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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOOKERS ***

Transcriber's Note

Suspected printing errors in the original text have been changed. A complete list is included at the end of this e-book.

Instances of inconsistent hyphenation have been left in place.

Hookers

By
Richard F. Mann

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"FOREWORD"

In writing this preface, it seems that I have followed the old Mexican custom of "Manana," and waited until the book was finished, before writing it, then I discovered that it was a necessity.

The characters in this story are real, live, and living people, and most of them are still in the fair city of Juarez, plying the oldest trade in the world, and were known personally by the Author, who studied them for several months in pop-eyed amazement.

All of the incidents in this story actually happened, and are taken right from the bare facts of life; in fact, the Author has had to tone down some of the descriptions of the parties herein mentioned.

The Author has not meant to be vicious in his statements of either country, but has merely stated conditions as they were found.

THE AUTHOR.

"You lousy bastard, don't you ever set foot in this room again. You sure got nerve—accusing me of holding out on you—you know damn well that guy never paid me a cent." [Pg 1]

"Well, Pearl, how was I to know? He came down into the street, and said that he gave you two bucks."

"As long as you've been a Pimp, you should fall for that stuff—Screw—get out of my sight."

"O. K. Baby, but remember that if you ever need me, all you gotta do is just say the word. You know I'm all for you."

"Nuts—I've been in this burg a week, and all I done is turn Two Dollar tricks, and split with you, and for what? You ain't never brought me one dime, but you sure ain't missed any meals. I don't need you or any other guy from now on. I got my permit today from the Chief of Police of Juarez, to hustle all I want on the Mex side, and I'm doing it, starting tonight."

One week had passed since the person of Pearl Jones had stepped off the west-bound Texas & Pacific train in El Paso, with one thought in mind, and that to make as much money as possible in as short a time as possible, and without bother from the police if—possible, which is not POSSIBLE, even in a border town like El Paso, as Pearl had already found out. [Pg 2]

In order for Pearl to hustle on the Mexican side of the border in the City of Juarez, it was absolutely necessary that she have a written permit from the Chief of Police, or any official whom she happened to please in the usual way that a girl of her ilk had to please one, when there wasn't enough money in the pocket to buy the permit. Consequently, Pearl found out later she could have had a permit from the most lowly Immigration official to the Mayor himself, but in the midst of her efforts to please, the Chief of Police seemed to be the one who was affected quickest in her efforts to—please—. Hence the permit.

Juarez, Mexico, chief port of entry to Mexico, population of forty thousand souls, mostly lost ones, separated from the United States by the Rio Grande River, if it may have the luck to be called a river, which at no time is deep enough to wet the crucial spot of one's anatomy, in case one has to run through it owing to lack of time to make the bridge, which has often been the case.

"Well, this is a night for celebration," thought Pearl, as she left her hotel to walk down to the corner of Stanton Street, to catch the Juarez car. The car was filled from door to door with old Mexican women, wrapped in black shawls, which would have been black with dirt had they been originally any other color, and loaded down with topping bags filled with the bare necessities that their own Immigration was kind enough to let them bring in, and anything else that they might hide under the numerous dirty underskirts they might happen to have on. [Pg 3]

The car clanged, and slowly started its noisy journey toward the Stanton Street Bridge, at which it stopped from three to five minutes, for the Mexican Immigration and Customs Officials to go through the car and make a pretense at examining everything that was being brought into Mexico, as if anything on the face of God's green earth that was brought into Mexico could hurt it.

"I wonder where I'll get off, now that I'm over here," thought Pearl, as the car left the bridge to ramble on its way on into the heart of Juarez, which is the sixteenth of September St. "I know," she thought, "I'll get off at the Tivoli, where all the gambling is, and see if I have any luck there." [Pg 4]

"Hello, Honey," came the friendly voice of a heavy-set woman of about thirty, who five years before had been the toast of the border because of her beauty, but who now had begun to show what the excess of Men, Beer and Hook Shops, too numerous to mention, can do to a woman who had sold herself to any man with the price, and had given herself just as quickly to a man whom she thought she liked. "I saw you over here last night and wondered who you were. Did you just

come to town? Well, my name is Evelyn—the last name don't matter, but better known as Bar Fly Ev. I'll be glad to show you the ropes around here. Come on and let's get off here at the Tivoli and snatch a couple of shots of whiskey, and see if there's a dollar to be made here. Of course, it's a little early just yet. The best time to pick a live guy is about an hour before the bridge closes tonight, that's when they are looking for a girl to spend the night with, and they ain't too particular. That's how I manage. Of course, you won't have to do that—you're too fresh looking—they'll go for you like a Texas hog goes for swill."

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The Tivoli, the official gambling house of Juarez with any kind of a game you care to play, run square, but with the percentage so heavy for the house that a winning customer is a scarce thing.

"Say, Ev, did you have to get a permit when you came to this town, before you could hustle on this side?" asked Pearl.

"Hell, no, that's a lot of dirty gippery. The only permit I've got is the one that every woman has. Of course, I know what you have had to go through, and it's a damn shame that some louse didn't tip you off. That's the way them Mex's have of getting first pop at every girl that comes down here."

"What'll you girls have?" asked the bartender.

"Whiskey for me, Joe. What will you have, Dearie?"

"The same, and a big one," answered Pearl.

"Say, Dearie, by what name are you calling yourself?"

"Excuse me for not telling you before, but it's Pearl—Pearl Jones—let's have another drink on it.

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"Well, that's as good a name as any, at least, it's good and common," smiled Evelyn, as she killed her second drink without a chaser.

"You know the old saying, 'Common by name, common by nature.'"

"I'm damned if you ain't O. K., and we'll have another drink on that one. Hey, Joe, two more drinks for two ladies."

"Say, Ev, you must have something on your mind tonight the way you are starting off. You girls have a drink on the house, will you?"

"Hell, Yes—I'll drink on anything. You know me, Joe—Bar Fly Ev, the girl without a limit—at anything. By the way, Joe, this is Pearl. She's a new girl in town."

"Hello, Sister, glad to know you. Have another drink."

"I'm glad to know you, and Ev and I will have another drink, possibly several more," answered Pearl, displaying her best smile.

"Say, Sister, you're dern good looking. I'd like to see more of you," said Joe, as he poured more whiskey, and leaned over the bar and patted Pearl on the arm. "I'm O. K. You ask Ev if I ain't. How about it, Ev?"

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"I'll say you're O. K., Joe, and you've spent many a dollar on me, but Jees, you're seventy years old if you're a day. Don't you ever get too old for this sort of thing?"

"You'll have to ask somebody older than I am," answered Joe.

"Don't let her kid you, Joe," smiled Pearl, "You and I will get together real soon, how's that?"

"Here, here, here—you two, let's don't have an exhibition on such short notice. We gotta be moving along. We got a lot of hard drinking to do tonight, as well as a few dollars to earn."

"Oh, Ev, don't be in no hurry. You and Pearl have another drink on the house."

"Well—I guess we better have another little one before we go, eh, Pearl?"

"Sure, Ev. I'd as soon get lit here with Joe, as later. Makes no difference by me."

Joe poured the drinks, and one for himself. "Here's how," said Joe, as he poured his down.

"We'll be seeing you," waved Ev, as they started for the door.

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"Let's see—seeing that we're on this side of the street, we might as well go to the Gold Palace. It's only four or five doors down this way."

The Gold Palace, a large cabaret, with a balcony on one side, the dance floor surrounded by tables and chairs with their real ugliness covered with dirty green covers, of none too certain age, with a band stand at the far end of the place, the bar off to the right doing a rushing business.

"We might as well go in here and cop a couple of snorts of liquor, and see if there's any of the girls in yet," said Ev, as she started for the bar.

"Hello, Curley—my, you look grand tonight," Ev greeted the young bartender, as they stood up to the rail. "I want you to meet one of the new girls who just came to town. Curley, this is Pearl."

"Hello, Pearl—I'm always glad to meet a new girl. Now, what will you have to drink?"

"Whiskey for me," said Pearl, "what do you want, Ev?"

"Whiskey, and lots of it, Curley," answered Ev.

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"Say, for cripes sake," said Pearl under her breath, "who is that kid? Jeese, he's cute. I've been in here several times, and every time I've seen him, I get all worked up over him."

"Cool thyself, Sister, it will doith thee no good to workith thyself into a lather about him. The old jane who owns this joint—well, her daughter married him. That's why he is working here, and is true to the wife, maybe not because he wants to be, but because he'd better be, or else lose a certain section of his anatomy which would cause him to be of no further use to anyone—ssshhh—here he comes with the drinks, I'll tell you more later. How is your wife, Curley?" smiled Ev.

"She's fine," answered Curley, as he went to wait on other customers.

"Well, as I was saying—the old jane who owns this place is Grace Valdez—no, she ain't Mex, but when she came down here about ten years ago she married one, in order to become a Mex citizen, so she could run a chain of hook-shops without any bother from the Mex government. Grace, at one time, was the biggest Madam in Denver, Colorado—but she's a good scout. If you're in a jam and she likes you, she can do you a lot of good; in fact, she can keep any girl out of this town that she don't like. I'll introduce you to her tonight, if she comes around. That's why I'm putting you hep—don't go on the make for the Son-in-Law. Hey, Curley, give me and Pearl another whiskey."

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"O. K. Ev, drinks coming up."

"Don't be funny, Ev. I made five bucks off him yesterday afternoon."

"Oh, Jeese—" exclaimed Evelyn, with her eyes bulging, "Well, for the love of your own soul, don't let on to any of these other hookers, as they are sure to run to Grace with it, and Hell would break loose in a big way—but—I'm curious, is—I mean—is,—well,—how the Hell is his bed manners? I'm curious to know if the wife is getting a break, considering all the fun her Mother has had."

"Oh, Ev, he's—well—"

"Ssshh, pipe down, here comes Grace now. Hello, Grace, dear, how are you?" smiled Evelyn sweetly, "I got a friend here who is just dying to meet you, Gracie, dear."

"Hello, Ev," answered Grace, as she walked up to the two.

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"Grace, dear, this is Pearl Jones. She just came to town, and I'm kinda showing her the sights tonight."

"How are you, Pearl," said Grace, as she offered her hand to Pearl.

"I'm glad to know you, Grace; won't you have a drink with us?"

"I've just got time enough to have a drink, then I've got to get out to the Red Lights Apartments. Three of my girls got into a fight last night, and one got stabbed pretty bad."

"What was the fight over—a man?" asked Ev.

"Sure—that's always the cause of fights down there. One of the girls was caught with the other one's man," said Grace, as she threw her whiskey down, "I'm glad to have met you, Pearl. If I can be of any help to you any time, don't be afraid to call on me. So long, Ev," and with that Grace disappeared in the crowd.

"Say, Ev, I like that old dame."

"I knew you would—she's a pip—that is, as long as you don't cross her. Well, let's shove off from here. There's a lot of bars over on Lysol Lane we ain't been into yet."

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Juarez Avenue, better known as Lysol Lane, extends from the Sixteenth of September Street to the Santa Fe Bridge, and all traffic, pedestrian and otherwise, must go down this street and across this bridge to return to El Paso, as both bridges are one way, the Stanton Street Bridge is to enter Juarez, and the Santa Fe Bridge to leave it. This street, being a little over half a mile long, even if you were sober when you start down it, you would be drunk when you reached the bridge, as more than every other door is a famous bar, others infamous—but bars nevertheless, and as you near the bridge they are bigger and better and louder and wilder. So the girls started their trek down this street with the Barrel House, then to several bars of less importance, until they reached the Castle, which is known for its wonderful band, its good liquor, and its wonderful proprietor and his wife, who, when she has been drinking a little too much, does a strip dance on the floor that causes the Cholos to fly for the river, to keep from burning the seats out of their pants.

"Hi, everybody," yelled Evelyn, as she threw the swinging doors open and strode in. "I crave whiskey and lots of it. Come on, Pearl, the night is just beginning—Everybody, this is Pearl, a friend of mine I've known for years—come on, everybody, drink to her—W-h-ee-ee," screamed Evelyn, throwing her arms around the nearest man, and everybody moving and milling around the bar. The band in the cabaret struck up a hot number, with everybody screaming and dancing and drinking, for the night was starting its mad, hilarious orgy, which always ended with anyone going to bed with anyone they happened to be with, regardless of who it might happen to be, sometimes even their own husbands.

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Pearl found herself swept along by strong arms, on to the dance floor, before she had time to see his face, and when she did get a real look at him, she wasn't displeased. He was a tall fellow, about twenty-five or less, in laced boots, riding pants and leather sport jacket, and grey slouch hat.

"I'm hot for you, baby; I could use you plenty," were his first words to Pearl.

"Well, you're not hard to take."

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"That will be for you to decide later," he smiled with his eyes.

"My car is parked just back of this place. Shall we go out to it, or would you rather go elsewhere?"

"Your car is as good a place as any—let's go."

"Oke," he answered, as he put his arm around her waist and lifted her off her feet and carried her out of the crowd to the swinging door. "How much is this deal going to cost me, Baby?"

"Just five bucks, big boy."

"Oke, Baby," as he slipped a bill into her hand, "There's ten. If you're good for five, you ought to be a pip for that."

In the dim light Pearl uncrumpled the bill he had slipped into her hand.

"Nuts, big boy, what's the gag? This ain't no ten—this is a fifty."

"I know it—see if you can make the next fifteen minutes worth it."

The band played wild, hot, throbbing, beating, maddening, breath-taking, passionate music, while the crowd swayed in and out, and around. Young men whispered soft, sweet words. Old men whispered soft, sweet words. Young and innocent ears listened and remembered. Not so young and less innocent ears heard, still they did not hear. Hands of young men strayed over their partner's bodies. Hands of old men strayed over their partners. Young and innocent figures quivered, and whispered, "Darling, I love you," while less young, and less innocent said, "Get your hand off my Pratt."

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Evelyn looked around all the faces that were near her, but nowhere could she see Pearl. She ordered more drinks while she waited, knowing from experience that if a girl friend disappeared for a few minutes there was only one thing to do, and that was to—wait. There was no need for hurry—wasn't she drinking all she could hold, and it wasn't costing her a cent? Sure, she would wait—till Hell froze over—or at least till whoever was buying the drinks, stopped.

"For the love of Jeese—where the Hell you been? Look at your face—my God, but you need a drink, dear," said Evelyn, as Pearl and her boy friend came alongside the bar. [Pg 16]

"Excuse us for a minute, big boy," said Pearl, as she took Evelyn by the arm and started for the Ladies' Room.

"You ain't answered my question, where—have you been?"

"I just made some real money—look." She showed Evelyn the fifty-dollar bill.

"Well, if you was out with that guy that you came in with, all I got to say is—you damn sure earned it."

"Ev, you said it—I ain't so sure I care to meet any more like him, at least not tonight, although I gave him my address. He wants to come up tomorrow. What do you know about him, Ev?"

"Plenty—dearie—plenty, and if you can put up with him you can have the world with a dirty shirt on it. He is filthy with money, owns a mine back out here in the mountains—you use your own judgment, dearie."

"Were you ever out with him, Ev?"

"No, thanks, I bar horses."

The crowds were beginning to work their way down to the bridge district. All the bars were full of hard-drinking men and women. The cabarets were crowded, as it was time for the floor shows to go on in these places. [Pg 17]

"Come on, Pearl, let's go over across the street to the Lobby No. 2. It's a gay place, they have a good show there, and there must be some of the regular girls over there by now, and you've made enough tonight already to spend the rest of the night having a good time."

"All right, I'm ready."

Lobby No. 2, one of the most popular bars in Juarez, the bar in the front of the building, and the cabaret directly back of it, quite a large dance floor, with a band stand at the farthest end, and surrounded on three sides with tables, and every table filled with every specie of the human race, some drunk, some more drunk, and some blind drunk.

"Hello, there, Ev," greeted the bartender. "How's the old girl tonight?"

"I'm fine, Henry—I want you to meet a girl friend of mine. This is Pearl." [Pg 18]

"Hi, Pearl, what will you and Ev have to drink?"

"I think I'll have Rock and Rye, and a big slug of it—Ev, speed up, you're holding up the parade."

"Whiskey, my darlings—Hey, Harry—you damn good-looking bastard—come over here, I got a girl friend I want you to know."

"Why, hello, Ev—I haven't seen you in days, or I mean nights. Where have you been?" greeted Harry Hicks, a tall blonde young man of about twenty-three, who was the Master of Ceremonies of the floor show.

"Harry, this is Pearl—Pearl, this is Harry." Evelyn poured down her whiskey without further ado.

"How do you do," said Harry, as he offered his hand.

"I'm very glad to know you," said Pearl, as she took the offered hand.

"How soon does the show go on, Harry?" asked Evelyn as she wiped her mouth on the back of her hand.

"In about three minutes, come on in and see it. I've got a good table for you near the band."

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"I'd love to," said Pearl, as Harry took her by the arm and helped her through the crowd.

"Hello, there, Irene," Evelyn greeted a girl friend, "How's tricks tonight?"

"Lousy," answered Irene. "I ain't made but two dollars all day, but thank Heavens, tomorrow is pay day at Fort Bliss, the soldiers are coming, tra—la—la—la—la."

"See you later," called Evelyn, as she shoved her way into the cabaret, and on down to the table where Harry had seated Pearl.

"Say, Ev, that boy is a perfect darling—gee, he is sweet, so fresh and clean looking."

"Yes—Yes—Yes—my dear, every Bat in this town has said them same words, and I been unlucky enough to be at every saying."

"Oh—good—there goes the show—look, Ev, the way he announces, isn't he the cutest thing?"

"Yeah—I suppose you've made a date with him tonight to meet at the States Cafe after you get back on the U. S. side, and he is to take you for a ride in his brother's car, and show you the Rim road on Mount Franklin, and how the lights of El Paso glitter down in the distance."

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"Why, Ev—how did you know?"

"Dearest girl, he has only told that same line to five thousand other Hookers in this man's burg, and what's more, they all go for it—I don't for the life of me know what it is about him that gets all the girls going—but do they go—"

"Did he ever tell you that, Ev?"

"Heaven forbid—there's only one thing that Harry could make me do, and that's—puke."

"Oh, Ev, look at the way he sings that song—why, I think he is about the sweetest thing I've seen down here."

"Pearl, dear, don't you let my dislikes bother you. If you like him, you go for him. You see, I been in this town for a long time, and when you have been here as long as I have, you will hate every Son-of-a-Bitch, and all that goes with them. Don't pay any attention to my rants—Hey, waiter—bring us two whiskeys, and for Heaven's sake, make it pronto, I'm dead of thirst already."

The show went on, to a solid success, as it did every night. It was eleven thirty, the band went wild, so did everybody else. There was only thirty minutes left to drink in, before the bridge closed for the night. Everyone was making the most of it.

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Evelyn and Pearl finally worked their way back to the bar, where Evelyn ordered a pint of whiskey, and killed the whole thing without taking it down from her lips.

"Jees, am I gonna get drunk tonight—make it another pint, Henry—pronto," yelled Evelyn.

Pearl and Harry were wrapped in each other's arms, conscious of nothing around them, living for the night only.

The States Cafe, the rendezvous for the continuation of the gaiety after one has come on the American side, not a large place by any means, but serving good food, with no hindrance whatsoever for the noise and ribaldry of the crowd, and took no notice of the bottles of straight American whiskey that appeared as if by magic out of the ladies' bosoms, where they had been concealed while in Juarez. The crowd had just begun to come in when Evelyn and Pearl arrived.

"Let's get a booth, Ev, and save a seat for Harry, as he ought to be here soon."

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"Sure, grab a booth—but there is no need of saving a seat for Harry, he's already here," said Evelyn, as Harry put his arms around Pearl from behind.

"Oh, Harry, dear, I had no idea you would be here so soon," said Pearl, happily, "Sit here, dear."

"What's the matter with you, Ev," asked Harry, "haven't you a boy friend tonight?"

"Yeah, I've had a boy friend for the past twenty-four hours, but he's up in my room, trying to sober up enough to go home. He is a louse to his wife—but—damn—he's good to me. He paid my rent for a month, and opened me a charge account at the White House, and gives me twenty bucks a month."

"Don't this place have but the one waiter for all these people?" asked Pearl.

"Just the one dear; Frank is his name, and he takes his time, but he's a good scout—wait, I'll go

and get you some water—gee, but you are sweet. Boy—oh—boy, I'd love to cut you," said Harry, as he kissed her on the ear and went for the water.

"Good Lord, Ev, did you hear what he said—he must be a sadist."

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"No, I think Harry's Irish."

"But he said he would love to cut me."

"Well, dear, that expression has more definitions than the one you happen to know," said Evelyn. "My God, look who's here—if it ain't Mickey and Betty—for the love of Heaven, where have you two been for the past rear-end of the week?"

Betty and Mickey came over to the table, hellos and greetings were very much in order, loud, noisy, raucous, but good natured was the dirty banter that passed to and fro among the crowd. Finally they left Pearl and Evelyn, but not until they made Pearl promise to pay them a visit, then they squeezed into a booth with four other people, but where they could still see everybody, and shout ribald songs of the border at the top of their voices.

"What is the matter with Mickey's face? Why, Ev, she looks like she had been through nine wars, and fought them all herself. I've never seen so many scars."

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"Well, you see," explained Evelyn, "Mickey is the only woman in Juarez, or the world, for that matter, that—if a fight starts in Juarez, and she is on the U. S. side—she is sure to get into the fight before it is over. I've seen her with a bottle so deep in her skull it looked like a feather."

"Darling," said Harry, "My brother loaned me his car, just as I told you. Shall we take a little ride when you are through eating?"

"I'd love to, dear—I've never been riding around El Paso since I've been here, but where will we go?"

"Well, we could drive out the Smelter Road and back the Mesa way, or we could go up on Rim Road, on the side of Mount Franklin, or maybe you would like to drive out to Washington Park—it is beautiful at night."

"Well, if I were you," said Evelyn, "I'd go to Washington Park. At least, there's grass on the ground around there."

"Well, why isn't there grass on the ground in the other places Harry mentioned, Ev?"

"Well, you see, as far as I know—I believe the natives of El Paso have had something to do with the wearing off of the grass in said places."

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"Oh, I know," smiled Pearl, "You mean cows."

"Yes—some cows, but mostly heifers."

"How do you girls feel about a drink," asked Harry.

"Well, why the Hell didn't you say something before—good Heavens, it's been a long time between drinks—bottoms up."

Screaming, glasses crashing, curses, tearing of clothes, yells, biting, pulling of hair, turning over of tables, running of people, came from the rear of the place.

"Good Heavens," screamed Pearl, "Those women are tearing each other to pieces—why don't somebody try to separate them?"

"Come on, let's get going," said Harry, as he took Pearl by the arm and piloted her out of the place, never bothering to pay the check.

"So long, kids, I'll see you tomorrow," called Evelyn.

"But where do you live, Ev?"

"San Antonio Apartments, on San Antonio Street, number twenty-seven. Come up tomorrow, dear —adios."

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Harry and Pearl went out into the beautiful new car, and took a long ride toward the Smelter Road, to the fork where you return by the Mesa Road.

"Shall we stop and look at the moon for a while?" asked Harry.

"I'd love it."

"Then we'll stop."

Harry pulled the car off the road at the top of a small Mesa Butte, and turned off the lights.

"Isn't it beautiful here?"

"Yes, but you are more beautiful than a thousand nights," whispered Harry into her ear.

She turned her head, looked into his expectant eyes, and thought how handsome he was, with that tightly brushed blonde hair, bushy eyebrows, beautiful smile, backed by manly big white teeth, surrounded by red lips.

"Oh, Harry, you are a darling," as their lips met and their young bodies quivered with the thrill of expectation to be fulfilled. [Pg 27]

El Paso, city of one hundred thousand, not counting the nearby towns and villages. Noon, the sun maddening with its terrific heat, asphalt in the street so soft that your foot-print is left in it on crossing, only the business that has to be done is all that is going on. People move about lifelessly, clothes sticking to them. Mexicans, dressed in black, with the usual black shawl around their heads, as though it were the dead of winter, and not a bead of perspiration on them, with the only cooling place in the town being in the theatres that are ice-cooled.

"My God—I'll die from this heat," said Pearl to herself, as she raised up in bed, with her nightgown sticking to her. "Jees, I wonder if I'll ever get used to it," she mused, as she climbed out of bed and raised the shade, and looked out on the sun-baked city.

"I wonder what I'll do today to kill the time before I have to go over to Juarez tonight. I know, I'll put on my things and go and wake Ev up and have breakfast—then maybe she can suggest some place to go where it's cool." [Pg 28]

Pearl stepped out of her nightgown, looked at herself in the mirror. She was twenty-three, but she didn't look more than twenty, her beautiful white figure, with all the curves of youth reflected back at her, gave her a happy feeling, knowing that she didn't look anything like the rest of the girls that had been down on the border long, and promising herself that she would watch out and see that she would never—never be like them. The door-knob turned slowly, then the door was thrown wide open. In walked the big boy of the night before.

"Oh, Heavens," screamed Pearl, "Wait a minute till I get something on," as she fled into the bathroom.

"Never mind, sweetheart—I like you just as you are, that's why I came up at this hour; I thought I'd find you in bed, or just getting out of it."

"Oh, please hand me something to put on," came the voice from the bathroom. [Pg 29]

"Hold your hand out to get it, then."

Pearl opened the door to put her hand out, and as she did, he slid his foot into the opening.

"Oh, please, don't come in—I haven't a thing on."

"That's why I'm coming in," he answered, as he pushed the door open and caught her in his arms.

"Oh, big boy, don't you know you shouldn't do this? What will you think of me?"

"Baby, I love you—don't you know that?—I love you," he breathed hard, as he kissed her eyes, her neck, her shoulders, and gathered her up in his arms and walked toward the bed.

"You will believe me—won't you—?" as he held her as if she were a small baby.

"Oh, big boy, you shouldn't act like this. What would anyone think if they should see us like this?"

"What the Hell do I care what anyone thinks—I want you and I want you all for myself—I'll buy you anything you want. I've got money—plenty of it. Can't you understand that I'll do anything for you? When you left last night without even saying goodbye, I looked all over town for you, but I couldn't find you. You know what I mean, I don't even know your name, but I want you to marry me."

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Tenderly he laid her down on the bed, smothering her with kisses.

Pearl looked into his eyes—he was sober—sober as a judge. He was a big man, a very big man, but he was like a child that had found the toy it had been looking for for a long time, and was so happy at finding it that he would never let it go again. He was fresh, clean, good looking, and had that very manly odor about him that women love, and above all, he had money, and lots of it; didn't Eve say so and didn't he tell her so himself? He ran his hands over her smooth body, his head was laying on her shoulder, his big body against hers, his breath seeming to scorch her. What was the use to fight against this? She knew that sooner or later she would give in to his pleadings, the sooner the better.

"Yes, dear, I do love you," she whispered, as she put her arms around him, and pressed her hot mouth against his hot, moist lips—they seemed to melt into one.

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"Pardon, Madam, do you want to carry all these bundles, or wouldn't you like for us to send them over for you?" asked the clerk in the White House, the largest department store in El Paso.

"Hell, no—I'll carry them myself," said Evelyn, as she began to pick up the numerous bundles she had bought.

"I beg pardon, Madam, but did you want to charge those things?"

"Jees, my all to Heaven has gone—certainly I want to charge them, I got an account here, ain't I?"

"I'm sorry, Madam, but we shall soon find out."

"Yeah—and for the love of Pete, make it snappy—don't keep me in suspense."

"Pardon, Madam," returned the clerk, laying down the receiver of the store telephone, "I'm very happy to inform you that your account is quite all right; thank you very much—call again."

"Thank you very much, and I'll call again damn soon. Adios."

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Evelyn returned to her apartment about three-thirty, unwrapped her packages, smiling to herself, and fondling her treasures.

"Well, I've bought a new outfit from top to bottom, and from the skin out. Won't I floor that herd of tramps tonight—Hot—ziggety—damn—now I'll bathe, throw on a load of that loud perfume, and damned if I won't be a lady, or know why."

"What was that?" asked Pearl, as she sat up in bed with a start. There was a rapping on the door.

"Who is it?"

"It's me—Ev," came the voice outside the door.

"Oh, just a minute, dear, till I unlock the door."

"My God, don't you ever expect to get up today? Do you know it is after four o'clock?" said Evelyn, as she came into the room.

"Well, I did get up for a little while, but you see I went back to bed."

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"Oh, I see," said Evelyn, as she walked to the bed on tiptoe, where Big Boy lay sleeping like a child.

"He came in at noon, and I couldn't get rid of him, or I would have come over to your place," answered Pearl, in a whisper.

"Well, I'm glad you're able to get up." She walked over to Big Boy, and pulled the covers off the bed.

"Hey, what's the big idea?" asked Big Boy as he raised up in bed.

"Shame on you," said Evelyn, mockingly, "Sitting up in bed in front of a lady, and you with no sign of any drawers on. Here, put these on while I ain't looking," throwing him the trunks of his two-piece set.

"Oke, Sister; where is Pearl?"

"Don't you hear the water running in the bathroom? Well, you know darn well I ain't in there."

"Hey, look, Sister, I'll give you a hundred bucks if you will talk for me. Look—I'm nuts about that girl—there's nothing I want as much as I do her—here's the hundred—will you do it?"

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"Will I? Boy, my mouth will run from now on about you. Hell's fire—I'd talk for a bull with that much dough."

"You know I want to marry that Broad."

"Well, at least that's cause for the damndest drunk I can think of—Hey, Pearl—get them things on—Juarez calleth me in a big way—and you too; get them things on. Good Heavens, I'm dry as a bone. Come to think of it, I ain't had a drink in nearly an hour."

"My, Ev, you look good today. Where did you get all those new clothes?" asked Pearl, as she came out of the bathroom.

"The boy friend I told you about last night. He is the cause of all this dressing up, and do you notice the smell? I even put on my best perfume."

"It sure smells good, all right."

"It does now, but wait until I throw a few beers into me, and I'll be the only one in Juarez that will smell like a cross between a violet and a swill barrel," laughed Evelyn.

"Don't you girls think we ought to have something to eat before we start on this drinking tour?"

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"Big Boy, you think of the best things—food will do us a lot of good right now. Come to think of it, I forgot to eat this morning. Damned if I ain't hungry," answered Evelyn.

"Where shall we go," asked Pearl.

"Well—I think that the Hilton Coffee Shoppe would be grand," suggested Evelyn.

"Hey, look—Big Boy, you go on down to the cafe, and order for us, and we will be along in a few minutes—will you?"

"Oke, Baby; what do you crave in the way of food?"

"Well, as for me—I'll have ham and eggs—what do you want, Ev?"

"The same, and lots of it."

"Now, look, you two—don't be all day," said Big Boy, as he went out the door, giving Evelyn a wink.

"Pearl—" said Evelyn, slowly, "Do you know what you're letting yourself in for?" as she sat down on the bed.

"Why—I don't get you, Ev, what do you mean?"

"Just this, Honey—I like you—you're a good kid, but don't be foolish—now don't think I'm trying to tell you your business, but you see I've been down here for a long time and I know this border—Oh, God, how well I know it."

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"What are you driving at, Ev?"

"Honey, don't try to kid that guy—look here," said Evelyn, showing Pearl the hundred-dollar bill Big Boy had given her.

"What's it for, Ev?"

"Well, he's nuts about you—and he wants to marry you. Of course, you know that already, and

what's more, it's none of my business, but for your own good, don't try to string that guy along. He looks like a kid, that's true. He is as easy to handle as a kid, but Pearl, he is a killer. I know him, and I know what he will do. So, if you want to marry him, and settle down, your nest will be feathered and in a big way, but don't try to kid him if you ain't serious—be frank about it—tell him the truth and then lay off him, or else be all for him. He gave me this money to talk for him, and to tell you what a great guy he is, and try to talk you into marrying him—I ain't telling you what to do and I ain't telling you what not to do—but don't kid him, and don't promise nothing you can't make good."

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"Why, Ev, I haven't known you for hardly twenty-four hours. I didn't even stop to think you had a serious side—you are a dear. Sure, I know what you mean. Now I'll tell you how I feel towards him. I don't love him, I never could. He's not my type, but when he gets around me, and puts his arms around me, and pulls me close, I can't hold out on him—he is the personification of satisfaction—Oh, Hell, Ev, you know what I mean, don't you?"

"I admit you ain't left much to my imagination, but I get you."

"You see, Ev, I am in love—but I know it is a hopeless love—but love, nevertheless—and it's Harry Hicks, the guy I went with when I left you last night in the cafe—that kid sure got under my skin."

"Well, he better stay from under them things."

"You don't like Harry, do you, Ev?"

"Well,—I don't dislike him. I never thought of him as anything but a big kid and I always treated him as one—Harry is a damn good guy as far as I know, and I don't think that he has an enemy in the world, but don't make the mistake that lots of the other girls have made with Harry—he likes all the girls, and what's more, he couldn't be true to any one for five minutes, not even himself—he's like millions of other men; to him a woman is for one thing, and when he is through, he is through—so the only way to impress him is to never—never let him know that he means any more to you than the lowest Cholo."

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"That seems to be the standard formula to make any man nuts for you."

"Oh—good—Heavens, Pearl, dear, we are forgetting Big Boy, and most of all to me, we are forgetting breakfast, even if it is almost dinner time," said Evelyn, as they hurried to the street.

"Have you been waiting long?" asked Pearl, as they sat down.

"Not long, but I had begun to be a little impatient."

"Did you order for us yet?" asked Evelyn.

"No, I thought I'd better wait, so I just had coffee, and decided to read the paper until you showed up."

"Any news?" asked Pearl.

"Paper says that some old boy down below the border is sore because he ain't President, and is gathering troops back in the mountains to start a little revolution."

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"That ain't nothing new," said Evelyn, "That's in every day's paper."

"I'll bet it's something awful down here when a revolution does start," mused Pearl.

"Awful is right—awfulest laugh in the country," answered Evelyn.

"Have you and Big Boy ever been down here when one started?"

"I'll say," answered Evelyn, as she sipped her coffee. "I was over in Juarez when the last one started."

"It must be awful, all those guns."

"Yeah—the only kind of guns these Mex wars are fought with is Gonorrhoea Guns."

"Listen, honey," said Big Boy, "What are you doing tomorrow afternoon?"

"Nothing—why?" asked Pearl.

"Well, I won't be able to see you tonight, I've some business to attend to, but tomorrow afternoon I thought you might like to go swimming some place."

"Oh—I would—wouldn't you, Ev?"

"I would not. I hate water, even for swimming, but that don't stop you two from going and having a good time."

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"Well, I'll be seeing you, tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock, at your room, baby," as he picked up the checks and started for the door.

"Are you sure it's swimming he wants to meet you for?" asked Evelyn, with a mouth full of eggs.

"I don't know, Ev—I can't figure it. I've never been in love before, and I don't know what it's like, but I think this is the real thing."

"You mean with Big Boy?" exclaimed Evelyn.

"No—no—no—Ev, honey, I mean Harry Hicks. When that kid took me in his arms last night out on that mountain, I went hook, line and sinker, and I don't know how to handle it."

"I'm sorry, Pearl, yet I'm happy—but there's only one thing can come from it, and that's—trouble—, but you got to expect that. You see, for every bit of fun you have in this racket, you have twice as much trouble, so my motto is—laugh, as long as you can, and take the rest of it with a grain of salt, so if you love Harry—you go right ahead—let nothing stand in the way—make it grand while it lasts—then when it's over, you will have something to remember, and nothing can take that from you."

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"Come on, Ev, let's get going. It's early, but let's go on over to Juarez and have a few snorts, what do you say?"

"When you mention drinks, you're talking right up my alley."

Evelyn and Pearl strolled out of the Coffee Shoppe, and down South El Paso Street, across in front of the Paso Del Norte Hotel, to wait for the Juarez car.

"My God, what you all doing standing here, not saying a word?" came a voice from behind them.

"Why, hello, Mickey," said Evelyn, as she turned and saw who it was.

"Hello, Mickey," said Pearl.

"Say, listen, you kids—got any dates for tonight?" asked Mickey.

"I ain't," said Evelyn. "Have you, Pearl?"

"I haven't."

"Well, there's three old guys, five days older than Hell, throwing an all-night party in the Rio Bravo Hotel, and they asked me and Betty to get as many girls as we could. There's plenty to drink, plenty to eat—there will be lots of fellows there besides them old ones, and there's a chance to make a few dollars, and if you can't make any money—well—when they get drunk you can always go through their pockets," said Mickey, in a voice that was supposed to be confidential, but still could be heard at least a block away.

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"What do you say, Pearl?" asked Evelyn.

"Do you think Harry will be there?"

"Oh, Heavens, be calm," as she lifted her hands in supplication.

"Yes," answered Mickey, "He'll be there; you couldn't keep him away from them kind of parties. Last one Harry was on, he got so drunk he stripped stark naked and did a Spanish down the hall."

"I'll bet that was a sight," said Evelyn.

"Oh, honey, that wasn't no sight at all—that big guy here they call Big Boy, well—he was as drunk as Harry, and he got naked too, and took an umbrella and opened it, and used it for a parachute when he jumped from the second-story window."

"Is that the Big Boy we know?" asked Pearl.

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"I don't know how well you know him," answered Mickey, "but it's the one you was out in the car with last night."

"Why, jumping out of a second-story window like that, it's a wonder he didn't break his neck."

"Pearl, dear," said Evelyn, "It wasn't his neck he lit on."

"How did you know I was out in the car with Big Boy last night?" Pearl asked Mickey.

"Well—you see, I had been mixing my drinks, and I was sick, and I went outside to heave. Well, I was sitting on the running board of the car on the off side, when you all got in, but I didn't sit there long."

"Why?" asked Evelyn.

"Honey, riding a wild horse is tame beside trying to sit on that fender," laughed Mickey. "Well, I'll see you all tonight at the party, as soon as the bridge closes." She waved as she went on down the street.

"Don't you get sore at nothing anybody says to you—she is a good scout, Pearl, and when you know her better you will like her, I'm sure."

"Oh—Ev, why would I get sore—come, come, come—here is our car." Pearl grabbed Evelyn's

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hand and started running for the car.

"My Heavens," exclaimed Evelyn, "This street car reminds me of some Madam's parlor—there's five girls I know—hello, gang."

"O. K., Ev. How is the biggest liquor and beer consumer today?" asked one of the girls.

"I'm fine. Girls, this is Pearl. She is a newcomer in our midst, and a good scout—Pearl, this is the girls—find out their names for yourself. I knew what some of their names was last week, but only Heaven knows what they are this week."

The girls smiled and said hello to Pearl, and all moved over for them to sit down.

"Ev, what's this I hear about a party tonight at the Rio Bravo Hotel—have you heard about it yet?"

"Yeah—Mickey Finn, you know her, we just run into her at the corner, and she told us about it, and said for us to come. Are you going?"

"Sure, we all are."

"Do you think it will be all right, Ev?" asked Pearl, under her breath.

"I don't get you—how do you mean all right?"

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"Well, I've never been on an all-night party in Juarez—so naturally I'm curious—but what I mean is—can you get away with much over here without the Mexicans landing you in jail?"

"As long as there ain't no murder, or absolute destruction of property—you are pretty safe, but why bother—wait till you get in the can before you start worrying about it."

Juarez, with its lights twinkling in the glowing dusk—with its midnight purple mountains looking like big, futuristic pillows flanking it on three sides, the skies screaming, flaming, gold, crimson, varied colors of reds, shading into blue, darker blue, then deep blue, then to purple in the far east, with the sounds of laughing, running, playing dogs and children, sounds of a twanging guitar slightly out of tune, accompanied by a nasal but sincere Mexican love song being sung to a Senorita with dark eyes and broken, dirty teeth, and bosoms that would make a Holstein cow's eyes bulge with envy—smells of all sorts drifted on the soft, gentle breeze, of tortillas, of beans frying with cheese, of chili sauces, of charcoal, of unwashed dirty bodies, of manure, both human and animal. A street car rattling by with its cargo of brilliantly painted cheeks, flashing smiles, syphilis-carrying, would-be, has-been, and are-to-be whores.

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Signs advertising whiskeys, and liquors of all kinds, brilliant in color, flashed in the deepening dusk, their utter defiance at the American side of the border. The extra bartenders were coming on duty, extra waiters were appearing in respective places, rubbing their hands together like pawnbrokers, at the thought of the night's tips; at the thought of what could be taken out of the pockets of one too drunk to notice; at the thought of the tips that would be thrown at the entertainers that would roll where they could stoop and pick it up without being noticed; at the thought of drunken women's pocketbooks that can so easily be gone into in a crowded place without fear of being caught. This was Saturday night, the biggest night of the week.

"We are getting off here at the corner," said one of the five girls. "We are going to start with the Gold Palace, Pearl; you and Ev come along with us."

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Evelyn started to rise.

"Thanks," said Pearl, as she caught Evelyn's arm, "We are going to ride around to the Lobby No. 2. I've a friend around there to see on business—but we will see you at the party, if not sooner. I hope you all have some good luck tonight."

"Thanks, honey," called one of the girls, "I'm damned if we don't need it."

"Why didn't you come on and get off and get a drink? I don't think Harry is there yet—it's a little early for him."

"Oh, Ev, I just can't wait."

"Well, I admit you sure got it bad."

"Say, how do these parties usually end, and where?"

"They usually end in the Goddamnest fight, and just anywhere that they didn't start," answered Evelyn.

"Do you think this one will end that way?"

"I can't see why this one should be any different from any of the rest; besides, Mickey Finn is going to be there, and that's always the sign of a fight." [Pg 48]

Hugo's Lobby No. 2 was brilliantly lighted, as ever, and much less crowded than the night before, owing to the early hour. As Pearl and Evelyn walked in, there were about fifteen or twenty people at the bar, and about three times as many in the cabaret having dinner.

"Hello, Henry," called Evelyn, "Two whiskeys for two ladies."

"Coming up, Ev."

Pearl felt two cool hands slip over her eyes, and a soft voice in her ear, that made her body quiver and caused a tight feeling in her stomach.

"Guess who, darling," said the voice in her ear.

"Hi—Harry, you big louse," came from Evelyn before Pearl could say a word.

"Oh, gee, Ev, you spoiled my game," said Harry poutingly.

"She ain't no game, Harry—she's a sure thing," winked Evelyn. [Pg 49]

Harry took Pearl in his arms, gave her a big hug, and then kissed her.

"Oh, Harry—what will people think?"

"Look all around you," said Evelyn, "Not a soul has noticed you."

"What are you having to drink, Harry?" asked the bartender.

"Whiskey, pal," answered Harry; then to Pearl, "Listen, honey, are you doing anything tonight? I'm going on a party, and it may be a bit rough, but would you like to come? I know you will have a good time."

"I know all about the party, darling, and Ev and I are both going, aren't we, Ev?"

"Sure thing."

"Oh, that's great," said Harry. "Well, I got to be going now. I've got to get that band to playing, and start a little excitement in there, or the guests will kick. So long, honey, I'll see you at the party."

"Oh, Henry, another whiskey for me," called Evelyn. "What do you want, dear—whiskey or smelling salts?" [Pg 50]

"Both," answered Pearl.

"Do you really like him as much as that? No kidding, come clean."

"Honestly, cross my heart, I love him—like Hell."

"Well, suppose you catch another dame cooing over him, and making love to him in a big way—then what?"

"I'd cut enough meat off her rear end to feed the dogs for a week," said Pearl, viciously.

"Well, I admit there are a lot of rear ends in this town that could stand a little cut off here and there, but some of them are so tough you would have to use a hack-saw to do it," tittered Evelyn.

"Did you ever stop to think that Big Boy might feel the same way about you that you feel about Harry? Have you stopped to think of that, and have you stopped to think Harry might feel about you the way you feel about Big Boy? Now, honey, don't think I'm butting in, cause I ain't, but think about it, will you?"

The Rio Bravo Hotel, on the Sixteenth of September Street, is the Class A hotel of the town. With the street cars running in front of it, with the railroad track on the side of it, a rip-snorting bar under it, and the numerous parties going on inside of it, it would hardly be a place one would pick out to spend a quiet evening, or get a night's sleep—so when one goes to the Rio Bravo, one does not go for anything less than a party—or maybe to earn two dollars, but, of course, that takes but a matter of a few minutes—in Juarez, but as so many of the local population figure, why spend a dollar for a room when there are so many dark nooks and corners off the main street, and parked cars, whether your own or someone else's. [Pg 51]

The rooms in this establishment are furnished with only the bare necessities of a room—a bed, a chair, sometimes a rocker, sometimes with the rockers broken off, but still used as a chair, a rug on the floor, but never a big one, or a good one, and the bathroom, but never in the history of Juarez has the hotel water heater ever been known to work, never any toilet paper, but a pile of newspapers stacked in the corner, a mirror, a cracked one, but still usable, if you are not particular—and one seldom is—when one is on a party.

It was twelve-thirty, the mad rush for the International bridge was over, the gates separating the two republics were closed until six o'clock in the morning. [Pg 52]

"Think we better stop and have some coffee before we go on up to the hotel, what do you think?" said Evelyn, as she and Pearl walked arm in arm unsteadily up the street.

"If we gotta do a lot of drinking up there, it wouldn't be a bad idea," answered Pearl. "Here's as good a place as any." She took Evelyn's arm and turned her into a little Mexican cafe.

They sat and sipped their coffee for a while, said nothing to each other, or to anyone else, as they were the only ones in the place except the little weezened black waiter, who could easily have been mistaken for a Negro, had it not been for his straight black hair.

"All through?" asked Evelyn.

"Yeah—let's get going and see what this joint of joy is going to be like."

They left the place, and walked up the street toward the Rio Bravo. As they were crossing the railroad tracks next to the hotel, Evelyn stopped, "Good Lord, look coming—there's Ruby, Myrtle, Betty, Billie, Lillian, Virginia, Annie, Laura, Irene, Marie, and I don't know any of the others." [Pg 53]

"Well, we must not be late for the party, anyhow, seeing that they are just arriving."

"Jees—there's probably twice that many already up there," answered Evelyn.

"Where do they all come from?"

"A party in this town does the same thing to these Hookers that cheese does to rats."

"Let's wait a minute and let them go on in," said Pearl.

They waited until the girls had disappeared: "Come on, dearie, we might as well go on and crash it and see what's going on." They went up the steps and into the lobby, which was rather bare, with nothing but a few leather chairs, showing considerable use, and a desk at the back near the stairs.

"Oh, Senorita Evelyn, I have not see you for so long time, I have near forget what you look like," bowed the clerk, who was possessed of a monstrous stomach. [Pg 54]

"Hi—Guts—we are looking for that party that's going on here tonight."

"A thousand pardons, Senorita, there is five parties going tonight. You will look and see which one you are invited to. I need not go up with you—you will hear these parties long before you see them. Have a very good time, Senorita."

"Come back here, you slut—do you hear me—come back here with my leg," came a voice, as Evelyn and Pearl neared the second floor.

"You can just go to Hell, you cheap, lousy bastard, having the nerve to promise me two dollars, and then when I'm ready to go, you saying you wasn't going to give me a dime—Goddam you, you just try and get this leg back," said Mickey Finn, as she came to the head of the stairs, with an artificial leg under her arm, with the shoe and sock still on it.

"What's the trouble, Mickey?" asked Evelyn, as she and Pearl came up.

"Why, can you believe a guy would have the nerve to pull a trick like that on me—promising me my money, and then not giving it to me? I'm taking this leg and hock it—to Hell with him—the thing that makes me sore is anyone trying to pull a lousy trick like that on me—can you believe it?" fumed Mickey. [Pg 55]

"Come back here with my leg, you bitch. If I get my hands on you, I'll wring your damn neck."

"Go to Hell," screamed Mickey, "You'll pay me more than two dollars to get this leg back."

"Pipe down, Mickey," shushed Evelyn, "If Guts hears you, he'll raise Hell right."

"A thousand pardons, Senoritas, but what is this trouble—and you—what are you doing with the Senor's leg?" came the voice of Guts from behind the trio.

"You seen me come in here with this guy, didn't you, Guts? He paid for the room, didn't he? Well, after he had his fun he refused to pay me my two dollars, and I'm damned if I ain't taking his false leg for the bill—and come to think of it, what have you got to say about it? Are you for me, or are you against me? You remember, I know of a couple of dirty deals I could tell the Custom and Federal authorities about—and by God, you know me, Guts," frothed Mickey. [Pg 56]

"Ah, Senorita—I am so sorry. Why you did not call me before? You are my friend, and no one can say different," answered Guts, as he pulled his enormous belly up, and with a scowl on his near-black face, started down the hall toward the half-opened door.

"Take that leg away from that slut," ordered the man, leaning against the dresser to support himself, as Guts and the three girls came into the room.

"Why have you refuse to pay the Senorita?" asked Guts.

"Refuse to pay her—why, the damn liar—I have paid her."

"You are just lying because there's some other people here. You ain't give me a red cent, and what's more, you are giving me ten dollars or I'm taking the leg. Ain't I right, Guts?"

"Si, Senorita, you are right."

"Hand the leg over and I'll give you the ten dollars to get rid of you."

"All right, I'll give it to you, but don't you try to pull nothing funny or I'll take that thing away from you again, and beat the Hell out of you with it," said Mickey, as she handed him the leg. [Pg 57]

"Thanks," said the man, as he took the leg, and reached down the top of it and pulled out a roll of bills, "Here's your ten," as he dug it out of a roll of fifties and hundreds.

"I'll be damned!" said Mickey, as they all left the room, "That's what I get for getting chicken-hearted, and giving it back to him. Every time I get sympathetic I lose money."

"Cheer up, Mickey—let's find the drinks," said Evelyn.

"Well, you ain't got far to look. They are right above us on the next floor," answered Mickey, as she made for the stairs.

"Well, nobody can't say it ain't starting off well—if we all don't end in the Mex jail, it will be a miracle of fate."

As they reached the third floor a sight greeted their eyes that would have made the old Roman gatherings look like child's play. There were couples everywhere in the hall, some fully dressed, some partially dressed, others practically nude, all oblivious of each other, while in the room there were less clothes but many more bodies, laying around on the floor, sprawled on chairs, on the bed, on the bathroom floor, while the bathtub was piled high with ice and bottles of every description; the connecting room to the bathroom had been opened, and an old phonograph was scratching the Mexican National Anthem, while a couple scantily clad, both male and female, in ladies' step-ins, insisted on doing their idea of the rhumba, which consisted mostly of the male part of the team goosing the female with the third finger of the hand, while she leaped, and screamed, with elephantine grace, much to the joy of the spectators, who were beginning to undress and join the dance, midst shouts and screams of gaiety. [Pg 58]

Of the three hosts that gave the party, two had passed to the realm of unconsciousness, while the third sat stark nude on the dresser, with his toupee in one hand, and a bottle of whiskey in the other, wasting no time in trying to join his friends in the happy state of unconsciousness.

"Looks like good pickings to me," said Mickey. "Everybody is undressed—it won't be no trouble to go through their pockets." [Pg 59]

"Good God, the bathroom is the place we are looking for. That is where all the drinks are. Come, come, my dear, let us not waste time," said Evelyn, as she stepped over the sprawled bodies on the floor.

"Jees, this takes the prize—I been on lots of parties, but never on one like this," said Pearl, as she followed Evelyn, who by this time was opening a fresh, cold bottle of whiskey.

"Why, the Hell—will they put whiskey on ice."

"Well, you couldn't expect anybody in this condition to know any different, could you, Ev?"

"You couldn't expect people who get in this condition to give a damn in the first place," said Evelyn, as she took a long swig of the freshly opened bottle, "Even I don't care after the first ten drinks."

"Quick—give me a slug of that stuff—if I ever get sober on a thing like this, and actually realize what it's all about, I'd do a nose dive out of my hotel window some morning," said Pearl, as Evelyn handed her the bottle. "Come to think of it—I ain't seen hide nor hair of Harry, and he said he would be here." [Pg 60]

"Well, Pearl, dear, when you see a pile of whores about ten deep, dig to the bottom of them and you will find Harry—at least, that's where he usually is."

"Oh—Jees—that's lousy whiskey—open another bottle—that tastes like tobacco juice."

"There's going to be trouble here this night as sure as the world stands—" said Evelyn under her breath. "I just saw Juan Moros pass the door—and that's a bad sign, as sure as you're born."

"Who is Juan Moros?"

"He's the boy friend of Negro Noche, and he has been on the trail of Irene, the blonde girl that came in with the crowd we saw come in just ahead of us. You know Irene, the tall blonde—he is crazy about her."

"Well, what's that got to do with us?" asked Pearl.

"Plenty—and in more ways than one—Negro Noche is the one woman in the town to be afraid of. She has been pulled in by the government officials several times for smuggling dope over the border into the United States—but they have never been able to convict her. She was arrested not long ago for smuggling Chinese across, and several attempts have been made to frame her, but no one has ever been able to pin it on her, and now she has threatened to kill any woman that she catches the boy friend with, and what's more, Irene is crazy about him. Now, ain't that cause for trouble?" [Pg 61]

"Well, I can't see what that has got to do with this party. He is here and so is Irene, but that is no cause for trouble—surely she wouldn't come up here and start trouble," reasoned Pearl.

"Which proves conclusively that you don't know Negro Noche."

"You might add that I don't want to."

"Well—well, hello, Henry, you devil—I thought you went home to your wife every night," said Evelyn, as a bartender she knew came into the bathroom.

"Well," laughed Henry, "She can't say nothing if I don't get through work in time, and get locked on this side of the river, can she?"

"Not unless you pull that gag once too often—here, have a drink," as she offered him the bottle.

"Well, Pearl, what do you think of the party?" asked Henry, as he turned to Pearl, who was looking out into the other room, trying to see Harry. [Pg 62]

"Henry, my darling, since you inquire, I think it is the most charming affair—in fact, I've never been on a party where so little self-consciousness was present—in plain English, it is the damndest thing I've ever seen—let's drink to it," as she raised her bottle and clinked it against his.

The phonograph in the adjoining room had stopped, but everyone was singing instead. Everybody had joined the first couple in the rumba, making the scene more hilarious by not having any

clothes on at all.

"Hi, baby," said Harry, as he staggered into the bathroom.

"Oh, Harry, I'm glad you came. I was afraid you might change your mind," said Pearl, happily.

"Where you are concerned, baby, I never change my mind—let's have a drink."

"Come on, Henry," said Evelyn, "Let's leave these two in here. It's plain to be seen they don't need us."

"Ev, you're a damn good mind-reader," said Harry. "Here, take a couple more bottles with you, so you won't have to bother us." [Pg 63]

"Thanks, I'll just do that little thing," as she took two extra bottles.

"Ah, baby—I want you so," said Harry, as he pulled Pearl to him and smothered her with kisses. "Come on, let's undress and go in the next room and join the dance."

"Oh, no, Harry, I've never done anything like that."

"Oh, baby—baby—don't you trust me? Have another drink."

"Yes, but—"

"No buts," said Harry, as he began to unfasten her dress. "Come on, I'll help you undress and then you have to help me."

"Harry—please—I don't really want to undress."

"You see—you see—you don't love me, that proves it." [Pg 64]

"Oh, yes I do, Harry—I like you so much, but I can't see where my undressing could have anything to do with it."

"That just proves it—proves it right there—you don't care a thing about me."

"Harry, if you were sober you wouldn't do a thing like this. I'm not sober by any means myself, but I don't want to undress."

"You see—you just want to spoil my whole night."

"Oh, all right—if my stripping will make you happy, I might as well strip—give me that bottle. I'll have to get a little drunker to enjoy this—here goes," as she put the bottle to her mouth, taking long, big swallows.

"Atta girl—I knew you would be a good scout," as he tried to help her get her dress off over her head. [Pg 65]

Pearl took off her dress, laid it over a chair, took off her step-ins, laid them with her dress, keeping only her shoes and stockings on.

"Oh, gee, baby—you sure look good to me—I'm just crazy about you."

"All right—you keep your word—you undress, too."

"Sure, I'll undress," said Harry, as he started to take off his pants, shirt, and underwear, and laid them on the chair with Pearl's things, standing before her in only his shoes and socks.

"Let's have a couple more drinks, Harry, darling—you know, I believe I'm going to enjoy this after all."

"I know I am," as he put his huge arms around her cool, pink body.

"Well—so help me—what the Hell is coming off here?" said Evelyn, as she came into the bathroom, her face blank in wonderment. [Pg 66]

"Oh, Jees—this is great—let's have a drink," said Henry, as he came in behind Evelyn. "You know, Ev, we might as well join the merry, mad gang—what do you say?"

"I dare you, Henry," answered Evelyn, as she started to strip with speed.

Pearl, in Harry's arms, leaped into the milling, singing, drinking, wrestling mob, in the semi-dark room, held tight in each others' arms, naked bodies rubbed against each other, strangers kissed passionately, lovers kissed more passionately, enemies kissed less passionately, but kissed—in their drunken orgy they had forgotten what they were enemies about—couples who had been dancing longer than the others fell on the floor, locked in each others' arms, their legs stuck grotesquely in the air above them, while their burning wet lips were pressed tightly against each others' mouths, stopping only long enough to take a drink.

A shriek from the bathroom—Evelyn and Henry leaped into the mob, naked as the rest—"Shake it up, baby," screamed Evelyn, as she and Henry in a tight embrace started singing and dancing with the rest; as the other couples fell to the floor newer and fresher couples joined the throng— [Pg 67]

only to fall later on the floor, to continue the party with mad, wet kisses, and—?

"My snow-white darling, I have love you so veer long, I weel never love but you—I have never love no one but you—only you—my darling—my darling—" came a soft voice near Pearl's ear, and as she looked closely, she saw it was the tall, handsome Moros, with the blonde Irene in his arms.

"Get your Goddam foot out of my face," yelled a drunken voice.

"My humble pardon, Senor—I am looking for some one," answered the deep, sober voice of a Mexican woman.

"Why the Hell don't you turn on the light, then?"

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"That, Senor, is a veer good idea," as she returned to the door and snapped on a flood of bright, red light.

Couples that were still on their feet, stopped dead still. Couples that were on the floor, stopped whatever they were doing—all looking towards the door, where the Mexican woman was standing, her hand still on the light button. Not a soul moved.

Negro Noche stood motionless—her pock-marked face covered with a heavy layer of snow white powder that is typical of all Mexican women. Eyes gleaming, breathing heavily, she pulled a heavy, dark-blue, 45-calibre automatic from under her dirty coat, as a grim smile broke the death-like mask that was her face. Six shots rent the dead silence. Juan and Irene lay in each others' arms, just as they had a few minutes before, but they knew it not. Negro Noche had accomplished her purpose—her lover and her rival were to annoy her no more—the gun silent in her hand, finger still on the light button, a blue wisp of smoke rose from the end of the gun, as the blood from the two bodies rapidly spread on the cheap, worn carpet—pandemonium broke loose.

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Pearl ran into the bathroom to get her clothes—Evelyn was already there—"My God, what will we do?" asked Pearl.

"This ain't no time to sing Frankie and Johnnie—don't wait to put your clothes on—run for it," answered Evelyn, as she grabbed Pearl and started for the hall.

Women were screaming, crying—men were yelling and cursing, running up and down the hall, some too excited to realize that they had on no clothes—others just running around in circles.

As Evelyn and Pearl came to the stairs, Guts was on his way up. He started to ask Evelyn and Pearl what had happened, but they brushed by and on down the stairs. As they rounded the second floor, they saw Mickey Finn on her hands and knees looking through a key-hole.

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"My God, Mickey," said Evelyn, excitedly, "Don't waste no time—get out of here quick."

"What's happened—what was all them shots?" as she rose off her knees and came to them.

"Negro Noche—shot Juan and Irene—don't waste a minute—we have got to get on the U. S. side somehow."

They all three ran down the stairs into the lobby, and out the front door, onto the street.

"Down the railroad tracks towards the bridge."

"We can't cross that bridge," said Mickey.

"I know it," answered Evelyn, "but it's dark down that way, and we can put our clothes on—come on," as they ran down the tracks.

They stopped in the deep darkness and put their clothes on.

"Now, listen to me," said Evelyn, "I have a plan. We will get back over on Lysol Lane, and go in one of those all-night bars, and I'll telephone to Tony, a taxi driver I know, where to meet us."

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"Do you think it will work?" asked Pearl.

"It's got to," said Mickey, as they started.

"Now, you two stand around the corner—I'll stagger in this dump, as though nothing had happened, and use the phone."

"Can't I go with you?"

"No, you stay with Mickey—if they see all three of us they will be sure to suspect something, and I don't crave to get mixed up in this mess—stand back there in the dark," as she put on her best drunken smile and staggered into the place.

"Hi, Senor—can a lady use your phone?"

"Si, Senorita—right this way," he led her over to the phone booth in the corner.

"Gracia, Senor," as she went in and closed the door, lifted the receiver—"El Paso operator, please—Hello—El Paso operator—give me Main Eight-Eight—Yeah—Hello, all-night taxi? Let me talk to Tony. What—Oh, that's you, Tony? Listen, get a load of this—this is Ev, you know—yeah—take one of the plain cars you got there, and cruise along the Smelter Road near the Southern Pacific

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bridge, and look out for three of us. No—no—no—it's not liquor—don't ask questions over the phone—make it snappy—good-bye." She hung up the receiver, and staggered out of the booth. "Adios, Señor," as she went out the door and around the corner, to Mickey and Pearl.

"I just heard the ambulance and the police wagon going up the street," said Mickey.

"Tony is going to meet us up on the Smelter Road," said Evelyn. "We'll go down these side streets until we get to the river, and then we'll follow the levee on around to where it is only about twenty feet wide, and about three feet deep. I know the very place. We won't have any trouble if we hurry—come on." So saying, they started for the river, down dark alleys and side streets, of which there are plenty in Juarez.

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They stumbled on through the darkness, half running, sometimes walking. "I'm sure I hear someone following us," said Pearl, as they neared the river.

"Your life ain't worth two cents over here in this section at this hour of the night," answered Evelyn.

"Let's run," said Mickey, as they started on down the levee.

"How far is this place you know about, Ev?" asked Pearl, out of breath, as they slowed to a fast walk again.

"About a mile or more," answered Evelyn, "But it's our only chance."

It seemed like ten miles to the three, as they ran stumbling through the darkness, when a flare lit up the sky ahead of them to the right.

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"What's that?" asked Pearl.

"Thank Heaven, it's the smelter," said Mickey. "We are almost there."

"Here's the place I mean," said Evelyn, as she pointed to a very narrow place in the river. "Now, let's all take hands, and hold tight. The only thing we have to be careful of is the quicksands—they are as treacherous as Hell," as they started to wade into the river.

"Watch your step," said Evelyn.

"Jees—that water is cold—hold tight to my hand, Pearl, and don't let go," said Mickey, as she took hold of Pearl, who was in the middle.

"We are in the midst of a lot of quicksand here—I can't seem to find bottom any further than I am standing. Let go of me, Pearl, and I'll wade around a bit and see if I can find a more solid place."

"Oh, God—now, Ev, don't do that. Don't let go at all here in the water—we will all wade together."

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"Hold tight, then, and we will wade up the side here a ways, and maybe we will find more solid bottom," as they started up the side of the stream.

Slowly they waded in until they were in about five feet of the bank.

"I think we are going to make it all right," said Evelyn, as she was almost jerked off her feet by Pearl falling to her knees in the water, and Mickey went out of sight.

"Hold on to me," gasped Pearl, "I've still got hold of her—she is in a sand-hole," as she rose to her feet, pulling Mickey's head above water, helping her to get solid footing again.

Evelyn reached back and took hold of Mickey's free hand, and slowly they reached the bank and climbed out on solid ground again.

"Are you all right, Mickey?" came from Evelyn and Pearl at the same time.

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"Yeah—I'm O. K., but I'd been a goner if Pearl hadn't had a good hold on me. That hole I fell in back there didn't have no bottom, at least, I didn't feel any—My God, what a night," as she stooped over and felt of her stockings to see if her money was still there. "Yeah, I still got my money, but I'll have to dry it, but wet money is better than no money."

"Listen—what is that I hear? It sounds—there it is—somebody trying to catch another car—it's the police siren and it's coming this way as sure as you're born," said Evelyn, "I'll go up near the road and see if I see anything of Tony. You watch me and when you see me motion to you, come a-running, because if we are caught at this, it will be just too bad," as she started toward the road.

"Stoop down," said Mickey, "We will keep low to the ground and go as close to the road as we can, so we won't have far to run when Ev motions."

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Bright lights came into sight, of a speeding car coming from town, as Evelyn came up on the edge of the road, and as the car came near her, its brakes began to scream, as lights following it came into view, with the shrieking of the police siren.

"Quick, get in," said the voice of a man, as the car came to a stop. "The cops are wise."

"Oh, Jees, where are Pearl and Mickey?" as she jerked the door of the car open.

"Here," as they came alongside of Evelyn.

Tony shifted the gears of the car, and was moving, as the three pulled and helped each other in, the other car nearing, with the siren screaming louder and louder. Tony shot into the night. "Lay down on the floor, girls, and get ready for the ride of your life. If I can beat the cops to the fork of the Mesa road, we have a chance—if not—we are jail-house bound for some time to come."

"What the Hell are we passing that's throwing all that light," asked Pearl.

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"It's some cement company," answered Evelyn, as they went into darkness again.

"Hey, Tony, how do you think they found out about this?" asked Mickey.

"One of them lousy telephone operators tipped them off, that is the only way they could have found out—the dirty fluzey."

"Good God—I hope we get away from them all right," murmured Pearl, as the car lurched and shot through the deepening dark.

"Are we leaving them behind yet, Tony?"

"Not yet we ain't, not till we get off these curves, but when we get on that straight stretch of road, I'll leave 'em plenty far behind."

"Hey, Tony," said Evelyn, as she got up on her knees, with her hands on the back of the front seat, "You don't think they could have sent a car out on the Mesa road, maybe to head us off, do you?"

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"Well, that's a chance we got to take, but I don't think they would have had time even if they had thought, which they probably didn't—but I'll tell you something—we gotta leave that bunch quick when we hit that straight piece of road, if we don't they will try to shoot the rear tires off. You girls stay on the floor, in case they do shoot."

"O. K., Tony," said Evelyn, as she got back down on the floor.

"Get ready, girls, we are coming to that straight part," as the car fairly felt like it was leaving the earth.

"We must be doing seventy or more—at least, if anything does happen while we are going this fast, we won't have to worry about it, anyhow," said Mickey, as she lay jouncing in her wet, sloppy dress, covered with sand and mud.

"I hope you don't take cold, Mickey. You know you got your head wet. I was lucky, that's the only thing I didn't get wet," from Pearl.

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"Well—" said Evelyn, "If them guys start shooting at us, there'll be more water in the car, and it won't have come from the river."

"I wonder what became of Harry?"

"I'll bet he ain't worrying about you," said Evelyn.

"I don't know—at least, I hope he won't get in jail."

"Jail, Hell," said Mickey, "He came down them steps ahead of you two, and I mean way ahead of you. Them shots hadn't no more than stopped when Harry come down so fast it would take two people to see him, one to see him coming and one to see him going."

"What was that hit the car?" asked Evelyn, as she raised up.

"Just a bullet bouncing off—but they will have to shoot fast now, I'm doing eighty—and what's more, I'm leaving them behind. We will be fairly safe in a minute or so, unless as you said, Ev—about the other car on the Mesa road, and I don't think we will have any trouble from that."

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"Damn, I hope not—I'd hate to have to sit in jail with these wet clothes on," said Mickey.

"I don't care much about setting in jail wet or dry."

"You two don't have to worry—Tony is a good driver, and we got a good chance of getting away," reasoned Evelyn.

"Well, suppose they start looking for us, to question us?" asked Pearl.

"Well—" said Evelyn, "Here's our story—this goes for you too, Tony—Pearl, you stayed with me tonight in my apartment—and you, Tony, you stayed with Mickey, and remember, we all went to bed about twelve-thirty, and don't let them jar you loose from that story, so if we all tell the same story, and stick to it, what can they do?"

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"Look what a break you're getting, Tony," laughed Mickey, "You stayed with me tonight."

"I suppose you are going to tell me now that I owe you two dollars," laughed Tony, "But say—what the Hell happened over there—a fight?"

"Hell, no, I wish it had been only a fight—but it wasn't—Negro Noche shot her boy friend and Irene."

"Jees, Ev, are they both dead?"

"Yeah—they never knew what hit them."

"No wonder you were so anxious to get back on this side tonight."

"How soon before we reach that Mesa fork, Tony?" asked Mickey.

"In just a few minutes now—look back and see how close those lights are."

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"Oh, Hell," answered Evelyn, as she looked out the back of the car. "They are damn near out of sight, Tony."

"Good—we'll make it all right now—hold tight back there—I'm making the turn—we are nearing the fork." The screaming of rubber on the concrete, as the big car turned the corner on two wheels. "Now, you girls can get on the seat and rest a bit, instead of laying on that floor, all crowded up."

"Another night like this and I'll swear off for good," said Mickey, as she sat up on the seat.

"Swear off what?" asked Evelyn.

"Well, off booze, for one thing."

"You swore off once before, didn't you?"

"Yeah—and that very night I was arrested in El Paso for Vag."

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"How long was you off liquor?"

"Till I got out of jail."

"How long was that?"

"Two hours."

The car was moving at a terrific rate of speed, up grade, and down grade. "See if you see any lights coming behind us," said Tony.

"We won't be able to tell until you reach the top of the next grade, but I'll keep a sharp look-out," answered Evelyn, as she turned half around in the seat.

"Just think," said Pearl, "This time last night I was on this road about this time, but how different it was."

"Well, I've been on this road plenty of times, and no two times have been alike," answered Mickey.

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"There's lights coming, Tony, but they are a long ways back, and it may not be the police car, anyhow."

"O. K., Ev, but I'll just keep moving pretty fast."

"Listen, Ev, will you come over and stay with me tonight?" asked Pearl.

"Why?"

"Well, I don't want to spend the rest of the night alone—will you?"

"Sure."

They came into the city limits, but there was no sign of trouble. Tony slowed down to an ordinary speed, so as not to attract attention.

"Listen—" said Mickey, "Why don't you two come and spend the night at our place—we have a furnished house, five rooms, three bedrooms, living-room, kitchen, and all that goes with it—you know the place, Ev, that little brick house me and Betty rented out on Myrtle Avenue. What do you say?"

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"Whatever Pearl says is all O. K. with me," answered Evelyn.

"Well, I have something to drink out there."

"Good," said Pearl, quickly. "We'll go."

"Hey, Tony, you know where my joint is, don't you?"

"I should, by this time. I've took you there enough—when you was so lit you didn't know where it was yourself."

They arrived at Mickey's place in a few minutes, and it was just as Mickey had described it, and very tastily furnished in pinks and blues, with a faint odor of incense in the still, cool air.

"Come on in, Tony, and have a drink," as the girls got out of the car.

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"O. K."

They went into the rooms, snapping on the lights, then all heading for the kitchen by instinct. Pearl called Evelyn aside—talking in low tones, as Mickey got out the bottle of whiskey and set it

on the table.

"Help yourself, Tony, while I see what the conference is about."

"What do you think?"

"What do I think about what?"

"About how much to pay Tony for his trouble tonight," said Evelyn.

"Well," from Pearl. "If it hadn't been for him, I don't know what we would have done, and I think we should at least give him ten dollars apiece—what do you think?"

"It's all right by me, and here's my ten to prove it," as she dug the wet money out of her stocking. [Pg 88]

Both Evelyn and Pearl dug into their clothes from the neck, and produced the ten apiece.

"Tony," said Evelyn, as she turned to where he was standing, "Will thirty bucks be all right for your trouble tonight?"

"Ah—nuts. Pay me my regular three bucks and forget about the rest. You have to work pretty hard for that money, and what's more, I got a real kick out of that run tonight."

"The Hell you say," from Pearl. "You take this dough—what do you think we are? I admit I'm new down here, and you are a good scout, but you ain't no friend of mine if you don't take this," as she handed the money toward him.

"Girlie, you're a good scout, and I tell you what I'll do. If it will make you feel any better, I'll take it—but remember this—when you want anything from me, or want me to take you any place or do anything for you, and you ain't got the dough—call me, and any time you need some dough yourself—I know you girls run short lots of times—don't forget—call me. Now, I'll be going," as he took his cap and started for the door. [Pg 89]

"Good-bye," from all three girls.

"If I hear anything, I'll give you a ring on the phone and tip you off," as he closed the door behind him.

"Hell's Fire. Give me a drink, quick," said Evelyn, as she began to undress where she stood. "I've seen funny sights, but I would have loved to have been a bystander and seen us three wading across that river. It wasn't funny then, but Mickey, when you come up out of that water, I almost broke down, as dark as it was down there, you was funny looking—" laughingly.

"It's a damn good thing Pearl had as good hold on me as she had, or I'd been a goner."

"Do you think there will be much of a stink about this killing? You know, Irene is an American citizen, and she was shot on the Mex side," said Pearl. [Pg 90]

"Well—" said Evelyn slowly, "You can't tell just what will come of this. The real trouble will come from Juan Moros' people, if there is any trouble at all. His old man is a political power down in that country—"

"That shows what you know about it," said Mickey bitterly. "When anything happens to an American outside of the U. S., it's just too bad. When trouble starts down here the American Consul is the first one to run for the bridge. Our government figures that if you are out of your own country, that's your business—and it's your business to protect yourself. Look at Nicaragua, Panama, Haiti, as well as our nearby Mexico. When anyone of our American citizens are knocked off, said government sends a note of apology to our Consul, saying they are sorry—but that don't bring your life back. Believe me, if you are an American, and you're in some other country, my advice is to keep your mouth shut, or affect an English accent." [Pg 91]

"Well, surely they will do something with that woman that did the shooting," argued Pearl.

"But my God, Ev, she killed one of her own people, and in cold blood."

"Yes, dear—he was a Mex, all right, but when she tells the Mex judge how he broke her heart, and how she found him in the arms of a milk-white Gringo—it's a ten-to-one shot that the judge will weep for her broken heart, and tell her that she has done her country a favor—in shooting a cur that would so scorn his own countrywoman."

"Well, you said that there might be trouble from his people, that his father was a big Mex politician."

"Well, in that case, if his father isn't tied up at the present in some revolution of his own, he may come here—or send one of his loyal men, and cut Negro Noche loose from some of her vital spots." [Pg 92]

"I've been on some hot parties, and I've seen a lot of things happen, but tonight takes the prize," mused Pearl.

"There's not much of the night left," said Mickey. "Let's get to bed and sleep a little of this off."

"Pearl, didn't I hear you say you had a date with Big Boy this afternoon—to go swimming?"

"Yeah—he asked me, and you, too, Ev."

"Are you going?"

"Sure, might as well. I can't lose nothing—I'll get up around noon and go over to the room, and wait for him."

"You'll probably find him at the room waiting for you, if I know anything about men, and if I don't know anything about 'em, there ain't nobody who does. Where did Mickey go?"

"I'm in bed," came from one of the bedrooms. "You two pick out the bed you want to sleep in and go to it when you are ready. Good night." [Pg 93]

"Good night."

"Say, I'm ready to turn in now, are you, Pearl?"

"Yeah—let's have another little drink before we go to bed."

"That's my idea, too—a drink—and a big one," said Evelyn.

"Listen, Ev—when I made up my mind to come down here, I only had one thought in mind, and that was to stay a little while and make some money, and get away while I could—you know what I mean, to get—well, to get away before it got me—do you know what I mean?"

"Sure, Kid, I know what you mean, only you're too damn nice to say it for fear of hurting my feelings. You mean to get away before you get like me—and Mickey—and that gang you were with tonight." [Pg 94]

"Well, I don't quite mean it like that—I mean—"

"Listen, honey, I know just how you feel—I only hope you can do what you want to. When I came down here, I had the same idea, but I let this damn place get me. Now I couldn't leave it, no matter how hard I tried. I guess the only way I'll ever leave it is in a box."

"I don't quite know what to do. I'm kind of puzzled since tonight—the party, the shooting, and all. Maybe I've had a little too much to drink—or not enough—I—I—well, I ought never, never think, nobody should ever think, especially about the past—Oh, well, let's have another drink."

"Well, if you could be bothered with Big Boy, you could feather your nest for good—honey, that means an awful lot these days—not having to worry about the rent, not having to put up with men that you hate the sight of, especially when you have to be nice, to make the lousy two dollars that they hand out grudgingly, and think that they are doing you a good turn—but, of course, if you can't go him—well, what's the use to try?" [Pg 95]

"I've been thinking about that myself—and I'm afraid it wouldn't work out. First, I don't care a thing about him, and he would be so jealous of me my life wouldn't be safe, if he caught me talking to anyone else, and knowing what I've been, if he ever got mad at me he would be sure to throw it up to me—and I'm afraid I couldn't stand that."

"Well, if I'm not mistaken, you do care for somebody else, don't you? And if my guess is right—it's Harry, ain't it?"

"Yeah—you're right, all right, it's Harry. He don't even know my name, and I don't know a thing about him, but Jeess, how I love that kid—Ah, nuts, one would be as bad as the other; I would be so jealous of Harry every time he was out of my sight for five minutes, I'd think he was with some other woman, and what's more, I'd be right—second, he is not the marrying kind, that is, he don't marry my kind—that's damn certain. Ah—to Hell with both of them, I'll take 'em all on that's got the price. What the Hell am I mooning about? Let's have another drink." [Pg 96]

"O. K., we will have another drink, but Pearl, you are only fooling yourself—you may say to Hell with them for now, but when you get up today, you will feel different about them. I know—I've said the same thing every night for the past five years. You can't settle it like that—if it were only possible to settle one's feelings like that it would make a lot of difference in people's lives—tomorrow you will go on thinking you can see Harry every night, and how you can chisel Big Boy at the same time, without the other being positive of just what you are doing—Honey, I know what I'm talking about. Five years ago, when I came to this border, I was the toast of the town—I know I don't look it, but I was sure a looker in those days, and I had my way any time I wanted it—but I was just like you—I was going to make a pile of dough, and make a getaway while I could, and marry some good, honest, quiet guy that would never suspect me of having been what I was. Yeah—I was foolish, but—I guess we are all foolish like that at times—Oh, God, if I could only call back those five years, what wouldn't I give, but what's the use, I've drawn my own cards, it's up to me to play them. You say you want to get out of this—then you take the money you have, and what I've got, and you catch the first train—don't wait—don't wait for anything—most of all, don't wait for your own thoughts to catch up with you—just go and go quick, but you won't—what's the use—Oh, what's the use." [Pg 97]

"You're right, Ev, what's the use? But there's one thing—I'm going to do the thing I originally planned; I'm one Hooker that's going to get the dough and make the getaway. I'm going to do just what you suggested—I'm going to see Harry every time I can, and I'm going to get all I can off Big Boy—come on, let's get some sleep."

"Honey, I'm for you hook, line and sinker. I'll also take the bottle and put it under the pillow in [Pg 98]

case I wake up thirsty."

"You know, Ev, I've only known you for a little over twenty-four hours, but it seems I've known you for years, and you're a damn good scout—good night."

"Good night, kid," said Evelyn, as she took a nip from the bottle.

They went to bed, to sleep the sleep of the just, and the hours slipped by as though they were seconds, until—

"My God, what is that, a fire alarm?" asked Evelyn, as she raised up in bed.

Pearl was still sleeping.

"It's that damn phone," growled Mickey, as she stumbled to it. "Who the Hell could be calling at this time of night—or day? Hello—what do you want? What? Oh, it's you, Tony—what's up? Oh, yeah, have they been able to trace the car, do you think? Do you think they will trace you? Thanks, Tony, I'll see you later," as she hung up.

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"What's up," yelled Evelyn, from the bed.

"Well, for one thing, there's headlines in the papers about the shooting last night, and Tony said the police were down there this morning, and questioned everybody on the place, and the boss lied and said that Tony hadn't left the place between twelve and six this morning. He says he don't know if they suspect him or not, and the police said there was only one woman in the car—so they must be all balled up—what do you think?"

"What's all the trouble, and what time is it?" said Pearl, as she raised up in bed.

"It was Tony called," answered Evelyn. "What time is it, Mickey, or is your time-piece working?"

"It's one-thirty," called Mickey from the kitchen.

"Oh, good Heavens, I must get to the room, I don't even remember what time I had the date with Big Boy."

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"It don't matter what time you had the date with him—he'll wait if you are late," from Evelyn, as she climbed slowly out of bed. "Oh, my, I'll never be the same. I'm so stiff I can hardly stand up."

"You spent all of last night getting that way," said Mickey.

"Getting how?"

"Getting stiff."

"I know, Mickey dear, but the stiff I mean is not the kind of stiff you mean."

"You better be careful, Ev," said Pearl. "You might catch pneumonia from being in that river."

"You are wrong there—the only thing you will catch from being in that river is hydrophobia, and I think I had that when I was a virgin," laughed Evelyn.

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"Good Heavens, Ev," said Mickey, "Was you ever a virgin?"

"Well, there has always been a doubt in my mind about that—you see, if I ever was—it's been so long ago my memory fails to recognize the fact."

"It must be grand to be a virgin," from Pearl.

"Yeah—but think of the fun you miss," said Mickey. "I sure remember the time I stopped being a virgin, and do I remember the one who put a stop to it!"

"What was he like?" asked Pearl. "And—what was you like?"

"Well, I was a big, green, corn-fed country girl, in the corn and Bible belt in Kansas, wasn't hard to look at (of course, that's before I had all these scars on this pan of mine)—and the guy—was the son of the rural mail carrier, who had just come out of the Navy, and what he knew was plenty, and I had always read what devils sailors were with the women—I guess I was just as curious as he was ambitious. Come on in the kitchen and I'll put the coffee on the stove, and finish my confession."

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"For God's sake, make that coffee strong—I sure need it," said Evelyn, as she and Pearl followed Mickey in the kitchen, and sat down at the table. "Oh, I forgot—I'll get the cups and saucers," as she rose from the table and went to the cupboard.

"Go ahead with that dirty story you started to tell us," said Pearl. "One of my pet weaknesses is the true story of How, Why, and Where Trollops like us three came from, and what caused it."

"Well, as I was saying, I was as green as they come, and I had already spurned, so to speak, the advances of the hired hand, which he made to me one day in the barn. We drove to church as usual on Sunday, in the Goddamndest rig you ever saw, a buckboard buggy with two horses. Dad and Mother sat in the seat, and me, being the only child, I stood up in the back and held on to the seat, and there I was, with my skirt and underskirts and drawers starched so stiff that when I sat down it sounded like somebody breaking macaroni in a cooking pot, hair done up in the latest, two big buns over each ear—when I look back at that now, I have all I can do to keep from

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screaming with laughter at the way I must have looked. Well, I was introduced to Jerry at the church, and he asked me if he could take me home in his buggy—that is, it was his old man's buggy that he had borrowed for the purpose. Mother and Dad thought it would be lovely if he drove me home, so they went on ahead when church was over, and left me with Jerry. Of course, him having been places and seen and done things, I was a pushover for him. When I look back at it, I must have been a panic. He drove off the main road, and said we should tie the horse, and go for a lovely walk under the trees. I was timid at first, as we sat on the ground under an old pine tree. He kissed me, and I wasn't so keen on it, then he took me in his arms, and it done something to me, and I came right back at him. In my ignorance I decided that I would show him that us country girls was just as up to date as any of those girls he met in foreign countries, and I stopped at nothing—well, that was the memorable time when I stopped being a virgin."

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"I bet that was a sight," said Evelyn.

"And how," from Pearl.

"Ah, damn, that coffee would boil over—hey, Ev, get the cream out of the ice-box, will you?"

"I'll get it," said Pearl, as she rose from the table. "You haven't told us what happened after that afternoon."

"There's not a lot more to tell. Jerry got an awful crush on me, so I thought—he came after me every evening or so, and took me for a drive—and a walk, as well, and three months after that first Sunday afternoon I began to blow up like somebody had been using a bicycle pump on me, and then Jerry decided to re-enlist—which he did do, without even saying good-bye—shortly after that my father found out all the dirt, and he literally put his foot against my dainty behind, and kicked me out, that being the proper thing to do to a wayward daughter in the Bible belt, and me, I went from bad to worse, and then to Kansas City—and by that time I had learned to step, and did I use to burn Twelfth Street up. I'd start at the old Gaiety Theatre, on 12th and Wyandotte Street, and on down 12th to McGee Street, then back on the other side of the street. Sometimes I'd be a long time making the round, but I made the money. That was in the days when Kansas City was good—a girl could easily make twenty bucks in a night of hard labor, besides what you could roll a guy for when he went to sleep—but eventually the police gave me the works in the form of a floater out of town, and I floated to Denver. Boy, Oh boy, will I ever forget Denver? Many's the pair of heels I wore off on Curtis Street and many's the dollar I've earned there—and from there to many places, till I arrived here, and this will probably be my finish—but what the Hell, drink your coffee."

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"In that case, you blame the cause of your—well—the cause of this life, on a man, then," from Evelyn.

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"I can't say I do—I'm what I am because I wanted to be—I need men. When I went to Kansas City, I could have found a job of some kind, and worked like thousands of girls do, but I didn't want to. I've never wanted to be what is called decent. I think that a life like that would be damn slow, and it's not in my nature to live like that. I love all this excitement—all this uncertainty, and most of all, I could never be true to one man, because—well, because when I see a man that arouses my interest, I could never resist the impulse to satisfy my curiosity, so—what good would I be with a husband—I'd only make the poor guy miserable, or else cause him to kill me—I know me, like no one else does."

"You are right there, Mickey," said Pearl. "No girl ever went the wrong way unless she wanted to—she may cry and say that a man made her what she is, and that she would never have been so unless some man tricked her—but down deep in her heart she wanted to be what she is. No girl was ever really raped—unless she helped the process along a little. The girls who have been raped, and really in their hearts didn't want to be, were the only ones that have been found dead, after an awful fight. No man can really rape a girl who doesn't want to be raped just a little. I know from actual experience."

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"You're both right," said Evelyn, as she reached for the coffee pot, for her second cup of coffee. "This coffee hits me right where I sit this morning—it sure tastes good."

"Well, I gotta get dressed and start for town. I gotta date with Big Boy, but I can't for the life of me remember what time it was for. What are you going to do tonight, Ev?"

"I suppose I'll do the usual thing—go over the bridge."

"Do you suppose there will be anything said to us about last night?"

"I don't see how they can say anything—we weren't caught doing anything, and there's no proof that we were mixed up in that mess, and we weren't caught coming over the border, so—what can they say?"

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"Yeah—I guess you're right at that—well, I'll see you later," as she started for the door.

"But where?" called Evelyn.

"I'll tell you what—you come over to my hotel, Ev, about six o'clock. How is that, and we'll go to supper—oh, by the way, Mickey, what are you doing tonight—the usual thing?"

"Sure—the usual thing, but I'll see you over on the other side," answered Mickey.

"Then I'll be over at your hotel at six," said Evelyn.

"O. K., Ev, see you then—and thanks, Mickey, for the hospitality. So long," as she closed the door behind her.

"That girl's sure a real good scout, Mickey—it's too bad that she has got to go the route." [Pg 109]

"Let's have a little drink—what do you say, Ev?"

"Quick."

"Say, Ev, where did you meet Pearl?"

"On the car the other night—and right away that Big Boy falls head over heels for her in a big way, and wants to marry her, and she can't see him—but—she is nuts over Harry Hicks—ain't that something to tie your bowels in a knot?"

"Oh, Jeess, Harry will do to her what he has done to all the rest that's come his way—he will get tired of her as quick as the rest, and then I suppose she will grieve, and go on the usual drunk, to forget it. I don't know what it is about that guy that makes these girls go for him like they do."

"Yeah—and look at the dough she could get from that big guy." [Pg 110]

"I sure wish I could get my hooks into that Big Boy for a couple of days, but he won't even give me a tumble," as they went on sipping their coffee.

When Pearl arrived at her hotel, she found Big Boy sitting in the lobby, with a sour expression on his face, which brightened when she came in.

"Hello, Big Boy," said Pearl, "Did you think I was going to stand you up?"

"No—I forgot what time our date was for, so I came at noon, and they said you hadn't been in all night. Where have you been?"

"Well—now, is that nice, to ask me where I've been, and what do you care where I've been? I'm here for our date, am I not? Isn't that enough? Come on up to the room, while I get dressed for wherever it is we are going?"

Big Boy followed Pearl into the elevator and to her room, without saying a word. When she closed the door, then he turned to her, face red with anger. [Pg 111]

"I know where you've been—look at that dress—I know you was one of the women who waded the river last night. I suppose you went and spent the night with the guy that helped you across."

"Listen, Big Boy, what ever gave you the notion that you had the right to question where I've been, and who I've been with? Get a load of this—there is no man, woman or child that has a right to talk to me like that, see—so don't you try it."

"Well, what was you doing in Juarez that you couldn't have come across the bridge before twelve, and why was it so necessary for you to come back over here that you would take the chance of wading the river to get here?"

"I—I—well—I just didn't make the bridge, and I—well, I was afraid to stay over there all night."

"You're lying like Hell, and you know it. You was on that party last night at the Rio Bravo—" as he came over to where she was standing. [Pg 112]

"I was invited over there, but I didn't go," said Pearl, timidly.

"Stop that lying—you was invited all right—and you went, and when that shooting happened, you thought you better beat it. Who was with you?" as he moved closer, "Where was Evelyn?"

"I don't know," lied Pearl.

"Now, you listen to me—I don't care what you do, or where you go, see—but don't lie to me," as he took hold of her, "You are the first woman in my life I have ever asked to marry me—and get this—if I can't have you, nobody else will—I mean it."

"You turn loose of me—I don't see what right you have to treat me this way, because I've been nice to you, you think I belong to you body and soul. Well, you let go of me, and get out. Who do you think you are?" [Pg 113]

"Oh, so that's the way you want it—well—what I said goes—if I can't have you, there's no other bastard will get you," as he punched her in the eye.

"Oh—help—help—you lousy tramp, get out of this room," screamed Pearl. "God damn you, don't think you can get away with that kind of stuff with me."

"Oh, Pearl—Pearl, please forgive me—I'll never do that again. Oh, honest, kid, I let my temper get away from me—Oh, please listen to me. I didn't mean it—if I didn't think so much of you I wouldn't have done it," as he took her in his arms, while she sobbed violently, and let him hold her close. "I'll call a doctor and have him fix the eye up so it won't get black," as he held her away from him, and then went to the phone.

"Oh, Jeess—" sobbed Pearl. "It's too late, my eye is already swelling shut—Oh, what a sight I'll be," [Pg 114]

as she threw herself on the bed, kicking her feet and crying loudly.

Big Boy called the doctor, and was told he would be there at once, then he threw himself on the bed beside Pearl, taking her in his arms, kissing her and trying to stop her from crying.

"You see, you don't trust me—then you call me a liar—and then you beat me," said Pearl, between sobs, as she thought, "I'll put on a real show for him, I'll make him shell out some dough for this."

"Oh, honey, can't you see I'm crazy about you—honestly nuts for you? If I didn't love you, I wouldn't be jealous of you, would I? I'll never do that again—will you believe me—let me get you a glass of water—please don't cry—come on, straighten up—the doctor will be here in a minute," as he held her in his arms.

A rap came on the door.

"Come in," called Big Boy, as he got off the bed, "Oh, hello, Doc—I want you to fix this eye for Miss Jones—she had a little accident." [Pg 115]

The doctor walked over to the bed, stooped over Pearl, and looked at her eye, already swollen shut, and turning a deep blue.

"That's a peach," said the doctor, "How did you get it?"

"I was coming in the door, doctor, and I dropped my key on the floor, and as I stooped over to pick it up, I hit my eye on the door-knob," lied Pearl.

"Well, it's the first door-knob I've ever seen that left knuckle prints," laughed the doctor, as he went to work to fix the eye.

"How long will it be black, doctor?" asked Pearl.

"Oh, about a week or so, and then it will be as good as ever."

"Ah, gee, that's tough," said Big Boy awkwardly as he backed towards the door, "I'll be back in a minute," as he left the room. [Pg 116]

"Will I have to wear a bandage over the eye until it gets all right?"

"No, you don't have to wear a bandage at all, unless you want to, but you know a bandage covers a multitude of sins. You can say you got a piece of glass in your eye, and that way you won't have to stay in your room for a week until it gets well."

"Ah, gee, Doc, you're a peach, thanks," as she got off the bed.

"Well, I'll be going now," as he gathered up his things. "Next time tell your boy friend to hit you some place it won't show," as he went out the door.

Pearl lay on the bed—there was nothing else to do. Now she couldn't very well go to Juarez, with her eye bandaged up. No matter what lie she told, nobody would believe it. Maybe it was just as well not to go over for a few days anyhow—let some of the trouble of the shooting die down, and that would be time enough, but she couldn't stay in the room all that time—she would go crazy. She arose from the bed, went to the phone, and called Evelyn's apartment and left a message for her to call as soon as she came in. [Pg 117]

The door opened slowly, as Big Boy came in, loaded with candy and fruit and flowers.

"My God, what all have you got there?" asked Pearl, as she looked at him with the one good eye.

"Some little things you might like, Pearl. You can have anything you want, no matter what it is. Will you please forgive me?"

"Well, it will take a lot more than candy or flowers to make me forget a sock like that."

"Ah, gee, honey—you can have anything you want—just name it. Let me get you a nice apartment, and some clothes, open an account for you—just anything to show you I do really love you, and I only want you to marry me—will you?" [Pg 118]

"No, I won't marry you—but I'll think about the apartment and the other stuff you mentioned."

"Ah, that's great—I gotta go now—I gotta meet a guy on some business about the mine—I'll be back tonight."

"Aw—alright, go ahead—I'll be here when you get back—you've seen to that, all right," as he came over to kiss her—"Never mind kissing me—I'm still mad."

"I love you—can't you understand that," as he took her in his arms.

A rap came on the door.

"Who's there," called Pearl.

"It's me—Ev," came the voice.

"Come on in."

"My God—what's happened to you—your eye—what's happened?" asked Evelyn, breathlessly. [Pg 119]

"Well, you see, it was like this," said Big Boy.

"Never mind—never mind—I get it—she was late for the date and you socked her for it—ain't you the big bully?" said Evelyn, as she walked over to Pearl.

"I just lost my temper, and I didn't mean to."

"You said you had to go—well, go ahead—I want to talk to Ev."

"Will you be here when I get back?" asked Big Boy anxiously.

"Yeah—she'll be here, all right, thanks to you—scram—" answered Evelyn, as he went out the door.

"My God, this thing hurts," said Pearl, as she put her hands to her head.

"What happened?"

[Pg 120]

"Oh, we got into an argument about last night, and he was furious, and just took a punch at me, that's all."

"Well, what was you saying?"

"He wanted to know about last night—and I was lying and trying not to tell him anything, and he seemed to know that I was lying, so he gives me the shiner."

"Didn't I tell you about that guy—I told you not to try to kid him, or lie to him. He is the meanest louse that ever lived when he loses his temper, and if you go ahead and play around with him, you won't only get another black eye, but you'll get a beating, and one that you will remember. I know him, and I also know his reputation. It's like I said—that guy is a killer, and if you go on fooling with him, and he ever catches you with Harry, he'll kill you as sure as you're born. I'm not saying I told you so, or any of that stuff. Heavens knows I know what it is to have a black eye, and it's no fun, but remember what I'm saying—I suppose he rushed out and bought this stuff to get you to overlook the sock, eh?"

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"Yeah—that's what he bought it for, and he also is going to get me an apartment, and some new clothes—he said I could have anything I want—"

"Well, you better take sparingly, because, sister, you will pay in the end. You let that guy go do all that, and you don't stay true to him, it's curtains for you—I'm telling you, because when he finds you are hot for Harry, he'll go up in smoke anyhow. He and Harry are the best of friends, but they are rivals as well. I'm dying for a drink—I'll bet you haven't got a drop around here, have you?"

"Look in the top dresser drawer—there's a full bottle that hasn't been opened."

"Thank Heavens—that's a life saver," as she fished the bottle out of the drawer, and opening it, took a long, deep drink. "Want one too, don't you?"

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"Might as well," said Pearl, as she raised up and took the bottle Evelyn handed her.

"Maybe I'm nuts, but I can't figure it out—here is a guy that wants you to marry him, and you can't see him for Harry. Ah, Hell—give me another drink—the world's all haywire."

"Hell, I'm not going to stay in this room all day. I want to go out, at least for a little while. I know, Ev—let's you and I go get an apartment—you come with me and help me hunt."

"Why go hunting apartments? If you really want to be swell, then take an apartment in the Hussman Hotel. They got the swellest in this town, and there's no use taking anything but the swellest, since Big Boy is going to pay the bill."

"That's an idea—I'll do it—you are all wrong about me taking sparingly—I might as well have whole hog or none, because he won't figure that, in case there is a big showdown. If I have to pay the price, I might as well make it worth while, ain't I right?"

[Pg 123]

"Yeah—I guess you're right, at that, because when he does start mopping the town up with you, he won't figure what he has spent—he will just figure you have been a louse, and you will get it—and how!"

"I'll change this dress and we will go," as she started to strip again.

"Gee, I'm sorry you won't be able to go across the border tonight. I hate to go over there alone."

"Don't worry, you won't be alone—I'm not the first Hooker that has sported a black eye in this burg. I'm going over—to Hell with what that crowd thinks. I've got a sucker on the string that's not so bad, so let's have the fun while we can. Give me that bottle, darling, I need it badly."

"Damn if you ain't the best pal I've had in a long time, Pearl."

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"You ain't so bad yourself, Ev."

They left the hotel, also a note on the door, saying they would be back shortly, as they had gone apartment hunting. They moseyed by the Plaza, and over to the Hussman, where they looked at apartments, which ended in Pearl taking one.

"This is some hot-looking joint," said Evelyn, as she sat down, gorgeously putting on the Ritz, "If

I'm going to come up here to see you I might as well start putting on the dog right now."

"Come up and see me—you—you're going to move up here with me."

"Like Hell—I'll come up and see you, but I ain't moving in here—I don't want to have to jump out of one of these windows some night when you and Big Boy have one of your grudge fights—I'll stay where I'm at."

"Come on, let's go back to the hotel, and I'll get my things packed, and start to move—will you help me?" [Pg 125]

"Sure, why not?"

They went back to the hotel, and found Big Boy waiting for them.

"Did you find the kind of a place you want?" he asked anxiously.

"Did I? Did I? I went to the Hussman and picked the best in the joint—is that all right?"

"Right," he smiled, "And the best is none too good."

"I'm going to pack and move right now, Ev, and you are going to help me."

"No, you call the maid and let her pack your things, and send them over. Here's a little present I have for you," as he handed her a small book.

"Oh, that's wonderful—now I'll forgive you for the black eye. Look, Ev, my own bank book, and already a thousand dollars to check on—Ah, gee, that's swell, Big Boy," as she gave him a peck on the cheek for a kiss. [Pg 126]

"How would you and Ev like to go to a show for the rest of the afternoon?" asked Big Boy.

"I wouldn't mind if I can have a few more drinks before I go in," said Evelyn.

"I'm all fixed for that," he answered, as he took a pint out of his hip pocket.

"I'll tell you, Pearl, you kill a third, and you kill a third, and I'll kill the rest. How's that?" said Evelyn, as she took the bottle from Big Boy.

"Why just the pint? I've a quart in the other dresser—wait, I'll get it," as she went to the dresser and took out a quart of Kentucky Bourbon.

"Why not kill both?" suggested Evelyn.

"Did you say you wanted to see the picture, or just want to go in the theatre to sleep?" asked Big Boy. [Pg 127]

"Well, we'll get a bigger kick out of it, if we are stiff; I know we will."

"I've a better idea than that," said Pearl. "Let's just kill the quart, then take the pint into the theatre, and have a nip during the picture, huh, what do you say?"

"It don't matter where I drink it, as long as I drink, let's get started—Big Boy, you drink first, then you Pearl, then I'll knock the rest of it off," suggested Evelyn.

"Oke," answered Big Boy, as he turned the bottle up to his mouth, while deep gurgling sounds came forth.

The quart was finished, and all went to the theatre, as Pearl left orders with the maid to pack her things, and have them sent to the Hussman.

The afternoon papers carried warnings to all Americans that the long-expected rebellion in Mexico had broken out in Durango, and that the administration of Portes Gil, Mexico's President, looked as though it were at an end. [Pg 128]

Portes Gil was at a loss—his troops could not seem to do anything—there was only one thing for him to do, and that was to recall ex-President Calles, known as the Iron Man of Mexico, to help in breaking the rebellion.

Juarez, with its large garrison of soldiers, was at a nervous tension, and the bar owners were twice as nervous, not knowing how long the garrison would be loyal to the Federals, as all that is necessary to change their loyalty is to shoot the commanding officers, and declare they were loyal to the other side, which is so often the case when the opposing side is much larger, or when there is a little looting to be done.

Fort Bliss, with its rows of beautiful two-story brick houses for its officers, its large brick barracks, housing its hundreds of men, and small, newly built brick bungalows for its petty officers, its tremendous stables housing its hundreds of horses, its enormous parade and drill grounds, clean as a freshly swept floor, aroused from its lethargy at the rumors of war. The men were raring to be let loose to fight, anybody or anything, as long as it promised excitement and fight. [Pg 129]

"It sure looks like a hot time in the old town soon," said Evelyn, as she lay back and stretched out on the beautifully appointed divan in Pearl's new apartment.

"Wait a minute until I change the bandage on this bum eye, and you can read the newspaper to me," said Pearl, from the bathroom.

"Why don't you leave the bandage off when you are in the house? There's nothing you can put on it now that will take the black out of it—just leave it alone, and when you start to go out, then stick the patch over it."

"That's a good idea, I'll do it," as she sat down in front of Evelyn. "Now, tell me more, what the paper says about war."

"The American Consul says in a statement in the paper that he cannot be responsible for American citizens who go over to Juarez just to have a good time, and that only those who have business and have to go over are the only ones to go over—Well, in my business it's necessary for me to go over—but you having a man who has money, on the string, you don't have to go over—but I can see by the expression in the one good eye of yours that you will have important business in Juarez—will you not, Miss Jones?" said Evelyn, with mock elegance. [Pg 130]

"With all this excitement brewing I should stay up here in the apartment, and act like a lady. Now's the time to go over there and raise Hell—with the revolution coming on, they will have forgotten about the shooting, and will be so taken up with other things, it will be as safe as ever, if you can ever call Juarez safe."

The telephone started ringing madly—"Who the Hell can that be?" asked Pearl, as she went to answer it.

"Hello—Oh, yeah—yeah, I hear you all right. You have to go right now—well, when will you be back?—Oh, gee, I'm sorry—well, is there anything you want me to do?—sure, I'll be careful—will you be safe in that territory? That is where most of the fighting will be, so the paper says—Oh, that's why you have to go down there—I didn't get that last crack—come again—don't mind if I go over to Juarez with Evelyn, and have a few drinks, do you? I can go, but you would rather I wouldn't? And have a drink whenever I want, too—No, I'm not mad—why should I be mad? But why should I go into the sisterhood just because you will be out of town for a few days? Oh, it might be weeks—well, you are going of your own free will—nobody is making you go—Oh, Hell, yes, certainly I've enough money till you get back—yes, O. K., goodbye," as she hung up the receiver. [Pg 131]

"What did I tell you?" said Evelyn. "He has to go to the mine and wants you to be the sweet and innocent one till he gets back—that guy is so jealous of you he smells bad—what are you going to do tonight?"

"Well, I was thinking it would be grand to go over to Juarez, and before the bridge closes, bring our own gang here for a party—what do you think?" [Pg 132]

"Yes, dear—Harry will like your new apartment—you ain't kidding me, I'm wise—and what's more, I'm staying here myself tonight with a boy friend—that is, if I can pick up one that is young enough to come without his wheel chair."

"All right—let's get started—wait till I put the patch on the bum eye."

"If anybody asks you how you got the eye, what are you going to tell them?"

"Tell them the truth—they won't believe it anyhow."

"I never thought of that before, and the way I've worried over trying to think up a grand lie to tell someone when, if you were to tell the truth it would be just as good, because they would never believe it, anyhow. That is a new idea, and I won't have to think so much now—Hooray—let us drink—Oh, damn it—there ain't no more whiskey." [Pg 133]

"Never mind, dear, we will soon be in Juarez," said Pearl, as she pulled the hat down over the patch on her eye.

"The way you have that hat on, you would hardly notice that eye," remarked Evelyn, as she arranged her dress.

"Don't you worry, that herd of hawk-eyed whores will see it long before I get there. Any time some woman's man socks her in the eye, it travels by mental telepathy—not that they have any mental capacity, but even the most lowly animal has instinct—therefore they would know it."

"Oh, sister, thou speaketh the truth—thou wilt be blessed," said Evelyn, lifting her hands to Heaven, "Come, Juarez calleth."

They boarded the Juarez-bound car, and as the car stopped for the Customs and Immigration officials of Mexico to get on, more than usual boarded the car, questioning everybody as to their reason for going over the border,—the extra questioning was because of the revolution having started. [Pg 134]

"For what reason, Seniorita, are you going to Juarez tonight?" one of the men asked Pearl.

"I'm going over to see a friend on business," answered Pearl.

"What manner of business, Seniorita?"

"About a job he promised me."

"And you, Senorita Evelyn, why are you going over tonight?"

"Well—to be damn truthful, Senor, I'm going over for a drink," answered Evelyn.

"That is a very good reason, Senorita—Gratias!"

The men moved slowly through the car, going through every bundle and package, regardless of size, whether it be large or small, making men stand up, and feeling them over for firearms, finally leaving the car to ramble its way on to town. [Pg 135]

"My Heavens, they are particular tonight," said Pearl.

"They will be that way until the war is over, and what good it does, I don't know," answered Evelyn.

Juarez, since the reports of the war, and the warning for Americans to stay on their own side, there were twice as many people in the bars as there usually were at this hour of the evening. They stayed on the car until they arrived at the Lobby No. 2, where they got off the car, with Pearl holding her head down so that no one might see the black eye.

"I wonder what Harry will say when he sees my shiner?"

"Black eyes are nothing new to Harry."

They went into the bar—crowds were milling, singing, talking, cursing and drinking to the war. [Pg 136]

"This is going to be another wild night over here—I can see that already—come on, let's get a drink, and then you can go in and see Harry."

"O. K."

"Well, for the love of Jeese—what happened to you?" asked Mickey, as she came up to Pearl. "You needn't tell me—Big Boy—ain't I right?"

"Right—what are you drinking, Mickey?" asked Pearl.

"Whiskey—but how did it happen, and when?"

"Well, he is jealous of me—and he knew I was lying about last night, and so—he took a sock at me."

"Ah, that's lousy."

"Yeah—that's lousy, but she got returns at once," said Evelyn. "She has already moved to the Hussman, and what an apartment—and then the boy friend came in and handed her a bank book all her own, with a grand for her to check on—then he goes away tonight to the mine, and Pearl is going to be true to him till he comes back—like Hell." [Pg 137]

"Well, that calls for celebration," said Mickey, as she drank her whiskey.

"It does," answered Pearl. "I think we should do it tonight, after the bridge closes—what do you say?"

"Good—I'll be there, but I ain't telling anyone about it—you do your own telling—I might invite someone you don't want—well, I got a date to roll a guy—I'll be seeing you," as she went into the crowd.

"Mickey is a damn good scout," said Pearl.

"She's regular," answered Evelyn.

"Oh, listen—that's Harry singing—come on in and let's sit at a table and see the show—I could watch him all night." [Pg 138]

"You probably will—but he won't be singing."

"Now, Ev, you shouldn't begrudge me a little pleasure—at least Harry never gave me a black eye."

"No—and from all I hear, he ain't got much of what you're crazy about, to give, either."

"Do you believe all you hear, Ev?"

"Well, I can't say that I do—but I have no reason to doubt the rumor, unless you care to enlighten me on the subject."

"Well, darling, you use your imagination—and sign my name to it."

"Really."

"Surest thing, Ev."

"Don't tell me I've missed something."

"I think you have."

"Well, it's really too late now—all I can do is be sorry." [Pg 139]

"You see, Ev—what I really like about Harry is his—well, his way."

"No—REALLY," said Evelyn, eyes wide.

"That's what it is."

"Well, I admit I've always suspected Harry."

"What?" said Pearl.

"Oh, nothing," smiled Evelyn, "But that calls for another drink—waiter, whiskey, quick."

"I'll have one, too—pronto."

They drank the whiskey, and crowded their way into the cabaret, and back near the band stand, where they found an unoccupied table, that commanded a good view of the show. [Pg 140]

"I'll be with you in a few minutes," said Harry, as he passed their table.

"Just a minute—Ladies and Gentlemen—I have some news—I've been requested by the management to read for your benefit," said Harry, as he silenced the crowd, then continued reading from a yellow piece of paper in his hand: "The Rebels have taken Chihuahua City, and are organizing more troops for the march on Juarez."

The crowd was silent; not a sound or a word for several minutes, then the sounds started, with low whispers, then rose to the usual loud singing, talking, dancing, still rising higher and noisier, until the gaiety was at the point of hysteria.

Mexicans stole sly glances at each other, some very serious and worried, others not noticing or caring that the rebels were going to march on Juarez, and others wondering which side to stick to, as the winning side is always the best, and if the rebels had taken Chihuahua City, Juarez would be nothing. [Pg 141]

Americans who ordinarily came over the border every night to have their little drink and waste a few hours, and go home practically as sober as they came over, were drinking with the best of the lot, as they knew that if the fighting was to take place in the city, as it had done before, there would be no chance to come over and have the usual drink; therefore drink all that was possible while the drinking was good; others, who remained gentlemen, whether drunk or sober, were making asses of themselves in huge form, and there is nothing that can be so perfect an ass as an American in a country other than his own, and with a mind made up to show off; hence, hilarity in its most violent form held sway for the rest of the night, cars and drunken people so numerous on the International Bridge it would be impossible for the gates to be closed before at least one o'clock, and the Customs and Immigration Officials dared not close the bridge until those that were dragging themselves and others were across, as it was possible that the Rebels would take a train, or an engine with a caboose, and in one of their moments of madness, which are many in the Mexican temperament, and leave Chihuahua City without the rest of the Rebel army, and just cause enough for a fight, to kill some innocent bystander, which is a known fact, that in a battle in Mexico there are more people killed by accident than with actual intent, as they are very bad shots, but if they ever work up enough courage to come close enough for a hand-to-hand fight, they either do it with knives, or call the whole thing off and go into the nearest bar, and have a drink. It is not an unusual thing to see the Federal army and the Rebel army call off the fighting for lunch and the usual noon siesta, and a general get-together, and congratulate each other on the bravery of the things they have seen done, or have heard of. Knowing this, and knowing that when the fighting did start in Juarez, that there would be as many bullets fall on the American side as on the Mexican side, Fort Bliss had already stationed a troop of men at the foot of the Santa Fe Bridge; consequently, with all the ribaldry the bridge had to be kept open until nearly two o'clock. [Pg 142]

Thrill seekers and tourists who were out to see everything and experience everything, stayed in Juarez that night, hoping to see some fighting and have first-hand information to tell the folks back in Kansas, or Ohio, just what it was like, and with the usual intelligence, which isn't above that of a stray cur, thinking it possible to witness a battle, but expecting that, owing to the fact that they were American citizens, that the Mexicans would watch where they were shooting, and not a hair on them would be harmed. [Pg 143]

Men whose wives in their drunken stupor wanted to stay in Juarez; men with women that they had picked up, but were too drunk to walk, were thrown over their shoulders, and carried like a bag of meal to the American side of the bridge; drunken women helping women more drunk than they, with the occasional leaning over the side of the bridge to let off some of the last of the liquid cargo they had taken on at the last bar.

Pearl, Evelyn and Mickey were among the last to come across, with Pearl and Mickey leading Evelyn, who was too drunk to make it alone.

"Ev, you should never get this drunk," said Mickey. [Pg 144]

"Who are you, sister? I'll get as drunk as I like," mumbled Evelyn.

"What I'd like to know is how much she drank to get this drunk. I've seen her kill a quart at a time, and never phase her, but my God, she must have got to a barrel this time," said Pearl.

"Let go of me—I can walk alone," said Evelyn, as she pulled away from them.

"Do you think you can, Ev?"

"Sure," said Evelyn, as she staggered to the curb, vomiting down her entire front.

"There she goes; now she will feel better as soon as she gets some of that stuff out of her," said Mickey.

"Yeah—but we better hold her, she might fall," but she was too late; Evelyn was already lying in the gutter. "What a sight she will be now—come on, Mickey, let's get her up to my hotel—call a taxi." [Pg 145]

Mickey called a car—they got Evelyn in, with much trouble, and finally arrived at the Hussman.

"My God, Pearl, what will they think—you dragging her through the lobby looking the way she does," as they were pulling Evelyn out of the car, with the help of the driver.

"I don't know, but I hope they let one crack out of them—that will give me all the excuse I'll need to wreck this joint without stalling."

"Wait a minute, girls," said the driver. "I'll take her up like this," as he threw Evelyn over his shoulder and started into the lobby.

"I'll get her up there and put her to bed."

"Don't you think, Pearl, that if you could get some hot coffee down her it might make her come out of it?"

"I don't know, but I'll try it—" as she said to the bell-boy, "Bring me some hot coffee up here, quick." [Pg 146]

"Are you going over to the States after we get Ev to bed, Pearl? You know you've a date over there with Harry."

"Have I? I've been doing some heavy drinking myself—I don't even remember it. Sure, we'll go over there as soon as we give her some coffee."

"Let's take her into the bathroom, and strip her in there, and then put her to bed," said Pearl, as she opened the door for them to enter.

They took Evelyn in to the bathroom, the driver holding her up while Pearl and Mickey stripped her, clean to the skin; then the bellboy arrived with the coffee.

"Wait a minute—I'll get a night-gown for her, and then we will put her in bed, and pour some of this hot stuff down her gullet. O. K., driver, bring her in."

He picked her up, and bringing her into the room, laid her down, holding her head up, as he took the cup out of Pearl's hand, and holding it to Evelyn's lips, while the hot liquid brought moans and groans from Evelyn—Pearl and Mickey stood by to help. [Pg 147]

"Now, let's cover her up, and leave her alone to sleep—she will be all right when we get back from the cafe."

Pearl turned the lights out, and down they went, leaving Ev behind for the first time since they had met.

"Jees," said Pearl, "I feel lost without her—she is sure some regular scout." As they got into the car that had brought them from the bridge—"To the States, driver."

When they arrived at the States Cafe, the height of the hilarity for the evening had passed, for the less noisy crowd had settled down to black coffee and food, to try and kill off some of the liquor.

Harry was sitting in a booth all alone, near the door, eating a sandwich, as they came in. He did not notice them until Pearl walked over to his table. [Pg 148]

"Hello, darling," as she sat down.

"Ah, gee, I'm glad you came—I've been waiting a long time. I'd begun to think you were going to stand me up," smiled Harry, with gladness beaming from his face.

"Pearl, you and Harry excuse me—I'll see you later," said Mickey, as she went towards the rear of the place to join a crowd of people she seemed to know.

"I haven't had much chance to talk to you about last night, when that awful thing happened. Evelyn and Mickey rushed right out over me, and I didn't know what had become of you, Harry. Did you get over the river all right?"

"No, I stayed on that side, at Dan's Hotel—they know me. You see, lots of nights when I don't make the bridge, I stay over there. It's not bad, really, but last night was a little unusual. When I couldn't find you, I had a hunch that Evelyn had gotten you clear of the place, and when I heard that some women had waded the river I knew that you were safe, because that's one of Evelyn's pet tricks. No matter if the bridge is open or closed, and Evelyn thinks that she had better get across that border, she goes for the river, and she has always been lucky—they have never been able to catch her. Boy, Oh boy—what a woman," laughed Harry. [Pg 149]

"Oh, Harry, you should see my new apartment—it's just grand."

"You said you have moved tonight—but I don't think you told me where."

"To the Hussman."

"Oh, baby—putting on the Ritz."

"Of course not—I just had a streak of luck, but you haven't even noticed my black eye."

"Yes, sweetheart, I had noticed it, but I didn't want to say anything—I know if it is any of my business you will tell me, and it's not polite for a man to ask personal questions of—well—of a girl he really is crazy about." [Pg 150]

"Harry, you are sweet, but you see the black eye is the cause of my good luck. First, jealousy caused the black eye, then the apartment was rented to make up for it—see—that's all very simple."

"Well, I can realize that anyone could be jealous of you, but I can't imagine anyone being mean enough to give you a shiner like that—I'm terribly jealous of you, but I couldn't do that to you—let's get out of here—this is no place to talk—can't we go somewhere, just you and I?"

"Yes, my apartment—just you and I—Evelyn has passed out."

They arose from the booth—this once Harry took time to pay before they left. They strolled leisurely up the street to the hotel, which is only a few blocks away. [Pg 151]

Pearl opened the door to the apartment, and Harry went in, his eyes wide in amazement at the loveliness of the place.

Evelyn, in the meantime, had aroused from her drunken stupor and had ordered some food, and was sitting on the divan eating it, when they came in.

"I thought you two would be here sooner or later. I sure have been on a good one tonight," said Evelyn, as they came in.

"Oh, Ev—I'm glad you came out of it—how do you feel?" asked Pearl, as she went over and felt of Evelyn's head. "Gee I'm glad you are eating something. What was the matter tonight that you passed out?"

"You don't mean to tell me that you passed out tonight, Ev?" said Harry, as he came over and stood in front of her.

"Well, it's the first time in years, and I can't imagine what caused it. I don't remember much of anything." [Pg 152]

"Here, Harry, sit down by me and tell me what you think of my new home. Don't you think it is lovely?"

"Yeah, its fine, but I don't get the connection of the black eye and the apartment."

"It's just as well," said Evelyn. "The less you get, the better off you will both be."

"No kidding, Pearl—what is the gag—who is the sucker?"

"Oh, just a guy that thinks he is crazy about me, that's all."

"Now, Harry, I want to ask you something seriously," said Evelyn. "Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm not, but you might as well know—you will sooner or later—I been telling Pearl she is nuts, now let's see what you think."

"Let's hear it," answered Harry. [Pg 153]

"Do you mind, Pearl?" asked Evelyn.

"No, I don't mind."

"Well, here's the story. You know that big guy they call Big Boy? You and he have been more less rivals for some time, and I know you are very good friends. You know the guy pretty well—you have seen him go on a rampage and wreck a place, then pay for it. Well—he's nuts for Pearl, and he is the one who gave her the black eye because she lied to him about last night, then he gave her a thousand bucks, and this apartment, and anything else she wants—now, what I'm coming to—this guy wants to marry her—I know that will floor you—and he means it. Pearl is taking all he can give her. Don't you think that if he is crazy about her, that if he catches her two-timing him he will go on such a rampage he might kill her?"

"Yes, that's right, Ev, that guy is a bad hombre—but why should he catch her?"

"I give you credit for some sense, Harry. If he gave her a black eye for lying, what will he do to her when he finds out you or some other guy is playing around his duck's nest?" [Pg 154]

"Don't worry, Ev. Pearl's too clever for that—anytime I fall for a woman I know she is clever," laughed Harry assuredly.

"That may be all well and good, but I'm damned if I care to be around when the thing happens,"

said Evelyn, as she guzzled some more coffee.

"You didn't tell me what they did to Negro Noche about that shooting last night, and what did they do with Irene's body?" asked Pearl.

"Negro Noche wasn't even arrested—the authorities said that she was protecting her home, and that if another woman was trying to steal her man, and she found them in each other's arms, she had done the right thing, so she was let free. About Irene, nobody seems to know where her home is, or if she has any people. They are holding her body over in the morgue until they can find out something, and if they don't they will bury her out here in the usual pauper's grave." [Pg 155]

"Oh, Jeess that's awful," said Evelyn. "Well, they won't bury her in no pauper's grave as long as I got a cent."

"You are right," answered Pearl, "But Ev, I've more money than you have—I'll pay for the funeral, poor kid—that's usually the end of most of us—God, that's awful—I'll tell you what we will do—we'll get up early in the morning and go over to the morgue, and arrange for her to have a decent funeral."

"I haven't any money," said Harry. "But I'll do anything I can."

"That's all right, Harry—I'm glad that I have the money to do it—shall we bury her on the Mex side, or shall we bring her over here?"

"What's the difference? I'm sure it wouldn't make any difference to her, and then you might have to go through some red tape about bringing the body across the border," said Evelyn. [Pg 156]

"Well, I better be getting home," said Harry, as he arose to go.

"Oh, no, Harry—stay up here tonight, won't you?"

"Do you really want me to?"

"Oh, darling, you know I want you to."

"If you two must have your fun, then listen to me—I'll stay in the other bedroom, and if anything should happen that Big Boy would come in any time, Harry, you come and get in bed with me, then he couldn't say anything," explained Evelyn.

"Ev, you're some little thinker—what would we do without you?"

"Oh, nuts," exclaimed Evelyn. "I'm going to bed—good-night," as she arose and went into the bedroom. [Pg 157]

Harry and Pearl sat for a long time on the divan, holding each other's hands, not saying a word. This was the third night they had known each other, and events since that time had been rather swift.

"I've seen lots of girls come down here, and stay around for a while, then maybe make a good marriage, then others go to the dogs, but of all the lot you are the first one that I've ever really been in love with," said Harry, softly.

"I love you, too, Harry, and it's my first real love, but I don't quite know how you can love me when you know what I'm doing and what I am—don't that make a difference?"

"It might to some people, but not to me—but you see I couldn't give you what Big Boy can."

"You mean you can't give me the money he can?"

"That's it—he can give you everything you could ever want—money, clothes, cars—or just anything you happen to want—why, look, he has already given you a thousand dollars—I doubt if I'll ever have a thousand in my whole life—I'm just a bum singer." [Pg 158]

"But just the same I love you, Harry—why couldn't we do this—I've an idea—let me string this guy along and get a load of dough, and then we can beat it and start fresh some place where no one knows us—would you like that?"

"Well, I don't know about that—I'll have to think it over—that is a little too much to say yes to on so short a notice, and not a nice thing to do."

"What's the difference? What I'm doing already is not exactly what the general run of people would call decent."

"Oh, that's nothing—I know women about this town that have good husbands and friends, and they step out on the side for the dough, to buy something they want, but they were respectable girls before they married, but this much I know—if I marry a girl like you, I can depend on you being on the level with me—I've seen enough of life down here to know that." [Pg 159]

"Suppose we talk this over some time tomorrow or later. We should get some sleep tonight," said Pearl, as she laid her head on his shoulder.

Harry pulled her close to him, all was quiet in the hotel, and the streets were quiet. The rest of the night was bathed in liquid silver of a belated moon, but inside each of them there raged a tornado of love, desire, passion, that was soon to be quelled by complete possession of each

other, then a sweet sleep of quiet and peace, that equaled the quietness of the silent city outside.

Morning quietly slipped through the windows, the bright hot sun rose, dispelling the chill of the night. The city rose with all its noise and bustle, as a sleeping dog rises and shakes itself, to be about its busy routine of the day.

Evelyn awoke, looked around, then realized that she was at Pearl's apartment, then looked next to her in bed, and was surprised that she was in bed alone. She slowly climbed out of bed, going to the window, looked out on the lovely morning, then thinking of Irene, she started for the bedroom where Pearl was lying in Harry's arms, sleeping quietly. [Pg 160]

"Hey, you two," as she shook them. "Come on—come on—snap out of it—we have lots to do today," as Pearl and Harry opened their eyes to behold a sight which caused them to laugh loudly. Evelyn standing in teddies, with her hair standing on end, eyes bloodshot from the night before.

"Ev, have you looked at yourself in the mirror yet?" asked Pearl.

"No, I haven't—I'm afraid to—I've heard people sometimes die of fright—so I'm just working up the courage to do that little thing—do you want me to order breakfast?"

"Breakfast—that sounds good," said Harry, as he sat up in bed.

"Ev, you're a darling—order a big one for me—I need it—I'm starved—then we will go over the river," as she went to the bathroom. [Pg 161]

Evelyn called the morgue, and found that no one seemed able to find Irene's people, or to find out anything about her, so she told the undertakers to get Irene ready and make all the arrangements for the funeral to be held at two o'clock that afternoon, at the Mexican Cemetery on the outskirts of Juarez, then she spent the next half hour calling every Hooker that she knew, and told them the time of the funeral, and asked them to be there, and to bring any of the other girls they could get hold of.

"How many have you called, in all, Ev?" asked Pearl, as Evelyn sat down beside her. "I'll call and have these dishes taken away."

"About twenty in all, but they all know others that I don't know and they will tell them."

"Well, I'm going to run out home," said Harry, getting ready to leave, "I'll see you at the funeral."

"All right, dear," said Pearl, as she kissed him goodbye. [Pg 162]

"Don't you think we better go over and see if there is anything we might do? I'll get a check cashed and take enough money over to pay the expenses for the flowers, since you insist on paying all the funeral expenses—the least I can do will be to see that she has lovely flowers, poor kid."

"That's right, Ev, we had better go on over—I'll have to get a check cashed, too."

They called a taxi and started for Juarez, and as the car pulled over the bridge, and under the shed where all cars stop to be questioned by the Mexican officials before entering Juarez, there were soldiers everywhere.

"Why are you Senioritas going to Juarez at this time," asked one of the officials.

"We are going over to attend the funeral of the American girl who was shot Saturday night in the Rio Bravo Hotel," answered Pearl. [Pg 163]

"What other business have you to attend to over there?"

"None."

"You will pardon, Seniorita, but may I suggest that as soon as possible you will return to the American side—the rebels have left Chihuahua City by train, and they may arrive at any time from one o'clock to six."

"Thanks, we will," answered Pearl, as the official motioned to the driver to drive on.

"I bet there will be some wild carrying on here with the rebels, when they do arrive," laughed Evelyn.

"I wonder if there will be much fighting?"

"Sure, there will be fighting, and lots of screaming and running. The way they carry on you think there is twice as much fighting as there really is." [Pg 164]

"I guess we had better try and get back before the rebels arrive. What do you think, Ev?"

"Well, after the funeral we will come back. We won't waste any time."

"Come right in, Senioritas," said the Mexican undertaker, as he bowed low to them.

"You have made the necessary arrangements that we called you about this morning?"

"Si, Seniorita."

"How much is the whole bill?" asked Pearl, as she fished into her bag.

"Four hundred Pesos, Senorita."

"How much American?"

"That will be two hundred dollars, Senorita, and that is everything. I have already had the grave dug, and the time you said over the phone is the time the funeral will take place. I, Senorita, have taken the privilege of calling a Padre—was that right?" [Pg 165]

"That's O. K. by me, don't you think, Ev?"

"Sure."

"Here's your money," as she handed him two hundred dollars.

"The good God will be kind to you, Senorita, for this good deed," as Pearl and Evelyn went out.

"Hell, I need a drink, don't you, Ev?"

"Yeah—a good stiff one," as they climbed in the car.

"Driver, take us to the Central, and come in and have a shot with us."

"Oke, Sister," answered the driver.

They turned on the Sixteenth of September Street, and had to stop to let troops pass, some short, some tall, but none with uniforms that fit, except the officers, who were perfectly groomed, with beautiful uniforms that would have done credit to a rear Admiral of anybody's country, and as they marched past, sullen dirty faces showed no sign of expression, of joy, of madness, chagrin, nor contempt—they were like so many dirty brown masks, that hide so much thievery, murder, and cowardice underneath. [Pg 166]

"Do the rebels look anything like this?" asked Pearl, as they passed.

"Just the same—clothes may be different, but that means nothing. These men that just marched past may be on the rebel side before sundown—they are just as willing to fight for one side as the other, as long as it promises to be profitable."

"I can't understand why they are always having these revolutions down here."

"Pearl, in our country every boy is taught that he can, by hard study and work, be the President if he wants to be, but down here every boy is taught that he must be President, even if he has to kill the former one, and they have tried to live up to their teaching, so it's just another case of some bad boy taking what he thinks is rightfully his." [Pg 167]

"I suppose they will stop the trains out of town, and march in."

"Oh no they won't—they will ride those trains into the heart of the town, screaming and yelling and shooting at anybody that happens to be in sight, at least that is the way they always have done, and Mex's never change."

"I hope the rebels don't arrive before the funeral is over—that would be awful."

"I'll say it would," as the car stopped. "Come on, here's where we drink—come on, driver." They all went in.

"I'll have whiskey," said Pearl. [Pg 168]

"So will I."

"Make it three whiskeys," answered the driver. "Say do you girls want me to wait over here for you?"

"No, we are going to stick around here until time for the funeral. You can go on back—oh, I almost forgot about paying you—here, take this," as she shoved a bill in his hand.

"If I were you, girls, I wouldn't waste any more time over here than I had to, and if you say the word, I'll stay and see you through," answered the driver.

"That's nice of you kid, but we will be O. K."

"So long," as he went.

"It's going to take more than one whiskey to get me through that funeral," said Pearl.

"Let's buy a couple of quarts, and go on out to the cemetery and wait there," suggested Evelyn. [Pg 169]

"That's the best idea of all," said Pearl, "Let's go."

They took the two quarts, and slowly walked up the street. Small groups of people, talking near doorways, gazed at them curiously as they went. Most of the bars and places of business were closed, and the windows boarded up, caused by the expected battle, and knowing full well that windows would be smashed if they were not somehow protected. As two o'clock drew near, the hearse with the remains of Irene, started for the cemetery, the driver looking like a cornered rat, and mad at having to go out into the open when the rebels might arrive at any time, drove slowly,

but fearfully, through the streets, toward the cemetery.

Pearl and Evelyn were sitting on a fallen headstone, drinking and discussing the injustice of life, to them in particular, and to all in general. They had just killed the first quart when the first bunch of girls, headed by Mickey, came into the cemetery—some were dressed as though they were going to a party, others in street suits, but none in mourning, as mourning could only be used once in a great while, so why buy mourning for the one funeral, and be stuck with something you couldn't wear to hustle in.

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"My goodness," said Mickey. "How long have you been waiting here?"

"Oh, not very long—want a drink?" asked Evelyn.

"Yeah—we brought several pints along with us—there comes some more of the girls," as she pointed along the road to about fifteen girls, all in gay colors, coming along as if they were going to a picnic.

"This is one of them things I sure don't like to go through with it," said one of the girls.

"Me either," answered another.

"Well, it's near two o'clock—it won't be long now," remarked still another.

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"I think that's the hearse coming now," said Pearl, as she shaded her eyes with her hand, looking down the road.

"We tried to get a taxi to bring us over, but not one of them would come," said one of the newly arrived girls.

"Well, you know there has been some talk about a revolution going to take place over here," said one of the other girls.

"So I'd heard," remarked the former, in a cutting voice.

"Yeah—that is the hearse all right—there is someone with the driver—it must be the Padre," said Pearl, still watching.

The hearse drew up at the entrance, slowed down, then proceeded to a far corner of the cemetery, where the freshly dug grave yawned as though waiting for its toll, while the two Mexican grave-diggers lay sleeping beside the fresh pile of earth.

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The girls moved slowly over to where the hearse had stopped, as the driver got out and kicked the grave-diggers awake, telling them in Spanish to help earn their money by helping to get the Gringo's body to the grave, which they did unwillingly. The driver, the Padre, and the two grave-diggers brought the box with the coffin inside it, to the side of the grave, sat it down, while the Padre began saying the service in Spanish and in Latin.

Painted faces looked on, as tears began to streak their cheeks, each thinking that this might have been her; some probably wishing it was them, knowing that at least their earthly troubles would be over, no matter what would be in store for them; other's minds went back to their pasts, the others to their childhood. Soon there could be heard sounds of soft weeping—the service was over, the four men slowly let the coffin into the grave, jerking the straps from under the box.

The two grave-diggers began to shovel dirt into the hole.

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"Can any of you sluts say a prayer?" asked Mickey.

"I ain't never prayed in my life," said one of the girls, "But I'll try it," as they all bowed their heads, as hard lumps of dirt and rock fell with a hollow sound on the box.

"Oh, Lord, I ain't never asked you a single favor in my life," began the girl slowly, "But Irene is a good scout, and if she ever comes into your place of business, don't turn her down—she always paid for her drinks, poor kid—Amen."

"Come on, kids, let's get going from here," said Evelyn, as she wiped her eyes.

They all walked slowly to the gates of the cemetery—those in front waited for the rest to catch up.

"Let's all have a drink," suggested Evelyn, as she began to open the quart she still had.

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They all gathered around, passing the bottle, talking in low tones, starting to repair the damage done to their make-ups by the tears.

"We had better be getting back to town," remarked Pearl, and they all started down the road, towards town, walking in little groups.

"Just think—that might have been any one of us," said Mickey, "It wouldn't have mattered who was with Juan Moros when Negro Noche came in—she would have shot anyone she found with him."

"Yeah—you're right, Mickey—it might have been any one of us. Juan was a nice fellow to everyone, but Noche is a bad bitch—don't let anybody fool you about that, but she won't get away with this—his people will see to that," answered Evelyn.

Pearl, Evelyn and Mickey were the first to arrive on the Sixteenth of September Street—the rest of the girls had split into the usual groups that they usually ran in, and came straggling along behind. [Pg 175]

"Let's go on down to the Central, and have a few drinks and rest awhile, and let this wear off," suggested Evelyn.

"O. K." said Mickey, as they were nearing the railroad tracks.

"Jees—look coming," said Pearl, pointing down the tracks.

In the distance a train was coming—Mexicans were hanging all over the engine, and on the roofs of the box-cars, the whistle was blowing, guns were firing. "It's the rebels."

"Here, we better get off the street—quick, let's run in the Rio Bravo," said Evelyn, as she grabbed Pearl's hand and started for the hotel.

The few people that had been standing in the street, ran for shelter. Four of the Federal Cavalry who had no chance to be disloyal, decided to make a display of their bravery by wrecking the rebel train, by riding four abreast into the locomotive, therefore making history, for Mexico, as well as being heroes themselves, but never considering that they would not be present to hear of it, they spurred their poor, bony horses on to the tracks, one in command gave the order "Forward"—and down the tracks they rode, the engine meeting them at the crossing of the Sixteenth of September Street. [Pg 176]

Men, horses, legs, arms, heads, blood, manure, and guns were scattered and strewn for blocks, the engine whistling, bell ringing, men screaming, groaning, dying, the Federal troops running to meet the rebels, the engine derailed in the middle of the street, the hissing of escaping steam, rebels pouring out of box-cars, running into the fight, screaming "Vive, La Mexico."

Both sides began to run behind buildings, firing from behind, at anyone they saw, whether it be friend or enemy.

"We have to make that river somehow," said Evelyn. [Pg 177]

"My God—what do you think has happened to the other girls?" asked Pearl.

"They are probably in as bad a fix as we are," answered Mickey, as a stray bullet shattered the windows of the lobby.

The rebels began to drive the Federals towards the river, amidst much shouting and shooting and excess bravado.

"I'll tell you what we will do," said Evelyn. "As the shooting moves toward the river, we will try to get out of here—I'll take my drawers off and put them on a pole like a flag of truce, and we will try and make it."

"My God, what is that awful odor?" asked Pearl.

"That's horse manure, mixed with blood, that splattered on the side of this building when the train hit those horses," explained Evelyn, as she was pulling off her underthings, putting them on the end of a yard stick she had found behind the deserted desk. [Pg 178]

"Will we run for it, or how shall we try it?" asked Mickey.

"We'll ease out into the street, holding this flag up, then we will go up the middle of this street to the corner, and down that way to the bridge," said Evelyn.

"Do you think they will shoot at us?" asked Pearl.

"Possibly, but I'm willing to bet that the only ones that have been killed in the fighting are the ones there in the street, that were killed by the train."

"You're right, there," said Mickey, as they moved toward the door.

"Oh, God, what a horrible sight," said Pearl as she shivered and put her hand over her eyes. [Pg 179]

"Get hold of her, Mickey, she never saw anything like this before. I guess it is kind of a shock to her to see all these Cholos laying around here in pieces," exclaimed Evelyn, as she stepped over what had once been a man, but was now only mangled flesh.

"If you don't want to look, you just keep your hand over your eyes, dear, and I'll keep hold of you until we get by this," said Mickey, softly, as she put her arm around Pearl, and helped her along.

"Come on here," called Evelyn.

They moved past the crossing, then into the center of the street—bullets whizzed overhead while toward the river there was a hot battle raging.

On the American side the banks of the river were lined with people watching the fighting, as though it were a baseball game, oblivious of the bullets that fell all around them. As the fighting came nearer the river, two huge armored cars, with French 75's mounted, rolled near the International Bridge, muzzles lowering menacingly, toward Mexico. [Pg 180]

A scream came from down to the left of the bridge, as a mother grabbed up her little one in her

arms, running toward the street. The child had been killed by a stray bullet.

Phones began to buzz at Fort Bliss, saying that the bullets from the fighting were falling thick and fast on the American side, and that one had already found its mark.

Five minutes passed—soon the screaming of a siren could be heard, coming toward the bridge was the large dark brown car with the American flag flying from the front, and it drew up at the foot of the bridge.

General M— stepped from the car, face red with fury.

"Fire a warning from one of those 75's," commanded the General, as he walked toward the center of the bridge, as the voice of the 75 roared across the border. [Pg 181]

Firing on the Mexican side stopped immediately, as one of the Federals came running toward the gates on the bridge.

"Open these gates," commanded the General, and the aides ran to do his bidding.

"What is it, Senor?" said the Federal, as he came near the General.

"I want the Commander of the Rebels and the Commander of the Federals at the foot of this bridge in five minutes—be on your way."

The Federal ran back to the group of soldiers, they all began to talk excitedly, running in several directions.

Truck loads of soldiers from Fort Bliss were unloading, all ready for action. [Pg 182]

General M— stood, legs spread, looking at his watch, tapping his riding boot with his stick, as the Federal Commander came to where he was standing.

"You have sent for me, Senor—I have come," as the sound of a horse galloping down the street was heard.

"At your command, I have come, Senor," said the rebel General, as he swaggered up to the General, looking at the Federal as though he were the lowest thing on earth.

"Yes, I sent for you both," said General M—, "I want to tell you that if you saddle-faced bastards let another bullet fall on the American side of the river, I'll wipe the whole goddamn lot of you, and this town, off the map," as he turned, giving an order to close the gates again, as the armored cars once more came into position.

The General of the Rebels rode away, to his own troops, who in the lull of the fighting had moved up on the Federals. [Pg 183]

The fighting began again, with renewed vigor on the side of the rebels, who had drawn their bayonets, while the Federals ran for the river, wading in and making for the American side, wasting no time in doing it.

Evelyn, Pearl and Mickey were coming down the middle of Lysol Lane, Evelyn still holding the drawers on the stick, showing she was a non-combatant, when she spied about fifty girls huddled on one side of a bar, some peeping around the corner. There were all the girls who had been to the funeral, and others, who had been to Juarez on their usual business, and all together, wondering how they were going to get to the American side.

"Hey, Gang," called Evelyn, "What do you say if we all make a run for the river—once we are in the river, we will be safe."

"How will we do it?" asked the girls. [Pg 184]

"Here's the way," explained Evelyn. "We all get in the street, and start to run—the rebels have their backs this way—they won't see us until we are almost in the river—because from what I can see they have already driven the Federals into the river and are already throwing rocks at them. Well, we run as quietly as possible and burst right through the rebels, and into the river—take the right side of the bridge, it's better—now, do you all understand?"

The girls nodded that they did.

"All right, then let's get going," as they all started down the street at a trot. They neared the river very quietly then amidst screams and yells they burst through the rebels, leaping into the river like rats from a sinking ship, grabbing at each other, helping each other through the quick-sand, and cold water, some holding on to their bottles of whiskey that they had brought along to give them courage. The few Federals who had not reached the American side, turned back to help the girls, amidst laughing, screaming, cursing, and splashing of water. [Pg 185]

The American soldiers were rounding the Federal troops up the way a Texas cowboy rounds up cattle, herding them into one bunch, while the girls pulled themselves out of the river without the aid of anyone except themselves. When they were out of the river, they went in a body to the street where the General and his aides were.

"This is a hell of a note," said Evelyn. "A bunch of good American women should have to wade that damn river, and no one to even help them up the bank—you don't seem to realize that once

in a while a lady needs a little help."

"You had no business on that side," said the General, curtly. "You knew there was to be a battle—the papers carried the news, and all Americans were warned to stay away from there," he continued.

"Well, just the same, it's a hell of a way to treat ladies," answered Evelyn, as she sat down on the curb of the sidewalk. [Pg 186]

"Senoritas—Senoritas," came the voice of the Rebel General, who had climbed up on the side of the bridge.

"What's the matter with that guy?" said Mickey, as she moved toward the foot of the bridge to hear what he had to say.

"Senoritas—can you hear me?" he called across the river.

"Wait a minute—all right, spill it," called Evelyn.

"Senoritas—we do not fight with women—you are perfectly safe."

"Hell's fire—we know that now—ain't we over here?" answered Evelyn.

"A thousand pardons, Senoritas—but we want you to come back and drink with the victorious—to be our guests for the evening." [Pg 187]

"Now, you see," explained Evelyn, "that's what I call a gentleman, a real fellow," as she walked over to the American General. "Say old top, would you mind having them gates opened and let us go back on the other side?"

"No, those gates remain closed until this trouble is settled."

"O. K. brother," as she went back to the girls, who were waving at the rebels. "Come on, gang, we'll go back the way we came," and they started off in the river, with much more enthusiasm than the first time.

"Come back here," yelled one of the American officers. "You can't cross that river."

"The Hell you say," called Evelyn, who was already in the water, leading the procession. "At least, these guys will buy us a drink." [Pg 188]

"Do you think it's safe to go over here now," Pearl asked Evelyn.

"Sure, and profitable—these guys will open every safe in the town, and all the champagne you can drink. I been through these things before," explained Evelyn, as the rebels were wading out to help them.

"You see," said Mickey, "these guys will drink so much they will just pass out all over the place, and you can go through their pockets right and left, in perfect safety, and how I'll go through them is nobody's business."

"It's all new to me, but I'm with you," answered Pearl.

"Sure, honey, that's the way—get all you can—you can't never have too much."

The rebels were throwing their hats in the air, shouting at their victory, with only one thought in their minds—to do all the looting possible, and drinking as well. They started with the nearest bar, the girls in their midst, singing, laughing, and looking forward to a hilarious time. They didn't wait to open the bottles of champagne—they broke the necks off and poured it over each other—they were wet from the river, so why not be wet with liquor. [Pg 189]

The Federals of Mexico were taken to Fort Bliss and quartered until they could be sent back to Mexico—they weren't prisoners—they were more refugees than anything else.

The rest of the day and night was spent in drinking, dancing, singing and general hilarity. Juarez was never more gay or wild—looting was indulged in—in a big way; every safe was opened. The rebels needed gold, and American money, whether paper or silver, was gold to them—the girls getting their share of the loot.

"I've stood about all of this I can," said Pearl, as she tried to get up from the table.

"Do you want to go home, honey?" asked Evelyn. [Pg 190]

"Home or anywhere, but I've got to come out of this—I've been drinking too much—I'll go nuts if I don't get out of it for a while."

"O. K. dear, I'll take you home," said Evelyn, staggering to her feet.

"Do you think you can manage it all right without me?" asked Mickey.

"Sure—I can get Pearl home all right, but ain't you had enough yet?"

"I've had plenty to drink, but I haven't got all the money I can use yet."

"Well, how much have you got?" asked Evelyn.

"I don't know, but I've sure been going through these lice. I've got as much as I dare put in my stockings, and I got wads in my waist, and some pinned in my step-ins." [Pg 191]

"Well, we'll be seeing you,—come on, Pearl—give me your arm—we'll make it some-how," as they staggered toward the door.

"Do you think we will have to wade that damned river again?" asked Pearl.

"I hope not—we'll go to the gates, and I'll try and argue those guys to let a couple of ladies through."

Once again the two staggered toward the International Bridge. The streets were deserted, not a person was to be seen, only a small group around the foot of the bridge. Day was just beginning to break over the horizon.

"Where are you Senioritas going?" asked one of the Mexicans.

"Home," said Evelyn.

"I'm veer sorry, Seniorita, but the Americans will not let you through the gates." [Pg 192]

"Well, we will see about that," as they neared the huge wire gates. "Hey—you—how's to let a couple of ladies through—we want to get home."

"Sorry, sister, we got orders to open these gates to no one," came the answer.

"Well, you got a Hell of a nerve—we're American citizens, and I demand that you let us through."

"Sorry, sister—but orders is orders."

"Well, you louse, do you mean to tell us you are going to make us wade that river again today?"

"If you want to get to the American side, you'll have to wade it."

"That's our good Americans for you," said Evelyn in disgust. "I'm damned if I know which is the worst, these Goddamn Mexicans or that lousy American scum that tries to be so damn important." [Pg 193]

"Come on, Ev—we've waded it before—we might as well do it again—at that the cold water may wake us up."

They walked back to the Mexican foot of the bridge, and over the levee, holding to each other once more as they started again through the chill waters of the Rio Grande.

"Halt—who goes there?" came the challenge from the U. S. side, as they neared the bank.

"Who the Hell do you think?" asked Evelyn, as they climbed out of the water.

"Say, woman—ain't you got any more sense than to come across that river that way? We will have to hold you now for investigation."

"Oh, yeah? Brother, that's just too bad—we asked you to open those gates, and let us through, and you wouldn't do it, now if you want to really start some trouble, just try and hold us for wading across." [Pg 194]

"Well, you will have to come up on the bridge, and do some tall explaining."

"O. K. I'll do some explaining—you're damn tooting," as they all three started for the foot of the bridge, where the commanding officer was waiting.

"These two women waded across the river, sir," explained the soldier, as they walked up.

"Would you mind explaining," began the officer, "what you two are doing at this hour of the morning, wading across the International border?"

"Oh—for Christ's sake—what's the big idea?" asked Evelyn.

"Just this—you women think you can get away with this stuff because you are women, and possibly because you think it's smart. Well, you can't—you will have to be detained, and taken in front of the Commanding General." [Pg 195]

"Well, you get a load of this—you low-born, half-witted, self-inflated with your own importance, shave-tail Bastard—you ain't detaining me or my girl friend for no investigation—see—you, or your men refused to open that gate to let two American citizens through, and we had to wade the river, and it's scum like you that has managed to get into office in this country, and run it with stuffed uniforms that wouldn't know the meaning of the word MAN if it was drawn in blue-print for them—you stand and tell me what you are going to do—why, Goddamn you, when I get through telling the General what I think, as well as the American Consul, you'll be a buck private again—you've got a gall—you impudent little runt."

"Just the same, I'm sorry, but the General will have to give his O. K. on your crossing."

"Then, by God—you'll call him on the phone right now," said Evelyn. [Pg 196]

"It isn't customary to disturb the General at this hour of the morning."

"That's too bad for the General, that he has to be aroused out of his beauty sleep."

"I will call him, even though it is not the ordinary routine."

"And how you will call him," exclaimed Evelyn.

"Well, I'm not quite used to the ways of the border yet, but it seems to me to be rather against one to be an American down here," said Pearl.

"The fault ain't with America—it's with the ignorant bastards that's allowed to run it," answered Evelyn, as the Lieutenant was calling Fort Bliss.

After much delay the General was finally reached. "What the Hell are you calling me for at this time of the morning?" he roared over the phone. [Pg 197]

"I'm sorry, sir, but it's about two women that have just waded the river, and we have detained them, and they have insisted that we call you, or they will take it up with the American Consul. I thought it best to call you."

Evelyn leaned her ear close to the receiver.

"Are they respectable women?" asked the General.

"I'll answer that question," said Evelyn, as she snatched the receiver from the Lieutenant. "What the Hell difference does it make whether we are considered respectable or not—we are American citizens, that ought to be enough."

"Why were you wading the river at this hour of the morning?" asked the General.

"Because we want to get home, and one of your lackeys refused to unlock the gates—that's why we waded the river." [Pg 198]

"Would you please let me talk to the gentleman who called me, please," said the General, as he boiled.

"Sure," as she turned to the Lieutenant. "He wants to talk to you," as she handed him the receiver with mock dignity.

"Get those women's addresses and names, and let them go, and don't you call me again, as he slammed the receiver up.

"Well, what did he tell you?" asked Evelyn, with contempt.

"He asked me to get your names and addresses, and let you go home."

"Ask Hell—he told you to, you mean—well, my name is Evelyn and I haven't got a last name, as far as you are concerned, and I live at the San Antonio Apartments," said Evelyn.

"My name is Pearl Jones, and I live at the Hussman." [Pg 199]

"Hussman," repeated the Lieutenant.

"Yeah, Hussman—and no smart cracks—from you, either—and don't get the idea that you can use the addresses for your own convenience when you have a day off."

"I'm sorry to have caused you ladies any trouble," smiled the Lieutenant.

"Ah, nuts to you, brother," said Evelyn, as she gave him a loud, juicy raspberry.

"Come on, Ev—let's call a taxi—I'm as near all in as I'll ever be, and live to tell it. Come on up to my joint and stay, will you? I don't like to be alone."

"Jees, I might as well move to your place—I don't seem to ever stay at home any more," said Evelyn. "Here, we will call from the same phone that big lousy Lieutenant just used," as she turned back. [Pg 200]

Loud rapping on the door aroused Pearl out of the deep sleep she had been in since she had climbed into bed that morning. "Who's there?" she called, still half asleep.

"Mickey," came the voice outside.

"Just a minute, dear, I'll let you in," answered Pearl, as she crawled out of bed and staggered to the door.

"For the love of Heaven, don't you expect to get up today?"

"What time is it?" asked Pearl, yawning.

"It's nearly five o'clock—have you been in bed all day?"

"Uh-huh."

"What's become of Evelyn? I've been over to her apartment several times, and she hasn't been there all day." [Pg 201]

"She is here with me."

"Well, you two sure have been sleeping sound. I been up here three times, and had the clerk ring the room several times, but no answer."

"We were nearly dead when we got here this morning. We had to wade that damn river again. How did you get across?"

"They opened the gates when I went and asked them to let me through."

"Well, the lousy tramps—and the way they treated us this morning—they sure was nasty."

"I stayed as long as I thought it was safe for me to stay, I finally got to go through the rebel General's pockets, then I decided to come home and get a little sleep. I feel fine now, and did I make the dough last night? Seven hundred bucks, not so bad."

"I should say not. Come on and let's wake Ev up. Have you got anything to drink with you? I haven't got a thing up here." [Pg 202]

"Yeah, I have a bottle with me. I sure know what it is getting up after having been on a good one, and not having a little drink to pick me up—it's awful," as they went into the bedroom, where Evelyn was still snoring.

"Hey, sister, snap out of it," yelled Mickey, as she shook Evelyn real hard.

Evelyn turned over and opened her eyes. "What's the big idea?" she asked.

"Look," said Mickey, as she held a pint of whiskey where Evelyn could see it.

"Oh, great Heavens, give me a drink quick, before I have time to start thinking," as she raised up in bed, taking the bottle from Mickey.

"Save me a drink, Ev," said Pearl, as she started to the bathroom.

"Well, you better hurry back, you know when Ev gets a bottle, she don't want to give it up until it's empty," called Mickey. [Pg 203]

"Did you make any money out of the revolution, Mickey?" asked Evelyn.

"Sure, did you?"

"I don't know yet, I haven't been sober enough to count it, but what I've got is on the chair there," as she pointed to a chair, loaded with clothes.

"I'll hand it to you and see just how much you have made," said Mickey, as she handed the clothes to Evelyn.

"How long do you think the border will be closed, Ev?" asked Pearl.

"Well, that's hard to tell. Sometimes those things last only a few days, then again they have been known to last months, but if we can't go over there, nobody else can, and I know all the apartments around here where there are likely to be parties, so the only thing to do is make the rounds of them, and chisel there, just like we did on the other side." [Pg 204]

"What about liquor?"

"Don't worry about that—there is more on this side than there is on the other side," said Evelyn, as she began to lay out her money.

"Did you make anything last night, Pearl?" asked Mickey.

"I haven't looked yet."

"I've got the enormous sum of thirty-five bucks," said Evelyn, as she looked disgustedly at the crumpled money on the bed cover.

"Well, honey, you didn't stay over there as long as I did, and you see I stayed until I got to go through the General's pockets, and he is the bird with most of the money. I had my eye on him all night," said Mickey.

"Now that another evening is here, what are we going to do with it?" asked Pearl. [Pg 205]

"I know—we'll call up some of the girls I know, and see if we can't find some place to go, or maybe we can engineer a party out at my place. If we can, we will gather the fellows that we know to get the whiskey, and make it a rip-roaring, bang-up party—what do you say?"

"O. K. with me—how about you, Pearl?" asked Evelyn.

"Whatever you all say is right with me."

"I've fallen for a new boy friend. I don't know what his name is, but they call him Dusty, and is he good looking, and can he fight? But—he's another one of those that haven't got a dime, but still, I sure can have a swell time with him. I'll call him right now, and see if he can get the rest of the boys," enthused Mickey.

"I've never heard you rave over a guy before, unless he had something you wanted," said Evelyn. [Pg 206]

"Well—," said Mickey, slowly, "I guess he's got something I want."

"Excuse me for living," said Evelyn, as she climbed out of bed, gathering up the money that she had been counting, "I don't know what he has got, but whatever it is, he has as good as lost it right now."

Mickey went to the phone, calling several numbers before she finally got Dusty, who from the trend of the conversation over the phone, was glad to get the other fellows for the party, much to the joy of Mickey.

Evening came, they usually do, even in El Paso, and this evening was very little different from any of the others. The party started at Mickey's wild, mad, hilarious, drinking, loving, laughing, fighting and all the more thrilling to all concerned, because of its being on the American side. All who were invited, came, and brought others that weren't invited, as well as their friends also, but no one cared—it was for a good time that the party was given and everybody proceeded to make the most of the chance. [Pg 207]

Twenty-four hours later the party was still going strong. The hilarity had grown in volume, instead of subsiding—the party was going too strong to stay in the bounds of the house—people were wanting to go places, and still keep the party going.

"I got an idea," said Pearl.

"What is it, honey?" asked Evelyn.

"Why don't we go to my place, and still keep the party going there, and after that we will go to some place else—ain't that a good idea?"

"Sure, it's a good idea, but I can't tell how long it will last at that hotel—they may be particular about a party like this."

"Well—," thought Pearl, as she continued, "we can go there and when we can't keep it up there any longer, then we will go elsewhere—how's that?" [Pg 208]

"Fine, let's call Mickey, and tell her, and see what she says."

"She is in the Kitchen, we will go in there and tell her," as they shoved their way into the kitchen, where new bottles were being opened.

"Sweetheart," said Harry, as Pearl came into the kitchen, "I was just getting you another drink—here it is," as he offered her the bottle.

"Harry, my sweet, I've a surprise for you—we are all going to my hotel—that's what we came in here to tell Mickey—are you for it, Mickey?" asked Pearl.

"Sure, darling, I'll go any place—let's gather up all the licker we have left here and get started," as she began to set all the bottles on the sink.

The news spread, and soon everybody was singing in a loud voice, "we're going to the Hussman—we're going to the Hussman," amidst much skipping and dancing. [Pg 209]

"Shall I call Tony?" asked Evelyn.

"Sure," answered Pearl. "The sooner the better."

"You better call several cars for this mob," said Pearl.

"How many of them are there?" asked Evelyn, as she picked up the phone.

"I don't know, but you better call about five or six cars, maybe seven—there's some people out in the yard, and it's too dark to see how many there are."

"Hello, Tony—this is Ev—well, look—we want you to send some transportation out to Mickey's for the party that is moving to the Hussman—you knew that there was a party going on, didn't you? Well, I guess there wasn't anyone who didn't—come right on out—O. K.—good-bye," as she hung up. "They will be here right away." [Pg 210]

The cars soon began to arrive, the drivers were taken in and made to drink whether they wanted to or not, and there were none who didn't want to. Seven cars were little enough—people were hanging all over the outsides of the cars, screaming and singing, some fully dressed, others partially dressed, others with only a street coat and shoes on.

They arrived at the Hussman—the bellboys were rushing around madly, expecting at least to earn some tips, which they did by bringing ice, and ginger ale to the room, the crowd unloaded in front of the hotel, each one trying not to look drunk and to be a lady or gentleman, until they got through the lobby to the elevator—some were helping others, others were staggering it alone. Pearl and Evelyn and Mickey in the lead, with Mickey loaded down with bottles, wrapped in a sheet like it might be soiled laundry, elevators started the mad procession of getting everyone off on the right floor, which became more noisy as the newness of the place began to wear off.

Pearl threw everything wide open, told everybody to make themselves at home, which they were already doing—those who had gotten thirsty on the ride were already in the kitchenette, uncorking bottles. Evelyn sat at the phone, ordering more liquor; Pearl and Harry, locked in each other's arms, oblivious to all that was taking place. Mickey eyeing one of the taxi drivers that the crowd had brought with them, and wondering how much he might have in his pockets, and [Pg 211]

proceeding to make him drunk enough to find out.

The party grew—other guests who were on the same floor, who were in the mood, joined in the crowd. People were going from one room to another, soon the phone in Pearl's apartment began to ring—the management asked them to be just a little more quiet, as they were annoying guests five floors away. The crowd was quiet at least three minutes, when it began all over again, in all its flamboyancy—drinking began to get heavier, some of the crowd began to pass out wherever they happened to be—that's where they lay.

Noon the following day.

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Big Boy approached the desk of the Hussman. "Is Miss Jones in?"

"That would be rather hard to say, sir," answered the clerk, "but I'll try and find out."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Big Boy, puzzled.

"Well, you see, sir—there has been a party going on on that floor, and in her apartment, since last night, and it's only been quiet for about two hours now. There were a few who left, I'll find out if Miss Jones is still up there," as he asked the operator to ring Pearl's apartment, which she did for several minutes, but got no answer.

"I'll go up and see if she is there, and what the Hell's going on," as he started for the elevator.

The apartment door was standing half open—two of the maids were peeking in, and commenting in low tones on what they saw, as Big Boy came up, they moved away.

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He pushed the door open, stood looking in at the sight that greeted him—of bodies laying on the floor, piled on the divan, on chairs, and on each other. He started for Pearl's bedroom.

Pearl was laying in Harry's arms on the bed, where they had both passed out hours before. Evelyn was laying on the floor on one side, and Mickey on the other. Mickey had passed out with her hand in the taxi driver's pocket.

Big Boy quivered with rage—he grabbed Harry and Pearl by the arms, and dragged them out of bed, nothing on his mind except that Pearl had lied to him again.

Twenty minutes later the police began to arrive—screaming a partly clad woman, running through the lobby headed for the street, made the more respectable guests' eyes bulge in amazement.

Pearl's apartment was a total loss. Big Boy had completely wrecked it with Harry, who had come out of his stupor long enough to put up a savage fight, all the participants of the party that could make a get-away had done so, except those that were too drunk to realize that this might mean a jail sentence. Evelyn had taken Pearl into the bathroom, with the help of Mickey, and they were trying to revive her.

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"I'm afraid he's killed her, Mickey," said Evelyn excitedly, as she patted cool water on Pearl's head, and wiped the blood off her face.

"Oh, Jees, I hope not—let's keep working with her—maybe we can bring her around—if somebody don't stop him, he is sure to kill Harry."

"I wonder what that is?" asked Evelyn, as the screams in the other room became louder, then died down.

"Oh, God, he might have killed Harry. If he has, we are all sure in for it."

"Open that door, in the name of the Law," came a voice from the outside.

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Evelyn rose to her feet, and unlocked the door, swinging it wide open, as one of the plain clothes men stepped in.

"What's the matter in here?"

"That louse has damn near killed this girl,—we can't bring her to," said Evelyn.

"All right, we'll get her to the emergency hospital quick," as he called two of the other men to take charge of Pearl. "You two girls better come with us."

"Where?" asked Mickey.

"Police station, sister—you've been there before."

"Well, that's all right by us—we don't mind—we ain't done nothing."

The lobby was in a panic, the ambulance had taken Harry and Pearl to the hospital, and the patrol wagon was backed up to the door, partly filled with screaming girls, and three officers had over-powered Big Boy, and had him in another car.

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"You girls get in the wagon with the rest of your sisters," said the officer who brought Mickey and Evelyn down.

They arrived at the station, and were booked with disturbing the peace, and disorderly conduct.

Big Boy was booked with disturbing the peace, assault and battery with intent to kill.

"Can we get out on bail?" asked Evelyn.

"Sure," answered the desk sergeant. "Ten bucks."

"I've got mine, have you enough Mickey for yourself?"

"Yes, I have some dough," as she fished some money out of her stocking.

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They rushed over to the hospital, where they were told that Pearl was resting easy, and there was nothing serious but cuts and bruises, of which there were many.

"Ah, gee, kid, I'm sorry," said Evelyn, as she came to the bed where Pearl lay bandaged, "How do you feel?"

"Awful, honey—how is Harry? They haven't told me yet. Will you find out for me?"

"Sure, I'll find out for you. Mickey you stay here until I come back."

"That guy's a dirty louse to beat you up this way, but don't you worry, dear, you will be all right. I wish I had a dollar for every time I've been to the hospital for some guy finding out I went through his pockets."

"Oh, this is an awful mess. Mickey, what did they do to you and Ev?"

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"Took us to the station, and we got out on bail—ten bucks apiece."

"Oh, here comes Ev."

"Well, honey, you needn't worry," said Evelyn, as she sat down on the side of the bed, "Harry is only beat up, but nothing serious, just cuts and bruises and a couple of black eyes."

"Ev, dear, I want you to go over to the hotel, and pack all my things and take them to your place and keep them until I get out of here—will you do that for me?"

"Sure, honey, and anything else you want me to do."

"Miss Jones, pardon me," said the nurse, as she came over to the bed, "there is a gentleman to see you—he didn't give any name, just said say Big Boy."

"Don't let him in here, oh, please—don't let him in here—I'm afraid of him," said Pearl, nearly crying.

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"I'll go and talk to him," said Evelyn, as she rose from the bed, "I'll tell that yellow bastard something."

Evelyn followed the nurse out to where Big Boy was sitting.

"Well, how did you get out so soon?" asked Evelyn.

"I'm out on bail—twenty-five hundred—I want to see her—I'm crazy, but I've got to see her," said Big Boy nervously.

"I'm sorry," said the nurse, "but you can't see her," as she walked away.

"Why can't I see her, Evelyn?"

"Ain't you funny? You don't think she would see you after the way you beat her up—you must be nuts."

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"Oh—Ev—I've got to see her."

"Well, this is one thing you won't be able to explain away, or buy away. She is through with you and you ought to know it. Why make her suffer more by coming here to see her? You know she is scared to death of you?"

"Ah, Ev—I can't live without her."

"I'm afraid you will die young then—you think that because you have money, you can beat up who you please, and then give them a present and that it is all over. Grow up—don't be like that—you know she is only a kid, and new to this racket, and then you pull something like that."

"Well, I'll tell you this much, and you can tell her for me. If I can't have her, no other son-of-a-bitch will get her. I'll kill her first—do you get me?" his mouth trembling in rage.

"Listen, you ain't scaring me, Big Boy—I know your money will get you out of this scrape, but you wouldn't pull anything like that. Your money wouldn't get you out of that, and what's more, you better lay off her—I'm telling you that for myself."

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"Ah, Ev, can't you see I'm nearly crazy for having treated her like I did. Do you think you can talk her into seeing me? Won't you try?"

"Well, I'll think about it—but don't come here any more, you only scare her, and you won't get to see her. I'll see you later," as she started to go back to where Pearl was.

"What did he say, Ev?" asked Pearl, anxiously, as Evelyn sat down.

"Oh, nothing, honey—he wanted to see you. He had calmed down and you won't have nothing more to worry about, so you just rest and get well."

"I'm afraid you ladies will have to go now," said the nurse, as she came to the foot of the bed. [Pg 222]

"I'll be up later and see if I can do anything," said Evelyn, as she and Mickey rose to go.

"Come back as soon as they will let you," said Pearl.

"All right, honey, we'll go and move your things now, and then we will be back later. Now, don't you worry, honey, you just rest—good-bye," as they left the room.

"What did he have to say, Ev?" as they reached the street.

"Well, it ain't so much what he said, but it's the way he said it. I'm afraid he might kill her if he gets hold of her again. Of course, he is sorry and all that now, but the next time he gets mad at her, or catches her with somebody else, he will kill her as sure as there is a Heaven. He said if he couldn't have her, no one else could, and you know him, Mickey, he means business."

"You're right there, Ev, that guy means business. Well, he can't get at her there in the hospital." [Pg 223]

"I'm not afraid of him doing anything to her there—he wants to make up with her now—it's when he gets mad at her again that I'm afraid of, but I'm pretty sure she is off him now for good."

"Yeah—and it's a shame. If she could only have cared for that guy, even a little bit, she would have been sitting pretty, but love is blind, so they claim, so she falls for Harry, and he also gets the Hell beat out of him. Well, it sure was some fight."

A week passed, rather uneventful—the Mexican trouble was settled and the border opened again. Evelyn spent as much time as possible with Pearl, accompanied by Mickey. Harry had already left the hospital, and Pearl would be out in a few days. The rest had done her good, and she gained weight in those few days.

"Has Harry been to see you today?" asked Evelyn. [Pg 224]

"Sure, he was over to see me this morning. He looks as good as ever, and he is so sweet. The nurse told me I could leave here in the morning—ain't that good news?"

"I'm sure glad, but what are you going to do about Big Boy? You don't know it, but he has damn near driven me crazy—he is wild to see you—he knows Harry has been up here whenever he wants to come, and he is wild with jealousy."

"Well, it's up to me to stay out of his way. He knows where you live, and he can come up there any time he wants to, so I'll have to stay in a hotel so he can't come up. Won't you move in with me for a while, Ev?"

"Sure, kid, I'll move in with you for a while. I know how you feel and I'm kinda tired of that apartment, anyhow. Let's move to the McCoy, what do you say? I think you'll like it."

"All right, Ev, you go pick out the room, so I will have some place to go to in the morning." [Pg 225]

"I'll go now, and do that before I go over on the other side of the river. Good-bye, honey, I'll see you in the morning," as she rose to go.

Pearl left the hospital, and went to the hotel, where she found Evelyn in bed.

"I didn't expect you to be out so soon, or I would have been down to meet you," said Evelyn, as she raised up in the bed.

"I didn't know myself, but it's grand to be out again and walk around—how is Juarez?"

"Just the same—I had a pretty good night last night. Mickey picked a live guy for me, and I got a hundred and ten bucks off him—that is, Mickey put her hand in his pocket and took it out and give it to me. She said I had earned the money by being with him. You know Mickey, and I just couldn't refuse—money is money."

"See anything of Big Boy?" [Pg 226]

"I was coming to that—I,—well, you will have to be awful careful, honey—that guy is on a drunk, and he is bad—he told me last night that the first time he sees you he is going to shoot you. I don't think he was kidding, either—he means business. Then again he might just be bragging, because he was so drunk—but just the same, don't you think it would be best to kinda keep out of sight for a few days?"

"Ah, gee, Ev, I wanted to go over tonight—couldn't we go some place that he wouldn't think to go, and that way we wouldn't be likely to run into him. You must know of some place over there we can go and drink and have a good time?"

"Sure, I know the very place, and I don't think you have ever been there. It's one of the places that Grace Valdez owns—you remember the old girl I introduced you to—the one who owns the Gold Palace. Well, this is her best money-making place, so she says. It is a regular cabaret and bar, with about thirty or forty girls working there, and they have rooms upstairs—but lots of people go there—sure, we will go over there tonight—what do you say?" [Pg 227]

"That's fine—I'm just raring to go on a good one tonight—how about you?"

"I could start right now, as far as I'm concerned."

"I'll tell you what let's do—you get up, and let's go shopping. I need some new things, anyhow—will you come?"

"Sure," answered Evelyn, as she climbed out of bed.

They spent the day shopping, and went to a show, then began to dress for the night over the border. As they were leaving the hotel they ran into Mickey.

"Well, it sure is good to see you out and around again Pearl—we sure have missed you."

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"That's nice of you, Mickey."

"Hey, look Mickey," said Evelyn. "We're going to the popular bar tonight—you know, the one up that side street, off the Sixteenth of September Street there—you know where it is, don't you?"

"Sure, I know where that joint is—that's a good idea—keep out of sight of the Big Boy, especially till that louse gets over these fits of jealousy."

This was too late—Big Boy was standing across the street watching the three as they were talking about him, eyes almost closed, watching Pearl as a snake watches a bird.

As they moved down the street to catch the car for Juarez, Big Boy followed. He boarded the car with them, but stayed in the back, with his hat well over his face.

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The night was beginning as they unloaded in Juarez.

"Oh, Jeess——" said Evelyn, "don't look, but there is Big Boy just getting off the rear of the car—let's disappear pronto." They ran up the block and into the darkness.

"Do you think he will suspect where we are going?" asked Pearl.

"I don't think so. He will probably figure you will make right for Harry, and that's where he will go, and wait for you," reasoned Mickey as they made their way on up the dimly lighted street to the Popular Bar.

As they neared the Popular sounds of a tinkling piano and drums, mixed with laughing and singing, came to them. The place was crowded with men who had not only come over for their satisfaction of liquor, but to satisfy their baser lusts as well—and this was the perfect place of satisfaction of this sort. The girls were in short dresses, heavily made up, with cheap rouge and powder—they mixed with the men, hugging and kissing whomever put their arms around them, thinking only of the two dollars that could be made upstairs.

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"Jeess, what a joint," exclaimed Pearl.

"You said it," answered Evelyn.

"Yeah—but you got a chance of making some real money in this place—when these guys are hugging any broad in the place you can always get your hand in the pocket and he never knows just who to blame," said Mickey as she looked the place over for a prospect.

"Well, we might as well get to the bar and start sipping some of that joy water, don't you think?" suggested Evelyn.

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"Let's get at it," as they shoved their way through the crowd.

"This place does the best business in town—at least it looks that way," said Pearl.

"Well, they can get rougher and noisier, and just anything goes, and this is some tough mob in here right now."

"Where did Mickey go?" asked Pearl.

"Heaven only knows, but she must have smelled a pocketbook—anyway, she will show up in a minute—whiskey for me—what will you have, honey?"

"Whiskey."

The music started in the cabaret, the crowd shoved its way onto the dance floor, leaving the bar partly empty. Big Boy stepped through the swinging doors.

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"Oh, God," whispered Pearl, "Big Boy."

There was no place to run, no time, nothing to do but wait as Big Boy drew a service automatic from his pocket, leveled it at Pearl, pulled the trigger six times. Evelyn had stepped in front of Pearl, taking the six bullets—she sank to the floor, everything was silent—Pearl dropped to her knees, lifting Evelyn's head.

"Oh, Ev, why did you do it—why did you do it?" she cried in anguish.

The crowd had fought and shoved its way back into the bar. Mickey knelt beside Pearl.

Evelyn slowly opened her eyes. "Don't cry, kid, its best this way—you still have a chance—Mickey,

promise you will—" slowly her words came, then a faint shudder, and her head fell forward. Evelyn was no more. There is nothing greater than to give one's life for that of a friend. Evelyn had made the Great Gesture. [Pg 233]

A shot was heard outside. People ran out to see what it was. Pearl and Mickey looked at each other.

"It's the guy that done this," said a man. "One shot was all he needed to finish him, right through the heart."

Six weeks since Evelyn had been buried. Pearl had not been in Juarez since that night. Harry had called up several times, but she had only seen him once, and tonight the desire to see him was so great she called up Mickey and made a date with her to meet on the Mexican side and see Harry. It wouldn't be the same without Evelyn, but she still had Harry and he could always be depended on—he loved her—she knew that.

"Hello, darling," said Mickey as she put her arms around Pearl. "You look a little peaked; let's have a little drink and then we will go in and see the floor show." [Pg 234]

"All right," said Pearl, as she turned to the bar.

They had their drinks and found a table where they could see Harry and the show. Pearl was happy for the first time in weeks. She loved Harry dearly; with him she could start all over and face life on a different plane. He saw her and waved, and soon he come over to them.

"Well, it's been some time since I've seen you—how are you?" said Harry as he leaned over the table.

"Fine, Harry, and you look wonderful."

"Listen, darling, you will have to excuse me tonight—I won't be able to see you after the show. I've got an engagement, about some business, but I'll give you a ring in a day or so," as he left the table. [Pg 235]

Pearl looked at Mickey—Mickey looked at her glass as she laid her hand over Pearl's.

"Forget it, kid, he's not worth it—have another drink and let's get out of here."

Pearl couldn't speak. The thing she depended on had been suddenly swept away from her. She wanted to cry—she couldn't. She wanted to scream—she couldn't do that. She was too numb to even think much. Harry, who she had loved, and whom she thought loved her, had given her the cold freeze-out. She drank her whiskey—it did no good—water would have had the same effect now—nothing really mattered. She and Mickey wandered from bar to bar until closing time of the bridge.

"Do you want to come out to my place tonight, Pearl, honey? You are always welcome," asked Mickey. [Pg 236]

"I guess so," answered Pearl, "but let's go to the State's Cafe before we go home—I want a sandwich."

"Do you think it's best to go to the States, dear?"

"Sure, I'll be all right."

"Let's go."

They arrived at the States at the height of the merriment. The last of the crowd had gathered there before going home with each other. Pearl and Mickey came in. As they sat down, across the aisle sat Harry and a little blonde who had just come to town. He looked over to their table, smiled and waved, and went on with his talk to his partner.

Pearl began to laugh—not a hysterical laugh, but one filled with mirth. "Who in this Goddam joint has a drink," she called as she rose from the table. Several men rushed to her aid with open bottles; she took a drink from them all, and so did Mickey. She was gay, nothing mattered now—have as much fun as possible. Ribald songs were sung by her and the best of dirty stories came to her mind. The crowd was so entertained it wouldn't leave. [Pg 237]

"Do you want to invite them all out to the house?" whispered Mickey.

"Sure," answered Pearl. "Listen, gang—get all your cars, and let's get going for a hell of a good time out to Mickey's," as she jumped off the table into the arms of the nearest man.

"Pearl, can't I see you for a minute?" asked Harry as he pushed his way to her.

"You have a business date to keep—now, brother, you keep it. I fell for that line once, but never again—Adios, Senor," as she went out the door in the arms of the man for the night. [Pg 238]

END

Transcriber's Note

List of changes to original text:

Page 1: changed "tthe word" to "the word"
Page 6: changed "Evevlyn" to "Evelyn"
Page 7: changed "youv'e" to "you've"
Page 8: changed "waived Ev" to "waved Ev"
Page 10: changed "yesterdady afternoon" to "yesterday afternoon"
Page 17: added closing quotation mark after "a good time."
Page 22: changed "acount" to "account"
Page 23: changed "raucus" to "raucous"
Page 30: changed "Cant'" to "Can't"
Page 30: changed "couldnt'" to "couldn't"
Page 32: changed "Adois" to "Adios"
Page 39: added closing quotation mark after "a little revolution."
Page 43: changed "waived" to "waved"
Page 45: changed "or tortillas" to "of tortillas"
Page 46: changed "croner" to "corner"
Page 51: changed "Rio Brava" to "Rio Bravo"
Page 60: removed extra quotation mark in "Well," what's that got to do with us?"
Page 61: added "know" to "don't Negro Noche."
Page 80: added closing quotation mark after "won't get in jail."
Page 81: Added quotation mark: "Well, suppose they start looking
Page 102: changed "Fod" to "For"
Page 102: added closing parantheses after "this pan of mine)"
Page 116: moved quotation mark from after "his things." to before "Next time"
Page 117: removed extra quotation mark after "as soon as she came in."
Page 119: changed "she went out the door" to "he went out the door"
Page 130: removed duplicate word in "he cannot cannot be responsible"
Page 145: removed extra quotation mark after "started into the lobby."
Page 147: changed "out of Pearl's head" to "out of Pearl's hand"
Page 149: added closing quotation mark after "it's just grand."
Page 149: changed "putting on the Ritz," to "putting on the Ritz."
Page 150: changed "Eve" to "Ev"
Page 154: Added quotation mark: "Negro Noche wasn't even arrested—the
Page 156: changed "come n" to "come in"
Page 156: changed full stop to comma in: across the border." said Evelyn.
Page 159: changed "marreid" to "married"
Page 159: changed "quitely" to "quietly"
Page 160: Corrected quotation marks: "Hey, you two," as she shook them.
"Come on—come
Page 161: changed "Cemetary" to "Cemetery"
Page 161: Added quotation mark: sat down beside her. "I'll call
Page 162: Added comma and quotation mark: this time," asked one of the officials.
Page 163: changed "They way they" to "The way they"
Page 165: removed duplicate word in "over the the phone"
Page 166: removed duplicate word in "fight for one one side"
Page 167: added comma to "Come on, here's where"
Page 169: changed "Lets'" to "Let's"
Page 169: changed "cemetary" to "cemetery" in two places
Page 170: changed "cemetary" to "cemetery"
Page 171: Added quotation mark: "We tried to get a taxi
Page 174: Added quotation mark: shot anyone she found with him."
Page 175: changed "Rio Brava" to "Rio Bravo"
Page 180: changed "found it's mark." to "found its mark."
Page 181: Added comma and quotation mark: those 75's," commanded the General
Page 182: Added quotation mark: "At your command, I have come, Senor," said
Page 183: removed duplicate word in "What do you say say if"
Page 187: changed "thats" to "that's"
Page 187: changed "waiving" to "waving"
Page 187: Added quotation mark: officers. "You can't cross that river."
Page 190: changed "dont'" to "don't"
Page 190: removed duplicate word in "I don't know know, but"
Page 198: Added quotation mark: don't you call me again," as he
Page 199: changed "Lietenant" to "Lieutenant"
Page 202: Added quotation mark: Evelyn turned over and opened her eyes.
"What's
Page 203: Removed extra quotation mark after: revolution, Mickey?" asked Evelyn."
Page 203: changed apostrophe to quotation mark: "Sure, did you?"

Page 205: added comma to "those that haven't got a dime, but"
Page 206: changed "it's being on the" to "its being on the"
Page 208: Removed extra quotation mark in: "Sure, darling," I'll go any place
Page 209: Added quotation mark: "Sure," answered Pearl.
Page 209: changed "good bye" to "good-bye"
Page 211: changed "all it's flamboyancy" to "all its flamboyancy"
Page 216: changed "distrubing" to "disturbing" in two places
Page 224: changed "cant'" to "can't"
Page 224: changed "Wont'" to "Won't"
Page 225: changed "give to to me" to "give it to me"
Page 226: added "be" to "it would be best"
Page 227: Moved quotation mark: "Sure," answered Evelyn,
Page 232: Added quotation mark: whispered Pearl, "Big Boy."
Page 233: Added comma: that done this," said a man.
Page 212: Added full stop: started for the elevator.

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