for the poor. The spectators wept and cried, "Benedictions on him—it's true—the gospel truth!" But when he related of Manuzza's sickly wraith of a twin brother who had visions of the Trinity, was training for the priesthood, and called himself, Little Brother Fool of Christ, and of his malingering, sacrifice of self, angelic thoughts, and pathetic passing, the people broke out in furious lamentations.

Nevertheless, Manuzza was sentenced to thirty years at hard labor, and the monks were condemned to death.

By evening, Manuzza in leg and hand irons, with newly shaven head, and wearing the ill-fitting coarse striped suit of the convict, was carted off to the coast town penal colony of Noto.

That night by torchlight the gallows three were erected in the Piazza of the Saracens opposite the Church of the Most Precious Blood. The next morning, Good Friday, a regiment of the King's marksmen, the Bersaglieri, arrived to maintain order.

The people, to show their contempt for the Law stayed away from the proximity of the gallows. As usual on Good Fridays they performed "The Road To Calvary" the Via Dolorosa; men and boys inflicting superficially upon themselves "The Five Wounds," and with bleeding stigmata, and arms outstretched as though in crucifixion, trailed the "Procession Of The Mysteries," the carrying from the church and through the streets the life-size images of The Stations Of The Cross.

Padre All Saints and the two monks were confessed and given the last sacraments. Soldiers, sailors, the elite, the police, photographers, and foreign tourists assembled around the gallows.

From a distance Rosa Maria watched through her veil. As the death drums rolled, the old cleric she called "Papa," his hands bound behind his back, was led, grinning, up the steps to the scaffold. The two monks paralyzed with fright, had to be dragged and carried. The hangman placed their feet upon the trapdoors, and looped the nooses around their necks.

When the drums stopped rolling he sprang the trap-doors. The necks of the two monks snapped. Padre All Saints dangled and squirmed. Hanging could not kill him. He swung about like an acrobat gasping. Minutes passed with no results. The spectators were aghast and cried out for a merciful ending. The captain of the Bersaglieri consulted with the

President of the Court; hastily formed a firing squad; and at the fall of his saber they sent a roaring fusillade into Padre All Saints' heart.

Rosa Maria mounted her ass and rode toward the rugged mountain. That night Titta Marullo would take her. She had had respect for "Papa," but could not possibly have for Titta Marullo. He was the son of the deceased weird old shepherd, "Sheep-dung," who had lived highest up the mountain than any shepherd in a cave near the edge of perpetual snow where nested the eagles. It was surmised that "Sheep-dung" had had Manuzza and his twin brother by his own teen-age daughter, dark, brooding hairy Venus, and after delivering her himself left the twins at the entrance of the monastery.

Titta Marullo with his face of a vulture, ignorant and savage, tortured and killed victims for amusement. Would her growing daughters also be despoiled by Titta Marullo and the hunted men, and bear their marked and murderous children?

With all his cunning and lofty wisdom "Papa" had been caught and put to death. Surely, sooner or later the King's police would close in on the band at the mountain lair. She would either hang along with them or rot the rest of her life in jail.

She yearned for Lollo Zirafa. Lollo loved her and not his sterile wife, Arabella. Why shouldn't she and Lollo live like Christian human beings among the Sicilians in faraway America? Yes, she would give herself to Titta Marullo and artfully service him, and appease his moods and demands. At the right time she would take the great risk of making a bargain with Inspector Petrosilo. She and Lollo must go free at the price of the heads of Titta Marullo and The Twelve.

Where town met countryside was the fountain of Diana. Women and children awaited to fill their pitchers. It was said that the waters of the fountain would not mix with wine when drawn by women of doubtful virtue. Rosa Maria drank from the fountain and watered her ass. Past the fountain, alone and safe from recognition, she removed her veil. Her straight jet black hair, her face of slender Spanish cast, with deep-set black eyes, incomparable lips of the Saracen, and black mole starred on her cheek above the right side of her mouth, was piercingly lovely.

The road led up to an arid clayey plain shaggy with seared stubble. In the useless land were the bleached bones of an ass. Above her the unkind sun, and beneath, the brimstone earth. It was the high noon, that brought the "fiachezza," the weighting inert drab weariness, the

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feeling of indolence, or irritation, of hate that simmers and smoulders, and that cries for a sudden unrestrained violence of mind and flesh. At the foot of the mountain among the tangle of rock, thorny scrub, mulberries and cactus, her ass found the secret path.

If Titta Marullo were ever to suspect in the least her plan he would kill her as though she were a fly. In her world the informer was lower than Judas Escariot. With the ridding of Titta Marullo there was one place she and Lollo could escape to, America, and the seat of the Sicilians, called, "Mulberry Street." She had heard of the wretched woeful hunted of the mafia; sometimes sought by both police and mafia who were in the haven of America waxing fat and rich.

That night Titta Marullo would celebrate with wine his rise to "Papa's" place. He would get drunk, drag her to bed, rip off her clothes, bite her breasts, and rudely clutch her hind and thighs in his iron hands. She would play her game. She would grasp and bite him with feigned wildness, joy and laughter. And he would pay for his pleasure with his blood.

Titta Marullo spent the nights ravishing Rosa Maria and the days gaming and carousing with his men. He talked of migrating to another region, of joining and taking by force greener pastures of the mafia. But that was impossible with Petrosilo's Carabineers about, waiting to pounce on him. He learned that a wealthy Calabrian builder, Bellanca, had come to nearby Segesta with contracts for public works. He waited until Bellanca left for the mainland, then at night came down from the mountain with his band, broke into the villa and kidnaped Bellanca's youngest son and a nephew who was a religious novice. Signora Bellanca's screams and tears were to no avail. He gave her a week in which to provide the ransom. The hostages were blindfolded, gagged, tied to the backs of asses and brought to the Cave of the Ear. When Titta Marullo's men came for the money Signora Bellanca gave them half, bewailing that it was all she had.

The Calabrian rich were to be taught that the Sicilian mafia were not to be trifled with. He commanded the novice to write a note to the effect that until the entire sum was paid, plus the penalty of a new outfit of clothes and shoes for himself and his band, he would send back the hostages piece by bloody piece. Signora Bellanca sent the other half of the gold promptly, and set about to sew shirts and trousers for Titta Marullo. At night, after Titta Marullo had had her, and he and

his men were sprawled in drunken slumber under the trees, Rosa Maria crept to the side of the hostages in the cave. She fed them and confided that she too was a victim and weepingly deplored her hunted life. "I swear on the heads of my innocent children that I will risk my life to be freed from Titta Marullo and live as a Christian. After you are returned to safety, reach Inspector Perosilo and tell him to meet me the following Saturday, disguised as a priest in the Confessional of the Church of the Most Precious Blood."

In the shadow of the Confessional Rosa Maria conspired with Petrosilo the fate of Titta Marullo. It was Titta Marullo's habit to dine Sunday evenings with his soul-trusted little godfather, Lollo Zirafa. And it would be there in the hut of Lollo that the betrayal would take place. Under the veil of the Confessional Petrosilo gave Rosa Maria the packet of powder with which to dope Titta Marullo's wine; for, even when drunk Titta Marullo and his men were as formidable as a company of Carabineers.

The time and signal for ambush would be the moment the light in Lollo's hut went out.

At Lollo's table Titta Marullo and his men were festive. Between courses they beat their cups and plates with their forks and sang. Rosa Maria served roasted sheep's heads, figs, cheese bread and wine. At dusk she lighted the oil lamp over the table. The lamp burned poorly. The sentinels, who had taken turns, were reeling from the copious wine. Unnoticed, Rosa Maria drugged the skins of wine. The lethal wine soon took effect. Petrosilo and his many Carabineers had come stealthily up the mountain and were hidden close by. One by one Titta Marullo's men left the hut and fell asleep on the ground. At the table Titta Marullo drooped his head. In the darkness Petrosilo came behind the open door with a long stiletto in his hand. Rosa Maria and Lollo watched Titta Marullo in the flickering gloom. "Titta Marullo," said Rosa Maria loudly, "I must put out the light and refill the lamp." All was hazy to Titta Marullo. He mumbled senselessly. Rosa Marie stood on the bench and blew out the light. Petrosilo rushed in and plunged his stiletto up to the handle into Titta Marullo's back. Rosa Maria relighted the lamp. With animal strength Titta Marullo arose and tried to wrench the stiletto from his back. He cried, "Lollo, dear Lollo, be my salvation!"

He began to fall, and pressed his blood-dripping hands against the lime-white wall in the effort to stand and re-

main alive. As he lay dying he whispered, "May Christ forgive you, dear Lollo... curses on your treacherous ^{CUNT}!" Rosa Maria...!" The following day, as a warning to the mafia, Titta Marullo's corpse and the twelve prisoners were hanged in the public square.

Petrosilo honored his pact with Rosa Maria. She, Lollo, her mother and daughters were taken under cover to Naples and put aboard a ship sailing for New York.

Thinking that she had thwarted the hated law, Rosa Maria's fame spread among the common folk, and they composed a song that began, "*Rosa Maria pronto e lestra—se menao pe' la fenesta—*" "Rosa Maria ready and nimble escaped the kill—by leaping away out over the windowsill—"

The other story circulated with melody trist, called, "Our very own Titta Marullo's veronica," sang how the bloody prints of Titta Marullo's hands on Lollo's walls protested and refused to be covered by coats of lime, and that finally the shepherd who took over Lollo's hut removed the wall and threw the stones down the mountainside.

Petrosilo's few victories over the mafia was his death warrant. He was assigned to track down the mafia in Palermo but never got there. Older heads had advised him that wiping out the mafia was to empty the sea with a pitchfork. While urinating in the outdoor public toilet he received a bullet in the back of his head. The crime was never solved. The people said the mafia had the courtesy to let Petrosilo finish relieving himself before firing the bullet into his head. A song soon became laughingly current that went: "—with sighing relief in hand doomed Inspector Perosilo departed our land—"

The killing of Petrosilo was superstitiously regarded as a just act from Above that miraculously broke the spell of the curse occasioned by the hangings of Padre All Saints and the two monks. From that event on a disastrous drought had set in that brought hardship to Trapani. All the age-old practices failed to conjure rain: praying to, beseeching and propitiating the saints; threatening the plaster saints with degradation and violence, and finally punishing the mute angels of God by tearing off their wings and dragging them through the dust of the waterless baking streets. Even resort to the pagan ritual of sacrificing black goats at midnight in the forest did not work.

But scant hours after Petrosilo's murder the skies became fraught with raging clouds, and the life-renewing rain fell for days. □