

# A RESENT FROM DOTTIE JACKSON

Lucky Fetore had everything a gangster could want—a fat loving mother, a beautiful blonde showgirl, millions stashed away in Swiss banks, control over a vast criminal empire. But there was one thing he could never control: the micro- mafiosi running amok in his brain . . .

Fiction by Pietro Di Donato

"All things work for good," said Dottie to her sweetheart, Lucky Fetore, in her Southern kewpie-doll voice. "That's what grandpa Colonel Jackson always used to say—and the old nigger mammy on the plantation told it to him." (Dottie had picked up the saying in the dressing room from another showgirl.) "You done a lot for me—that's for sure. Gee, honey, I wish I could do a big goodie for you'!"

Lucky Fetore smiled sentimentally. "You jus' keep yuh nose clean, pussy-baby; that's good enough for me."

The swarthy fat gangster was happy. He had a quiet fat CONTINUED

wife, obedient fat children, a fat mother he loved, millions in deposit boxes and Swiss banks—and Dottie-Bird Jackson.

When Lucky fell for a girl he put her on a pedestal . . . like a Madonna. He picked them young and imagined they were virgin. He had a thing for showgirls, peroxide blondes—Jean Harlows of Anglo-Saxon origin. It kind of set off his Latin greasiness. And they had to be little: “—So’s I can put ‘em on an’ spin ‘em—” . . . “—In spite of what they say, ‘Big girl, big gash, little girl, all gash.’” He acquired Dottie-Bird Jackson from the topless, bumps-and-grind floor show in one of his night clubs. She was a tiny 16-year-old curvy dancer with neat legs, a pouty mouth, huge breasts, and platinum bleached hair. He put her up in the Waldorf Towers in the suite next to Jackie and Ari—with a Rolls, chauffeur, maids, and took her to the races and the night spots. Saturday nights he spent in Dottie-Bird’s suite: Sunday with his family in his Riverdale mansion, and Momma Fetore and the many respectful fat relatives who lived off him. Around his neck he wore the golden chain and diamond-studded crucifix that Momma Fetore had sent from Rome—blessed especially for him by the Pope.

Throughout the United States the name ‘Lucky Fetore’ had a magic fascination (they didn’t know that in Italian it meant “stench”); many people admired him as though he were one of the last Great Romantics, and the press and Hollywood immortalized him. He created mayors, governors, labor leaders, and top men in Washington; they fawned upon him and obeyed him, and he was rightly proud of it—“You boys jus’ stay with Lucky an’ you’ll always be in the clear.”

Certain things did get him “right here” too: his hoods distributed food baskets on holidays in Little Italy, his donations to the churches were big, his undertaking parlors buried the poor *gratis*, he paid all the bills of the “Italian-Americans Are Number One League”, and was never ashamed to tell The Boys he had come up the hungry, hard, lonely way.

But Lucky Fetore began to have troubles peculiarly his own. Not long after he 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. Testicolo.

Testicolo abominated Fetore. He remembered the City in its halcyon days before the Fetore corruption, when he had arrived from Italy as an idealistic medical student who married an Irish girl and brought her to the Italian section. For years he had hopelessly railed against the Fetore mob in secret, and on many occasions he had had a gun held to his back and been forced to operate to save the life of a bullet-ridden Fetore man. Besides having had to deliver Fetore’s gluttonous sow of a wife and attend his family, he was a victim of Fetore’s shake-down protective association.

“Lucky,” announced Dr. Testicolo after examining Fetore, “some woman has made you a present of the clap.” “Yuh mean, now I’m a man?” laughed Lucky. “Shit, that’s nothin’ but a cold in the nose—I ain’t gonna let a little thing like that bother me!”

Dr. Testicolo, not too encouragingly, suggested a blood test. “My good Sicilian wop blood’ll keep me a hundred years!” thundered Lucky. And he was really infuriated when Dr. Testicolo said he thought Dottie-Bird Jackson should be looked at.

That night Dr. Testicolo confided to his wife, “Rosemary, I’ve just seen Fetore’s death warrant under the microscope. I found gonorrhea in him. He will probably treat himself with hot peppers and wine like all the tough guys do. What I didn’t tell him was that he has syphilis into the bargain—Heaven 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 long enough—but right at this moment he is filled with a million little gangsters of his own!”

Two years later Momma Fetore was worried about her favorite son. Her lucky Mario wasn’t well. He neglected the

intricate machinations of his beloved Mafia. Lucky wandered around in an amnesic state for days, and went weeks without sleeping. He turned on his trusted gunmen for no reason at all, suddenly knifing or shooting them. Instead of making his hard-hitting infallible decisions he scribbled and laughed.

His brothers Dino and Frankie found it impossible to interest him in his “business” responsibilities. His soiled oily eyes glittered with a strange light. They thought maybe it was because Dottie-Bird Jackson had run off and left him, but they were sure he’d snap out of it and be his old kingly self. Momma Fetore told Dr. Testicolo that the evil eye had been cast upon her wonderful son. Dr. Testicolo readily conceded it could be. Momma assiduously performed Christian and pagan incantations and administered old-world potions to Lucky: dirty rancid socks to his armpits and spittle and garlic to his temples. He accused his brothers and henchmen of planning to kill him.

Word got around that Lucky Fetore was slipping. But his gangster rivals decided it was another cunning Fetore dodge, a typical lay-low stunt. When the Federal government queasily mustered the courage to convict and sentence Fetore for a short term on a bland income tax fraud charge, Lucky didn’t seem to care about getting out of it. In court his attention strayed and he gave silly giggles as answers. It pleased the public to think Lucky Fetore had arranged to be sent to jail to save his life from gangster enemies and the hoods believed it too, at least for a while.

But in prison Lucky’s behavior was schizophrenic. He attacked his cellmate sexually, addressing the frightened man as “Dottiebaby”. The prison doctor’s Wasserman test on Fetore explained his actions of violence, perversion, maudlin streaks and days of stupid disinterested silence. The silver bullets of science could not rub out the micro-mafiosi corkscrewed into his brain. Now and then the newspapers gingerly ran contrasting photos of Lucky’s Miami Beach palace, Lucky in his sartorial splendor, and Lucky in drab prison clothes, with careful intimations that after the government had caught up with him he couldn’t take it. The change in his fortunes, they hinted, had brought him to the point of nervous breakdown. Lucky Fetore was automatically remanded to a State mental institution.

When Lucky was marched into the asylum, Kissinger, a worker-patient, surveyed him and remarked to Charlie the attendant, “So dot’s the big shot king of crooks mit siffliss—vell, vell, Solomon said, ‘Vun hair from a pussy can knock a man over more den an army mit swords and horses’.”

Another patient who was admitted the same afternoon was a tall gaunt hippie with glaucous eyes. He had a pale yellow beard and long locks down over his shoulders. He carried a cardboard tablet of the Ten Commandments and wore a sackcloth robe and home-made sandals. In a peace demonstration at City Hall a hard-hat plumber had fractured his skull with a length of pipe, resulting in irreparable brain damage. He was committed after he persuaded a group of hippies, high on acid, to crucify him on a large wooden cross in front of the White House as a protest against Nixon’s Vietnam war policies. His five crucifixion wounds healed, and the “stigmata” remained visible. It was inevitable that he be nicknamed “The Messiah” by the patients as well as the attendants. He had neither kith nor kin nor identity.

Lucky Fetore made a troublesome patient. His parietic mind could not realize that this was not his palace in Miami, 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 toilet tissue as though it were very important to do so, scatter bedpans about the lavatory and toss sleeping patients from their cots.

“I wanna talk to Joe Frazier and Richard M. Nixon!” he shouted, “An’ before they kiss my ass they gotta get naked foist! I’m gonna strip every phony sonofabitch in Washington and walk all over them! My boys kin lick the United States

Army! Frankie, Dino! Turn the typewriters on these jerks! What are they doing in my place? Here, Dottie, take this 10 grand an' buy yuhself a new G-string! Get yuhself perfumed up sweetie, put on yuh silver fox an' we'll burn up New York! I told yuh City Hall bums to lay off my pushers or I'll bust yuh! Frankie! What's the take on the Washington cat-houses? Yuh not workin' the Polack bims hard enough! Git that newspaper jerk that's ridin' me! Rub him out! Bring Agnew naked to me!"

Charlie the attendant shook his head: "Gangster movie fans oughta get a load of this." Charlie took a drink from his pint and muttered through his teeth, "If yuh don't keep drunk on this job so help me Jesus yuh'll end up buggy yuhself!"

Lucky rattled away to a catatonic Negro and then bellowed, "Where's Dottie, yuh black bastard!" The Negro remained motionless. Lucky punched the Negro to the floor and kicked him. The Messiah came up to Lucky. "Brother," he said softly, "Love thy neighbor . . ." Lucky babbled and rushed away. The Messiah 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 24 hours a day—no wonder I don't watch TV no more!"

Pete paused with the bedpans 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 by the CIA and brought here." At mess-time Charlie brought Lucky his tray of food that the Fetore family arranged to send in three times a day from an expensive restaurant. Lucky took it and without warning slammed it against Charlie's head.

"All right, you wop bastard!" said Charlie. "From now on you'll eat the hospital crap and I'll treat myself to your tray. You're not Almighty Lucky Fetore 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 tin cup of bean soup and frankfurters, the Messiah gently refused 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 nocturne of driven unpunctuated voices. Men who had once been free members of society raved raucously in the darkness. The Messiah walked the dim wards singing psalms and carrying water and bedpans 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 hilarious party was going on in a doctor's cottage. Two hospital guards drove slowly about the grounds. Out on the turnpike the Greyhound buses roared by. In the operating room of the infirmary a young patient was having a cancerous arm amputated. In the tunnels

connecting each unit of buildings worker-patients pushed carts of soiled sheets and clothing to the laundry. At the powerhouse smoke poured from the high stacks and within the building giant dynamos whirled ceaselessly. In the morgue ice-box rows of bodies, from tots to dotards were kept at the right temperature. On the shelves in the laboratory glass jars were labelled with their contents of hearts, lungs, brains and other organs. Also in the laboratory was a curio section, a black museum of the criminal and the insane, complete with asylum-made weapons, suicide objects, instruments used by sadists and masochists, souvenirs of the electrocuted, dope and syringes in condoms found deep in the rectal passages of dead patients. In the asylum dairy barn cows lowed, and by the dunghills cocks crowed and dogs barked; on their cots thousands of patients slept, soon to awaken to the nightmare of day. Lucky Fetore knew neither night nor day. He paced his room shouting in great agitation, "I tell yuh nobody's fucked Dottie-Bird Jackson but Lucky! I'll rub out the bum who says Dottie gave me the syph!"

"I ain't got nothin' from Dottie! I took you outta show-business honey; no more hoofin' for you! Yuh kin have anythin' in the world, baby! Meet me at the Copa! Them slugs from the West Side ain't gonna muscle in on my cat-houses! I run this lousy town! Cops are two-cent jerks—I make 'em and break 'em! Go buy yuhself better skins than Liz Taylor's, Dottie! Fifty tousand from the river-front unions or they'll get hit! Yuh jerks in City Hall stay with Lucky an' yuh'll be in the silk! Lay offa Dottie! Me, Lucky Fetore, I'm the Law! Dottie, that blonde pretty hair sends me, Dottie!"

The Fetore clan and deputies pulled up to the hospital each day in bullet-proof Cadillacs. Frankie and Dino, though flashily dressed, entered somberly. With them came their bleached showgirl wives. Momma Fetore always brought home-made

hot Italian dishes. Frankie, Dino, and the other Big Pieces talked seriously to Lucky about the rackets business, but Lucky stared through them. They were convinced Lucky was not pulling an act.

One day he said to them, "I wanna talk to the champeen, Joe Frazier, and Richard M. Nixon. But they gotta get naked first! Truth walks balls out!" He busily began to strip.

His brothers tried to stop him. He punched them. He ran about nakedly waving his arms as though he were flying. Momma Fetore sobbed her way out of the hospital. Someone had put the evil spirits into her wonderful boy. The rapidly dividing and multiplying spirochetes were eating away at Lucky's brain. Another time, in the presence of his visitors, he suddenly attacked and seriously injured a young nurse. The staff fearfully explained to the Fetores that they had no other choice but to transfer him to the violent ward. The medical director, a colonel in the National Guard, said, "Send the 'Messiah' along with Mister Fetore; B ward will snap any conscientious objector out of his ivory tower!"

In B ward Lucky would tolerate no one but his "Momma";



for that she was grateful and hopeful.

It seemed that when she was near him he calmed down . . . like a mongoloid, or a mute beast who can identify the smell of the flesh he came from. She cradled his head on her spent fat breasts, and kissed him and held his hand. "Mariuccio, my son of gold," said the illiterate old Italian woman, "do you not know your very own mother?" Lucky nodded dumbly. "I am making the Novena for you, my Marinello. Jealous enemies have cast the *fatura* upon you and the devils have stolen your head—but the mother who carried you and brought you forth with God's will and her blood, will bring your mind back to you."

She spat on her finger, made the sign of the Cross on his forehead and temples, and put a little bottle of Holy water from the Vatican to his lips. "I pray for you, your wife and children pray for you, your brothers pray for you, the men you made big and rich in government pray for you, the priest says Mass for you each morning, and all the paesanos kneel to God for you. Oh, how you are loved!" The tautness in Lucky's face loosened. For a moment he was coherent. Tears came to his eyes and he lisped, "You're the only one that's ever loved me . . . loved me for myself an' nothin' else . . . God bless you, Momma. . . ."

B ward was jammed with ganglionically tense inmates; former boxers, cops, dancers, laborers and men from all walks of life. The turmoil was never-ending; men were ever on the move like the killer sharks that know no rest, like breathless gladiators of the night; and the great room smelled acidly of hyperactive flesh. Most of the time Fetore kept apart from the uncontrollable mass. He stood with his hat and coat on at a barred window rapt in the illusion that Dottie and his gang were conversing with him.

The masculine vigor in the violent ward was extraordinary; insanity endowing men with above-human strength. A wiry legless man, perched on a bench near Fetore, 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 exhausted; a youth smoked a whole cigarette in ten seconds to achieve his orgasm; a white-haired homosexual pursued a blank-minded boy; a thick-limbed longshoreman with a pair of drawers wrapped around his head chortled gaily in German, "Yah-yah-yah-kartudel!"; a starkly wild blind man in restraint pulled at his bonds until his wrists were lacerated to the bone, crying, "I want an operation! Cut me open! Cut me apart and put me together the right way!"

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 imbecilic black who could utter only guttural sounds and yet understood simple directions, kept himself posted by the attendants like a Nubian slave awaiting their commands to rush over the benches and punish troublesome patients. At mess-time the attendants and strong-armed worker-patients herded the

men 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 others sent to the double-tiered cots in the basement.

In the other patients Lucky Fetore imagined that he saw the hundreds of men whom he had had murdered, that they had managed to 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 off 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 Lucky'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 a small bloodied patient Lucky had stomped to death. And they finally grasped the fact that the national American power, Lucky Fetore, was hopelessly insane.

None of the attendants dared to take the responsibility of restraining him. But Jo-Jo, the black imbecile, whose

physical supremacy of the violent ward had been challenged, glowered for hours at Lucky Fetore and lived for the moment when the attendants would permit him to tackle the demented gangland boss.

The Messiah's safety in the dangerous ward was miraculous. He went among the murderous men unharmed. It seemed the tormented insane, by an inexplicable process, received a spiritual message from the Messiah: somewhere in the exploded labyrinths of their minds his dignified biblical appearance established an inviolable altar.

The attendants, who were underpaid State employees and had the power of life and death over the mentally afflicted, could not resist sadistic entertainment. In their boredom they set one patient against the other.

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

"Have you ever had a piece of ass?" leered Mulkeen. "I mean a no-good hippie whore?"

"There is no evil woman, brother," answered the Messiah. "Whatever the Father creates is beautiful."

"Is Killer Fetore beautiful, yuh sap?"

"Mister Fetore came from the hand of God also."

Mulkeen struck him. "I'll knock some sense into yuh! Ain't that beautiful?" The Messiah fell to the floor. Lucky Fetore watched the attendant hit the Messiah and came towards them. The Messiah arose and smilingly poised his other cheek for the next blow. Mulkeen was taken aback. He blurted in contempt, "Yuh goddamned fool, yuh *are* nuts!" Lucky Fetore collared Mulkeen. "You're the fuckin' rat that made a play for Dottie!" The attendant was terrorized. He reached for his whistle to summon Jo-Jo. With one blow Fetore broke his nose. "Jo-Jo!" cried



# DOTTIE JACKSON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

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

Jo-Jo charged Lucky Fetore with an inarticulate roar. For a few minutes it was a collision of two crazed jungle beasts; Lucky with swift short blows, the punches of an experienced and ruthless punisher, and Jo-Jo with gorilla strength. Fetore staggered Jo-Jo again and again but Jo-Jo kept ploughing into him with his head lowered.

Finally Jo-Jo caught him full in the stomach. Lucky Fetore fell back helpless. Jo-Jo choked him and smashed him against the brick wall, lifted him above his head and sent him crashing to the floor. As Lucky Fetore lay dazed and open-mouthed, Jo-Jo held his legs up and apart and stomped his groin. He got down astride Lucky Fetore's chest and battered his head upon the concrete until the floor was awash with the gangster's blood.

The doctors relayed Mulkeen's report to the Fetores that Lucky had attempted suicide during the night by repeatedly ramming his head against the tile urinal in the mass toilet.

The lesions in Lucky's brain increased, and produced a hopelessly amnesic state. The most-feared man in America staggered and fell about the ward in idiotic bewilderment. At night Jo-Jo delighted in sodomizing him and then pulling him from his cot and beating him mercilessly. Within a month his face was battered beyond recognition, and his body was bruised and swollen.

Momma Fetore knew she was going to lose what was left of her son. When she tearfully soothed and kissed his wounds he slobbered and mumbled, "Ga-ga-ga-ga-ga, ma-ma-ma-ma-ma. . ."

The Messiah tended him and was his only friend. Something in Lucky's ravaged brain clicked and for a week he whispered the Messiah's words, "Don't kill . . . don't kill . . . don't kill . . ." Johnny Ricci, an inmate who believed that he controlled the world from inside his head but who 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 Lucky Fetore—who was now like a one-year-old child—Johnny cheerfully philosophized, "Messiah, you'll soon die of starvation and go straight to the Happy House above. Maybe you'll save Mister Lucky from burning in the Fun-City below—but I've decided not to die. I'm going to stick around and keep the earth-planet rolling. People break their asses for a buck, kill each other for a buck, and then have to pay to be planted in the dirt or cremated. It's cheaper to be nuts. I get all I want here without work or worry. It's the jerks on the outside who are screwy. 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, wink at it, and leave a kiss in the cup."

Johnny chucked Lucky's chin. "Chinny chin up, godfather . . . old too soon—smart too late—smile and the world smiles with you, goombah—it's never so dark as before the dawn—nothing wrong with you—psychosomatic—" He tapped Fetore's forehead. "It's all upstairs in your cucuzzo. You were the top banana—where did it get you?—right in your self-greasing pleat!—you'd a been better off selling pizza pies on Pennsylvania Avenue. I'll dash off a note *à 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. Crime does not pay. Honesty is the best policy. A poor law-abiding citizen is infinitely richer than a wacky *mafioso malo carne* \$\$\$\$saire. In this cultured atmosphere I have made many ineffable pals, including and mainly Johnny Ricci (to whom I am leaving 7 billion Papal pennies). This is a divine place and I recommend it for the rest of the boys in my *casalingua cosa nostrum*. The cuisine is *tre bien* and all the servants here are so refined and kind to me. The true Messiah has taught me the Bible which I can quote in Esperanto verbatim. I look forward to a quick

recovery from my trifling indisposition and the trip home. I will be the Democratic candidate to unseat that ass's jaw-bone in the '72 election.

(Signed) Your humble loving son,  
Mario Fetore



Before he ambled off he fashioned a paper dunce cap for Lucky and hung a cardboard nameplate over Lucky's head that read Mr. Durance Vile, Lord Of The Flies.

One morning Johnny Ricci accompanied the nurse into Lucky's room. The night before the nurse had left him in self-protective restraint. But Lucky had broken the straps holding his hands and was standing on the exposed bedsprings. His ankles were still secured with straps to the bed. He had ripped his blanket and sheets and had pulled the rubberized covering off the mattress and scattered

the horse-hair of the mattress filling into a pile on the floor. The old experienced nurse said in annoyance, "Now what the hell does Mister Crime think he's doing?" Johnny Ricci bunched a handful of horsehair and said, "Durance Vile is making wousers." The nurse asked what were wousers. Johnny Ricci said, "Wiglets for bald cunts."

Lucky and the Messiah 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. The nurse threw the switch. They were shocked unconscious. Their limbs convulsed and their faces purpled. Debonair Johnny Ricci assisted the nurse, whistling *Saint James Infirmary Blues*.

For days Lucky and the Messiah lay in stupor. Then followed insulin treatment. They were held face down while a doctor pierced the lower spinal column with a large needle and injected insulin. Lucky Fetore screamed in agony. The Messiah sweated and murmured prayers. Week after week they lay wasting in the infirmary. The Messiah, a wraith, was

To peasant simple Momma Fetore it was not the colossus of criminal America dying, it was her Mariuccio, a baby that had issued from her—a baptized Christian for whom she had suffered to bring to life. The Messiah's 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 shed the rare unwordly aura of pity about her son. In her heart she took him to her as her son as well. 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 my name give man peace on earth!" he said over and over. Emaciation had rendered him almost transparent. The doctor, whose conscience perturbed him for having cynically diagnosed the Messiah as a religious imposter, sent for a local priest.

"Yes, yes," affirmed the priest. "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."

"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?"

"But you have done no wrong in your life," continued the priest, "you owe yourself life; you are not like many men about you here who have feasted upon their own damnation."

The Messiah's lids wavered, and he closed his eyes happily. It was Palm Sunday. Johnny Ricci had palms from the mass in the chapel. He made crosses with palm and fixed them in the pacified Messiah's hollow eye sockets.

the walls of the vessels of Lucky's brain, severing the organization of the impulses. *Locomotor ataxis* partially paralyzed his legs and he lost the natural discipline of his alimentary functions.

In A building there was an overwhelming yellow-brown miasma of man's worst possible putridity. It was a male stable with a thousand black and white men and boys. Through insult to the brain by venereals, trauma, arteriosclerosis, encephalitis, social concussions and senility, men who had been fathers, clergymen, businessmen, artists, intellectuals, heroes, politicians, and fastidious individuals, were devoluted to foetalism and infantilism, wallowing in their own and each other's bodily voidances with which the unwashed floor, walls, doors, ceilings, and windows were splattered and caked. In A ward man was an oozing intestinal cell, a urolagnic and scatological primate.

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 20 years he had tried to quit and live a normal life, but the bottomless, acidic, fibrous, fertile smell and degradation of A ward had soaked into his senses and soul. The daily, hourly, minute-to-minute, second-to-second vision of men scavenging human offal was so vast a proof of man's hapless fragile transiency and so terrible a living picture of God's imagination and man's capacity for suffering that to him it transcended fecal reality and was profound, and before its magnitude he humbly bent his head.

"Ai, ai, ai," sighed Matchek, "I am my brother's keeper. What does it matter who you were or what you ever did, poor devil, you are coming into the last Hell."

After breakfast, with the rest of the cowering naked patients, he was pushed in line down into the basement where open stalls with wide drains in the floor served for relief purposes.

On a bright sunny morning his mother and wife and children prostrated themselves in church praying for his soul. He lay expiring under a pile of patients in a basement toilet stall, his decaying limbs contracting him into a stinking bundle. Large blood vessels in his brain blew out, gushing blood

32 PENTHOUSE

# A PRESENT FROM DOTTIE JACKSON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

over the remnants of his brain tissue.

For the price of a new church the Fetores got an Italian bishop and two acolytes for the final blessing. An intern and a married nurse cleaned and sterilized Lucky. As they prepared him for the bishop they played with each other and made a clandestine date to stay the night at a motel. When the bishop and the Fetores arrived the intern and nurse looked away from each other and were professionally decorous. The Fetores knelt. The acolytes lit and swung their censers. Wearing his impressive vestments, the bishop delivered the last sacrament.

"Men may doubt all First Week truths . . . ridicule all . . . deride the moral law, defy its sanctions—but there is no denial of death. Children of our beautiful Italy, as you are gathered around your dying beloved it behoves you to know and remember that Death, your own personal adventure, is similarly inevitable. Remember that the law of life is birth, growth, decay, dissolution. Remember death's universality and death's indifference to victims. Remember the judgment of death frequently reverses the self-sacrificing principles of life. We must consciously emphasize the unimportance of time, and the worth of a happy eternity. Forget not the parable of the rich man and his barns. Consider the angel's warning to him, 'This night—thou fool—thy soul—'."

"Let this untimely death of your beloved benefactor, Mario Fetore, ensample your values and thoughts. Look forward and sensibly regard your own death day—when for you the world dies, as even now the world dies for the sometime erring but generous, most endearing, Mario Fetore, and say in your

hearts, 'Out from the doubts in the shadows—out from the torpor and weakness—out from the mists and terror, may my closing eyes rest on the Cross of my Savior.' And let us pray for the soul of the dying before us; he who is departing '*urbis et orbis*.' " The bishop anointed Lucky's nostrils with the holy oils and uttered the words, "*Per istam sanctam unctionem, et suam piissimam, misericordiam indulgeat tibi Dominus quidquid per odoratum deliquisti*. World without end, Amen."

On the rapidly vanishing mirrors of Lucky's memory were discordantly refracted scenes from his danger-ridden life. "I'm the Law!" defiantly cried his swirling brain cells. "People are midget slob! They want dope, horses, alky, numbers, whores, tricks! I'll give it to them and make them pay with their blood! Kill to live is the Law! I love my mother and brothers and sisters and kids and that whore Dottie! Might is right! Bullets and money are my soldiers! The public can't touch me! The Government can't touch me! Crime is nothing but Nature! Crime is the American way! I'm the strongest! I! Fetore! Am the Law!"

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.

It was getting late and he wouldn't die and he wouldn't die. A beast in the chaos kept clawing to live. The intern and the nurse kept looking impatiently at their watches. The bishop resigned himself to an uncomfortable wait. One of the Fetore boys said to the intern, "Well!" The intern said gravely, "The patient is about to pass away. I don't know what's keeping him alive. But in a few minutes he'll surely be dead. . . ."


Lucky Fetore heard what the intern said. His eyes opened and rolled glaring around, and back up behind him to the intern, and he snarled, "Sssshhhitt. . . !"

The Fetores and their children, dressed in heavy black, lent tears to their personal tragedy behind the shuttered wealth of the Fetore mansion. Frankie and Dino Fetore, wearing black ties and armbands, awaited Federal permission to claim Lucky's remains. They had inherited the King Lucky Fetore multi-billion dollar criminal empire. But before they continued the business they were determined to tender its founder a funeral the American people would never forget.

Lucky Fetore's shrunken corpse lay in the morgue. The Messiah lay on a table against the wall as though sleeping. The pathologist, an Afro-haired black with thick-lensed spectacles, peered at the identification tag on Lucky Fetore's ankle. He put on his apron and rolled up his sleeves. His assistant, a tall pretty blonde, handed him the cleaver. He took the cleaver and hacked open Lucky Fetore from the crotch to the chin; quickly hollowing and scooping out the cadaver. The horrible fetid smells of human disintegration arose. The pathologist was annoyed by a smell that did not come from the corpse. He sniffed near the blonde and said, "Whatever you're wearing makes me sick." As they weighed, measured and sliced the viscera she said, "I'm wearing Bellodgia by Caron, and it costs an arm and a leg. Dr. Eldridge, what the hell do you know about perfume?"

He drew a chalk-line across Lucky's forehead, slit along it with a knife, peeled the scalp down over the face, and began cutting into the bared skull. The nurse said, "Dr., answer me—why do you find my perfume disgusting?" He said, "Nurse, 'Quand ta bouche s'ouvre et se mouille on dirait que tu bois du ciel; et pour mes lèvres qu'elle fouille ta langue au gout blond du miel.'"

"Bellodgia is for brunettes. Tabac Blonde or Chanel number five would be natural to you!"

And as he furiously worked the saw and ripped through the bony shell, Lucky Fetore's head thudded from side to side on the cold marble slab. 

©Pietro di Donato 1971



"Personally I think that all this talk of an uprising amongst the eunuchs is just wishful thinking"