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Inquiry. A story.

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I n q u i r y

A Story by

Klaus Mann

"I am your friend, Orloog!" The young lawyer wiped off the sweat from his forehead. The air in the cell was sultry. "You ought to trust me," ~~the lawyer~~ ^{he} said. "I am your defender."

"I don't need a defender. Everything is clear. I've said everything."

The prisoner's voice sounded strangely hollow - at once unctuous and barking; ~~rather impressive but not very pleasant.~~ He was squatting motionless on his narrow bed - the features of his ~~very~~ haggard face blurred in the ~~black~~ twilight, ~~as the~~

"I've said that I have killed her," he concluded with a sort of bleak satisfaction.

"I know, I know." The lawyer teetered one foot up and down impatiently. This man Orloog made him terribly nervous. What an obstinate fellow! And so exasperatingly smug! Thought himself a paragon of virtue. Refused cigarettes; wouldn't touch a drink. Spent two hours, or so, every morning, reading the Bible - with his fingertips. It was quite fascinating to watch his forefinger wandering, swiftly and skillfully, along the lines of prominent letters. Amazing, if one ~~thinks~~ ^{thought} of it, what a human being can endure and accomplish! A blind man - travelling about by himself! - from San Francisco to Chicago, from Buffalo to New York... Always neatly dressed and apparently very sure of himself. A helpless cripple, fooling around with loose women; bringing himself into a mess as this man Orloog had managed to do. ~~Rather~~ Kind of stunning, isn't it.

At the first look you wouldn't even notice his blindness. Orloog gave the impression of a respectable man in his early sixties. He was only fifty-four but looked older, with his grizzly temples and sunken eyes. Rather dignified, in a ~~poor~~ way. A small town official, you'd say; or,

dusty

perhaps, a schoolmaster, or a man who owns a modest shop, somewhere in a provincial place - selling stationary and pencils, and religious booklets with colored illustrations. That's what Orloog looked like - fairly harmless, indeed.

And then, of course, you'd be struck by the sightless profundity of his eyes.

His blindness, if anything, can save him from the chair, mused the lawyer. I'll try to appeal to the sympathy of the jury...

"Don't be so damned stubborn, man!" he finally exclaimed, in an at once cheering and scolding voice. "Don't you realize you're quite in a fix? I want to help you, Orloog. I'm paid for it, too. It's my job."

"I didn't pay you," Orloog observed, looking exceedingly ~~defiant~~ *haughty.*

"But your sister did," the lawyer said - whereupon the prisoner shook his head with a curious smile - tender and absentminded. "Poor Amelie," he said softly; then added, somewhat cryptically: "My conscience is clean."

"So you had to commit two murders, hadn't you?" The young jurist lost his temper: Orloog's rigid complacency got on his nerves. After all, the fellow was arrested for his second slaying, just a few months after he had been released *on parole* from a San Francisco prison where he had been serving a life term for killing a woman.

"No murder, if you please!" Orloog lifted his long, skinny forefinger with a strangely priest-like gesture - solemn and pedantic. "What happened in San Francisco was an accident: even the judges admitted that I didn't mean to kill her. And ~~what happened in Chicago~~ *as to my poor wife, Betty*... But that's a different story."

An accident? - The lawyer was not so sure. There was something weird about shooting a woman right into her heart - by sheer accident and mistake.

The barrister, a conscientious young man, had perused most carefully

all records concerning the Orloog case he could get hold of. The defendant had come to this country as a young boy, with his mother and ~~the~~ older sister, Amelie. The family was Russian, but sometimes Orloog pretended that he was a Greek by origin, and that his father used to ~~have~~ ^{own} a caféhouse in Athens, and later moved to Amsterdam, Holland, and that his mother was born in Bucharest. It was all very muddled and complicated. However, old Mr. Orloog was already dead when his family left Europe, and old Mrs. Orloog died a few months after her arrival in America. There was no money and young Orloog had to quit college. He had wanted to become a teacher or a priest but couldn't finish his studies. His sister Amelie was a dressmaker, and a fairly successful one, too. But when she began to make enough money to support her brother, it ~~already~~ was too late: his life was already ruined.

As to the exact circumstances of the drama in San Francisco, there were many contradictory reports and interpretations. It took place at a wedding party and everybody was pretty drunk. One of the fellows tried to tease Orloog, who had at that time a job as an inspector with one of the big shipping companies. His pals laughed ~~him~~ at him and called him "the professor", because he spent most of his spare time ~~and even parts of the nights~~ reading scholarly books and had nothing to do with girls. So at that wedding party they tried as usually to be funny at his expense, and made all sorts of wisecracks about his eyes, and that he would become blind because of his silly reading, ~~but it wouldn't make so much difference as he never looked at a girl, anyway.~~ He told them how foolish they were, but didn't really mind; for he was accustomed to that kind of thing. It was only when one of the girls joined his merry tormentors that he lost his temper. She had been a bridesmaid at the ceremony and was conspicuously attractive, according to all testimonies - blond and fleshy and rather provocative looking. The whole party guffawed when she said to Orloog that, in her

opinion, he already was virtually blind, although his eyes seemed still good enough to decipher all that stupid stuff he kept reading. "But you don't see a woman," she said. "I'd risk a bet that you have no idea what I look like."

They just wanted to tease "the professor"; ~~no~~ no one intended to hurt him. In fact, the general mood was so harmless that everybody roared with laughter when Orloog suddenly produced a gun and declared that he was sick and tired of being pestered, ~~that way~~, and that he was going to prove there was nothing wrong with his eyes: he would shoot a hole into a picture adorning the wall directly behind the spot where the fleshy blonde was standing. The painting ~~was called "Leda and the Swan"~~; it showed a voluptuous nude fooling around with a fat, white, wicked looking bird. ~~It was called "Leda and the Swan."~~ "I'll aim at her bosom," Orloog announced. The whole crowd applauded; nobody believed that the gun was loaded. The girl didn't move. "You can't scare me," she said. Then he shot - but not at Leda's bosom.

He hit her heart with uncanny exactness. She was immediately dead.

Many of the witnesses later indicated that they had watched him aiming at the bridemaid's breast. But he insisted that he hadn't killed her on purpose: "I meant to frighten her, that's all. She was too ~~luxurious~~ ^{visions} ~~and~~ ^{slippery}, too attractive. I had to teach her a lesson. But to kill her? Never!"

Everything turned upside down - Orloog said - when he tried to aim at Leda's painted breasts. The living girl seemed petrified, while Leda beckoned and grinned and performed very shocking gestures. ~~and~~ Then the whole ^{room} was filled with a sort of dense, silvery smoke - a fluffy darkness veiling and swallowing both women - the gesticulating ~~painter~~ ^{mirage} and the motionless one who lived - and the bride and the other guests and finally himself. "There was a terrible ~~darkness~~ ^{stillness}," said Orloog. "And then, there was her scream."

While he was in jail, his sister sent him every month a ~~thirty~~ ^{twenty} dollar

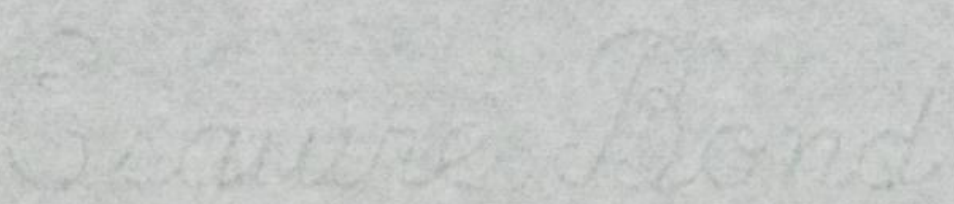
check. He never touched the money; didn't spend a cent, during all these years. In fact, he was even too stingy to do something for his eyes that became increasingly poor. ~~So~~ when he was released on parole because of his good behavior, after thirteen years, he had saved more than three thousand dollars, but ~~couldn't see anything~~ ^{had lost his sight} he was totally blind.

One of the questions puzzling and disturbing the lawyer was this: Why did Orloog interrupt his trip in Chicago when he passed through that city, on his way from San Francisco to New York? Wouldn't it have been more natural for the blind, lonely man to continue his voyage and to join his sister who expected him in her Bronx apartment? She was the only friend he possessed and had given him the most touching proves of her true devotion while he was in jail. He knew no soul in Chicago, had no business there. What, then, held him back? He spent almost four weeks, quite alone, in a gloomy little hotel. It was only then, after ~~four~~ weeks of complete solitude, that he met Miss Betty. She had some job in a night-club: the lawyer didn't precisely know in what sort of capacity - as a waitress or a singer or what. In any case, there she was when Orloog dropped in, one Sunday afternoon. He thought it was a regular restaurant and wanted to eat a bite. But it was no regular restaurant. Betty began a chat. "I knew at the very sound of her voice that she was the right woman for me," Orloog said. "I've always wished to get married. Every man does. All human beings are entitled to enjoy a certain minimum of happiness. So when I heard Betty's voice it was something like a miracle: she was the bit of happiness I had a right to ~~demand~~ ^{claim}."

~~They got married in Chicago, four weeks after their first meeting, and spent their honeymoon in Buffalo: Betty had insisted to go there, because of dear old mother. The blind husband was presented to her and also to a young fellow called Jim - ostensibly Betty's brother. Orloog said that he had a wonderful time with Betty, in Buffalo - almost dream-like, full of perfect delight. But it lasted only three days: then she~~

They got married in Chicago, three weeks after their first meeting. Orloog grew quite rhapsodic when he described the ceremony and the hilarious celebration that followed. It must have been a grand and joyful affair, according to his account. The blind man revelled in detailed reminiscences of the opulent meal, the sparkling conversations, the glamorous gathering - twenty-seven people, as he stated pedantically, attractive girls and distinguished men. Finally everybody got drunk, including even the priest, and Betty kissed the groom in ~~front~~ front of the animated crowd. She also called him "sweetypie" and announced that she wanted at least half a dozen babies from him. An unforgettable festivity: Orloog never mentioned it without adding that it certainly was the most beautiful experience of his life.

The honeymoon was spent at Buffalo: Betty had insisted to go there because of her dear old mother. The blind husband was presented to that charming elderly lady and also to a young chap called Jim - ostensibly Betty's brother. Orloog said that he had a wonderful time with Betty and her family - almost dream-like, full of perfect delight. But it lasted only three days: then she



left him taking his money along - all that ~~was~~ had remained of the three thousand dollars. That so-called brother of hers, Jim, ~~had~~ also disappeared. When Orloog begged Betty's mother to lend him ten dollars for the bus fare to New York City, she turned very angry and said she had nothing to do with all this: she wasn't Betty's mother and Jim wasn't Betty's ~~brother~~ - the whole affair was a hoax. So Orloog wired ~~to~~ his sister, and Amelie sent him twenty dollars, and he went to live with her, in the Bronx.

The lawyer knew Miss Orloog's home in the Bronx - two tiny rooms, a rather squalid dwelling. Kind of cozy, though - but in a lurid way. Crammed with hideous nick-nacks, artificial flowers, dusty souvenirs. And Miss Orloog - a pathetic old spinster, almost incredibly ugly - in the midst of this nightmarish set-up. The only bright spot in the two ghastly rooms was a huge reproduction of a woman's portrait. It was Betty - looking rather gorgeous, indeed, with her thick, pouting lips and her turned-up, impudent little nose; pompously dressed up in a long, pleated gown lavishly adorned with all sorts of fancy stuff - flowers, laces and veils. Her face under a luxurious richness of curled hair, beamed with a frozen, merciless smile.

Orloog had been living with his sister for three months or so when Betty's letter arrived: "Can you ever forgive me? I am longing for you."

"You were happy, weren't you, when you received that note?" the defender inquired.

Orlogg hesitated, shrugged his shoulders, finally declared: "I suppose I was - in a way."

"So you were still in love with her when you went to Chicago?"

"She was my wife," said Orloog, motionless and mysterious.

"Of course," the lawyer ~~said~~ *quietly agreed*, and added ~~quietly~~ - following the scheme of the speech he prepared for the Gentlemen of the Jury: "But she constantly let you down; cheated and robbed you, didn't she? First in Buffalo, and then ~~in Buffalo~~ again in Chicago. The first disappointment was that

(540)
failed to show up at the station. You had asked her to meet you at the train, but she didn't come. There you were - a blind, helpless man..."

"I didn't really expect her to show up," the defendant observed.

"But why, then, did you suggest ~~you~~ ^{she} should meet you?"

"It was a part of my plan," Orloog said - the upper part of his body bent forward, his sightless eyes fixed on the solicitor, who began to turn rather fidgety.

"Which plan, man? Don't talk riddles to me! I'm in a hurry. After all, you're not the only client I have to look after."

"My plan to test and to tempt her. Every detail was prepared and calculated. I had discussed the whole scheme ~~to~~ with Amelie - ~~dozens~~ and hundreds of times."

"With your sister? ^{Did} ~~she~~ she knew what you were going to do?"

"I didn't know it myself," Orloog said - which made the investigator sigh with relief. His whole argument was based on the presupposition that the defendant had gone to Chicago, not in order to kill his wife, but with the intention to resume their married life.

"It worked very well - my plan," the prisoner said, with a rather sinister smirk. "I took a cab and ~~told~~ told the driver where I wanted to go. I knew, of course, what kind of a face he'd make when he heard that filthy address. ~~But I tried to look quite innocent when I told him the name of the street and the number.~~ Boy, was he surprised! Yessir, alright sir - he'd say, and then ^{he} hesitated, and said, once again: As you wish, sir; I just wonder, he said, if it's the right place to go - for a man in your condition. What do you mean - a man in my condition? I'd ask him. Why, your eyes, sir, he said, and I almost chuckled, ^{because he was so} ~~and I noticed he~~ embarrassed. ~~he was. I could hear how he blushed - poor fellow.~~ It's a very gay place, sir, he said. Plenty of girls there. Pretty girls, too. But you couldn't see them. - So I told him he shouldn't worry: I had ^{just} some business to do there, and he said, It's alright with me, but when we arrived ~~there~~ he still

seemed kind of puzzled; looked at my handbag and said, Do you want to stay over night here, sir, do you want me to carry your stuff inside, or shouldn't I rather come back, in an hour or so, and pick you up and take you to some clean place. So I gave him a tip and told him to come back in an hour or so: for, you see, I was pretty sure that everything would be over in about an hour. But the bag isn't heavy, I said, I can carry it, ~~the same~~. In fact, it was pretty light - just the knife, and the money, and a few things for the night, and, of course, the Bible."

There was a silence. Orloog seemed absorbed in memories. He recalled the tinny voice of the colored girl ~~who~~^{ed} who opened the door - the door of that sordid house where Betty had been leading her sinful, scandalous life. The girl ask^{ed} him whom he wanted to see, and he said that he had a date with Miss Betty, and then there was the sultry air in the lobby - full of vulgar perfumes, the sickening smell of sweat and gin and of dusty plush and girls with no clothes on, and the smell of the faded flowers the girls wore in their hair. The colored ~~girl~~^{maid} showed him up to Miss Betty's room. He had to wait there, for ten minutes or so, and he used the time to explore the room - touching the furniture, the draperies and the mirror; the flowers, the cushions, the bottles with perfume, her lipstick, her slippers, her nightgown that laid spread out on her couch - a fine garment of heavy silk: "must have cost quite some money," observed Orloog, while a sensual, wistful smile momentarily altered his features. ~~Everything was almost precisely as he had figured it, would be her entrance, too, corresponded with his expectations.~~ *the air in the room, and then* *Her* *tempestuous* *entrance,* ~~too, corresponded with his expectations.~~ He had known that she would be a little tight, and that the scent of her hair would be mixed with the smell of liquor. She kissed him - exactly with that sort of casual vehemence he had anticipated - and said, very hastily: "Here you are, sweet, good to see you again, how is everything, have a drink, why didn't you help yourself, here's the bottle, can't you see, oh, I forgot - you can't! so sorry, sweetie, what kind of a trip ~~do~~ did you have, pretty warm here,

it's fun to have you ~~here~~, though - why don't you say something, I was
(*how d'you like my new dress,*
longing for you, sugar, your little wife has been very lonely..."

Then she kissed him again, and he touched that dry hair of hers - that curly mane dangerously charged with electricity.

"Was she very drunk?" (*asked the lawyer*)

"No more than usually," ~~Erloog said.~~ "She was pretty tight, all right. That's why she kissed me so long and opened her mouth when she kissed me. She only opens her mouth when she has had quite a few drinks before."

"And then? After she had kissed you? Did she tell you that she wanted to live with you again?"

"She said, Now I have you again, sweetie, you look fine, honest you do, don't forget we're married. I said that I don't forget anything because I have a pretty good memory. I remember everything - about Buffalo, for instance: and if I lived to be hundred, I wouldn't forget what you have done to me. That's what I said to her - and then, of course, she tried to pull over her old tricks - innocent faces, you know, and that *foolish* baby talk: What d'you mean, honey? What's wrong? Kiss your little wife! But I didn't kiss her again and told her that the old woman had confessed everything: that she isn't Betty's mother, and Jim isn't her brother, and that the whole gang had cheated me - cheated and robbed and fooled me. This made her terribly mad, she ~~smashed~~ a glass at the floor, and rushed around and cried. That old bitch, she screamed, I've paid her ten bucks, how does she have the nerve, stinking old ~~rat~~ she is. But then, all of a sudden, she changed, and turned very sweet again, and put her arms around my neck, and said we should forget about all that nasty stuff: it was all a joke - and, anyway, it's over, so let's forget and have fun."

"Didn't you *say anything about* ~~ask her what had happened with~~ those two thousand five hundred dollars she'd stolen from you? ~~Didn't you try to find out?~~"

"What for? I wanted her to believe that I fell again for her swindle. This was a part of my plan. And it worked nicely, too." There was a bleak

triumph in his voice as he slowly continued:

"I told her, I'll stay with you - tonight, and tomorrow, and always; and she giggled, and said, That's swell, so you still love me, ^{big boy} that's fine. It's funny that you love me so, she said - and suddenly, turned very serious ^{pretty}, and yet you don't know what I look like, how ~~good looking~~ I am, ~~you don't~~ ^{not} even ~~know~~ the color of my hair, you are blind. I can see you, Betty, I said. I can see you with my fingertips and with my mouth and my body. That's funny, she said. So you can see me with your fingertips. Sounds kind of exciting, doesn't it. Let's go to bed, she said. It's kind of late. I'm tired. And she yawned and sat down on the couch. It's a hard life, she said, a very hard I'm leading. Let's go together, somewhere, I've always been fond of the country, she said. Cows, and flowers, and all that. Let's go somewhere. I'm sick and tired of that place, and of Chicago, and of everything. I said, ~~Will~~ talk it over tomorrow, and would she be good enough to open my suitcase for me and to unpack my stuff for the night. She said something like, O.K., boss, in a funny little voice, ^{very} very tired it sounded. And then she opened the bag. This was the decisive moment."

"What do you mean - the decisive moment?"

"The moment she saw the money - and she saw the knife."

"What has the knife to do with your ~~former~~ plan?" The lawyer's voice sounded as if there were a lump in his throat choking him.

"Without the knife," Orloog explained, "my whole scheme might have failed. First she saw the money - three brandnew hundred dollar-bills, neatly displayed next to my old slippers. This was the first temptation. That she grabbed the money - the three hundred bucks Amelie had lent me - was pretty wicked, alright. But it was no sufficient prove of her basic wickedness. Not enough to condemn her. She had to go further. She had to reveal the whole meanness of her character. That's what I needed the knife for: to find out if she would dare turn it against the man who had loved her so and from whom she had stolen everything he possessed."

"Sounds kind of melodramatic, doesn't it." The lawyer made an effort to appear flippant and detached, ~~but it sounded a little forced.~~

"It was all very simple," the defendant said. "First I heard how she stooped to grab the money - the suppressed sound of her panting breath as she stood there in that stooping attitude: big, fat woman she is - , and then the faint crackling of silk as ^{she} put Amelie's hundred dollar-bills into her décolleté. Give me that money, I said; for I felt I ought to be fair and give her a chance to repent her sin. But it was too late, I suppose. She couldn't go back any more: the Evil One already had grip of her - completely. ~~Yet, I gave her another chance to save her life and her immortal soul, and asked her, once again, to not so steel my money - Amelie's money, the instrument of temptation, the Devil's bait to prove how bad she was. her wickedness, Which money, sugarmops?~~ she asked, ~~and what a nasty little voice she had! Sugarmops...~~ She'd never used that foolish expression before. Sugarmops... kind of idiotic, isn't it. I wonder if she made it up, just at that moment - ~~just invented it~~ when I asked her to hand me over that money - ~~but~~ just invented it, out of sheer malice and fear and badness..."

He sat still, for two minutes or so. Then he produced, quite surprisingly, a brief, rasping sound like a sob. But when he began to talk again, his ^{voice} ~~his~~ sounded normal - only a little hoarse as if he had been silent for a much longer time. "Well," he said - and the defender was struck by the impression that there was a sudden flash of phosphorescent light in the ^{shady} ~~the~~ depth of his ~~shady~~ eyes - , "finally she got tired of lying and turned very rude, and shouted at me - calling me all sorts of names, blind bastard, and crippled hypocrit, and what not. How do you have the nerve to tell me that I stole your foul money, she ^{tried} ~~said~~. Even if I had - you wouldn't see it, hideous freak you are! So I asked her to stop this outrageous talk. Cut it out! I said. I warn you, Babette Orloog! Don't go too far. Don't forget it's your husband you are talking to. There are certain things no woman should tell her husband. 'To her husband?!' - You should have heard her voice, Mr. Attorney,

- that terrible voice of hers as she cried out these words - three times, four times, again and again; repeating them like a lunatic; yelling, shrieking, hurling them - 'To her husband! What a joke! To her husband...' And her laughter! ~~the monstrous laugh of the hell~~ *a laugh to give you the shivers.* Obviously, she was possessed by the Devil - raving with wickedness, all beside herself. If she ~~would have~~ *had* been in her senses - why should she have told me, frenzied with wantonness, what I had only guessed and wondered about, but hadn't really known, up to that horrible moment? 'What a joke!' she screamed. 'Husband! he believes it! What a fool he is! what a dope! What an idiot you are!' she guffawed. 'What a halfwit - with all your books! To believe that ~~a~~ *did* really marry a blind guy, an ex-convict, a crippled murderer, ~~with a voice like a priest,~~ a filthy bore, a lousy hypocrite!' So I jumped at her and choked her and asked her to explain what she meant - if she wasn't my wife, and didn't belong to me, and ~~if~~ *wasn't* her husband. She had just enough breath to pant, No, I am not your wife... No no no, she gasped, I've fooled you, old dope, the ceremony was faked, everything was swindle - the priest was faked, and the official, and the guests - they were friends of mine: whores as I am one, and their pimps, and my pimps: they sure ~~were having fun~~ got a kick of it, the whole gang of them, if you could only have seen them, blind son of bitch! If you had seen the funny faces they made, and the dirty things ~~that went on~~ *they're doing* while you were sitting there, at the end of the table - the happy groom, the dignified husband, the fool...the fool... the fool..."

The lawyer was dumbfounded with surprise. It took a few seconds before he managed to speak. "The ceremony was faked? She wasn't really your wife?... But, man! - that changes the entire picture. Why didn't you tell me, right in the beginning?"

There was no answer. Orloog's thoughts and his darkened eyes seemed to wander into remote and sinister regions - exploring the lurid mysteries of inaccessible landscapes. It was only when the defender repeated his ~~question~~ question, that he murmured at last: "I don't know. Kind of ashamed,

I suppose."

The lawyer shook his head - musing over this new angle which seemed apt to upset the ~~base~~ fundamental approach of his speech. Didn't Betty's incredible depravity almost justify Orloog's action? At least, it yielded a lot of priceless mitigating circumstances. The discovery of this abominable deceit must have ~~shocked~~ ^{violently} and excited the blind man, ~~to a degree that made him virtually irresponsible in the legal sense of the word.~~ There he was - ~~happy to embrace~~ ^{the woman} ~~when~~ he believed to be his legitimate wife...

"I knew it all along." Orloog's hollow voice interrupted the swift speculations of the ambitious young solicitor. "At the bottom of my heart I've always known that there was something fishy about that wedding party. I wasn't so very surprised when she told me. It was rather her impudence that ~~surprised me - the brassy air she had when she hurled her sordid confession,~~ ^{got that of hers, the shrill, shameless voice} ~~right into my face...~~ She was even worse than I'd thought. She didn't feel sorry - not she. She enjoyed her sin. 'That was a good one!' she boasted. 'The smartest, funniest trick I've ever pulled.' And now, beat it!' she said to me. 'And more snappy than that!' I asked her, for the last time, to give me back that money: I would leave, if she did, and she'd never see me again. But this was enough to make her mad again. 'It's my money,' she screamed at the top of her voice. 'You owe it to me - after all I've done for you. Why do you think I went to bed with you? For the fun of it, I suppose? Don't you realize it's my business? Three-hundred bucks is certainly not too much,' she said, 'considering ~~the way you look and you talk.~~ ^{what sort of a guy you are.} She had all forgotten about the two thousand five hundred; so I reminded her, and I shook her shoulders. It was terrible, because her shoulders were so soft and so beautiful... But her voice was plenty hard ~~and shrill~~ when she shouted at me: 'Don't touch me, old murderer, or I'll scratch out what remains of your ugly eyes!' But I kept shaking her and asking for the money: so she lifted that knife - she'd been holding it all the time. But now she lifted it and suddenly hissed at me - with no voice at all - : 'Here is your money, sweetiepie.'

And she wanted to stab me, with my own knife. But I was faster than she: of course I was, as I had prepared myself for this moment and exercised every movement, for so many weeks. I didn't say a word - just wrested the knife away from her and pushed her back, and then I threw the knife."

"So you've actually killed her in self-defense?" asked the lawyer, *cheerfully* very ~~amused~~. "She would have killed you if you hadn't done what you did."

"She might have tried to, ~~all right~~." The prisoner had a brief nasal laugh - scornful and abrupt. "I don't think she'd a chance to succeed, though. Was kind of clumsy, you know. No skill, no training, no discipline. And then, she was drunk as hell."

"You're pretty slow, man! Don't you see what I'm driving at?" The young defender seemed exceedingly animated - suddenly refreshed as by new hope. "What you've just told ^{me} - first, that she'd faked the wedding ceremony; second, that she was on the point of killing you when you threw the knife - means a tremendous improvement of your situation - unless you're going to ruin your own chances with silly, disturbing twaddle. Now, listen to me, Orloog, and try to understand what I say, ~~to you~~. The cardinal point of my pleading will be the fact that you've acted in self-defense..."

"Cut it out, brother!" the prisoner interrupted him in a grave, ominous voice. "I don't need a defender, and I've told you so right from the beginning. I have eliminated a piece of rot, and that's all there is to it. A smiling, smelling, sweet and scandalous piece of sin and ~~filth~~ filth. I have wiped it out. This was ^{the} right thing to do. In fact, precisely the *kind* of thing the Lord appreciates and enjoys."

The advocate shrugged his shoulders. "The Lord - perhaps. As to the wordly authorities..."

"The wordly authorities must ~~not~~ not interfere with the sacred will of the Lord. And if they do - it's just too bad for them. The lord will come down on them with his sword and his fire. ~~I don't give a damn~~, I don't care what they do to me. I am not afraid."

"But why, then, didn't you report to the Police, right away? Why did you leave the house where you had committed the crime, and asked the driver who'd been waiting for you, to take you to the bus station, and took the bus for New York? It was only when they arrested you, right here, in Manhattan, that you admitted your deed. What did you try to escape for - since you are not afraid?"

"Because I had to embrace my good sister, and had to give her back those three-hundred bucks, and to tell her that everything had worked nicely, according to our plan. The scandal has been stamped out. The vicious woman is dead. I've watched her dying. I've touched her shoulders and her lips and her breasts, and have waited until she began to get cold. It took quite a bit of time, too. Somebody might have come and discover me, but I didn't care. I sat down on her bed and waited. It was kind of unpleasant, because of that sickening music that came up from downstairs. I hadn't heard it before ~~not when I arrived~~ ⁱⁿ ~~may have been too excited~~ ^{nervous}, too much absorbed ~~in~~ my plan. But now, when she was dead and there was nothing to do but to wait until she'd get cold - now I heard the music. It sounded so sweet and nasty: I thought it would make me vomit. The kind of music, you know, they use to attract and to excite each other; the sinful tootle, the repulsive stuff... ~~I had to think all the time of what was going on, down there, while I sat her and guarded Betty's body. I knew it only too well - the sordid performance they give, accompanied by that appalling singing and swinging and chirping...~~ Just when I was on the point of going - for Betty's lips and hands had already got pretty cold - they played her favourite tune - a silly little something: she used to whistle and to hum it, all the time..."

There was a stillness. The young lawyer wondered if it wasn't advisable to plead mental irresponsibility in the Orloog case. But he abandoned this idea as he had another look at his client. The haggard man seemed to grow - to become enormous in the eerie twilight of the prison

cell.

"She sang it when I first met her, in that sordid joint," he said slowly, in a deep, woeful voice. "And at our beautiful wedding party, and in Buffalo - she sang it everywhere. Now that orchestra played it, down= stairs. But she couldn't open her mouth, couldn't move her lips. She was numb and stiff and already pretty cold. In silence she atoned for her many tricks and songs and her many sins."

He was silent too. It took a long time until he spoke again - and the lawyer somehow felt that these were the last words he would hear from him:

"I don't care what they'll do to me. The chair or a life term - I don't give a dam. I am through. This is an evil world. I have seen enough."

He covered the sightless holes of his eyes with a big, heavy hand - a strangely inhuman hand with prominent bluish veins and short, spatular fingers, as if made of wood, lead, and iron - a callous tool to inflict pain and the revenge and the punishment.

X

Inquiry

cut out double
qualifying adjectives

A Story by

Klaus Mann

"I am your friend, Orloog!" The young lawyer wiped ~~off~~ the sweat from his forehead. The air in the cell was sultry. "You ought to trust me," ~~this lawyer~~ ^{he} said. "I am your defender."

"I don't need a defender. Everything is clear. I've said everything."

<sup>"at one" or
not fix it</sup> The prisoner's voice sounded strangely hollow - at once unctuous and barking. ~~rather impressive but not very pleasant~~ He was squatting motionless on his narrow bed - the features of his ~~very~~ ^{the} haggard face blurred in the ~~black~~ twilight, ~~of the~~

"I've said that I ~~have~~ killed her," he concluded with a sort of bleak satisfaction.

"I know, I know." The lawyer teetered one foot up and down impatiently. This man Orloog made him terribly nervous. What an obstinate fellow! and so exasperatingly smug! ^{he} Thought himself a paragon of virtue. Refused cigarettes; wouldn't touch a drink. Spent two hours, or so, every morning, reading the Bible - with his fingertips. It was ~~quite~~ fascinating to watch his forefinger wandering, swiftly and skillfully, along the lines of prominent letters. Amazing, ^{when} ^{thought} if one ~~thinks~~ of it, what a human being can endure and accomplish! A blind man - travelling about by himself! - from San Francisco to Chicago, from Buffalo to New York... Always neatly dressed and apparently very sure of himself. A helpless cripple, fooling around with loose women; bringing himself into a mess ^{and live} as this ~~man Orloog~~ had managed to do. ~~rather~~ Kind of stunning, isn't it.

At the first look you wouldn't even notice his blindness. Orloog gave the impression of a ^{any ordinary} respectable man in his early sixties. He was only fifty-four but looked older, with his ^{grayed} ^{graying} temples and sunken eyes. Rather dignified, in a ~~potty~~ way. A small town official, you'd say; or,

dusty

perhaps, a schoolmaster, or a man who owns a modest shop, somewhere in a provincial place - selling stationary and pencils, and religious booklets with colored illustrations. That's what Orloog looked like - fairly harmless, indeed.

And then, of course, you'd be struck by the sightless profundity of his eyes.

His blindness, if anything, can save him from the chair, mused the lawyer. I'll try to appeal to the sympathy of the jury...

"Don't be so damned stubborn, man!" he finally exclaimed, in ^{a voice} at once cheering and scolding ^{the for you're in} voice. "Don't you realize you're quite in a fix? I want to help you, Orloog. I'm paid for it, too. It's my job."

"I didn't pay you," Orloog observed, ^{dearly, proudly} looking exceedingly ^{laughy} satisfied.

"But your sister did," the lawyer said, ^{so} whereupon the prisoner shook his head with a curious smile - tender and absentminded. "Poor Amelie," he said softly; then added, somewhat cryptically: "My conscience is clean."

^{arguing} "So you had to commit two murders, ^{didn't} ~~hadn't~~ you?" The young jurist lost his temper: Orloog's rigid complacency got on his nerves. After all, the fellow was arrested for his second slaying, ^{only} ~~just~~ a few months after he had been released ^{on parole} from a San Francisco prison where he had been serving a life term for killing a woman.

"No, murder, if you please!" Orloog lifted his long, skinny forefinger with a strangely priest-like gesture - solemn and pedantic. "What happened in San Francisco was an accident: even the judges admitted that I didn't mean to kill her. And ^{as to my poor wife, Betty} ~~what happened in Chicago~~... (But) that's a different story."

^{accused on mistake} An accident? - The lawyer was ^{not} so sure. There was something weird about shooting a woman right into ^{the} her heart - by sheer accident and mistake.

The ^{attorney} ~~barrier~~, a conscientious young man, had ^{studied} perused most carefully ^{studied}

all records concerning the Orloog case he could get hold of. The defendant had come to this country as a young boy, with his mother and ~~his~~ older sister, Amelie. The family was Russian, but sometimes Orloog pretended that he was a Greek by origin, ^{He said he} and that his father used to ~~have~~ ^{run} a caféhouse in Athens, and later moved to Amsterdam, Holland, and that his mother was born in Bucharest. It was all very muddled and complicated. However, old Mr. Orloog was already dead when his family left Europe, and old Mrs. Orloog died a few months after her arrival in America. There was no money and young Orloog had to quit college. He had wanted to become a teacher or a priest but couldn't finish his studies. His sister Amelie was a dressmaker, and a fairly successful one, too. But when she began to make enough money to support her brother, it ~~already~~ was too late: his life was already ruined.

^{ruined? How?} As to the exact circumstances of the drama in San Francisco, there were many contradictory reports and interpretations. It took place at a wedding party ^{where} and everybody was pretty drunk. One of the fellows tried to tease Orloog, who had at that time a job as an inspector with one of the big shipping companies. His pals laughed ~~him~~ at him and called him "the professor", because he spent most of his spare time ~~and even parts of the nights~~ reading scholarly books and had nothing to do with girls. So at that wedding party they tried as usually to be funny at his expense, and made all sorts of wisecracks about his eyes, and that he would become blind because of his silly reading, ~~but it wouldn't make so much difference as he never looked at a girl,~~ ^{wasn't it?} ~~saying.~~ He told them how foolish they were, but didn't really mind; for he was accustomed to that kind of thing. It was only when one of the girls joined his merry tormentors that he lost his temper. She had been a bridesmaid at the ceremony and was conspicuously attractive, according to all testimonies - blond and fleshy and rather provocative looking. The whole party guffawed when she said to Orloog that, in her

check. He never touched the money; didn't spend a cent, during all these years. In fact, he was even too stingy to do something ^{about} for his eyes that became increasingly poor. ~~So~~ When he was released on parole because of his good behavior, after thirteen years, he had saved more than three thousand dollars, but ~~couldn't do anything~~ ^{had lost his sight}: he was totally blind.

One of the questions puzzling and disturbing the lawyer was this: Why did Orloog interrupt his trip in Chicago when he passed through that city, on his way from San Francisco to New York? Wouldn't it have been more natural for the blind, lonely man to continue his voyage and to join his sister who expected him in her Bronx apartment? She was the only friend he ^{had} possessed and had given him the most touching ^{proofs} ~~proofs~~ of her true devotion while he was in jail. He knew no ^{one} ~~seul~~ in Chicago, had no business there. What, then, held him back? He spent almost four weeks, quite alone, in a gloomy little hotel. It was only then, after four weeks of complete solitude, that he met Miss Betty. She had some job in a nightclub: the lawyer didn't precisely know in what sort of capacity - as a waitress or a singer or what ^(attendant of some sort). In any case, there she was when Orloog dropped in, one Sunday afternoon. He thought it was a regular restaurant and wanted to eat a bite. But it was no regular restaurant. Betty began a chat. "I knew at the very sound of her voice that she was the right woman for me," Orloog said. "I've always wished to get married. Every man does. All human beings are entitled to enjoy a certain minimum of happiness. So when I heard Betty's voice it was something like a miracle: she was the bit of happiness I had a right to ^{claim} ~~demand~~."

8 ~~They got married in Chicago, four weeks after their first meeting, and spent their honeymoon in Buffalo: Betty had insisted to go there, because of dear old mother. The blind husband was presented to her and also to a young fellow called Jim - ostensibly Betty's brother. Orloog said that he had a wonderful time with Betty, in Buffalo - almost dream-like, full of perfect delight. But it lasted only three days: then she~~

at 11 am 6-9-

where
They got married in Chicago, three weeks after their first meeting. Orloog grew quite rhapsodic when he described the ceremony and the hilarious celebration that followed. It must have been a grand and joyful affair, according to his account. The blind man revelled in detailed reminiscences of the opulent meal, the sparkling conversations, the glamorous gathering - twenty-seven people, as he stated pedantically; attractive girls and distinguished men. Finally everybody got drunk, including even the priest, and Betty kissed the groom in ~~front~~ front of the animated crowd. She also called him "sweetie" and announced that she wanted at least half a dozen babies ^{by} from him. An unforgettable festivity: Orloog never mentioned it without adding that it certainly ^(certainly) was the most beautiful experience of his life.

Did he remember?

factious?
The honeymoon was spent ⁱⁿ at Buffalo, ^{or going} Betty had insisted to go there because of her (dear old) mother. The blind husband was presented to that charming elderly lady and also to a young chap called Jim, ^{who Betty} - ~~osten~~ ^{was her} sibly Betty's brother. Orloog said that he had a wonderful time with Betty and her family. - ^{almost} dream-like, full of perfect delight. But it lasted only three days: ^{power} then she

vest off, with her -6-
left him taking his money along - all that ~~was~~ had remained of the three thousand dollars. That so-called brother of hers, Jim, ~~was~~ also disappeared. When Orloog begged Betty's mother to lend him ten dollars for the bus fare to New York City, she turned very angry and said she had nothing to do with all this: she wasn't Betty's mother and Jim wasn't Betty's ^{brother} - the whole affair was a hoax. So Orloog wired ~~his~~ his sister, and Amelie sent him twenty dollars, and he went to live with her, in the Bronx.

The lawyer knew Miss Orloog's home in the Bronx - two tiny rooms, a rather squalid dwelling. Kind of cozy, though - but in a lurid way. Crammed with hideous ^{knick-knacks} knick-knacks, artificial flowers, dusty souvenirs. And Miss Orloog - a pathetic old spinster, almost incredibly ugly - in the midst of this nightmarish set-up. The only bright spot in the two ghastly rooms was a huge reproduction of a woman's portrait. It was Betty - looking rather gorgeous, indeed, with her thick, pouting lips and her turned-up, impudent little nose; pompously dressed up in a long, pleated gown lavishly adorned with all sorts of fancy stuff - flowers, laces and veils. Her face under a luxurious richness of curled hair, beamed with a frozen, merciless smile.

Orloog had been living with his sister for three months or so when Betty's letter arrived: "Can you ever forgive me? I am longing for you."

"You were happy, weren't you, when you received that note?" the defender inquired.

Orlogg hesitated, shrugged his shoulders, finally declared: "I suppose I was - in a way."

"So you were still in love with her when you went to Chicago?"

"She was my wife," said Orloog, motionless and mysterious.

"Of course," the lawyer ^{quickly agreed} ~~said~~, and added ~~quickly~~ - following the scheme of the speech he prepared for the Gentlemen of the Jury: "But she constantly let you down; cheated and robbed you, didn't she? First in Buffalo, and then ~~in~~ again in Chicago. The first disappointment was that

she
failed to show up at the station. You had asked her to meet you at the train, but she didn't come. There you were - a blind, helpless man..."

"I didn't really expect her to show up," the defendant observed.

"But why, then, did you suggest ~~she~~ *she* should meet you?"

"It was a part of my plan," Orloog said - the upper part of his body bent forward, his sightless eyes fixed on the solicitor, who began to turn rather fidgety.

"Which plan, man? Don't talk riddles, to me! I'm in a hurry. After all, you're not the only client I have to look after."

"My plan to test and to tempt her. Every detail was prepared and calculated. I had discussed the whole scheme ~~me~~ with Amelie - ~~dozens~~ dozens and hundreds of times."

Did
"With your sister? ~~So~~ *she* knew what you were going to do?"

"I didn't know it myself," Orloog said - which made the investigator sigh with relief. His whole argument was based on the presupposition that the defendant had gone to Chicago, not in order to kill his wife, but with the intention ~~to resume~~ *of resuming* their married life.

single fudge
"It worked very well - my plan," the prisoner said, with a rather sinister smirk. "I took a cab and ~~told~~ told the driver where I wanted to go. I knew, of course, what kind of a face he'd make when he heard that filthy address. ~~But I tried to look quite innocent when I told him the name of the street and the number.~~ Boy, was he surprised! Yessir, alright sir - he'd say, and then ~~hesitated~~ *hesitated*, and said, once again: 'As you wish, sir; I just wonder, he said, if it's the right place to go - for a man in your condition. What do you mean - a man in my condition? I'd ask him. Why, your eyes, sir, he said, and I almost ~~chuckled~~ *laughed* because he was so embarrassed. ~~how~~ *he* could ~~hear~~ how he blushed - poor fellow! It's a very gay place, sir, he said. Plenty of girls there. Pretty girls, too. But you couldn't see them. - So I told him he shouldn't worry: I ~~had~~ *just had* some business to do there, and he said, It's alright with me, but when we arrived ~~there~~ he still

seemed kind of puzzled; looked at my handbag and said, 'Do you want to stay over night here, sir, do you want me to carry your stuff inside, or shouldn't I rather come back, in an hour or so, and pick you up and take you to some clean place.' So I gave him a tip and told him to come back in an hour or so: for, you see, I was pretty sure that everything would be over in about an hour. 'But the bag isn't heavy,' I said, 'I can carry it, ~~thanks~~. In fact, it was pretty light - just the knife, and the money, and a few things for the night, and, of course, the Bible.'

There was a silence. Orloog seemed absorbed in memories. He recalled the tinny voice of the colored girl ~~who~~ ^{the} opened the door, ~~the~~ door of that sordid house where Betty had been leading her sinful, scandalous life. The girl ~~ask~~ ^{ed} him whom he wanted to see, and he said that he had a date with Miss Betty, and then there was the sultry air in the lobby - full of vulgar perfumes, the sickening smell of sweat and gin and of dusty plush and girls with no clothes on, and the smell of the faded flowers the girls wore in their hair. The colored ~~girl~~ ^{maid} showed him up to Miss Betty's room. He had to wait there, for ten minutes or so, and he used the time to explore the room - touching the furniture, the draperies and the mirror; the flowers, the cushions, the bottles with perfume, her lipstick, her slippers, her nightgown that laid spread out on her couch - a fine garment of heavy silk: "must have cost quite some money," observed Orloog, while a sensual, wistful smile momentarily altered his features.

(the her tempestuous) Everything was almost precisely as he had figured it ~~could be her~~ ^{the air in the room, and} entrance, ~~too, corresponded with his expectations.~~ He had known that she would be a little tight, and that the scent of her hair would be mixed with the smell of liquor. She kissed him - exactly with that sort of casual vehemence he had anticipated - and said, very hastily: "Here you are, sweet, good to see you again, how is everything, have a drink, why didn't you help yourself, here's the bottle, can't you see, oh, I forgot - you can't! so sorry, sweetie, what kind of a trip ~~do~~ did you have, pretty warm here,

it's fun to have you ~~here~~, though - why don't you say something, I was longing for you, sugar, your little wife has been very lonely...

Then she kissed him again, and he touched that dry hair of hers - that curly mane dangerously charged with electricity.

"Was she very drunk?" asked the lawyer.

"No more than usually," ~~Orlago said.~~ She was pretty tight, all right. That's why she kissed me so long and opened her mouth when she kissed me. She only opens her mouth when she has had quite a few drinks before."

"And then? After she had kissed you? Did she tell you that she wanted to live with you again?"

single quotes?
P12 VP
"She said, Now I have you again, sweetie, you look fine, honest you do, don't forget we're married. I said that I don't forget anything because I have a pretty good memory. I remember everything - about Buffalo, for instance: and if I lived ^a to be hundred, I wouldn't forget what you have done to me. That's what I said to her - and then, of course, she tried to pull over her old tricks - innocent faces, you know, and that baby talk: What d'you mean, honey? What's wrong? Kiss your little wife! But I didn't kiss her again and told her that the old woman had confessed everything: that she ^{wasn't} Betty's mother, and Jim ^{wasn't} her brother, and that the whole gang had cheated me - cheated and robbed and fooled me. This made her terribly mad, she ~~smashed~~ ^{smashed} a glass at the floor, and rushed around and cried. That old bitch, she screamed, I've paid her ten bucks, how does she have the nerve, stinking old ^{rat} ~~bitch~~ she is. But then, all of a sudden, she changed, and turned very sweet again, and put her arms around my neck, and said we should forget about all that nasty stuff: it was all a joke - and, anyway, it's over, so let's forget and have fun."

say anything about
"Didn't you ~~ask her what had happened with~~ those two thousand five hundred dollars she'd stolen from you? ~~Didn't you try to find out?~~"

"What for? I wanted her to believe that I fell again for her swindle. This was a part of my plan. And it worked nicely, too." There was a bleak

triumph in his voice as he slowly continued:

"I told her, I'll stay with you - tonight, and tomorrow, and always; and she giggled, and said, That's swell, so you still love me, ^{big boy} that's fine. It's funny that you love me so, she said - and suddenly turned very serious, and yet you don't know what I look like, how ^{pretty} ~~goodlooking~~ I am, ~~you don't~~ ^{not} even ~~know~~ the color of my hair, you are blind. I can see you, Betty, I said. I can see you with my fingertips and with my mouth and my body. That's funny, she said. So you can see me with your fingertips. Sounds kind of exciting, doesn't it. Let's go to bed, she said. It's kind of late. I'm tired. And she yawned and sat down on the couch. It's a hard life, she said, a very hard ^{one} I'm leading. Let's go together, somewhere, I've always been fond of the country, she said. Cows, and flowers, and all that. Let's go somewhere. I'm sick and tired of that place, and of Chicago, and of everything. I said, We'll talk it over tomorrow, and would she be good enough to open my suitcase for me and to unpack my stuff for the night. She said something like, O.K., boss, in a funny little voice; ^{or} very tired it sounded. And then she opened the bag. This was the decisive moment."

"What do you mean - the decisive moment?"

"The moment she saw the money - and she saw the knife."

"What has the knife to do with your ~~future~~ plan?" The lawyer's voice sounded as if there were a lump in his throat choking him.

"Without the knife," Orloog explained, "my whole scheme might have failed. First she saw the money - three brandnew hundred dollar-bills, neatly displayed next to my old slippers. This was the first temptation. That she grabbed the money - the three hundred bucks Amelie had lent me - was pretty wicked, ^{all} ~~air~~right. But it was not sufficient ^{proof} prove of her basic wickedness. Not enough to condemn her. She had to go further. She had to reveal the whole meanness of her character. That's what I needed the knife for: to find out if she would dare turn it against the man who had loved her so ^{much} and from whom she had stolen everything he possessed."

"Sounds kind of melodramatic, doesn't it." The lawyer made an effort to appear flippant and detached, but ~~it sounded a little forced.~~

"It was all very simple," the defendant said. "First I heard how she stooped to grab the money - the suppressed sound of her panting breath as she stood there in that stooping attitude: big, fat woman she is - , and then the faint crackling of silk as ^{she} put Amelie's hundred dollar-bills into her ^{inside} ~~clammy~~ décolleté. Give me that money, I said; for I felt I ought to be fair and give her a chance to repent her sin. But it was too late, I suppose. She couldn't go back any more: the Evil One already had grip of her - completely. ~~Not, I gave her another chance to save her life and her immortal soul, and asked her, once again, to not so steel my money - Amelie's money, the instrument of temptation, the Devil's bait to prove her wickedness.~~ Which money, sugarmops? she asked, ~~and what a nasty little voice she had!~~ Sugarmops... She'd never used that foolish expression before. Sugarmops... kind of idiotic, isn't it. I wonder if she made it up, just at that moment - ~~just invented it~~ when I asked her to hand me over that money - ~~out~~ just invented it, out of sheer malice and fear and badness..."

He sat still, for two minutes or so. Then he produced, quite surprisingly, a brief, rasping sound like a sob. But when he began to talk again, his ^{voice} ~~soun~~-ded normal - only a little hoarse as if he had been silent for a much longer time. "Well," he said - and the defender was struck by the impression that there was a sudden flash of phosphorescent light in the ^{shady} ~~depth~~ of his ~~shady~~ eyes - , "finally she got tired of lying and turned very rude, and shouted at me - calling me all sorts of names, blind bastard, and crippled hypocrite, and what not. How do you have the nerve to tell me that I stole your foul money, she ~~said~~ ^{cried}. Even if I had - you wouldn't see it, hideous freak you are! So I asked her to stop this outrageous talk. Cut it out! I said. I warn you, Babette Orloog! Don't go too far. Don't forget it's your husband you are talking to. There are certain things no woman should tell her husband. 'To her husband?!' - You should have heard her voice, Mr. Attorney,

- that terrible voice of hers as she cried out these words - three times, four times, again and again; repeating them like a lunatic; yelling, shrieking, hurling them - 'To her husband! What a joke! To her husband...' And her laughter! *a laugh to give you the shivers.* ~~the monstrous laugh of the hell~~ Obviously, she was possessed by the Devil - raving with wickedness, all beside herself. If she ~~would have~~ *had* been in her senses - why should she have told me, frenzied with wantonness, what I had only guessed and wondered about, but hadn't really known, up to that horrible moment? 'What a joke!' she screamed. 'Husband! he believes it! What a fool he is! what a dope! What an idiot you are!' she guffawed. 'What a halfwit - with all your books! To believe that ~~it~~ *he* really married a blind guy, an ex-convict, a crippled murderer, ~~with a voice like a priest,~~ a filthy bore, a lousy hypocrite!' So I jumped at her and choked her and asked her to explain what she meant - if she wasn't my wife, and didn't belong to me, and if ~~wasn't~~ *wasn't* her husband. She had just enough breath to pant, No, I am not your wife... No no no, she gasped, I've fooled you, old dope, the ceremony was faked, everything was swindle - the priest was faked, and the official, and the guests - they were friends of mine: whores ~~as I am one,~~ *like me,* and their pimps, and my pimps: they sure ~~were having fun~~ got a kick of it, the whole gang of them, if you could only have seen them, blind son of bitch! If you had seen the funny faces they made, and the dirty things ~~that went on~~ *they're doing* while you were sitting there, at the end of the table - the happy groom, the dignified husband, the fool... the fool... the fool..."

The lawyer was dumbfounded (with surprise). It took a few seconds before he managed to speak. "The ceremony was faked? She wasn't really your wife?... But, man! - that changes the entire picture. Why didn't you tell me, right in the beginning?"

There was no answer. Orloog's thoughts and his darkened eyes seemed to wander into remote and sinister regions - exploring the lurid mysteries of inaccessible landscapes. It was only when the defender repeated his ~~same~~ question, that he murmured at last: "I don't know. Kind of ashamed,

I suppose."

The lawyer shook his head - musing over this new angle which seemed apt ^{liberal} to upset the ~~base~~ ^{charge his whole defense} fundamental approach of his speech. Didn't Betty's incredible depravity almost justify Orloog's action? At least, it yielded a lot of priceless mitigating circumstances. The discovery of this abominable deceit must have ^{violently} shocked and excited the blind man, ~~to a degree that made him virtually irresponsible in the legal sense of the word.~~ There he was - happy to embrace ^{the woman} ~~what~~ he believed to be his legitimate wife...

"I knew it all along," Orloog's hollow voice interrupted the swift speculations of the ambitious young solicitor. "At the bottom of my heart I've always known that there was something fishy about that wedding party. I wasn't so very surprised when she told me. It was rather her impudence that ^{got} ~~surprised~~ me - ^{that of hers, the shrill, shameless voice} ~~the~~ brassy air ~~she had when she hurled her sordid confession, right into my face...~~ She was even worse than I'd thought. She didn't feel sorry - not she. She enjoyed her sin. 'That was a good one!' she boasted. 'The smartest, funniest trick I've ever pulled.' And now, beat it!" she said to me. 'And more snappy than that!' I asked her, for the last time, to give me back that money: I would leave, if she did, and she'd never see me again. But this was enough to make her mad again. 'It's my money,' she screamed at the top of her voice. 'You owe it to me - after all I've done for you. Why do you think I went to bed with you? For the fun of it, I suppose? Don't you realize it's my business? Three-hundred bucks is certainly not too much,' she said, 'considering ^{what sort of a guy you are.} ~~the way you look and you talk.~~' She had all forgotten about the two thousand five hundred, so I reminded her, and I shook her shoulders. It was terrible, because her shoulders were so soft and so beautiful... But her voice was plenty hard ~~and shrill~~ when she shouted at me: 'Don't touch me, old murderer, or I'll scratch out what remains of your ugly eyes!' But I kept shaking her and asking for the money: so she lifted that knife - she'd been holding it all the time. But now she lifted it and suddenly hissed at me - with no voice at all - : 'Here is your money, sweetpie.'

And she wanted to stab me, with my own knife. But I was faster than she: of course I was, as I had prepared myself for this moment and exercised every movement, for so many weeks. I didn't say a word - just wrested the knife away from her and pushed her back, and then I [^]threw the knife."

"So you've actually killed her in self-defense?" asked the lawyer, ~~very seriously~~ ^{cheerfully}. "She would have killed you if you hadn't done what you did."

"She might have tried to, ^{all} ~~all right~~." The prisoner had a brief nasal laugh - scornful and abrupt. "I don't think she'd a chance to succeed, though. Was kind of clumsy, you know. No skill, no training, no discipline. And then, she was drunk as hell."

"You're pretty slow, man! Don't you see what I'm driving at?" The young defender seemed exceedingly animated - suddenly refreshed ^{me} (as) by new hope. "What you've just told ^{me} - first, that she'd faked the wedding ceremony; second, that she was on the point of killing you when you threw the knife - means a tremendous improvement of your situation - unless you're going to ruin your own chances with silly, (disturbing) twaddle. Now, listen to me, Orloog, and try to understand what I say, ~~to you~~. The cardinal point of my pleading will be the fact that you've acted in self-defense..."

"Cut it out, brother!" the prisoner interrupted him in a grave, ominous voice. "I don't need a defender, and I've told you so right from the beginning. I have eliminated a piece of rot, and that's all there is to it. A smiling, smelling, sweet and scandalous piece of sin and ~~filth~~ filth. I have wiped it out. This was ^{the} right thing to do. In fact, precisely the ^{Kind} of thing the Lord appreciates and enjoys."

The advocate shrugged his shoulders. "The Lord - perhaps. As to the wordly authorities..."

"The wordly authorities must ~~not~~ not interfere with the sacred will of the Lord. And if they do - it's just too bad for them. The lord will come down on them with his sword and his fire. ~~I don't give a damn~~ I don't care what they do to me. I am not afraid."

"But why, then, didn't you report to the police, right away? Why did you leave the house where you had committed the crime, and asked the driver who'd been waiting for you, to take you to the bus station, ^{why did you take a} and took the bus for New York? ^{and} It was only when they arrested you, right here, in Manhattan, that you admitted your deed. What did you try to escape for - since you are not afraid?"

X "Because I had to embrace my good sister, and had to give her back those three-hundred bucks, and to tell her that everything had worked nicely, according to our plan. The scandal has been stamped out. The vicious woman is dead. I've watched her dying. I've touched her shoulders and her lips and her breasts, and have waited until she began to get cold. It took quite a bit of time, too. Somebody might have come and discover ^{me}, but I didn't care. I sat down on her bed and waited. It was kind of unpleasant, because of that sickening music that came up from downstairs. I hadn't heard it before ~~not when I arrived~~ : may have been too ^{nervous} excited, too much absorbed ⁱⁿ my plan. But now, when she was dead and ~~there~~ there was nothing to do but to wait until she'd get cold - now I heard the music. It sounded so sweet and nasty: I thought it would make me vomit. The kind of music, you know, they use to attract and to excite each other; the sinful tootle, the repulsive stuff... ~~I had to think all the time of what was going on, down there, while I sat her and guarded Betty's body. I knew it only too well - the sordid performance they give, accompanied by that appalling singing and swinging and chirping...~~ Just when I was on the point of going - for Betty's lips and hands had already got pretty cold - they played her favourite tune - a silly little something: she used to whistle and to hum it, all the time..."

There was a stillness. The young lawyer wondered if it wasn't advisable to plead mental irresponsibility in the Orloog case. But he abandoned this idea as he had another look at his client. The haggard man seemed to grow - to become enormous in the eerie twilight of the prison

cell.

"She sang it when I first met her, in that sordid joint," he said slowly, in a deep, woeful voice. "And at our beautiful wedding party, and in Buffalo - she sang it everywhere. Now that orchestra played it, down= stairs. But she couldn't open her mouth, couldn't move her lips. She was numb and stiff and already pretty cold. In silence she atoned for her many tricks and songs and her many sins."

He was silent too. It took a long time until he spoke again - and the lawyer somehow felt that these were the last words he would hear from him:

"I don't care what they'll do to me. The chair or a life term - I don't give a dam. I am through. This is an evil world. I have seen enough."

He covered the sightless holes of his eyes with a big, heavy hand - a strangely inhuman hand with prominent bluish veins and short, spatular fingers, as if made of wood, lead, and iron - a callous tool to inflict pain and the revenge and the punishment.

X

Inquiry

"I am your friend, Orloog!" The young lawyer ~~said~~ and wiped off the sweat from his forehead. "You ought to trust me. I am your defender."

"I ^{don't want a} ~~want no~~ defender," said the prisoner. "I told them that I don't. ^{He was squabbling} ~~I've confessed everything. Everything is clear.~~ ^{motionless on the} ~~Everything is clear.~~ ^{abandon of his position}

The lawyer sighed; lighted himself a cigarette and offered one to ^{the} prisoner. Orloog refused with solemn determination: "I don't smoke. ~~Thank you, Mr. attorney.~~ ^{7:45 black} ^{... twilight ...}

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders, put ~~the~~ the cigarette case back into ~~the pocket of~~ his coat pocket, and remained silent for several minutes. This man Orloog, he thought, was the most stubborn criminal he'd ever had to defend. What made the case so particularly ^{Mr. Basson's} unpleasant was the fact that the man was totally blind. Didn't see a thing; all experts agreed upon it. Quite an impressive fellow! - if one thought of it...: travelling about by himself, from ~~the Bronx~~ ^{San F.} to Chicago; from ~~San Francisco~~ ^{to N.Y.} to Buffalo - always with that heavy blackness before his eyes. Obviously, it required a great deal of will-power to remain active and alert, under ~~the~~ such conditions...

At the first look you wouldn't even notice his blindness. ~~He~~ Orloog gave the impression of a respectable ^{man} ~~chap~~ in his early sixties - very neatly dressed, dignified and a bit pedantic. A minor official in a little town, you'd say; or, perhaps, a schoolmaster, or a man who owns a modest shop, somewhere in a provincial place - selling stationary, and pencils, and religious booklets with colored illustrations. That's what Orloog looked like. ^{fairly handsome, indeed.} A little dusty, narrow-minded, complacent - with his tightly closed lips, the bony face, dominated by an imposing aquiline.

And then, of course, you'd be struck by that sightless ^{profoundity} ~~look~~ of his ^{too} ~~eyes~~. There was something weird and rather frightening about his ^{dextrous} ~~skillful~~, almost elegant movements - once you had realized that the man was blind. You couldn't watch him without apprehension when he was tying

"I know," said the lawyer said. He felt...

The air in the cell was so dry.

"You ought to trust me," the lawyer said.

A moment, what a human being ^{if what things of it} ~~seeing~~ ^{and} ~~accomplish~~!

The prisoner's voice sounded strangely hollow — at least ~~then~~ ^{at first} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~nothing~~ ^{was} ~~not~~ ^{very} ~~pleasant~~ ^{pleasant}.
and ~~nothing~~ ^{rather} ~~his~~ ^{this} ~~impression~~ ^{impression} but a

He was symmetrical — the features of his body, his face ^{blending} ~~and~~ ^{distinct} in the black twilight of the narrow room.

He concluded with a sort of blank satisfaction.

And so exasperatingly ~~simple~~ ^{simple}! thought himself a paragon of virtue and fortitude. Did not ~~know~~ ^{know} to ~~know~~ ^{know} how to ~~be~~ ^{be} a ~~Reformed~~ ^{Reformed} ~~criminal~~ ^{criminal}? It was quite fascinating to watch his fingers wandering, swiftly and ~~surely~~ ^{surely} along the lines of prominent ~~lines~~ ^{lines}.

with low mind skid

his necktie or was cutting a piece of meat. It was astounding how he handled the fork and the knife.

His blindness if anything may save him from the chair, ^{man's} ~~thought~~ the lawyer ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~ingly~~ absorbed in the sight of his restive protégé. It's the only chance he has got. I must try to appeal to the sympathy of the jury...

"Don't be so damned obstinate, man!" he finally exclaimed in an at once cheering and scolding voice. ^{Don't that I want you to realize you're quite in a fix?} "You realize you're quite in a fix?"

"My conscience is clean," Orloog said, looking exceedingly dignified. "I have done what I had to do." ^{in a hollow, barking, voice}

"So you had to commit two murders, had you?!" The young jurist lost his temper ^{this Orloog's complicity may get on his nerves!} but only for one moment. Presently he pulled himself together and turned calm and friendly again. "I know, of course, you didn't mean to kill your wife when you stabbed her. The knife hit her at that unfortunate spot because you couldn't see where you were throwing it. The jury will appreciate this fact - on account of your blindness..."

^{every word you say is a filthy lie,} "Orloog declared, in his hollow, barking voice. "Betty was not my wife, to begin with. You know that the ceremony was faked. I wouldn't have stabbed her if she'd been my wife."

^{The lawyer wanted to interrupt him, but Orloog continued, pedantically,} with a ~~grave~~ ^{pedantic} solemn gesture of his skinny hand: "The second lie is that I didn't mean to kill her when I threw that knife. I knew precisely which spot of her body to aim at. I was familiar enough with Betty's ^{loins} ~~body~~ - and besides, I've practiced the whole thing, over and over again - with that dummy, in my sister's house."

"A dummy? What are you talking about?" The solicitor shuddered a little. The idea of that blind fanatic throwing knives at a dummy as preparation of his murderous plan - it was just a little too much, ~~to take~~ ^{for the} The young man felt rather sick for a moment. He helped himself to a glass of water. Then he continued the investigation, patient and composed.

^{Arrested. His doesn't seem to be staying in the prison for more than a few months.}
A parolee - his second

My mind is full of this for it, I'm afraid. 445 my 7-0-6.

- when upon the person ~~that~~ a
~~radiant~~ smile ~~shook~~ his head
with a radiant smile - "Poor Andy"
and absent-minded -
he said softly "Then God will
forgive him"

Also all the fellow was
a ~~man~~ ^{was} ~~in~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{for} his second
slaying ~~a~~ ~~also~~ - but
it was just a few months
ago that he had been released
from a S.F. prison

"No murder!" O'Loon asserted
the big defender, lifting his
long, skinny, forefinger with
a ~~dedication~~ ^{streaming} ~~streaming~~ ^{pietistic}
gesture - solemn and pious.

"Where did you hide that dummy?"

"I didn't hide it at all. It's in my sister's apartment."

"But the police didn't find anything when they searched the place."

Orloog chuckled a little. "Then she's probably burned it," he declared, heartily amused by his sister's exaggerated caution. "Silly old girl she is."

The young barrister remembered the ^(sinister) ~~sinister~~ little flat where Miss Orloog lived: he had been there several times. It was Miss Orloog who ~~had~~ insisted ~~on her brother~~ that her brother should have a private defender, ^{and} she paid the fee in advance. A curious creature, that Miss Orloog - ^{almost incredibly ugly;} kind of sinister, too. Obviously, she adored her brother. Had supported him, during all these years, when he was in jail serving a life term for killing a woman, nine years ago. That pathetic old spinster, Miss Orloog, would send him fifty dollars, every month. But he never touched it. Never drank or smoked, ^{wasn't too stingy to buy himself glasses} ~~never~~ bought anything; didn't spend a cent - during all these years. So when he ~~came out~~ ^{was released because} of his good behaviour, he had saved something like ^{about} five thousand dollars, ~~even a little more~~. He had a ~~little~~ fortune, all right; but he couldn't see anything. His eyes had been pretty poor before he was sent to prison, and while serving his term he became totally blind.

A remarkable case, indeed! - the young lawyer recapitulated the essential facts as far as he had knowledge of them.

Orloog was a young fellow ^{but poor} when he came to this country, ^{as a poor boy,} with his mother and his older sister, ^{Auntie.} ~~Adelaide~~. The family was Russian, but sometimes Orloog ~~suddenly~~ pretended that he was really a Greek, and his father had ~~an~~ extensive business in Athens but later moved to Amsterdam, and his mother was born in Bucharest. It was all very muddled and complicated. However, ^{was already dead when his family arrived} old Mr. Orloog ~~remained~~ in the old country, and old Mrs. Orloog died a few months after her arrival in America. There was no money and young Orloog

" You wouldn't call an accident
a murder. And

What happened in S.F. was
an accident: even the
judges admit that. It
didn't mean to kill.
And what happened in
Alb. — but that is a
different story.

An accident? — The lawyer
was not so sure. There was something
wrong about this shooting a
woman, right into her bed —
by sheer accident. Not meant.
You say, he was too stupid
to do anything like this,
yes that firearm was really
bad.

had to quit college. He wanted to become a teacher but couldn't continue his studies ~~and so renounced the idea~~. His sister ~~Adelaide~~ ^{Amelia} was a dressmaker and a fairly successful one, too. But when she began to make enough money to support her brother, ~~it already was too late: the~~ ^{his life was already} "accident" in San Francisco had already happened. ^{his life was ruined}

"The accident": this was the term Orloog obstinately employed when referring to his first ~~crime~~ ^{murder}. At that time, ~~he had a job in the harbour~~ ^{who was at that time} of San Francisco and was a man in his early forties. (He looked much older now than his actual age, which was only 54.) ^{with his summary and of very few} The young lawyer had perused very carefully the records of Orloog's first trial. All witnesses agreed upon the serious and reliable character of the defendant. ^{for conversation and} Among his colleagues he had the reputation of being reserved, rather smug and almost incredibly learned, but besides a pretty decent guy. They used to tease him because he spent most of his spare time, and even parts of his nights, ~~with~~ reading scholarly books. The unanimous opinion of his fellow-workers was that he should have become a professor and always resented he had to renounce this career. "He has studied too much," they said. "That's how he ruined his eyes." ^{in S.F.}

As to the exact circumstances of the drama itself, there were many contradictory reports and interpretations. It took place at a wedding party, and everybody was pretty drunk. One of the fellows tried to be funny about Orloog, ~~and his many books and that he had no girl~~ ^{- that he was reading}. They flouted at him and said that he had no sweetheart and nothing - only books, and that he would turn blind with all his reading, ~~and but it wouldn't make~~ ^{too} the much difference, for he didn't ~~even~~ look at girls, anyway. ^{not 11/12} One of the girls - she had been a bridesmaid at the ceremony - was particularly witty and insisted Orloog should close his eyes and then tell if she was fair or dark: "I'd bet he hasn't even noticed the color of my hair!" ^{he} She was a very attractive girl, according to all testimonies: blond and fleshy and rather provocative looking.

They just wanted to tease Orloog; nobody had intended to hurt or to offend him. In fact, the general mood was so harmless that everybody laughed when Orloog suddenly produced a gun and declared that he was sick and tired of being pestered that way, and that he was going to prove there was nothing wrong with his eyes: he would shoot a hole into a picture hanging ~~directly~~ on the wall directly behind the attractive ~~banterer~~. The painting showed a voluptuous naked lady with a fat white bird. It was called, "Leda and the Swan." - "I'll aim at her bosom," Orloog announced. The girl ~~said~~, O.K., I am not afraid. The whole crowd applauded: ~~none of them~~ ^{nobody} believed that the gun was loaded. And then he shot - but not at Leda's bosom.

The girl died right away. He had hit her heart with uncanny exactitude.

Many of the witnesses later indicated that they had watched him when he aimed at the bridemaid's breast. But he insisted that he hadn't killed her on purpose: "I wanted to scare her, that's all. She was too luxuriant, to ^a beautiful, too ~~wicked~~; I had to teach her a lesson. But to kill her? - Never!"

Everything turned upside down - Orloog said - when he tried to aim at Leda's painted breasts. The living girl seemed petrified, while Leda beckoned and grinned, and then the whole room was filled with a dense smoke - a ~~foggy~~ darkness swallowing both women and all other guests and finally himself. ...

There were some enigmatic points ~~quite~~ in Orloog's biography - quite a few curious puzzled. One of the questions ~~that intrigued~~ the lawyer was this: Why did Orloog interrupt his trip in Chicago when he passed through that city on his way from San Francisco to New York? Wouldn't it have been more natural for the blind, lonely man to continue the voyage and to join his sister who expected him in her Bronx apartment? She was the only ~~faithful~~ friend he possessed and had given him the most touching proves of her true devotion while he was in jail.

There was a terrible darkness,
said 6,100. "And then, 11:00: we
had 500

While he was in jail, his
sister sent him money from
a check of fifty dollars.

He knew no soul in Chicago - had no business there. What, then, held him back? He spent almost four weeks, quite alone, in a gloomy little hotel. It was only then, after four weeks of complete solitude, that he met Miss Betty. She was working at that time in a nightclub: the lawyer didn't precisely ^{know if she work} in what sort of capacity - as a waitress or a singer or what. Orloog ^{was in} dropped by there, one afternoon, when the place was empty, as he thought it was a restaurant and wanted to eat a bit. Betty began a chat - "and I knew at the very sound of her voice that she was the right woman for me," Orloog said.

He always seemed a little mystic and evasive when he spoke of ~~this~~ this first and decisive meeting. Apparently he was having forebodings as to an event of this kind when he stopped at Chicago. "It was bound to happen - once," he observed cryptically. ^{My wife always wished to get married} Every human being is entitled to enjoy a certain minimum of happiness. So when I ^{found} ~~saw~~ Betty, ^{and} it was something like a miracle: she was the bit of happiness I had a right to ^{make} demand."

~~The defender was always was slightly embarrassed when the blind murderer spoke about having "seen" anything - a woman's face or a bunch of dollar bills or a knife. "Why do you always pretend having seen this or that?" he once asked him, cruel and irritated and cruel. Whereupon Orloog had a mysterious smile: "Do you think it's only with his eyes that a man can see? I have seen Betty with my fingertips, with my hair, with my lips, with my entire body. I have smelled her, I have heard her voice, I have known her laughter and her tears and her blood. I have seen everything she has - and even what she tried to hide from me: I have seen it."~~

The lawyer was inclined to believe that Betty may have resembled the woman Orloog had killed at Frisco. ~~No doubt, both victims must have been of a similar type - fair, fleshy, and exceedingly vulgar.~~ There was no portrait of the San Francisco woman; but the solicitor knew ~~had~~ seen two pictures of Betty: one of them showing her shortly before the time

when she met Orloog made her acquaintance. ~~the other photo was taken~~
~~two hours after her death. In the first picture~~ she looked rather gorgeous,
indeed - with her thick, pouting lips, and her turned-up, impudent little
nose; ^{so young} ~~and~~ dressed up in a long, pleated gown lavishly adorned with all
sorts of fancy stuff - flowers, laces and veils. Her face, under a luxuriant
~~and~~ richness of curled hair, ~~seemed~~ beamed with a frozen, ~~soulless~~ smile.

Her features seemed more relaxed, more natural, indeed, more human in the
second photo. It was taken two hours after her death. She ^{lay} ~~was~~ on the a
couch ~~of her room~~ - exactly ^{in the pose} as Orloog had left her. The knife was still
sticking in the midst of her left breast. Her head had glided sideways
from the pillow - just a little bit, as it sometimes happens to people
soundly asleep. ~~She seemed~~ restful and calm; there were no traces of
struggle - no distortions, not disorder, no blood. Her face - ageless,
tragic and proud - had assumed a sort of inaccessible beauty that she
had utterly lacked in life.

~~"She has atoned," Orloog said, in that grave, hollow voice of his, as~~
~~he and the lawyer stared together at the dead woman's picture.~~

"But you didn't want to kill her!" The defender said it almost implo-
ringly. The entire scheme of his plead depended on this basic presupp-
osition: that the defendant had not planned the murder when he returned to
Chicago.

^{W 6/11/01} ^{Orloog's brother}
~~All facts seemed to testify to this theory.~~ Orloog went to Chicago
in order ^{They had married in Chicago, only a few weeks after} to resume his married life with Betty. She had asked him to
come. He received her reconciliatory letter precisely three months after
she had abandoned him, on their honeymoon. This happened in Buffalo:
Betty had insisted to go there, because of her ^{For and spent time} dear old mother. "Sweet,
old Mommie has such a cute little house, just in the center of Buffalo,"
Betty said. And her blind lover ^{very soon} ~~followed~~ believed her.

In Buffalo, he was presented to an elderly lady who said she was Betty's
mother. There also was a young fellow called Jim: Betty said that he was

^{Sh. like him taking his}
^{money along - 46. 53000...}

√* If he would only be a
little more talkative as
to circumstances

" ~~There was a~~ ^{evening} took
place in Chicago

" Yes

" And the

" Honey moon Took money

Left in

" Stole it

" Will yes

They got married in Chicago,
four weeks after their first
meeting
who lived

The blond husband was pointed to be
also to a young fellow
who by the name of
who probably said was his brother.

her brother and Orloog had to kiss him. There was a great deal of whispering and giggling going on between Betty and Jim and also between Betty and Mommie. And Jim asked Orloog if he wasn't mighty happy and proud ^{to} have found such a lovely wife, and if the official who had married them had a long white beard. Orloog said, I don't know, I am blind; "but," he said, "I did see that Betty blushed when I gave her the ring, and that she looked more beautiful than ever." And then there were gales of laughter.

But at night, when Orloog was alone with his wife, she turned serious and tender, and asked him again if he was happy, and how much he loved her, and if he appreciated what she was doing for him: "Not many women would take a fellow like you - a convicted murderer, released ~~from~~ on parole from prison... But I happen to like you," she said, and kissed him, and he said, "I am so grateful to you. I am very happy."

The next morning she had disappeared, and Jim had gone with her. She had taken along all the money he had saved in prison - his little fortune, \$ 5000. When he begged Betty's mother to lend him ^{ten} ~~twenty~~ dollars for the bus fare to New York City, she turned very angry and said she had nothing to do with all this: the whole affair was a hoax. She wasn't Betty's mother, and Jim wasn't Betty's brother, and Orloog was not her husband. The ceremony in Chicago ~~had been~~ was faked. The whole gang of Betty's friends had participated in the ruthless deceit - playing bridemaids and relatives and officials.

Betty had cheated and robbed him.

He wired to his sister, and ^{Amy} ~~Adelaide~~ wired him twenty dollars, and he went to live with her in the Bronx. ^{Orloog had been living with her.} And then, three months later, Betty's letter arrived: "Can you forgive me, dearest? I am longing for you."

"You were happy, weren't you, when you received that note?" the young lawyer inquired.

Orloog hesitated ~~and mused~~. "Yes," I suppose I was," he declared at last.

Oslooy said that he had
a wonderful time in the lake -
quite dream-like and, full
of cloud best joy.
My ~~heart~~ last night and day!
You truly love him, taking

Das ist ja ein
Punkt sind Sie ja der Tatsachen
sagen dass was auch immer
besser werden

"So you still were in love with her when you went to Chicago?"

"She was my wife," Orloog said cryptically.

"And when you arrived at Chicago," the jurist asked eagerly, "she dis-
appointed you, didn't she? You came with the best of intentions - ready
to forgive everything she had done to you: but she frustrated her gene-
rous purposes. The first disappointment was that she failed to show up
at the station. You had asked her to ^{meet at the train} ~~fetch~~ you but she didn't come.
There you stood - a blind, helpless man..."

"I didn't really ^{expect her to show up} believe she would come," the defendant observed,

"But why, then, did you suggest she should meet you?" The lawyer ^{was on the point of} ~~was~~
^{losing his} ~~rather~~ exasperated by the mysterious pose of the prisoner.

"It was a part of my plan," the defendant declared - the upper part
of his body bent forward, his sightless eyes fixed on the solicitor, who
began to turn rather fidgety. ^{... he teetered on foot up}
^{and down impatiently ...}

"Which plan, Orloog? Don't talk ~~me~~ riddles to me! I am in a hurry,
man. ~~after all,~~ you're not the only client I have to look after..."

"My plan to tempt and to test her. Every detail was prepared and
calculated. Nothing was left to chance. I had discussed the whole scheme
with ^{Adelaide} ~~Adelaide~~, dozens and hundreds of times."

"With ^{you - OK} ~~Adelaide~~? The lawyer seemed extremely interested in this new
angle. "So she knew what you were going to do?"

"I didn't know it myself," Orloog said - which made the investigator
sigh with relief. "How could I know what I was going to do? It all de-
pended on Betty."

"So you did not intend to kill her?"

"I intended to tempt and to test her," the accused insisted. "This
was my task and my duty. I had promised it to the good man in the San
Francisco penitentiary."

"Whom did you promise - what?"

"The good man over there - our boss in jail. 'Look after yourself,'

Orloog

the ^{lawyer} ~~jurist~~ and asked ^{uneasily} ~~hastily~~
 I said, the scheme of the
 following: ~~that he was the~~
 ~~plaintiff~~ ~~he was for the~~
 speak he felt for the
 of the jury.

" But she constantly let you
 down; cheated and robbed you,
 didn't she? And then, in
 Chicago again?"

His entire argument was
 based on the ~~presumption~~
 the ~~presumption~~ that the
 defendant had not

" The worldly authorities
 must not interfere with
 the sacred will of the
 world."

he'd say to me when he gave me my papers. 'I have your word of honor, ^{he'd say,} Orloog, ~~that you're going to become a decent man,~~ behave decently, and won't disappoint me, and won't ~~mess~~ ^{are} around with sin.' He also said I shouldn't tolerate sin. These ~~were~~ ^{are} the words he used: 'Be vigilant and severe, Orloog! Don't you tolerate sin! You have no physical eyes to see with, but the Lord has granted you a spiritual sight that is even more penetrating.' Beautiful words, aren't they? Lofty, inspiring words! So I took a cab and told the driver where I wanted to go. I knew, of course, what kind of a face he'd make when he heard that filthy address. I had precise information what sort of a place it is. But I tried to look quite innocent when I told him the name of the street and the number. Boy, was he surprised! Yessir, alright sir - he'd say, and then hesitated, and said, once again: As you wish, sir; I just wonder if it's the right place to go - for a man in your condition. What do you mean? I'd ask him. What do you mean - 'a man in your condition?' - 'Why, your eyes, sir,' he'd say, and I almost chuckled as I saw how he blushed and how how embarrassed he was. 'It's a very gay place, sir. Plenty of girls there. Pretty girls, too. But you couldn't see them.' So I told him ~~if~~ he shouldn't worry, I had some business to do at that place, and he took me there, but when we arrived I could see he still was kind of puzzled; looked at my handbag and said, Do you want me to carry it inside, sir, do you want to stay over night, or shouldn't I rather come back, in an hour or so, and pick you up and take you to a clean place - this is a gay place, sir, if you know what I mean: plenty of girls, all right, but I don't know, he said, if it's very clean, sir. So I said, I can carry that little bag myself, it isn't heavy, I said. In fact, it was pretty light - just the knife and the money and ^{the shirt,} an extra shirt and, of course, the Bible. For I was afraid there might be no Holy Bible, in that damned joint where I had to go - to test and to tempt my wife."

My

"My worked way with my
plan" & the prisoner said,
with a native sinister

Smish.

you
- for, I was terribly for that
way

There was a silence. Orloog seemed absorbed in memories. He recalled the tinny voice of the colored girl who opened the door and asked him what he wanted; and the sultry air in the lobby - the ^{low} perfumes, the sickening smell of gin and sweat and dusty plush and ~~the~~ girls with no clothes on and the faded flowers the girls wore in their hair. The colored girl ~~showed him~~ asked him if he had a date with Miss Betty, and he said, yes, I have quite a date with her, and so the colored girl, showed him up to Betty's room. He had to wait there, for ten minutes or so, and he used the time to explore the room - touching the furniture, ~~and~~ the draperies and the mirrors; the flowers, the cushions, the bottles with perfume, her lipstick, her slippers, her nightgown that laid ^{squashed out} prepared on the couch. Everything was almost precisely as he had ~~anticipated~~ figured it would be. Her entrance, too, corresponded exactly with his expectations. He had known that she would be a little tight, and that the ^{same} fragrance of her hair and her perfume would be mixed with the smell of liquor. He had known she would kiss him, and say, 'Here you are, sweetie, good to see you again, how is everything, why don't you have a drink, here is the bottle...oh, I forgot you can't see: so sorry, sweet!' ^{it's for you} and then she would kiss him again. And he would touch that dry hair of hers - that royal, provocative mane dangerously charged with electricity, and her lips that were always a little moist - her wet, sinful mouth, her impudent nose, her adorable arms, shoulders, breasts, and that gorgeous behind.

It happened exactly this way. She embraced him and called him her sweetie, and asked why he hadn't helped himself to a drink, and then apologized for having forgotten that he couldn't see.

"Was she very drunk?" asked the lawyer.

"No more than usually," Orloog said. "She was pretty tight, all right. That is why she kissed me so long and opened her mouth when she kissed me. She only opens her mouth when she has had quite a few drinks before."

- a fine garment of heavy
silk, "heavy silk," "Oscar"

Sh: A
must have cost quite some with
more, "but observed b. 1. with
and with a wrist for cut. several
Smith which allowed several for
his features.

- ~~very rapidly~~ with that
disposition. Last. Sh. always
displayed when she was
intoxicated:

"And then? After she had kissed you? Did you tell her that you wanted to live with her again?"

X "She said, Now I have you again, don't forget we're married. I said that I don't forget anything, because I have a very good memory. Are we really married? I'd ask her. 'Did you really marry a blind guy, an ex-convict, a crippled murderer? And she said, Why, of course, don't you remember, the ceremony. So I told her that I know everything, for that faked mother of her had told me the whole dirty plot. This made her terribly ~~ang~~ mad, she threw a glass at the floor, and rushed around and cried, That old bitch, she said, I've paid her ten bucks, how does she have the nerve, stinking old bitch she is. 'But you wouldn't believe her, deary,' she said and kissed me again. 'You're too smart too be fooled by that filthy witch. She isn't my mother, of course not, that was just a joke. But that we are married - that's true. I swear it to you, sweetypie! You're my husband and I am your wife.' - 'I know it,' I said, 'I am your husband and you are my wife.' So she was quite relieved and said, That's fine, I knew you wouldn't believe that damned witch, you're smart for that kind of tricks, and now - she said - we've a drink together and you tell your little wife all about New York, and what's going on Broadway. I don't drink, I told her, did you forget I don't? And I ~~can't~~ ^{don't} see those girls on Broadway either; I can see no girls, only you, I said, And now? um, because you're my wife, and I always wanted to be married, and I can see you with my fingertips and my mouth and my body. That's funny, she said, what you say about ~~f~~ your fingertips. Sounds kind of exciting, she ~~said~~ ^{giggled}. Do you care for a coffee, she'd ask me. Or something to eat? The maid could bring you a sandwich. You see, she was very sweet, very thoughtful."

"Didn't you ask her what had happened with those five-thousand bucks? Didn't you try to find out?"

Y.S.R. "No, I didn't. I wanted her to believe that I fell again for her ~~lies. She thought she had been pulling the wool over my eyes again.~~

My war all a joke - and, any way,
it's over, so it's over -
have fun.

My memories were ^{about} 14:15 / 14:30
~~has happened in~~ ^{from the 10}
for instance - I wouldn't
forget what has happened then
and then, of course, to try
to find the one but old
sicks - those in most places,
you know, and that baby -
talk: What'd you mean by her?
What's wrong? With you?

But I didn't kiss, and I told
her that I know every thing:
the old that
But then, all of a sudden,
she changed, and I heard my
sweet again, and that was
gone - and my neck, and
said we should forget those old
story, it's

This was a part of my plan. And it worked nicely, too!" There was a bleak, ^{slowly} triumph in his voice as he continued his tale:

"I told her, I'll stay with you this night, - I'll stay with you for good, and she giggled and said, That's swell, you'll see me with your finger=tips, that's lot of fun, she said. 'With your fingertips!' she said, over and over again. 'Imagine!' She giggled quite a lot. So I took off my coat and my shoes and my necktie. 'Already?' she'd ask me. 'Already - the fingertips?' She had a good laugh but I knew that she didn't like the idea. Of course she didn't like it. Had probably a bunch of other fellows waiting for her - down there, in the lobby. So I said, yes, I am your hus=band, ~~am~~ I?, and I took off my pants, and then ~~opened~~ ^{if} I were looking for my pajamas or something. I felt that she stared at the suitcase and her eyes flashed with greed. What a vicious little voice she had as she said to me, 'You didn't bring many things along, darling.

Where are your pretty neckties and that nice woolen dressing gown?' I said that I had ^{left} another bag in the parcel room, at the station, This was a lie, of course; but it was indispensable for the ^{sake} ~~success~~ of ~~the~~ test. For if my suitcase had been crammed with stuff, she might ^{not} have ~~seen~~ the money. ^{not: not} ~~As things~~ The way I had arranged things - with the bag almost empty - she couldn't well miss the sight - three brand=new hundred dollar-bills, neatly displayed next to my old slippers - and she couldn't miss the sight of the knife." ^{First she saw 19 money.}

"What has the knife to do with your famous plan?" The ^{new} ~~Lawyer's~~ voice seemed strangled as if ~~he had~~ ^{was} there was a lump choking him in his throat.

"Without the knife," Orloog ^{might} ~~said~~, "my whole scheme would have failed. That she grabbed the money - the three hundred bucks ^{Adelaide} ~~Adelaide~~ had ^{last} ~~borrowed~~ me - was pretty wicked, all right; but ^{no sufficient proof of} ~~it wasn't yet wicked enough.~~ ^{will make it} ~~wasn't~~ Not enough to condemn her. She had to go further. She had to ^{whole} ~~to the~~ reveal the ~~mean~~ ^{whole} ~~ness~~ of the her character. That's what I needed the knife for. ~~I had to find out if she would turn it against the man~~ ^{damn}

This was the first temptation.
She

It's a hard life, she said.
A very hard life. I am
leading. Let's go some-
where. We'll discuss

And then it
"What do you mean — it.
decision moment?"

"The moment she saw it.
among — but she saw
the knife."

who had loved her so and from whom she had stolen everything he possessed.

"Sounds kind of melodramatic." The lawyer made an effort to appear flippant, ~~and sceptical~~. But he was young and impressionable. Orloog's peculiar case and his quaint manner of presenting it, puzzled and touched the beginning barrister, far beyond the limits of professional interest.

"It was all very simple," the defendant said. "First I heard how she stooped to grab the money, and then the faint crackling of silk as she put ~~the~~ it into the ~~low~~ neck of her ~~gown~~, décolleté. Give me that money, I said; for I felt that I ought to be fair and give her a chance. But it was too late; she couldn't go back any more, I suppose. The Evil One already had grip of her - completely. I gave her another chance to save her life and her immortal soul, and asked her once more if ~~she~~ ^{she} wanted she didn't want to give me back that money. 'Which money, sugar-mops?' she asked, and what a nasty, hypocritical voice she had! Sugar-mops - she'd never used that ~~silly~~ expression before. Doesn't make any sense - sugar-mops... I wonder if she made it up at that moment - ~~under~~ ^{just invented it} under the pressure of fear..."

He kept silence for half-a minute or so. When he began to speak again, his voice seemed a little hoarse as if he had been silent for a much longer time. "Well," he said - and the lawyer was struck by the impression that ~~something~~ ^{there was a sudden flash of} moved and glittered in his shady eyes - "she got tired of lying and turned very rude and said, I couldn't have seen her, anyhow, for I am blind: 'You blind bastard!' she cried, 'who do you think you are?' and ~~gave~~ ^{gave} me plenty of names, ~~son of a bitch~~, and cripple, and what not. 'Do you really think I married you blind monster?' she asked, and I said, No, I didn't think she did. So she said I owed her plenty of money for everything she's done for me since I met her - for every single time she went to bed with me. 'What do you think I have done it for?' she shouted at me, ~~and~~ ^{she} laughed, and was terribly hysterical. 'For the fun of it, I suppose?' I reminded her of the 5000 but she

stood
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- 300 bucks
man - ~~isn't~~
isn't

Do you
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So I dumped it here, and
docked her, and told her
TWY (6) if I didn't know it all
along; but still, it
was as a shock
my took a few seconds after it.

Lawyer - dumbfounded.
"The attorney was found? She

"Now, since you know
it, she'd say, in
a terrible, cold voice,
"You may figure out
how much money you
owe to me... But she
called me names.
And she
told me about the
money."

And she
told me about the
money.
How can I see it if I was
you? Even if I had
the money, I wouldn't
fold me about the
money.

said five thousand were not enough, and those three hundred bucks were hers, and I never would get them back. 'And now - beat it!' she said. 'And more snappy than that!' So I shook her ^{shoulder} and said, 'Give me that money, you devil, but she yelled and ~~laughed and said, jumped at me, and~~ ^{she} shouted I shouldn't touch her, or she would scratch out what remains of my eyes, and as I didn't let her and still shook her and demanded the money, she lifted that knife - she ^{had been} holding it all the time - , and suddenly hissed at - with no ^{noise} at all - ; Here is your money, damned old cripple you are! - and wanted to stab me - with ^{my own} that knife of mine. But I was quicker than she: of course I was, ^{I had prepared myself for this moment ever since I had first met her} for I had exercised all this, for so many weeks. I didn't say a word: just seized her and wrested the knife away from her and pushed her back, and then I threw the knife."

"So you've actually ^{done it} in self-defense?" the lawyer asked very eagerly. "She would have killed you if you hadn't done what you did."

"She might have tried to, all right." The prisoner had a ^{brief, nasal laugh; it sounded utterly contemptuous.} "I don't think she'd have succeeded, though. Was kind of clumsy, you ^{see} ~~see~~ No skill, no practice, nothing. And then, she was drunk like hell."

"But, man! You're kind of slow! Don't you see what I'm driving at?" The young man ^{suddenly} ~~suddenly~~ seemed exceedingly animated, ^{as if now he was} ~~as if now he was~~ ^{completely} ~~completely~~ ^{involved in} ~~involved in~~ new aspects of the entire story: it allows me a new approach - and a pretty promising one, too!" He rubbed his hands and ^{looked very much} ~~looked~~ brisk, and enterprising, cheerful. "The fact that she threatened you with the knife before you even touched it, speaks decisively in your favour. These are extenuating circumstances of utmost significance."

She'd been fighting
Marian is of course
in possession of
situation

What you first told me - that you were not really responsible at all with

The lawyer shook his head - which was an
 amazing over this new angry approach of
 So I asked to stop this his speech
 on dangerous talk. Can it
 eat! I said. Don't go I mean
 you, Mr. Calog! Don't
 go for him. Don't forget
 it's your harbor now and
 talk to you. There are certain
 things no woman should
 tell for harbor! (laughs)
 Calog's

I'll
 Orlong didn't
 There was no answer.
 sightless ~~for~~ ^{and his} darkness
 seemed to find Wand
 into narrow and similar
 regions — ex gloriay
~~Asian~~ ⁱⁿ ~~Swiss~~ ^{gl.}
 crossed, my landscape.
 It was only that when
 defined had repetition
 any question that
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Orlong's
 eyes
 Wand
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 the
 the
 the

I wish you were
 doing your own
 thing

— unless you are going down
to name your own ^{sub-processor} ~~processor~~ ^{chip} ~~chip~~

"I don't need any extenuating circumstances," the prisoner said.
"I have eliminated a piece of rot and sin - a breathing, smiling, smelling, sweet and horrible ^{second degree} agent of the Evil One. I have wiped it out - which was a good thing to do. The kind of thing God appreciates,"

The jurist shrugged his shoulders. "God - perhaps. But as to the wordly authorities..."

"It's O.K. with them, too," the accused declared, all determined complacency. ".....(P.9/10.)

"But why, then, didn't you report to the police right away, at Chicago? Why did you take the bus and waited delayed your confession until they arrested you, in Manhattan?"

"Because I had to embrace my good sister, and give her back those \$ 300 that belonged to her, and tell her that everything had worked out according to our plan. That the scandal has been stamped out, and won't rise its ugly head any more."

The young lawyer wondered if it wasn't his duty to arraign Miss Orlogg as well, or if he might risk to plead irresponsibility in the Orlogg case. But he abandoned this idea as he had another look at his client. The haggard man seemed to grow in the twilight of the prison cell. Comforting him, in a sonorous, paternal voice: "Don't you be sorry, young man. You are ambitious. So was I - thirty years go. But this is a wicked world. It may be the chair - I don't give a dam. I've seen enough," he concluded, covering the sightless holes of his eyes with a hand that was big, heavy and extremely tired - a strangely inhuman hand, with prominent bluish veins and short, spatular fingers, as if made of wood, lead and iron - a callous instrument to inflict pain and to carry out the punishment.

He is nervous and

The scandal has been stamped out but the vicious woman is not satisfied by the punishment

shoulder and his lips were brown. She began to

