

one

The
Homosexual
Magazine

**all
fiction
issue**



A Fabulous Fable
by JAMES BARR
the Author of
QUATREFOIL

DECEMBER 1953

TWENTY FIVE CENTS

BEST WISHES
FOR A

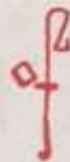


MERRY
CHRISTMAS

AND A HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON
TO ALL OUR
SUBSCRIBERS
AND
LOYAL SUPPORTERS



THE
STAFF

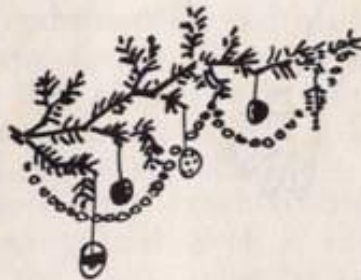


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"... a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one." Carlyle

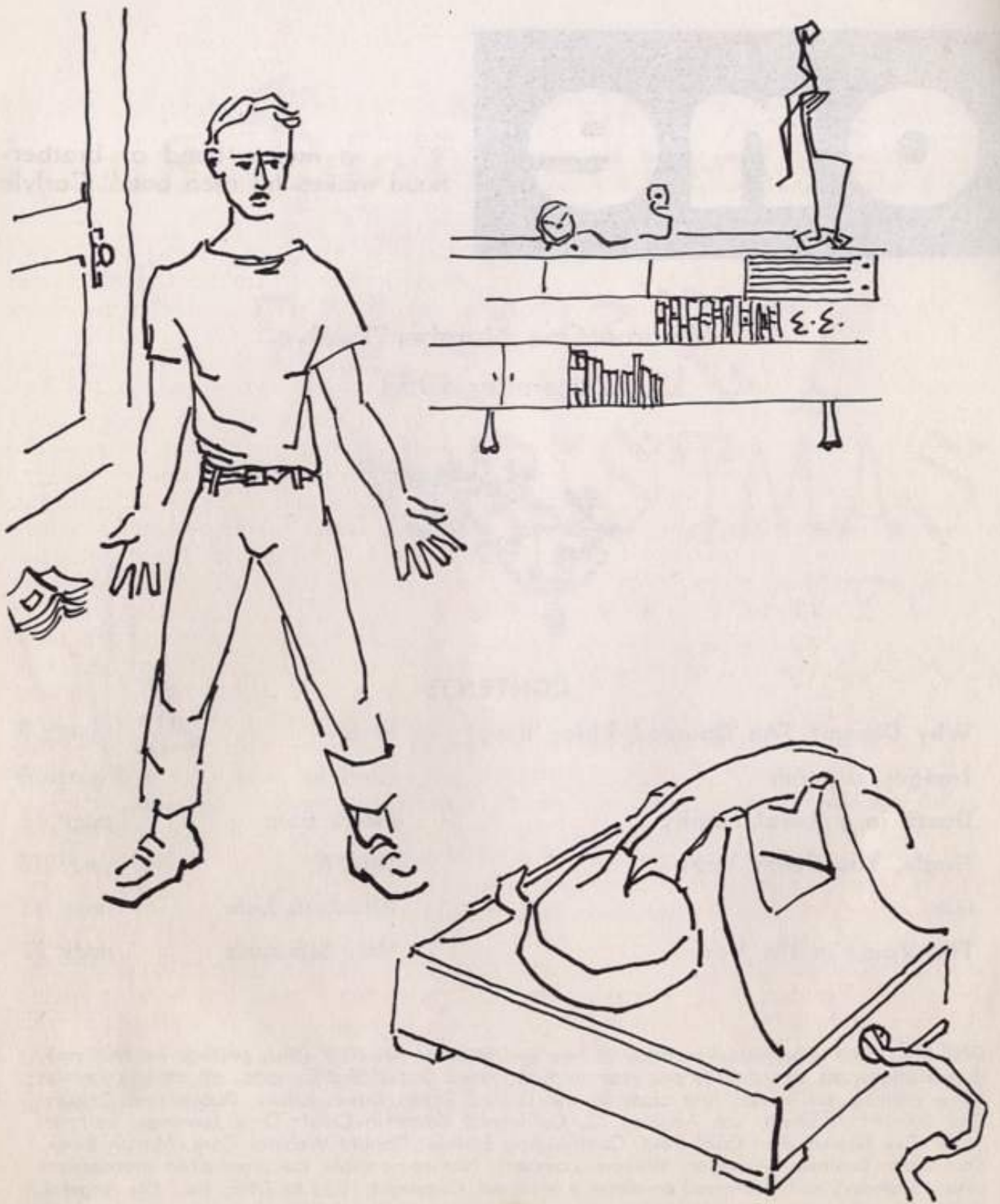
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Why Doesn't The Damned Thing Ring!

Just now I sprinted into the other room to answer it but there was silence when I said hello. They waited and I waited, and quite a little tension built itself up before I finally won. There was a click and the humming tone began. My prize for admirable endurance was a dead, dead phone heavy in my hand. Black rock. But before that click and hum, I'd lost a house-sized chunk of self-respect. The suspense had gotten too much for me standing there wanting so hard and praying between gritted teeth, and I'd blurted into the void, "*Please say something. I want you to.*"

Yes, for just a minute there I thought it might be you. Don't ask me where I got such a silly idea but it was fun while it lasted. The thought of you caring this much whether I was home or not, or of dialing whether you spoke or not, was full of happy, tooting trumpets and anywhere between fifteen and twenty thousand singing voices. After the click, I came to and said, "*Him* do a thing like this? Hell, he's too honest to be this flattering. Besides, he's forgotten your number and he'll be forgetting your name any day now. Climb off it, stupid." So I climbed off it and got semi-mad at whoever it had been on the phone. Then

I began walking around the place and arguing with you all over again as if you were here.

Now, Buster, I know very well you don't like being liked the way I like you. It disgusts you to be clung to and doted on and sobbed over, because the cling, the dote and the sob, all hamper you in your Great Chase. A scalp in the belt of a Great Lover makes for a full, rich life — but when it hasn't been detached from the victim, the Splendid Seek is slowed to a domestic crawl. It must be very annoying to lug around a trophy that bawls. What's more, I embarrass you. Any sort of real attachment in a thing like this, just isn't *right* somehow. To be acceptable, it should be one great big whoop and a lot of little hollars, and someday — not too soon — a settling down with a nice, respectable girl and hewing a family out of nature, nerves and a brave little joint savings account.

All this is understandable — I really mean it — and I'd have packed my lacy heart long ago and left — if it hadn't been for one thing. It so happens you have our time all planned out weeks ahead, bright projects sparkling in your eyes, and the second ticket is always for

me. No matter how wild that last has-sel was, you always call up and say something madly sentimental like, "Hey, we eating here or out tomorrow night before the show?" And I say thought-fully, "Oh, there, I guess," instead of, "I've been hatching this phone like an egg! Let me run over there this instant barefoot on glass!" The point being, I can only assume you want me around or you'd not call. So here I am telling you that if you want me, you'll also have to take the cling, the dote and the sob be-cause we all go together. It's a package deal, Buster.

All right. Now, glue your hat on be-cause what's coming next will make you want to tear your hair out. I'm going to tell you just *how* I like you so you'll un-derstand exactly what went on here last Saturday night while you were out. It's important that you know and I've ap-arently got to tell you because I don't think you have the faintest smattering of imagination. Not a damned jot.

Don't wince: this'll take just a minute. I'm not going into that wonderful effi-ciency of yours; the way you sweep so thoroughly and check each item on the grocery slip and saw a board precisely the right length and stay within your budget without a single bitten finger-nail. Superbly careful without a qualm. And so thoroughly honest I can't imagine you ever having blushed or felt ashamed. Don't go away! I have to irritate you saying this because I want you to know I think you're handsome inside, too!

And you're clean. Go on and rage at such a remark but that's what you are.

Where it's only hygiene in other people, it's actually a matter of beauty in you. You're almost inhumanly clean and neat; the very fabric of your trimness is im-maculate. If there were gods, they'd be no neater, no fresher, no cleaner than you. I always feel very mortal around you, and all pores and armpits, ashamed I'm me and afraid our auras overlap be-fore I'm prepared. So sweetly clean! I've taken deep joy in it and felt great luck to be near you. This sounds embar-rassing to me, too, but I'm afraid I've darned good reasons for mentioning it.

Not long ago you began to get moody and I gathered you were in the process of missing Helen's Place. You used to go there all the time before you met me. I didn't like the place so I scrambled around to buy more beer at the grocery and serve it to you with the air full of smoke, the tray full of butts and a one watt globe giving more gloom than glow. You snarled at me across the kitch-en table: "It's not the *beer*, stupid." I asked innocently what then and you said those magic words, "It's the atmosphere down there and the people. Just sitting and watching them and talking to them and all." My old ears perked up; I in-quired about this *and all*; I wanted to know what this *and all* consisted of, what this *and all* had that I didn't. Wrong tack, of course. You broke a cup and called me jealous and silly and always, always, always getting my godam feel-ings hurt. I saw your point and admit-ted this was all quite true. You really blew your top then. You'd gotten into the habit of resenting everything I said

and I found myself enjoying that resentment. It was good to see you as unhappy as I was. Nice little household.

So we come to last Saturday night. You'll recollect we started it off with me listing all the things we might do. I was all glowing at the prospect of going out somewhere, anywhere just to be going out. We small-towners get that way about Saturday nights; it means a great deal to us. But every suggestion left you colder and got me hotter under the collar. I knew your long stare at the salt-shaker was a reverie about the one place I hadn't mentioned. I just don't get excited about bars and you always get mad at me for not having as good a time as you do. So we haven't gone. Now it was getting late and jealousy of that salt-shaker finally got me. I took a deep breath and said brightly as if it had just now struck me, "Hey look, why don't you let me drive you out to Helen's Place and you can give me a ring when you're ready to come home. I've got a lot of typing to do and I'll probably be at it way after you get home."

Judas, sweet Judas, how you raged!

When I finally convinced you I wasn't being sarcastic and that I really had a lot of work to do, you believed me as if I hadn't spent the last hour trying to suggest things for us to do on my favorite night of the week. You bounced up and insisted on doing the dishes, and even got very affectionate for a couple minutes there. You said it was because you knew how much I didn't want you to go. The implication was you were

just a poor helpless kid caught in the terrible undertow operating out of Helen's Place. I was also a bit miffed at getting the year's ration of affection at a time like this but, instead of drowning you in the dishwater, I only suggested you submerge your hands. You must have felt uncomfortable even after wringing all that affection out of your impassive nature; you quieted down on toward the drying and got downright silent going to the car. I insisted the whole way out that it was all right and why shouldn't you have yourself a time when I had to work, and get in there and relax like mad, kid. I wasn't going to let you blame me for having a bad time; it was a real send-off. In fact, I worked so hard at it I almost forgot to get the key from you. That would have been great: Saturday night waiting on his porch for him to come home.

As a matter of fact, I really had a little work to do. I drove back humming to myself; the microscopically thin veneer of self-sacrifice hadn't worn through yet. You'd been brighter-eyer than I'd seen you in months and I'd be getting this work done sooner than I had expected; we'd have more time together Sunday with it out of the way. I might even get a little luxurious reading done tonight. I planned on hurrying on out to get you as soon as you called so we could have a beer together before coming home. Maybe the place wasn't as depressing as I liked to think it. Maybe I was all wrong about bars being depots for desperate people. I hummed all the way home.

I went directly to the typewriter, sat down, pulled the chair forward and sat for two busy hours dialing the radio. No station seemed less irritating than bedlam and the silence after I turned it off was actually frightening. The only time I touched the typewriter was once when my elbow accidentally hit the keys. The word came out "mkli9" which seemed to sum everything up pretty neatly. At eleven-thirty I gave up and went in to shower. The water was both iced and scalding; no compromise in *that* faucet. And when I lay down to read, I was shocked at the tiny lines that make up a printed page. Some were no thicker than hairs and many of the periods weren't really round at all. There was a place where the quotation marks were almost as low as commas and another one where I threw the book clear across the room. Then the electric clock began whirring as if it were about to take off from the bureau; it made the whole room vibrate. It was only trying to get me to look at it so I started to get the radio from the kitchen; that would give the clock real competition. But halfway through the front room I stopped and felt a sick glob appear in my middle. *You don't want to get the radio or go back in to read or lie down or sit down or even stand here like this. All you want is that beer, that cool, delicious beer in that charming little bar.*

I don't remember much about the next couple hours. There was an exciting encounter with a stick of chewing gum and an attempt to filter solace from a cup of tea and a doughnut. One tasted

as if a very old duck had been swimming around in it and the other was sheer excelsior. Nor did I ever think a dollar ninety-nine clock could ever become so interesting I would just sit there and stare at it: *"There went twenty seconds. Now, let's see how long it takes ten seconds to pass. Come on, whip it up. Hell, hours have passed and there are still four seconds to go. Hm, two. One. Hm. So that was ten seconds. Think of it."*

Closing time for bars came and went. The most important beer in all history went, too. Just up and vanished, that gigantic beer of ours.

I wanted to go out but there was always the chance you'd call. Anyway, where could I leave the key? The thought of going to bed was the most repugnant ever to steam up from the sewers of hell. I stood beside the contraption as if it were a vat of bubbling acid. When I at last did crawl in, it was like floating face down on a tepid swamp. I rolled and only stopped for brief briefings: "Now don't jump when it rings. Phones always startle people in bed at night. Always. If they wake up, that is. So don't get startled and jump and all that. Just walk out there casually and say a very matter-of-fact *Hello* or *May I help you?* or *Where the godamhell have you*—no, not that. Keep it casual." I dragged the phone in beside the bed and lay there studying it. A cold looking instrument. Very black.

Suddenly I knew you were in trouble. You were too decent and honest and efficient to simply forget to call. It *must* have been an accident or something.

I saw you beaten up, lying still in a dark alley, bruised on the floor of a cell, dead in the street, drunk, lost, kidnapped, bleeding. Sweat stood out on my face. Once I dozed off and woke with a terrible start under the impression I'd been forced to touch a dead body. My hand had fallen on the cold phone.

Junior, take a bow. That was the first sleepless night I ever spent over anyone. But all of it—every stinking minute—was nothing compared to what came bright and early next morning. I'd started calling all the numbers in your crowded phone-book and was moving on to the police and hospitals when the phone screamed. I was startled and I jumped. And there was that voice of yours complaining about the phone being busy so long. You were way out on Whittaker and Fourth and could I pick you up in about twenty-five minutes? You'll recall a certain silence at my end of the line. I was trying to get back up from the floor. What did I answer? Something about being in the middle of rinsing out socks or some other lie like that. You said okay, you'd take a taxi and maybe I should start dinner early if I wanted to go for a drive later on. Did my yeses sound odd? They should have.

Yes, Buster, I was sick. You were alive and well and, worse, wholly unaware you'd caused anyone anything but sheer joy all night long. I'd just spent many valuable hours of my life worried ulcerous about someone who was having himself the dandiest, blithest, most rollicking time he'd had in lo these many months. But that part was nothing. Your lack of

imagination was a mere mote compared to the second thing I began realizing.

It hit me like an ax that all your wonderful cleanliness and trim neatness and superb freshness had been given away like a dirty penny to a stranger. And probably accepted at that value, too, because we don't hold high what's given easily. Unless we're me. All the immaculateness just possessed at random, stomped around in—and you had allowed it in some flattered fever! I could hear you saying between swallows of beer, "We can't go to my place. It's being borrowed tonight. No, not that. We're just friends and we each go our ways and do what we damned please. No ties. Free man!" Then followed all the rest that's just a function without affection and there was no affection in all the world that Saturday night.

Don't you remember coming to me in the kitchen before you started the dishes and kneeling on the floor where I sat? On the floor on your knees and looked up as if you wished you could cry. *You!* I said, "Hey, what's all this?" and you said, "*I know you don't want me to go. I know how much.*" Remember that? All right then, I'd like to know how irresistibly beautiful a stranger is, any stranger, and what this particular one had and did, and precisely how this night of incidental bliss was so much more important to you than all my miles of well-paced floor. You said *I know how much!* and got up and went out there anyway. Just what was all that knee stuff on the floor anyway? A gesture, bone to a dog, sop to a conscience, wool for an eye? And I

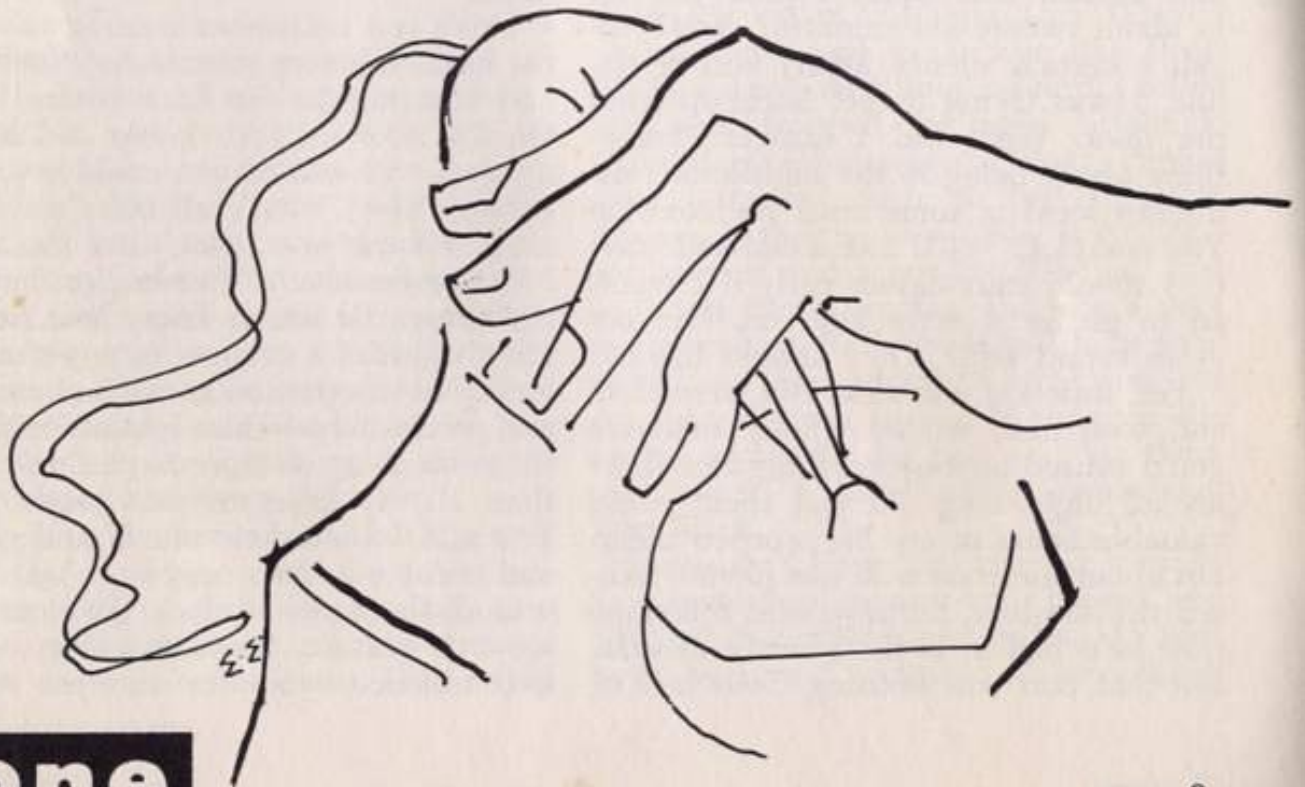
want to know exactly how dazzling that night was, how unforgettable and thrill-filled from start to finish. And, friend, make it a production because if it was one degree less than momentous, *my* Saturday night was just plain waste and I was indeed a sobbing, clinging, doting fool.

No, this will never do. You're not to be convinced this way. A little loneliness might do it but you've a high wall of handsomeness to protect you from that. I've known for pages this is a waste of time. You'll never see it. But how then can I tell you romance is *made* not hunted for and found full bloom? And how can I ever convince you that I like you

in spite of all the things I love about you!

But then if you don't see these things before I have to say them, perhaps you shouldn't call. Perhaps the phone should stand there silent, hour after hour, day after day, a week and now another. *Easy to say, oh so easy to say but you'll go on looking at the thing and hating to leave the house for fear you'll miss its ring. And the long waiting's like that call tonight where neither says a word and we're connected only by miles of humming silence. And, in the terrible suspense, I wonder who'll hang up first and I pray between gritted teeth for just a word before the click, the hum.*

Smith



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IMAGES

It is odd seeing you in love again, and light of pace,

As you were when I first came to you.

And strange to see that once-known sweetness change your face,

Make your body bright, making it new.

Because another one of me has taken you, a twin-like thing,

You cannot go or break away from me.

Drink as a hummingbird drinks of sibling flowers, and bring

My love back where it needs to be.

Camilla





Death in a Royal Family

The door of the apartment closed softly.

Johnny, who seemed to be in a deep sleep on the couch, sat up, took a long gold tipped cigarette from the filigree box on the table and lighted it with the heavy companion lighter. He picked up the mother-of-pearl telephone from its cradle and dialed a few of the slightly raised golden numbers. He frowned impatiently while the buzz sounded repeatedly in his ear and pushed back the brocade sleeve of his dressing gown. The frown deepened. He'd forgotten his watch was not on his arm. When the buzz broke abruptly in his ear he said, "Police? I think I've just been robbed." He gave them his name and address.

"That's right. I went out of the room for a moment and when I returned, my guest was gone. So was my watch, a diamond ring weighing about two and a half carats and seventy dollars from my wallet.

"Right. My guest's name was Stuts. About 25. He has modelled for me for almost a year; I'm an artist. He's living at the YMCA down the street now, at least that's where I've been picking him up."

Johnny listened a few seconds and nodded.

"Yes, I see, but I don't know that . . . You'll send someone over within the

hour. Good, but remember I want no fuss or publicity. I'll prefer charges quietly when you have him. He shouldn't be too far from my hotel now . . . I'm very anxious about the ring. It was my mother's. I can't imagine whatever made him do it. I pay him extremely well . . . Yes, thank you."

Johnny poured some more wine into his glass, pushed the button on the cradle for the operator and said, "Give me Apartment 16-J."

He burped into his hand and murmured, "Damned soda pills." Once more the buzz broke in his ear.

"Willie? Johnny. Well, I think I've finally got the little rat. It worked like a charm . . . Oh, a few hitches. Could have been better — but what couldn't at our age?"

"Yeah. Just about like I told you it would. I called him at work and told him I wanted to see him for the last time. He said he was tied up. Even hinted he was having dinner with you! Imagine! That's one of the things that I really loathe about him, trying to play us off against one another when we were having our affairs while he was having his diapers changed! I will miss him, Willie, but I'll be glad to be out of this hell he's caused me, too.

"I know, my dear, you've stuck by me like an angel and I won't forget it. Well,

anyway, he finally agreed to come by about nine. I begged him, Willie, literally begged him to forget the past three months and come back. He *laughed* at me. He said he'd never appreciated freedom until now! Imagine! And I always let him do as he pleased! *Always!* I gave him everything. He sat there sipping my best champagne and *laughed* at me! Money was never a consideration, you know that, and you know what he called me? A tight fisted, fading, old snob! Imagine! He really went too far right there, Willie."

"Thank you, doll. I appreciate that . . . I know you mean it. You're the exact opposite of that wretched little nobody. Anyway, when I told him I'd taken an overdose of sleeping pills, he threw back his head and roared! He said I'd never have the guts! Imagine! . . . Well, we'll see how he likes facing life as a jailbird. People won't break their necks getting to him once he's branded as a thief!"

Johnny stabbed out his cigarette and flexed his fingers admiring the play of light on the lacquered nails.

"Too harsh? Willie, I've given him every chance known to man to make amends and come back to me and all he did was *laugh* at me. He really was nasty at the last. He went into the bedroom and brought out my bottle of capsules. He said, 'Are these what you took,' and when I said it was he said I hadn't taken enough to insure a good night's sleep! Then he poured the rest of the bottle out in his hand and said, 'Take this many and maybe you *will* do the world a favor!' Imagine, and after

all I've done for him, for him to talk to me like that!

"Yeah. But you should have seen him turn pale when I went over and took the whole handful and swallowed them in three gulps. Honestly, you should have seen his face. I thought he was going to stop me for a minute, but then he said, 'What did you do, substitute flour in them?' I'm glad he didn't say soda. I *know* I'd have given myself away. But he really was worried. I could tell. And when I gave him my ring and watch he did look upset. He refused to take them at first. Then when I begged him to take them as my dying request, he agreed — but he was cad enough to say he'd send them back tomorrow when I was feeling better! Imagine! . . . Someone at your door? Okay, but hurry. The cops are on their way over, you know."

Johnny put the telephone on the amethyst velvet sofa and went to turn off the radio. Mr. Montovani's orchestra was snapped back into the cold dark night outside on the highest note of *Charmaine*. Johnny returned to the telephone, the frown deepening between his aging eyes as the number of minutes mounted. At last Willie returned, but not to relieve him of the frown.

"*He's down there with you,*" Johnny gasped . . . But why? . . . *He* said that I'd sent my watch and ring down to *you!* What absolute cunning! And the police due here anytime! That little beast! I'll get him if it's the last thing I ever do! I'd better get dressed and come down there and get them before the police arrive . . . The *Nelsons* are with you?

Oh God! I suppose he blabbed the whole thing in front of them. One could almost believe he knew what I was planning. Willie, could you slip out and bring them up to me? Good. I'll simply have to tell the police I misplaced them and found them after I called. Oh, that little varmit! But hurry!"

As Johnny put the telephone back in its cradle a violent pain twisted up through his stomach and writhed into his chest to explode into unbelievable agony. He howled. Sweat broke from his face and body and he seized the arm of the sofa to keep from rolling to the floor. He managed to get the telephone in his hand and gasp, "Operator! Operator, send me the house doctor. Urgent. And call an ambulance. I think . . . I'm dying!" His voice tore out of him in a breathless savage shriek that left him vomiting on his best oriental rug.

Less than an hour later Johnny died at the height of a strychnine convulsion. Willie, his best friend, and a startlingly handsome young man with blond curly hair, candidly told their stories to the police.

Yes, Johnny was extremely temperamental, Willie recalled suavely. Yes, he had had an affair, rather, with the blond,

said the blond. Yes, he had threatened suicide often — it was one of his favorite threats to get his way — and he *was* very bitter against the young blond just now. Yes, they both thought he kept strychnine up at his farm in Connecticut.

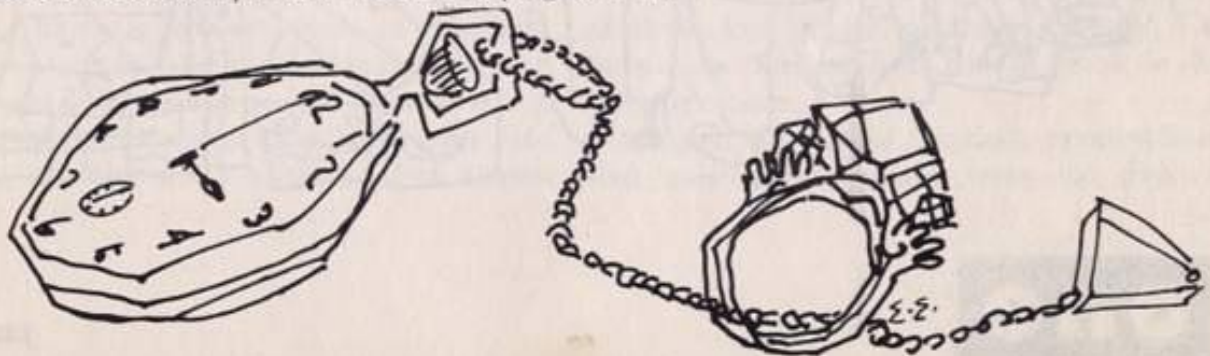
Then the blond young man related how Johnny had implored him to deliver the watch and ring as a dying wish, and how he had agreed to only because he believed Johnny to be bluffing. And Willie, wasting not a few of those famous sidelong glances that had upset bars from Rome to Hollywood, related how Johnny knew he was planning to be out all evening, but how friends of his had dropped around unexpectedly, thereby detaining him. Yes, the Nelsons agreed, they'd seen the young man deliver the valuables and heard of Johnny's strange behavior.

The police were puzzled, naturally, but any cop is smart enough to recognize suicide, clumsily disguised as murder for gain. So they allowed handsome Willie and his charming new friend to go home — together.

Happily ever after? I wouldn't say so. If *you* were Wealthy Willie, or the shrewd young blond, could you quite dare?

James Barr

James Barr is at present finishing a sequel to "Quatrefoil", (Greenberg, New York) You'll see a selection from it in ONE's pages soon.





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Jingle, You Belles You!

You wouldn't know, girl, but every Christmas at Marshall's Department Store they rig up a special toyland for the kids on Fifth in between Kitchen Ware and Garden Supplies. It's hardly what you'd call original with all its big mechanical figures moving an inch north and an inch south for six weeks in silly little jerks, all the loud jingling music and whole masses of bargains everywhere you look that only parents are supposed to touch. It's enough to give a child nightmares clear through Easter like it does the parents: it's not till then they finish paying for all they bought. And little of it's what the child itself wants but what the parents wish they'd had when *they* were kids and, darling, if you say you want that silly space suit just *once* more I'll beat you over the head with it no matter *what* it costs. I know all about it from personal experience. I was in that department two whole unholy Christmases before I got myself transferred to window decorations in sheer desperation.

The Kiddie Fairyland at Marshall's was agony for the parents, terror for the poor personnel and tearfully confusing to the kiddies themselves. What's more, doll, the manager was a big, butch ex-All American three-quarter-back from way back when croquette was just going out and each game ended in obsequies. And what's even more, he swore if he ever found as much as *one* real fairy in Fairyland he'd mow them through Garden Supplies, Knife them through Kitchenware and end up doing simply frightful things to them in Danish Pottery. He actually *razed* at the idea of a man

thinking of anything but sales quotas and Jane Russell, and the girls were supposed to dote on him or Burt Lancaster in that order. But all I can say about *him* is he was blind as any one of several bats. There were no fewer than three of us in his very own department, seven on that floor and I dread to think of a Kinsey report on the whole store! A whole battery of us used to eat lunch together upstairs and, Mary, what mad times we had! Naturally if *he* showed up, we all got baritone and clustered around two gay girls saying the most *brazen* things. Oh, how he'd leer and wink and wish us luck in simply improper whispers! Ah, those lunch half-hours! Mad, I tell you, *mad!*

Well, around November sometime Mr. Slaussen hies himself up to Personnel and tells Miss Pickins he wants a kind and gentle Santa *this* year. The one she sent down the year before got drunk and either gave away the bargains as if they were his or caustic monologues on what he thought of *all* brats. The children were rather intrigued by all this but the parents told him exactly what he could do with his ulcers and took their business and babies elsewhere. Miss Pickins listened sadly, nodded sympathetically and assured him that *this* Christmas will be different. Being Mr. Slaussen, he remarked it had *better* be and marched off as if he'd just made the world safe for democracy all alone. And, believe me, it *was* different. That little Miss Pickins had Borgia blood in her mild little veins.

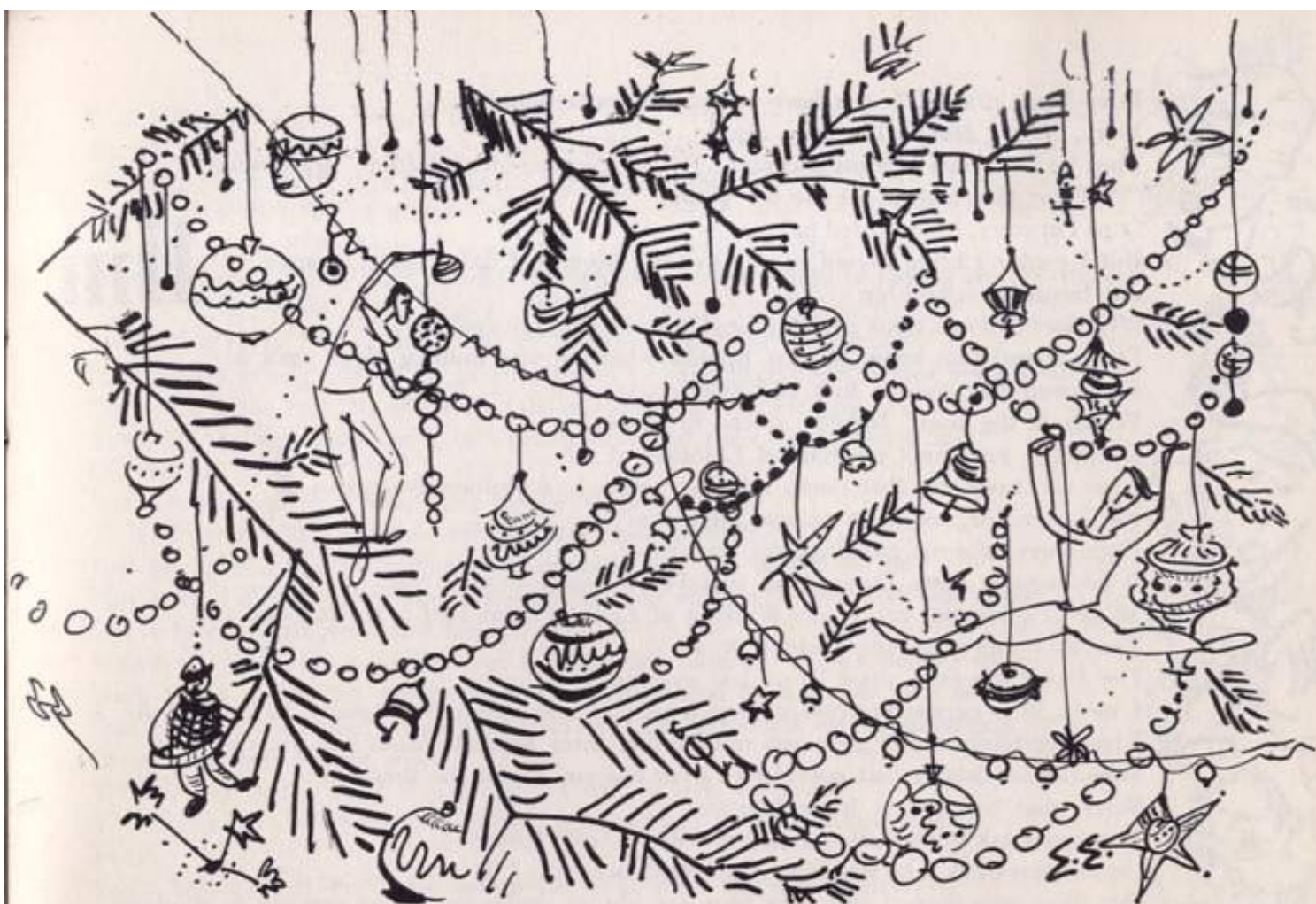
She sent the kindest, gentlest, sweetest Santa that ever minced down from the Pole. It

weighed at least two hundred pounds before pillows and was as graceful as a feather in a breeze. Oh, you should have seen the utterly elegant way it picked the white hairs from its teeth: all little fingers. And as unconcerned at all the shocked attention as if the seedy old costume were a Dior creation. Naturally it got around fast but Slaussey was so busy he was the last to find out. When some of the other department heads began twitting him, he didn't know what they were talking about. One said, "A simply lovely Fairyland this year, Slaussen! I just can't wait to see what Santa's bringing *me!*" And another: "Hey, Slaws, I knew Santa had gnomes working for him but I didn't know he was a brownie himself. But it's sure pulling in the crowds. Oh, you're a sly one, old boy!" The sly one said, "Why-uh-yes! Biggest crowds we ever had! Great promotion, eh?" then hurried back to his department to see exactly what was causing all this record breaking. When he got to Fairyland, he stopped and just stood there staring.

Santa—sitting before whole fields of parents and progeny—wasn't just doing a dollar an hour job to draw unemployment compensation after New Years. That one was nothing less than holding court. It had dozens of tiny lavender bows in the white beard, brilliant sequins sewed all over the costume, gilt sprinkled in the wig and eyebrows, and the biggest pinkie ring ever to be borrowed from Accessories. Those full lips were "Carmen's Kiss! The *Latest Red Menace!*" and the immense cheeks simply *burned* with rouge. There was carefully applied eyeshadow and, believe it or not, a diamond beauty mark. Somehow, and you won't believe this either, the whole effect was just right. It was fanciful and luxurious and a bit regal—and somehow more *fun* than any Santa in town.

On top of this, our very own Santa was simply *doting* on the kids. While Slaussey watched in horror, Old Man Christmas picked up a child, established it on one fat knee and exclaimed, "What a precious little precious! I just *love* you, really and truly I do! Just *look* at these brown eyes, so big and deep! Madam, you're simply *too* lucky. *None* of us adults deserve little miracles like this, do we? No, dear, don't pull my beard. I'm not sure it's real. Now, what do you want this poor old beat-up Santa to bring you this year? Go easy now: money doesn't grow on trees." For once, the children weren't scared. They howled in delight at a deity that could make fun of itself and they had to be torn away from him. Our mad, mad Christmas spirit was a howling success. Sales soared.

So did Slaussey. He plowed forward, laid big hands on Santa and actually dragged him out to the stock room. Everyone on that floor heard him roaring dozens of unpleasant opinions on the subject of unnatural selection — all of which ended with, "And don't show your face back here EVER!" Santa, decostumed but still in make-up, flounced out locking like offended royalty, got a safe distance and called back, "You simply *disgust* me! *Boor!*" Slaussey roared and started after him; they did a thrilling chase scene on the Up escalator in which both ran like mad but neither moved an inch. Bets were made and a cheering section formed spontaneously in the big crowd. Then all at once Santa turned and screamed, "I'm going to faint! Catch me!" Slaussen saw the descending two hundred pounds and decided all this was beneath his dignity. He ran and didn't stop until he was again facing Miss Pickins. The things he said can only be sung to Mademoiselle From Armentiers—softly.



Well, it so happens that while he was up in the main office, the store manager was visited by a delegation of two hundred furious parents of all sexes and each with at least one deafeningly heartbroken child. The din! They wanted to know WHY Santa had been dethroned by that horrid, profane man downstairs. This Santa was the sweetest, nicest Santa in town, and so sincerely interested in their children and such a fine *person!* They raged and the manager said it was all a misunderstanding forty-three times and finally slipped out. He pressed a certain little black button and hissed into a speaker, "Send that Slaussen up here this instant."

That's all, really. Slaussey was given a most novel choice. He could get that Santa back in twenty minutes or take the part himself. Marshall's Department Store now had no interest in him in any other capacity. As it turned out, Santa was back in ten minutes and serene as a queen restored to her rightful throne by divine intervention. I understand Slausen had to make a personal salary adjustment; Santa, you know, is no fool. And another thing: Santa was kept well supplied with hot coffee and French pastries clear through Christmas Eve. I tell you, it was a *mad* Christmas!

Saul K.



Love these drapes! Is the host an artist or something?
Mary, Mary, *Mary!* It's been *ages!*
Then he leans *way* over me and says, "Let me see your identification," and I said,
"Well for *that* matter, let *me* see *yours!*"
Oops I'm sorry, bit crowded in here
But I couldn't bring myself to *do* anything because I didn't want to spoil
our beautiful friendship
Who does that one think she's kidding! Twice a day, my eye!
I've a friend that knew Marlon Brando when he was nothing more than a
I've loved you since I first laid eyes on you
Which is the host? Nobody seems to know.
Darling, I just don't understand Lesbians at *all*
I see *no* reason for that much tatcoing unless he's profoundly jealous of
the Louvre or wants to charge admission
Oops sorry take my handkerchief no *please!*
If he imitates Bette Davis again tonight I'm going to take this
Who? Oh, heavens no, you're thinking of *Len* not *Ken*; Len is the tall one and
Ken isn't any particular height at all
I've loved you *both* since I first laid eyes on you
I mean, if a person borrows money from you and solemnly promises he'll faithfully
I most certainly did! I gave you my number three separate times and you're *yet* to
Who *doesn't* loathe that one? Did I ever tell you about the time she
Sorry, that happens to be spoken for
You just mark my word: one day it will be *Saint Kinsey!*
I sometimes think if he says *play it cool* just once more I'll
But those two darned cats they have are always under you when you try to sit down
You're crazy if you think I'm going to hash over that silly Convention a *third* time
Man's whole function in the Scheme of Things is terribly, terribly incidental
That was just plain old *lettuce!* I cught to know; I made it myself!
Oops sorry hope it doesn't stain no it was *my* fault it really was
I've loved you since you first set eyes on me
Well, if *that's* a vice-squadder, I *want* to be arrested
Come back here! I *demand* to know exactly who told you such a thing!
All I know is he likes to ski and overpark
So they decided to strike *everything* he'd said out of the minutes and forget the
whole thing and love one another all of a sudden
What's wrong with being a Japanese? A person has to be *something*
Never pick up two of *anything*, darling, unless of course you're
Oops sorry if it stains I'll pay the cleaning give me your number hm?
Ah, but you're an obligation to Society if you *like* Society or *dislike* Society
Maybe so but he swears he's nct on duty

Din

one

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Pooh, what sanitarium would have him?
My place is out of the question; I live with my folks
Well, all I can say is, he's bragging. I happen to *know*
Are you *sure* he's out of town?
All right, *you tell me* how he could play an ace with spades no trump
No, I'm sorry I can't. Next Sunday my whole damned family is having one of those
I was nine years old at the time and I knew *exactly* what I was doing
I tell you, these barbell boys are *all* hopelessly married to mirrors
That's news to me, friend: he and I happen to have lived together for eight years
She's fifty or so and has the most *fabulous* collection of pictures you *ever*
Naturally the neighbors get a bit curious now and then but I always say
Oh shut up lover
But is it legal to send things like that through the mail?
At least grunt when I say something; don't just *sit* there
Just go up and say something conversational and ask him what he's
Hey now, I didn't say *everyone* should practice nudism; I said that only those
You've loved me since the first time you saw me
Which one? Not the youngish one in the white sweater! I don't believe it!
Sure, I was on the S.S. Melch when the Fifth Naval District was part of the
Quick talk to me: here comes that gruesome thing I stood up Thanksgiving
Oops, oops and *double* oops!
Where? Say that *is* nice! If you don't, I will. Watch my drink.
You didn't have to *shout* that, friend; this happens to be a respectable
Fresh
You'd better take Tess home before she does what she did at Helen's
I don't care; just give me a straight shot
But it's slightly disillusioning to meet a chapter chairman at a steam bath
Man is an experiment that has failed, failed, failed
Will you stop that? You know what I mean all right
Does the music *HAVE* to be up that loud? All I see is your mouth moving
I challenged his credentials and he didn't get the floor again; it was the *only*
way I could shut him up
May I get you another drink? I said another drink, no, *drink!* Oh, forget it.
You're nice
Oops
Doesn't that siren sound awfully near?
He doesn't *discuss* the books he sells; he just recites the jackets
I'm tired of flitting; I can't tell you how tired I am of flitting
The host is out cold in the back bedroom
Hey, somebody answer the door!



Elizabeth Lalo



The Voice in the Vase

I'm the funny cop that hit the headlines all over the country a couple weeks back. I been laughed at by more people than ever heard of the Keystone cops and lectured to right out in court on the birds and the bees by a wise-cracking, publicity-loving municipal judge. I been suspended and personally reprimanded by every superior officer on the Force including the Chief of Police himself, and I been the subject of hundreds of letters crisscrossing back and forth between the Police Commissioners, the City Attorney, The Mayor and all but one of the City Council because he had the flu. I been twitted by editors, radio commentators and TV comics for having a "dangerously clean mind," and some citizens' committee even started a crusade to get brighter recruits on the Force. My whole career's shot and it's all because of a pair of lousy perverts. What they did to me was worse than unnatural: it was *supernatural* and nobody believes me. But nobody! And all I can say over and over is it's true, so help me! Every bit of it's true and there's no way in the world to prove it! That's why I'm writing this. Maybe someday in the years to come somebody will believe what I'm getting down on paper here. The way I feel I don't much care what happens to me after I've finished.

It happened like this. I was just in the middle of taking a special course for vice squadders, when I saw these two for the first time. It was on a crowded bus and there they were smack in the middle of the aisle with two bags of groceries each. There was plenty of room further back but they wouldn't budge.

How was I to know they were getting off in a block? Well, it so happened in the training I was taking, the instructors said over and over to act just like anybody and be easy-going and friendly: none of the hard stuff people usually think of in connection with a flattie for some reason. The instructors said a hundred times, "If anybody spots you, you're a failure." So that's why I said to these two characters on the bus real friendly, "Get a move on to the rear of the bus, you two. Don't jam up the aisle."

They looked at me up and down and the little one said, "You're not at an intersection, friend." That set me back on my heels especially since one of my instructors had got on with me. He looked at me then up at the ads with a little private smile on his face. Sure, I got mad. I turned back to these two guys and said hard, "Snap into it or I'll run you off the bus." Then I noticed several people around smiling and whispering, and way back somebody guffawed. And the little one said to the other one, "Didn't I tell you? The minute I laid eyes on him." All I could do was stand and stare at them and boil. But all the same I memorized their faces for future reference. Anybody can commit a crime and they usually do. Like the instructor said, "Everybody's a criminal waiting to be brought out. This includes you guys." Everybody in the class laughed but they knew how deep that remark was. So I studied these two and made a mental note of where they got off. Later I was glad I did because the instructor beside me gave me so bad a grade I was rejected.

One Sunday not long after that I found myself driving down the street those two got off at. Sort of coincidence, I guess. I kind of slowed down and looked the neighborhood over, and sure enough, I'd hardly gone a couple blocks when I spotted both of them. They were out in front of a duplex working in the garden. Both had on bright trunks and they were busy as little bees. I said to myself right then, "Those two are queer." All the neighbors were lounging around with the comics and warm beer but not these two guys. You could look at how too much better their place was than everybody else's and see there was something wrong somewhere.

Right then I got an idea. If I could pop in on a fairy festival that these characters throw every so often, I'd stand a good chance of getting back in favor and maybe even get a promotion. All I'd have to do would be keep an eye on the place weekend nights. No trouble at all! I began to feel glad I'd run into them that day on the bus.

That feeling didn't last. Weeks passed and all I ever see is them just doing the stuff everybody does around the house. No parties, hardly any company at all. I got disgusted and decided to give it up, then I got to thinking what they'd done to me and I got mad and decided to stick it out. I thought to myself, maybe these two are exceptions and don't give parties. Okay but that doesn't mean they're like you and me. I scouted the place and found a nice bushy window I could peek in without being seen from behind, and I began going up there now and then to watch for a half hour or so. I'd decided to settle on raiding them if it was only a party for two. I'm a dogged sort of guy.

Well, it was the sort of job that called for

a dogged guy, I can tell you. The only thing that kept me at it was the thought of the Sergeant shaking my hand. I couldn't see very much from the angle the window was at but even then these two characters never *did* anything. It was like looking in on anybody and I got madder and madder. They just planned meals and argued how much garlic salt should go in the meat loaf, and took turns doing the dishes. They washed out socks and ironed shirts and talked for hours about how they were going to fix the place once they had the money. They'd taken it unfurnished and it was kind of bare. Man, the yak about what color to paint the front room and what kind of coffee table they'd make and how long the curtains ought to be! I thought I'd go nuts—and my neck nearly broke. And there were spats but they didn't stay mad long; that little one seemed to hold out the longest. I'd go home disgusted and asking myself just *what* I was doing there squatting in those bushes. But a hard job is supposed to make a man all the more determined. I kicked myself right in line, set up regular hours and even began taking my camera along. No lousy perverts were going to make *me* give up!

Even when I couldn't see them, I could hear about everything they said. There was lots of talk about how good-looking this guy or that one was down at their offices or in a movie or somewhere, and builds, builds, builds. They wore trunks around the house most of the time and there were silences in there. But none of all that's really what you can call an act against nature in court. *That* sort of thing they were real careful about because none of it was done for any sort of an audience—even one as close as I was. They were always running around and pulling down the

shades and lowering their voices and turning off the lights. Imagine sneaking through life like that—every minute night and day! People don't realize how perverted perverts are until they watch them. Me, I'd just go crazy having to be so secret about everything I did. What a hell of a life to choose when they could be normal with no trouble at all!

Then all of a sudden the whole thing blew sky high. In just five minutes everything changed from being dull and ordinary, and got so *damned* different I thought I'd gone crazy. Maybe I did. It sure doesn't sound sane what happened from there on.

I said they didn't have much furniture. The living room was bare except for a second hand divan and a borrowed floor lamp. And up on the ledge over the fireplace with a couple books was this little vase. It was about as tall as a milk carton and some dark color, and it didn't look like much to me. It was old and there was a chip out of the top. Not the sort of thing you pay any attention to. I never noticed it until the night it got broke.

They were twittering around about putting up a long curtain rod. The little one didn't look where he was swinging it and the end of the rod gave the vase a crack. It didn't fall off—just busted in two neat pieces like it was cut down the middle from top to bottom and laid there rocking on the ledge. The big guy began yawping at the little one about being a victim of general atrophy or something like that. He walked over and looked at the two pieces.

"Darn you anyway. I've been very fond of this little thing. Why don't you ever watch what you're doing! You know, I got this almost ten years ago at a Salvation Army store for a quarter."

"Stop moaning. It's in two neat pieces. I'll glue them together and it won't look a *bit* worse than it did before. Maybe better."

"Thanks so much. Anything else around the house you'd like to improve?"

"Give it here. I've got some glue in the closet."

"Funny how it broke exactly in two, isn't it?"

"Hey."

"What?"

"Now how could *that* be?"

"How could *what* be?"

"Look. Am I losing my mind or is there writing on the *inside* of these two pieces?"

"Come on, let's get this curtain up before—"

"You come *here* and *look* at this! It's in a spiral starting at the top and going clear down to the bottom."

"Dolling, that's physically impossible. *Who* could get *whose* hand inside that half-inch neck? Let's see what you're calling writing."

"People put ships in bottles, buddy, and somebody has *written* inside this vase."

"Those are just scratches."

"Well, the scratches are in English."

"I'll be darned. I don't see how anyone could write *inside* a vase this *small*! Makes you think of literate monkeys—or gnomes and things."

"Bring your half over here under the lamp. We'll read it. It's in a spiral so if we take turns each reading a line, we'll have what it says."

"Your half must start it off. Mine begins with *it's too bad because this vase is actually.*"

"Sit down. Closer. Now, here goes."

That was the closest I'd ever seen them together in the light. I hurried around the back door with my camera, slipped in and tiptoed through the dark kitchen. They were both

in just trunks and pressed close together to read this vase stuff, and the big one had put his arm across the other's shoulder. I raised my camera and got ready to step into the room. Then I began listening to what they were reading. It was real strange.

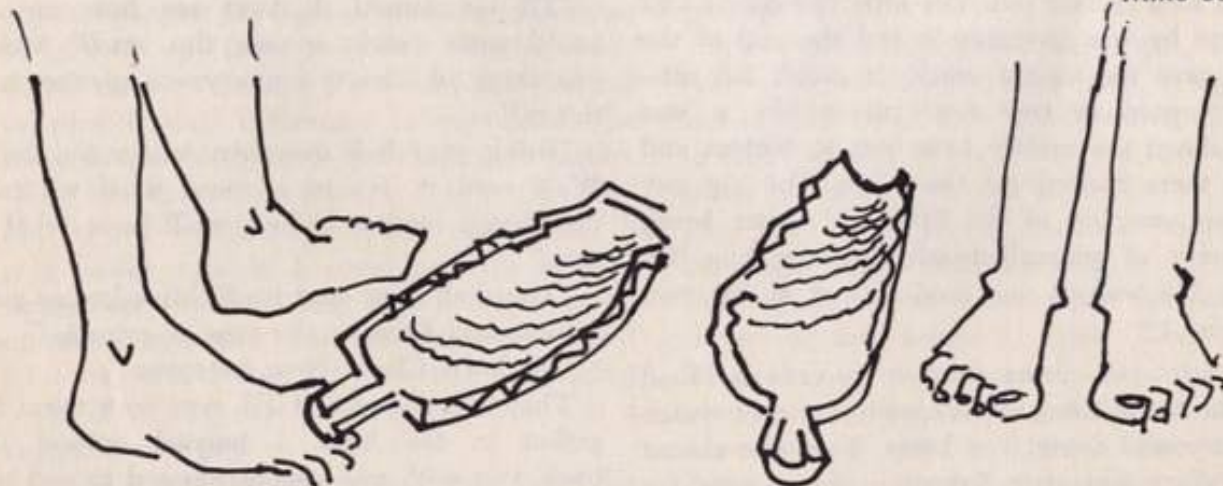
No, you won't glue this back together and it's too bad because this vase is actually more valuable as an antique than for what you'll use it. This little two bit bargain that you've dusted so irregularly was thrown together one warm April afternoon in the year 999 A.D. This inscription is in the language and vernacular of the two who finally discovered its secret and who, being human, will destroy these pieces after they've finished reading this. Oh, yes, you will whether you want to or not. The substance of this whole affair is that you two kids now have at your disposal three wishes apiece to rescue yourselves from any danger which threatens you. Just specify the type of rescue you desire and it's yours, dears. There's one condition however. You must first smash these pieces into small, unreadable bits. Now, naturally this whole thing will throw you

both into a purple dither and you'll simply throw away your first two wishes. But the third is a question. Try to make it count. It might be instructive to tell you to WAIT. Wait and wait and wait. In fact, you'll be wise if you never use the third one. If this sounds fabulously mad to you then all this ceramic bother has been wasted on you. Perhaps it was a silly idea in the first place.

When they'd finished, they just sat there. I was kind of stumped myself. Then it hit me all of a sudden that they'd move out of that intimate, abnormal pose any second. I stepped into the room and raised the old camera. They looked up startled. The pieces of the vase fell on the floor and smashed to bits. And in the couple seconds it took me to get them in the finder, they both said exactly the same thing to cover up for the other. If one of them had been just a bit more selfish than the other, they wouldn't have gotten into any trouble but they were just sentimental enough perverts to say in chorus: "I wish I was a woman!"

Sure, sure, I snapped the camera just a second too late.

Mike Schwartz



one



plan has been worked out whereby ONE'S readers can take active part in its progress and expansion. ONE, a California non-profit corporation now offers to you, and to all of its friends, five different types of non-voting corporation membership. From these each person can select a means for supporting ONE'S aims and ideals

We are confident that you want to help us make ONE a better magazine, a more fearless and exciting challenge than ever before. We have great plans and high hopes for the coming year. Won't you join with us?

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To be intentionally shocking takes a lot of energy but to shock unwillingly is infinitely more tiresome. We can only feel a sort of weary sadness when some of our more sheltered readers see ONE for the first time and launch upon a whole series of shocks. They're staggered to find that there is a magazine devoted to comment on and study of homosexuality. Then they find that this outrage has been going on for a whole year and the self-admitted publishers are still unjailed! From there things must go from bad to terrible as they find that (a) ONE is dedicated to instructing both the public and the homosexual about deviation, and to bringing about a necessary union of the two, (b) ONE's contributors feel no incongruity in demanding for themselves the civil rights given all other citizens, (c) ONE advocates no illegal act of any kind, incites to no "unnatural" behavior, and fights inequitable laws in a completely lawful manner, (d) ONE sponsors research on the subject regardless of its findings, (e) ONE is not and has no wish to be an erotic magazine, and (f) ONE is not backed by any political group, allied organization, or individual.

This last point should be emphasized with much underlining. For instance, ONE is connected in no way with the Mattachine Society, either legally secretly or ideologically. The January issue will contain the first of a series of criticisms of this organization that does not appear to hold with any of the purposes which motivate this magazine. And further, ONE is wholly unfinanced except by its readers. It's true! And to a hardened businessman this must seem incredible. Our bills would also seem incredible -- but we manage. We're even planning on an issue in January with eight more pages -- because our backers (you) say we're too little. In the event that you'd like to see this little leaflet publish better articles and fiction, artwork and photos, have more pages and come out on time -- in fact, if you'd like to see it continue, there's something you can do.

Read the reverse side of this page -- then write a check. Remember, nobody gets paid. It all goes into ONE and only ONE. And YOU are ONE.