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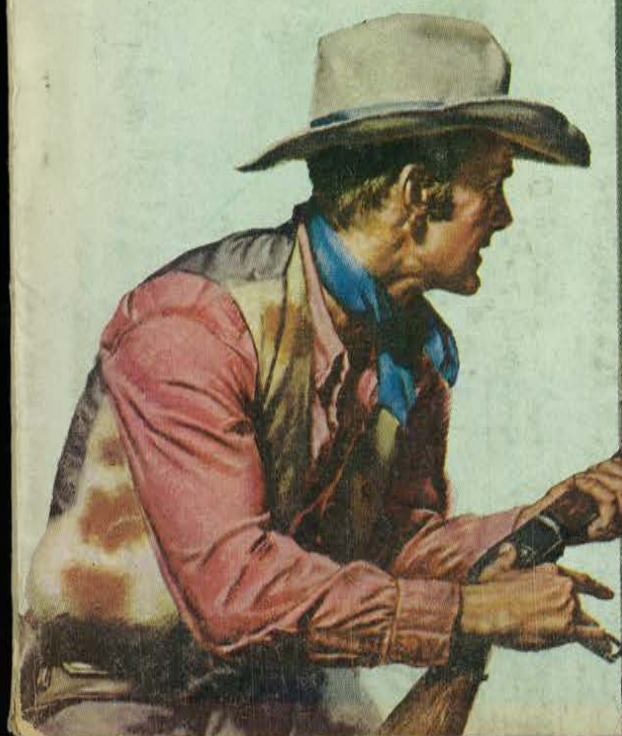
Dazzy Vance:

FLATBUSH FIREBALLER

by Frank O'Leary



**The Sheriff
Takes A Walk**
A WESTERN THAT'S DIFFERENT



Bluebook

FOR MEN

Contents for August 1961

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Blue Notes

Some assorted background facts
on who wrote what, and why, in
this issue of *Bluebook*

(Eve Arnold photograph-Magnum)



Pietro di Donato & paternal image

Again this month, *Bluebook* brings you the greatest names in American fiction. The other authors in this issue will not mind our singling out the names of Alec Waugh and Pietro di Donato as authors who are simply not outranked by anybody.

PIETRO DI DONATO, of course, is the tremendously gifted author of "*Christ In Concrete*," the uniquely dramatic story of his father's awful death which was an imperishable monument to his memory. Pietro, himself a bricklayer, and more recently a contractor, has since led a double life as author—because talented writer he is. But not since his first great work has he found a subject worthy of his fire until now:—as a matter of conscience, he once served as an attendant in the lowest depths of a state insane asylum, and his story "*A Gift From Dottie Ryan*," is equal to his memorable first story. Writing such as his is not a craft; it is compounded of the pain and joy of living. He is now en-

gaged in writing a novel based upon this stupendous short story. We believe that it will be his greatest. . . . which is saying a lot after the literary swath cut by "*Christ In Concrete*."

* * *

ALEC WAUGH, author of "*Island In The Sun*," and "*Fuel To The Flame*" is another literary meteorite for *Bluebook*. He lives all over the world—starting with New York's Algonquin Hotel, he has apartments in the West Indies, England, the South of France, and who knows where else, to serve as bases for his fancy and inspiration. He writes his manuscripts in longhand. He does not drive a car. But in the midst of these somewhat anachronistic privileges he permits himself, he writes some of the most astute and stylish fiction in the modern English language. We are proud to add his name to those of *Bluebook's* contributors.

The story of Willie Pegram, "Lee's Incomparable Young Man," by WM. H. KOFOED and FRANK MULLADY, is the result of a somewhat unusual collaboration that began when a writer and editor of long experience met a retired New York City detective.

Frank Mullady, the researcher of the team, has spent thirty years of his life, when not engaged in police work, studying not only the broad canvas of the Civil War, but in tracking down minute details of character and background of the participants as well as some neglected aspects of actual battles.

This man Kofoed has long been a literary soldier of fortune. Editor, publisher, writer, he master-minded more than thirty periodicals, beginning in the fabulous twenties and ending in the fatuous fifties. Since then he has authored six novels and countless magazine articles. His latest and greatest enthusiasm, shared with Mullady, is in bringing again to life the great national drama of a hundred years ago.

So of course it won't be a surprise to you to learn that the team's Number One Project right now is a Civil War book, already well advanced.



Frank Mullady



Wm. H. Kofoed



by Pietro di Donato

Gee, Honey," said Dottie to the Boss in her "southern" kewpie-doll voice, "you done a lot for me; I wish I could do somethin' big for you!"

Boss Marino smiled sentimentally.

"You jus' keep yuh nose clean, baby; that's good enough for me."

The big swarthy Italo-American racket king was as happy as he ever could be. He had a quiet wife, and children, a mother he loved, millions in deposit boxes, and Dottie. The Boss picked them young and liked to think they were virgin. His romantic preference had always been show-girls, peroxide blondes of Anglo-Saxon origin. It kind of set off his Latin oiliness. He acquired Dottie Ryan from the floor show in his night club the Bluebird on the first night she appeared there. She was a small sixteen year old curvy dancer with neat legs, a large mouth and breasts, and bleached platinum hair. He put her up in a ten-room suite, with a chauffeur, Cadillac, maids, and took her to the races and night clubs. Saturday nights he spent in Dottie's apartment;

Sunday with his family, Momma Marino and the many, respectful relatives who lived off of him. He wore around his neck the Scapula that Momma Marino had sent from Rome—blessed especially for him. Throughout the United States the Boss's name had a magic fascination; many people admired him, and Hollywood gave him infamous but lasting identity.

"You boys just stay in with the Boss and you'll always be in the clear," he told them.

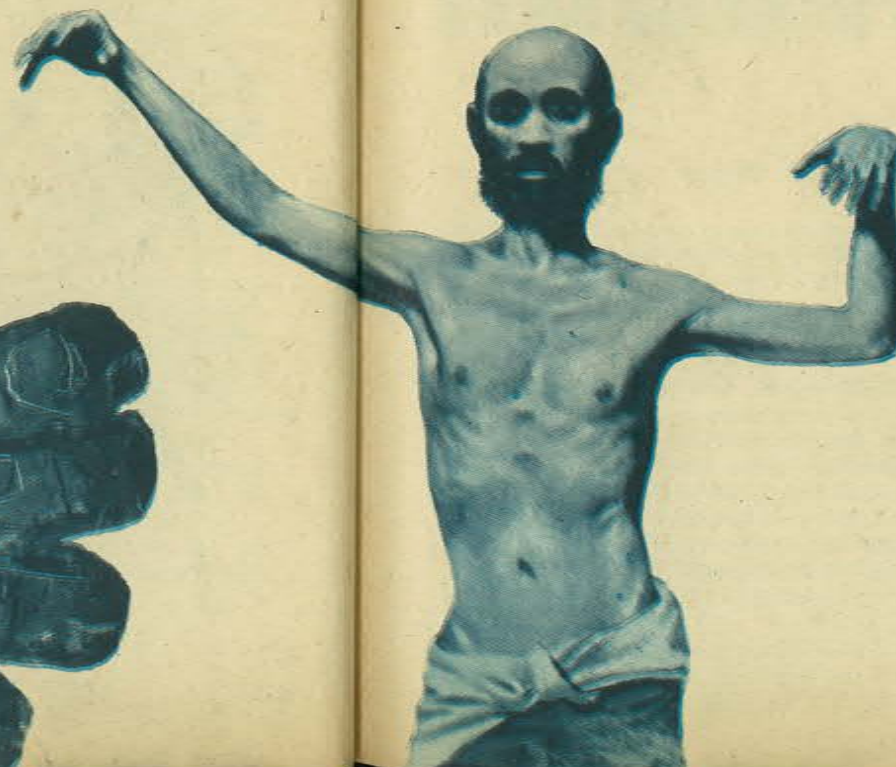
But he was beginning to have his own troubles.

He was treated circumspectly by governors, mayors, labor leaders and the newspapers, and he was proud of it. He owned the Italian section, Nanny Goat Hill, half the city, and enjoyed three palatial winter homes. His henchmen distributed food baskets on holidays in Little Italy, his donations to the churches were huge, and his undertaking establishments buried the poor gratis. He was not ashamed to tell the boys that he had come up the tough solitary way.

Not long after the Boss

(Continued on page 56)

A Gift From Dottie Ryan....



Here is a story to rank with the author's
justly celebrated "Christ In Concrete."
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account, in your damned grandson's. All signed, deposited to account—You don't believe me? Call your bank, see how much money you have. Go on, call. It's always a pleasure to be richer than you expected, now ain't that a fact?"

The Sheriff was thinking hard. Harder than he ever had. The girl knew how to sign his name. The girl was in love with Jack, but she wouldn't marry him while he was a policeman. The girl's name was Shirley Orsette. He had a lot of trouble remembering names these days.

But this was no girl's idea. Farkin had said there was money in Jack's account, too. He said: "Jack's been shaking you down, Farkin?"

"Sure. But now maybe he lays off. He wouldn't want you getting grease on that gold badge."

"You were making a record this morning, of the phone call. I thought you were talking in front of someone, but you were making a record."

Larry Farkin said: "Sure. I got all kinds of records. The sort of old fool you are, you might shoot first, and think afterwards."

The gun was in the Sheriff's hand, then, and it was like ten years or more had rolled away. He said: "Smart boy like you can outshoot an old fool any day, Larry."

Sweat started rolling down the frog face. It didn't do anything to make Larry Farkin any prettier. He said, sharply: "Take it easy, mister. Try and get it through your head—you do anything, and it all comes out about Jack."

The Sheriff nodded. He'd never felt better in his life. Suddenly, the names of everyone he'd ever known went through his head. His memory was as good as it had been when he was twenty. He said: "If Jack's a grafter, maybe I don't care what happens to him, maybe he'd be better off dead—or in prison."

Farkin was half screaming now. He'd have to stop that, or some of the gambler's thugs would be charging in here. Farkin said: "You can't be that square. It ain't natural, not for nobody. Your own grandson, mister."

The Sheriff tossed his gun, caught it neatly, slid it back into his holster. "I'll give you fair draw, Farkin. I've had more experience, but you're younger." He started counting: "One, two—"

The high, shrill voice went on: "Lay

off, Sheriff. You're washed up!"

The Sheriff said: "Closed a bar on the way over here. The Ritz. You own part of it, like you do most of the muck in my county?"

"You ain't got the right. You're not the Alcoholic Board. You—"

"Call and find out. I'm taking this city back."

Larry Farkin said: "You've gone crazy. You—"

The manicured hand went under Larry Farkin's coat, then, the blue steel of the little automatic flashed, and the Sheriff made what he thought was maybe the best draw of his life; pull, cock and shoot all in one movement, and Larry Farkin's shoulder was red and his automatic was on the floor, and he was slobbering at the mouth with fear.

The Sheriff stood up, and said: "Lawyers aren't going to make your shoulder feel any better. Get out of town, Larry, or take it every time I see you."

The door banged open then, and Jack came plunging in. He looked fine in his blue uniform, but a little silly when he found there wasn't anything to do.

The Sheriff said: "Shirley call you?"

"She was worried about you... I've been trying to get the dope on Farkin for months. Couldn't get any cooperation in the department, and—Farkin swore he'd have you framed if I didn't go along with him."

"Why, son," the Sheriff said, "I can take care of myself. I can take care of the county, too. That's a good girl, that Shirley, but she shouldn't have bothered. She just wasted a phone call."

But the Sheriff didn't feel happy. He'd made a mistake in judgment. Jack wasn't a crook, and that Shirley girl wasn't a crook's woman. But for a little while, the Sheriff had suspected them.

He was getting old. Time to step down and let Jack handle things.

But first he'd be a little useful helping the kid get started in his cleanup. There was a time to be smart, like Jack, and a time to be tough, like the oldtimers.

He said: "Shirley told you, we're eating lunch together," and marched on out. There wasn't a wrinkle in his uniform, his hat had cost a hundred dollars, and his gold badge gleamed. You could almost hear a string band play The Streets of Laredo.

Gift From Dottie Ryan

Continued from page 23

had taken over Dottie he had private complaints of a purulent nature, although he had been faithful to Dottie. At length he called in old Dr. Archimedes Vitone. Dr. Vitone hated the Boss—and he had good reason to. Dr. Vitone remembered Philly in its halcyon days before the Boss Marino rule, the time when he had come from

Italy an idealistic medical student who married an Irish girl and brought her to the Italian section. For years he had hopelessly railed against the Marino mob in secret, and on many occasions had had a gun held to his back and been forced to operate and save the life of a bullet-ridden Marino man. Besides having had to deliver the

Boss's children and attend his family, he was a victim of the Boss's shake-down protective association.

"Mr. Marino," announced Dr. Vitone after having examined the Boss, "some woman has made you a present of gonorrhea."

"Yuh mean, now I'm a man?" laughed the Boss, "Hell, that's nothin' but a cold in the nose—I ain't gonner let a little thing like that bother me!"

Dr. Vitone, not too encouragingly, suggested a blood test.

"My good wop blood'll keep me a hundred years!" thundered the Boss. And he was really infuriated when Dr. Vitone said he thought Miss Ryan should be looked at.

That night Dr. Vitone was in high spirits. He confided to his wife: "I've just seen Marino's death warrant under a microscope. I found gonorrhea in him. He was amused and will probably treat himself with hot peppers and wine like all the tough guys. What I didn't tell him was that he has syphilis also—Heaven will forgive me! It may cost me my old life, but I'll see to it that his syphilis is not discovered until it reads four-plus, and then it will be too late! That spirochete has been sucking the blood of decent America—but right at this moment he is filled with minute silent gangsters!"

A few years later Momma Marino was worried about her favorite son. The Boss wasn't well. He neglected the intricate machinations of his rackets. He wandered off in an amnesic state for days. He did not sleep for weeks at a stretch. He turned upon his trusted gunmen and punched them for no reason at all. Instead of making his hard-hitting ruthless decisions he scribbled daddoes and laughed. His brothers Mike and Tony found it impossible to interest him in the rackets. His dark oily eyes glittered with a grinning light. They thought it was because Dottie Ryan had run off and left him, but they were sure he'd snap out of it and be his old kingly self. Momma Marino told Dr. Vitone that the evil-eye had been cast upon her son. Dr. Vitone readily conceded that it was possible. Momma Marino assiduously performed incantations and administered old-world potions to her son. The Boss had become unapproachable. He accused his brothers and henchmen of planning to kill him. Word got around that Boss Marino was slipping. But his gangster rivals decided it was another cunning dodge, a typical get-away stunt. When the Federal government queazily mustered the courage to convict and sentence him for a short term on a comparatively bland charge, the Boss didn't seem to care to get out of it. In court his attention strayed and he gave silly giggles as answers. It pleased the public to think that the Boss had arranged to be sent to jail to save his life from gangster enemies and so did the hoods, at least for a while.

But, in prison the Boss's behavior was extremely schizophrenic. He attacked his cell mate sexually, addressing the frightened fellow as Dottie darling. The prison doctor's Wasserman blood test of the Boss explained his unintegrated actions of violence, perversion, maudlin streaks and days of stupid disinterested silence. The silver bullets of science could not rub out the tiny hi-jackers that had corkscrewed into his brain. Now and then the newspapers gingerly ran contrasting photos of the Boss's big winter homes, the Boss in his hey-day, and the Boss in drab prison clothes, with careful intimations that after the government had caught up with him he couldn't take it and that the change in his fortunes had brought him to the point of nervous breakdown. The Boss was automatically remanded to an asylum.

When Boss Marino was marched in, Hymie Finkle, a worker-patient, surveyed him and remarked to Charlie the attendant: "So dot's the Big Shot Marino mit siffiss—vell, vell, Solomon said: 'Vun hair from a voman can trample a man more den an army mit swords and horses!'"

Another patient who was admitted the same afternoon, was a tall gaunt anemic young man with glaucous eyes, named Stanislaus. He had a pale yellow beard and long locks down over his shoulders. He carried a Bible and wore a sack-cloth robe and sandals. He was committed after he had picketed the White House night and day with a placard demanding from the President immediate cessation of bloodshed throughout the world. It was inevitable that he be nick-named "The Messiah" by the patients as well as the attendants.

The Boss made a troublesome patient. His paretic mind could not realize that this was not his palace on Sea Island nor his guarded sumptuous hotel suite. He wandered about the milling ward excitedly. Something in him compelled him to turn on the showers, knock over mops and pails, unravel rolls of tissue as though it were very important to do so, scatter bed-pans about the lavatory and toss sleeping patients from them cots. "I wanna talk to Joe Louis and Franklin D. Roosevelt!" he shouted, "I'm gonner strip every sonuvabitch in the world and walk all over them! My boys kin lick the United States army! Mike! Tony! What are they doin' in my place! Here Dottie, take this ten grand and buy yuhself a new brassiere! Get yuhself perfumed up sweetie, put on yuh silver fox an' we'll burn up Philly! I told yuh city hall bums to lay off my snow peddlers or I'll but yuh! Tony! What's the take on the Washington cat-houses! Yuh not working the polack bims hard enough! Git that newspaper guy that's riding me! Rub him out!"

Charlie the attendant shook his head. "Hollywood and the newspapers oughta get a load of this." Charlie took a drink from his pint bottle and muttered through his teeth: "If yuh don't drink on this job so help me

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Jesus yuh'll end up buggy' yuhself!"

The Boss rattled away to a cata- tonic negro and then bellowed: "Where's Dottie, yuh black bastard!" The negro remained motionless. "Wise, eh!" shouted the Boss. He punched the negro to the floor and kicked him. Stanislaus came up to the Boss. "Brother," he said softly, "Love thy neighbor . . ." The Boss babbled in- sensibly and rushed away. Stanislaus helped the wounded negro to his feet.

Charlie the attendant said to one of his worker-patients: "Pete, did you see that? The show goes on twenty four hours a day—no wonder I don't go to the movies no more!"

Pete paused with the bed-pans in his hand. "Yes," he agreed, "this place is full of lunatics. If it weren't for my secret love affair with the Queen of England I wouldn't have been framed and sent here."

At mess-time Charley brought the Boss his tray of food that the Boss's family arranged to send in three times a day from an expensive restaurant. The Boss accepted it and without warning slammed it against Charlie's head.

"Alright! you wop bastard!" said Charlie under his breath, "From now on you'll eat the regular crap and I'll treat myself to your tray—who'll know the difference! You're not Boss Marino here! When they put you in a place like this you've lost your ticket! Anything goes! You're just another nut and we'll fix your little red wagon here!"

When Charlie handed the Messiah his cup of bean soup and boiled frankfurters, Stanislaus gently re- fused it.

"No thank thee, brother," he said, "it is my bounden duty to fast until there is peace on earth. Thou shalt not kill, saith the Lord God Jehovah."

"You can do what you like with your own belly, son."

Night in the asylum behind the barred windows was an eerie heart- crushing fascinating chrome gray- black nocturne of driven unpunctu- ated voices. Men who had once been free members of society raved rau- cously against dreams in the dark- ness from their abandoned lighthouses of illusion.

The Messiah walked the dim wards singing psalms and carrying water and bed-pans to patients. Men cursed, laughed, prayed, groaned and called for their wives and children. The night attendant sat in his cage drowsily smoking his pipe. A hilari- ous party was going on in a doctor's cottage. Two hospital guards drove slowly about the grounds. Out on the main highway the Greyhound bus roared by. In the operating room of the infirmary a young patient was having a gangrenous leg removed. In the tunnels connecting each unit of buildings worker-patients pushed loads of soiled sheets and clothing to the laundry. At the power-house smoke poured from the tall stack and within the building huge dynamos whirled ceaselessly. In the morgue

ice-box rows of bodies were carefully kept at the right temperature. On the shelves in the laboratory glass jars were labeled with their contents of hearts, lungs and brains. On their cots thousands of patients slept, soon to awaken to the nightmare of day.

Boss Marino knew neither night nor day. He paced his room shouting in great agitation: "I tell yuh no- body's rolled Dottie Ryan but the Boss! I'll murder the bum who says Dottie ain't clean! I ain't got nothin' from Dottie! I took you outta show- business honey; no more hoofin' for you! Yuh kin have anything in the world, sugar! Meet me at the Blue- bird. Them slugs from the west side ain't gonner muscle in on my cat- houses! Line 'em up and turn the heat on 'em! I run this lousy town! Cops are two-penny jerks! Make 'em and break 'em! Go git yuhself the best skins, baby. Fifty tousand from the waterfront unions or they'll git their heads pushed in! City Hall's on the payroll. Stay with the Boss and yuh'll be in the silk. Tony keep after the boys. Hot rods. Lay offa Dottie. She's mine and nobody ain't gonner have her but me, savvy! Mar- ino's the law! Yuh hear me yuh sonuvabitches; Nobody kin touch the Boss! Yeh! Hahaha! an' I was a poor wop kid! Slashed a cop in the old country! Yuh gotta know how to handle a sticker and a gat! I know what I want! I git what I want! I knocked off an old dame on the Titanic and lifted her dough! Yuh can't buck Marino! I'm tough! nothin' kin kill me! 'Fraid of nothin' and no sonuvabitch in the world! The jerks want whores and geegees and happy dust and alky and numbers! I'm the guy to give it to 'em! If I'm sucker not to do it some other wise guy will! I'm the law in Philly! Wipe out the small-timers! Take care of the wops in Nanny Goat Hill! Give the sky-pilots some dough! Don't be cheap! Hand out free lunch to the quiet slob! Jesus! that blonde hair sends me, Dottie! Meet me at the races, honey!"

The Marino clan pulled up to the hospital each day in an imposing cortege of bullet-proof Cadillacs. Mike and Tony though flashily dressed entered the hospital somberly. With them came their bleached show-girl wives. Momma Marino brought hot dishes of spaghetti and meat balls. Mike and Tony talked out of the sides of their mouths to the Boss about the rackets, but the Boss stared directly through them, not under- standing. The Boss wasn't getting any better. He did silly things while the mobsters earnestly tried to communicate with him. It began to dawn upon them that the Boss wasn't pull- ing an act.

One day the Boss said to his family and pals: "I wanna talk to Joe Louis and Franklin D. Roosevelt. But they gotta git naked first!" He busily be- gan to strip. When his brothers at- tempted to stop him he punched them ferociously. Then he ran about nakedly

waving his arms as though he were flying. Momma Marino sobbed her way out of the hospital. Someone had put the evil spirits into her boy.

Dr. Beckman and the staff knew cause and effect. The rapidly dividing and multiplying spirochetes were eat- ing away at the capillaries of the blood vessels of the Boss's brain, developing the inevitable lesions that closed off the blood supply lines with inflammatory reaction, which discon- nected the mental faculties and left each chamber a sloughing irrespon- sible agency.

At another time, in the presence of his visitors, the Boss suddenly attacked and seriously injured a nurse. The staff fearfully explained to the Marinos that they had no other choice but to transfer him to the violent ward.

Stanislaus, meanwhile was a patient less easy to diagnose. His actions frustrated Dr. Beckman. The doctor examined him, found no organic dis- turbances, and was forced to rate his I.Q. as unusually high. He decided that Stanislaus was faking Christian ideals to evade military service.

"Send the 'Messiah' along with Marino," he ordered, "Ward B will snap any pacifist out of his ivory tower!"

On visiting days in B ward Boss Marino would tolerate no one but Momma Marino. For that she was grateful and hopeful.

It seemed that when she was near him he calmed down. She kissed him and held his hand. "Gigi, son of mine," said the illiterate old Italian woman, "do you know your mother?" The Boss nodded dumbly. "I am making the Novena for you, Gigi. Enemies have cast a fatura upon you and the devils have stolen your head—but your mother will bring it back to you." She spat on her finger and signed the Cross on his forehead and temples. "I pray for you, your wife and children pray for you, your brothers Mike and Tony pray for you, the priest says Mass for you each morning, and all the paesanos pray for you."

The tautness in the Boss's face loosened. For a moment he was coher- ent. Tears came to his eyes and he lisped: "You're the only one that's ever loved me . . . God bless you Momma . . ."

B ward was jammed with gangli- onically tense inmates; former boxers, cops, dancers, laborers and men from all walks of life. There was a morbid self-perpetuating stimulus in the air; the turmoil was never-ending, and the large room smelled acidly of hyper-active flesh.

Most of the time the Boss kept apart from the uncontrollable mass. He stood with his hat and coat on at a window breathlessly in the hal- lucination that Dottie and his gang were conversing with him.

The masculine vigor in the ward was extraordinary. A wiry one-legged men perched on a bench near Marino

Continued on page 60

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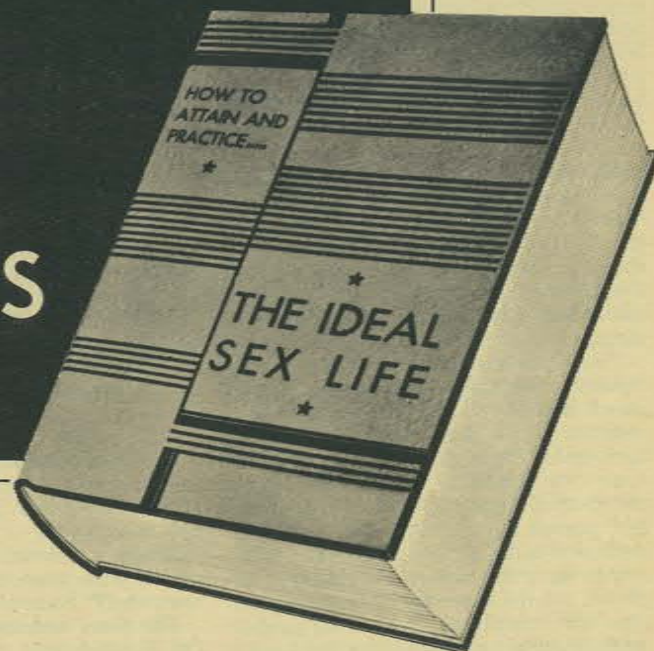
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jerked his head about and lashed out at anyone within reach. A big ex-detective sat barefooted on the concrete floor dealing out cards to an invisible player; an acrobat did somersaults until prostrated; a white-haired homosexual pursued a blank-minded boy; a thick-limbed stevedore with a pair of drawers wrapped around his head chortled gaily in German, "Yah-yah-yah-kartufel!" on and on; a starkly wild blind man in restraint pulled at his bonds until his wrists were lacerated to the bone, and crying, "I want an operation! Cut me open! Cut me apart!"; virile men shouted cacophonically, swinging at the air, and almost every patient bore blackened eyes, broken noses and injuries.

Two whiskey-loving Irishmen with clubs in hand kept the patients barricaded behind a row of metal park benches. Jo-Jo, a tremendous asylum-born imbecile negro who could utter none but guttural sounds and yet understood simple directions kept himself posted by the attendants like a nubian Cerberus awaiting their commands to rush over the benches and punish troublesome patients. At mess-time the attendants and strong-armed worker-patients clubbed the men into line through a narrow passage that led to the mess-hall. With the evening quietus of exhaustion upon them they were corralled into the dormitories, some chained to their cots, and many sent to double-tiered cots in the basement.

In the other patients the Boss imagined that he saw the hundreds of men whom he had murdered and that they had come back to life and were closing in on him. He spent his waking hours in frothing fury, punching, kicking, gouging and strangling the patients about him.

His brutality passed itself over to the more vicious of the patients and they in turn attacked the weaker men, keeping the ward's physical hysteria at a constant pitch. Each day more of the Boss's victims were carried off to the infirmary. One afternoon as his family were entering the visiting room of ward B they were treated to the sight of the bloodied body of a small man whom the Boss had stomped to death; and in their gangland minds sunk the fact that their great Boss was hopelessly insane.

None of the attendants dared take the responsibility of restraining him. But Jo-Jo the imbecile whose physical supremacy of the violent ward had been challenged, glowered for hours at the Boss and lived for the moment when the attendants would permit him to tackle Marino.

Stanislaus' safety in the violent ward was miraculous. He went amongst the raging men unharmed. It seemed the tormented insane by an inexplicable process received a spiritual message from Stanislaus who possessed peace, as though somewhere in the exploded labyrinthes of their minds his dignified biblical appearance established an inviolable altar.

The attendants, incredibly underpaid State employees, and for the most part of undeveloped character, having a very real power of life and death over the mentally afflicted, could not resist sadistic entertainment, based on their assumption that the patients were the living-dead anyway. In their boredom they set one patient against the other and promoted satirical scenes of perversion.

One evening, though decimated by fasting, Stanislaus was changing the soiled bedsheets for a sick patient. Mulkeen the attendant was drunk. He interrupted Stanislaus and questioned him about his beliefs.

"Have yuh ever had fun with a dame?" leered Mulkeen, "I mean a hot no-good babe?"

"I know no evil woman in this world, brother," answered Stanislaus, "Whatever the Father creates is beautiful."

"Is Killer Marino beautiful, yuh sap?"

"Marino came from the hand of God also."

Mulkeen struck Stanislaus. "I'll smack some sense into yuh! Ain't that beautiful?" Stanislaus fell to the floor.

The Boss watched the attendant hit the Messiah and came towards them. Stanislaus arose and smilingly offered his cheek for the next blow. Mulkeen was taken aback. He blurted in contempt: "Yuh goddamned fool, yuh are nuts!"

"Yes, brother," said Stanislaus blissfully, "a fool for Christ's sake."

The Boss collared Mulkeen. "You're the dirty rat that made a play for Dottie!" The attendant was terrorized. He reached for his whistle to summon Jo-Jo. With one blow the Boss broke his nose.

"Jo-Jo!" cried Mulkeen, "Jo-Jo! Let him have it!"

Jo-Jo charged the Boss with an inarticulate roar. For a few minutes it was the fight of two crazed jungle beasts; the Boss with quick short blows and Jo-Jo with animal strength. The Boss staggered Jo-Jo again and again but Jo-Jo kept coming into him with his head lowered. Finally Jo-Jo caught him full in the stomach. The Boss stood helpless. Jo-Jo kicked him between the legs, choked him and smashed him up against the wall, lifted him high above his head and sent him crashing to the floor. As the Boss lay there dazed and open-mouthed, Jo-Jo held his legs up and apart and stomped upon his groin. He got down astride the Boss's chest and battered his head upon the concrete until his face was a gory pulp.

The doctors relayed Mulkeen's report to the Marino family that the Boss had attempted suicide during the night by repeatedly running his head against the brick wall in the lavatory.

The lesions in the Boss's brain increased, and produced an amnesic state. The once most-feared man in America staggered and fell about the ward in idiotic bewilderment. At night Jo-Jo delighted in pulling him from his cot and beating him mercilessly.

Within a month there no longer was any semblance to his face and his body was bruised and swollen.

Momma Marino knew she was going to lose her son. When she spoke to him he slobbered and mumbled, "Ga-ga-ga, ma-ma-ma-ma..."

The Messiah tended him and was his only friend. Something in the Boss's brain clicked and for a week he whispered Stanislaus' words: "Don't kill... don't kill..."

Johnny Ricci, an egocentric youth who imagined that he controlled the world from inside his brain but who in reality was doomed to live out his life in asylums, made the rounds of the wards for diversion.

While the Messiah sat reading his Bible to the Boss who was now like a one year old child, Johnny cheerfully philosophized:

"You'll die soon of starvation Stan and go straight to Heaven. Maybe you'll save the Boss from burning in Hell—but I've decided not to die. I'm going to stick around and keep the world rolling. People work, struggle, study, kill each other and have to pay to be buried. The people on the outside are screwy. I get all I want here without work or worry. I got the jump on everybody because I know how I'm wired. I say don't drink the cup of life; bring it to your lips and leave a kiss in the cup."

Johnny patted the Boss's head. "Keep smiling Boss—it's never so dark as before the dawn. It's all in the head. You'd a been better off if you were satisfied, selling bananas. You were a big shot—where did it get you?—right in the pleat. I'll dash off a note a la literati to your maternal relation."

In a lavish script hand he wrote on a wrinkled paper bag: *Dearest Mom: Having wonderful time. Am well and happy. I have seen the light. Honesty is the best policy. A poor law-abiding citizen is infinitely richer than a wacky millionaire. I have made many fine acquaintances, including Johnny Ricci. This is a divine place and I recommend it for the rest of the boys. The food is excellent and all are so kind to me. Stanislaus the true Messiah has taught me the Bible which I can quote verbatim. I look forward to a quick recovery from my trifling indisposition and the trip home. Signed, your loving son, Louis Marino.*

Before he ambled off he fashioned a paper dunce hat for the Boss and hung a cardboard nameplate over the Boss's head that read: *Mr. Durance Vile.*

Stanislaus and the Boss were taken to the infirmary for shock treatment. They were strapped upon cots, padded tongue depressors stuck sideways in their mouths and electrodes clamped to their temples. When the nurse threw the switch they were shocked unconscious; their limbs convulsed and their faces turned purple. For days they lay in unknowing stupor. Then followed insulin treatment. They were held face downward while a doctor pierced the lower spinal column with a large needle and injected in-

sulin. The Boss screamed in agony. Stanislaus sweated and murmured prayers. Week after week they lay wasting in the infirmary. Stanislaus, a physical wraith, was propped in the cot next to the Boss's.

The Boss, dying bit by bit in a silly disgusting manner, irked the two new gang lords Mike and Tony. They hoped he would die immediately and get it over with. The king was worse than dead and it was to their chagrin that the mob and the police and the public knew that a couple of bugs a thousand times smaller than a bullet that the Boss picked up while having a good time and not the law nor competing gangsters were rubbing out the Boss.

To simple Momma Marino it was not the colossus of American crime who was dying—it was her son Gigi—a baby that had issued from her—a baptized Christian for whom she had suffered to bring to life. Stanislaus' wan face smiling kindly to her son came as the sole balm to her. This strange sweet young man with the beard whom she reverentially called the Holy man aided her in her mother's distress. She knew that the Holy man shed the rare unworldly aura of pity about her son. In her heart she took him to her as her son also. She said to him in Italian: "May my son be by thy side in the world to come." And she went to him and kissed his hand.

In phases of delirium Stanislaus thought he was truly the Son of God. He saw himself on the Mount and upholding his mission of peace before Pilate and Herod. He resisted forced feeding and intravenous nourishment. "In my name give man peace on earth!" he said over and over. Emaciation had rendered him almost transparent.

Dr. Beckman, whose conscience perturbed him for having psychoanalyzed Stanislaus as a religious imposter, sent for a local priest.

"Do you not remember," said the priest to Stanislaus, "they cry peace, peace, but there is no peace?" The Messiah smiled forgivingly. "We were created in His likeness. We have the flower of peace within us to bring forth with the second birth—that of the soul."

"Yes, yes," affirmed the priest confounded, "that sounds lovely, but He put us here to live as man with all the faults of man and not as God, and He equipped us as he did all forms of life to defend and preserve ourselves!"

"Thus spake the very Pharisees at the First Coming, but the Master was above defense."

"In destroying yourself," persisted the priest, "you are destroying His work. You are committing murder, the same thing you decry. Do you not fear that you will have to stand trial for it?"

"Thou art the one who with eyes refuses to see. He died for us peacefully. Can we do less?"

"But you have done no wrong in your life," continued the priest, "you

owe yourself life; you are not like the men about you here who have feasted upon their own damnation."

"They too are the children of God. It can be no other way," gasped Stanislaus. "They seem alien to thee because... in my Father's house there are many mansions..." Stanislaus' lids wavered, and he closed his eyes happily.

The spirochetes sucked deeply into the walls of the vessels of the Boss's brain, severing the organization of the impulses. Locomotor ataxia partially paralyzed his legs and he lost the natural discipline of his alimentary functions.

Upon beholding him fouled from head to foot Momma Marino wept and besought God to take him out of his misery. She stayed with him for hours trying to clean him and to get him to recognize her.

It was necessary to remove him from the infirmary and wheel him over to the incontinent ward in A building.

Within building A there was an overwhelming yellow-brown miasma of man's worst possible putridity. It was a male stable with a thousand naked white and colored men and boys. Through insult to the brain by venereals, trauma, arterio-sclerosis, encephalitis and senility, men who had been fathers of families, clergymen, businessmen, artists, intellectuals, politicians and fastidious individuals, were reduced to infantilism wallowing ravenously in their own and each other's bodily voidances with which the unwashed floors, walls, doors, ceilings, and windows were splattered and caked. The stench was that of the oceanic slime from which in the

beginning of Time the fauna of man slowly assembled. In A ward man was an oozing intestinal cell, a urolaginic and scatological primate.

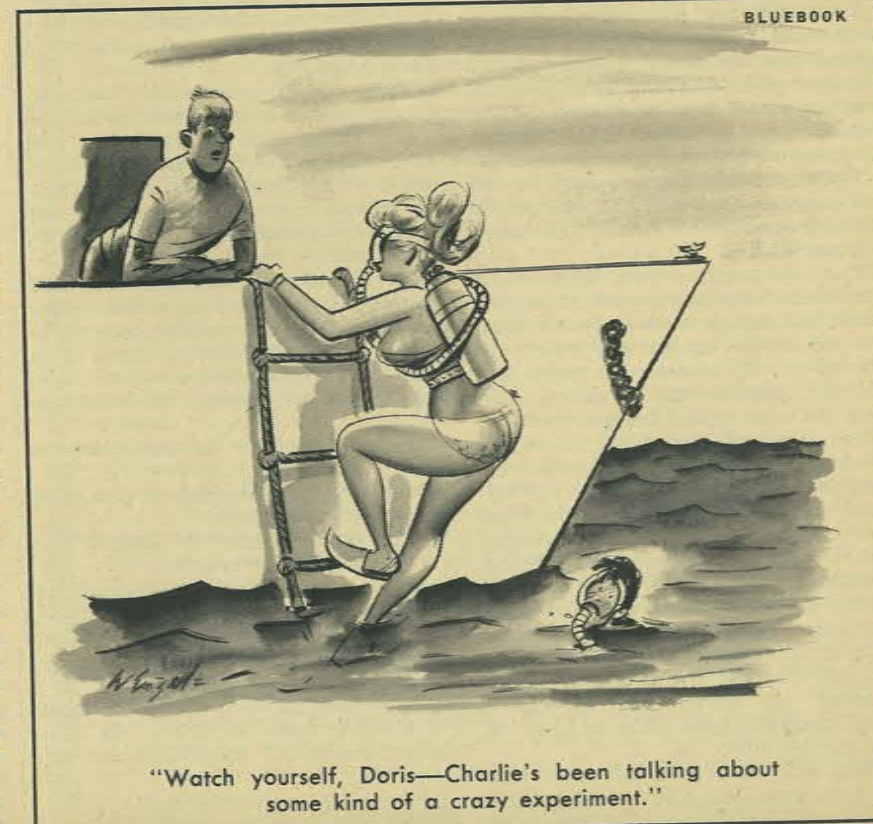
The hospital authorities shied away from A ward, and the ward was shut off from public eyes.

Iconoclastic Ivan Matchek and a small faithful group of institutionalized worker-patients were the custodians of A ward. Matchek was a morose man who looked at the ground and talked to himself. The doctors agreed that he had worked too long in the incontinent ward. For twenty years he had tried to quit and live a normal life, but the bottomless sour smell and degradation of A ward had soaked into his senses and soul. The daily hourly vision of men scavenging human offal and indulging in zoophilia was so vast a proof of man's hapless fragile transiency and so terrible a living picture of God's imagination and man's suffering that to him it transcended fecal reality and was profound, and before it he humbly bent his head.

Boss Marino, skeletal, his battered head shaven, his nose bashed, his ears misshapen, his face puffed up black and blue, his teeth gone, and his legs rolling spastically, was escorted into A ward by Matchek.

"Ai, ai, ai," sighed Matchek, "What does it matter who you were or what you ever did, poor devil, you are coming into the last Hell."

The Boss slept on a rubber mattress in the basement. During the night a negro patient near him had an epileptic fit. When he came out of it he abused the Boss in an animal act. The Boss did not know. In the morning he was dragged up to the mess-hall.



"Watch yourself, Doris—Charlie's been talking about some kind of a crazy experiment."

He fumbled with his bowl of slops and poured it over his head. After breakfast he was pushed in line down into the basement where open stalls with drains in the floor served relief purposes.

On hands and knees he crawled and avidly devoured filth. Lice and vermin scurried in troops over the unsanitary half-living bodies. Some twisted hanging fragment of his brain told him that a huge fat roach on his knee was Dottie Ryan. His paralyzed fingers tried to grasp it in desire. The long unfeeling days he spent huddled against the mire-smeared flesh of other patients in a corner of the ward. Soon he became blind and catatonic. His body was rotting with pus-running sores, his formless mouth and face was matted and infected with ordure, and greenish-white fungi grew on the soles of his feet. The triumphant luetic virus invaded every major organism in his body and brain.

On a bright sunny morning Momma Marino and his wife and children prostrated themselves in church praying for his soul. He lay expiring under a pile of patients in a basement stall, his decaying limbs contracting him into a stinking bundle. Large blood vessels in his brain blew out, gushing blood over the remnants of his brain tissue. On the rapidly vanishing mirrors of his memory were discordantly refracted scenes from his dangerous life.

The liberated blood pumping within the rigid brain pan screamed for outlet, crushing his brain cells, compressing the billions of minute islands down through the foramen magnum and obliterating the cardiac and respiratory centers in the medulla oblongata.

Momma Marino, dressed heavy black, lent tears to her personal tragedy behind the shuttered wealth of the Marino home. Mike and Tony Marino, wearing black ties and arm bands, impatiently awaited Federal permission to remove the Boss's remains.

The Boss's shrunken corpse lay in the morgue. The Messiah lay on a table against the wall as though sleeping peacefully.

The pathologist, a short fellow with thick-lensed spectacles, peered at the identification tag on the Boss's foot. He put on his apron and rolled up his sleeves. His assistant, a tall pretty redhead, handed him a cleaver. He took the cleaver and hacked open the Boss from the crotch to the chin; quickly hollowing out the cadaver. He weighed, measured and sliced the viscera, and the efficient pretty redhead jotted down the data. The pathologist drew a chalk-line across the Boss's forehead, slit along it with a knife, peeled the scalp down over the face, and began cutting into the bared skull with a stiff-backed saw. As he energetically worked the saw and ripped through the bony shell, the Boss's head thudded from side to side on the marble slab.

The gift had been delivered—the present from Dotty Ryan, whose full name was Dorothy Ryan Vitone.

Lovers Talk

Continued from page 17

Why had she revived it after all these months, tonight of all nights? Anything, he supposed, to avoid a repetition of the last two nights, with its polite making of conversation about mutual friends. Well, that made sense. What had happened on this trip? What had happened to their marriage? It was in ruins now, but how or why or when or where: he did not know, he could not guess.

* * *

She paused at the head of the staircase and looked round her. Her eyes rested upon him and moved on, showing no recognition. She was wearing a dark green skirt and a pale cerise blouse that brought out the red tint in her hair, just as her jade earrings did. She was slim and rather tall. "I'm seeing her for the last time," he thought.

As she came down the steps, two men in the middle of the room broke off their conversation, their eyes following her as she chose a seat against the wall. A solitary young Italian stared, undisguisedly. To whet the curiosity of other men was half the flavour of the game. But tonight their roused attention sent a quiver of irritation along his nerves. Next time she came into a bar she would be, in fact, unattached or with another man.

A waiter came over to her and she gave an order. A newspaper lay beside her and she picked it up. The two men returned to their drinks and talks, but the Italian was restlessly conscious of her presence. He beckoned the waiter across and whispered something. The waiter shrugged, he seemed to be saying "I'm sorry, sir, but I don't know."

This was the game at its best and normally Martin would have prolonged it, but tonight he was impatient and on edge. He took out a calling card, wrote on it "You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I want to hear your voice. May I join you?", and signalled the waiter over.

She played it beautifully. She read the card, then looked up at the waiter questioningly. The waiter pointed in his direction. She fixed on him a long, impersonal, speculative stare, then wrote with her lipstick, "Just for one drink."

She looked him up and down as he sat beside her.

"Do you make a point of this kind of thing?" she asked.

"It's the first time I've done it."

"Is that strictly true?"

He hesitated. It was a rule of the game that you had to tell the truth in terms of your adopted character. If either was caught out in an inconsistency, the game was lost.

"It's true and it isn't true," he said. "I haven't done anything like this since I married. I was a different person then."

"So you're married then."

"I was."

She raised her eyebrows. "Tell me about yourself. Right from the start," she said.

He hesitated.

Usually he had chosen a role as different as possible from his own. But this evening he had sent his card across. He had to be Martin Salmon with a professional address in Boston. He must be himself and yet not quite himself. "I'm a New Englander," he said. "I was born in New Hampshire, outside Peterborough . . ."

She knew, as well as she knew her own home in Maine, the Colonial house where he had spent his boyhood. Their fathers had been classmates, the families had exchanged summer visits; but it was not of the things that he and she had shared that he talked now, but of his escapades with other boys, the picnics, the camping, the hunting, the Tom Sawyer side of him. It all became very real to him, as he relived it with nostalgic vividness, here in this dimly lit foreign bar. Memory brought a warmth into his voice. She listened with quickened interest, an attention that she did not pay him normally.

"I'm a New Englander too," she said. "But all that's new to me, perhaps it's through not having had a brother."

Again he hesitated, he had given her his real name, but she clearly could not be Julia Salmon. She would have to choose herself a part; and the skill of the game lay in tricking one's opponent into a contradiction. But he did not want to play it that way, now.

He looked at her left hand and the two rings on her fourth finger. "You're married," he said, "and some unusual things must have happened to you or you wouldn't be alone here in a French hotel. I'm curious to learn all about you. Yet I'd prefer you to stay—no, I won't say a mystery, but I'd like to think of your life beginning this evening when you came down that staircase. Everything about you was so perfect, the way you moved, the clothes you wore, the pale green of those earrings against your red hair and the pale pink blouse. You looked so regal, yet so human too."

Her eyes widened. "I said one drink, but, after all that I think I'll need a second."

* * *

The second cocktail became a third. "It's after eight," he said. "Why don't we dine together?"

The ornate Edwardian dining room was barely quarter full, but it did not look empty with the gilt chairs and scattered clientele reflected and re-reflected in the heavy mirrors.

"This is my last meal in France. I must make it a special one," he said.

He ordered oysters. "The French don't worry about months without an R in them"; *soupe de poissons*; "gastrologically wrong, I'm sure, but it's a nicols specialty"; *Caneton à la*