

time of the Conquistadores and Sir Henry Morgan; the Havana of coffee, cigars, sugar, and succulent tropical fruits, of a multirace Caribbean population with an inbred sense of rhythm and an unquenchable zest for life. This Havana had nothing to do with international politics, the Cold War, or global strategy. It was unchanging and Wilson was relieved and elated to find it all still there. He was accepted and at the same time ignored as he walked slowly through the streets. The easy tolerance of an old and infinitely sophisticated city enveloped him and told him once again that he was one of her own simply because he came and abided with her for a time.

He came at last, a dew of perspiration on his face, to a little bar on Calle Virtudes that he had forgotten until he looked up and saw its grimy sign. In the old days it had been one of the underground contact points for the exchange of messages. He stood on the narrow, broken sidewalk, a slow grin of pleasant recollection on his face. He had spent some happy times at that bar in the Batista days, pretending that he was an American tourist while he waited for messages for Fidel from the Student Directorate in Havana. The drinks were good and he had even screwed the owner's daughter, a voluptuously willing sacrifice to a stalwart fighter from the hills.

Wilson pushed aside the beaded curtain that separated the bar's interior from the sidewalk and stepped into a cool semidarkness. It was smaller than he remembered, although the scarred mahogany bar with the mottled mirror behind it still filled one wall, and some ill-kept tables with sprung and bent metal chairs about them occupied the remaining area. The grinning, masculine picture of Batista and the intertwined flags of Cuba and the United States which hung from a rusted nail in the center of the mirror's upper

frame had disappeared and an even larger picture of Fidel had taken its place, decorated with faded crepe paper in the red and black of the 26th of July Movement. A rather smaller flyspecked picture of José Martí remained on the opposite wall over a scroll of political platitudes that could serve and survive a dozen regimes of radically differing philosophies. Wilson looked a moment at the hero's sad, rather effeminate face and shook his head. He never could understand this thing the Cubans had for Martí. A guy like that alive couldn't even cut the mustard in running a sub-bureau; the predators of Cuban politics would eat him alive. Maybe it was because he was dead . . . the most useful adornment in politics was the support of the dead, particularly the wistful, the poetic, and the ambiguous. Their memories were malleable and hence adaptable and of use to the living. A good quote from a dead political philosopher always gives the speeches of a power-seeking politician a touch of class, and when the guy is dead it don't cost a thing; it's in the public domain.

The barroom was empty. Wilson stepped over to the counter and brought his palm down on the protruding plunger of a tarnished call bell. A dark, corpulent woman in her early thirties sauntered in from a back room. "Sí?"

"I would like to have a beer," Wilson said in Spanish.

The woman stiffened at his accent. "You are a Yankee?"

"No, a Canadian."  
She made no effort to get him his beer. "What are you doing here? This is a neighborhood bar. We don't serve strangers."

"I am no stranger, María."  
The woman looked at him closely for the first time. "Mother of God! It's you!" Tears flooded her eyes

and she began to wring her hands. Why do you come here? To bring trouble? We have had all of the trouble we want."

"Trouble? Why should you have trouble? You were on the winning side. I figured Victor would have a bar a half block long on the Prado as his reward for helping Fidel."

"Victor is dead," María said tonelessly. "My father is dead. He tried to help my brother escape to Miami. My brother is missing. I don't know if he made it to the States or if he is dead or in prison."

Wilson wet his lips. "And your mother?"

"Dead, because of what happened to my father. I am alone."

"You doing O.K.?"

María twisted her lips. "I'll get you your beer." She opened a bottle without a label and poured the contents carelessly into a glass. The foam overflowed onto the bar. She took the edge of her palm and swept it onto the floor.

"I look a little different since the night you had me, don't I?"

"We all change a little."

"Little? Fifteen damned kilos. All we eat now is starch. I am hungry all the time and I look like a pig."

"The food in my hotel isn't too bad."

"That is for the visitors. Try buying your food in the market."

"Isn't that counterrevolutionary talk?"

María smiled for the first time. "Don't tell me you are from the secret police?"

"No."

"Then a little truth won't hurt. I know that I am taking no chance. You have foreigners written all over you. If you had lived here since the revolution, you would even smell differently."

Wilson swallowed his beer and put down a peso note. "Will that buy a beer?"

"Yes, that kind of beer."

"Here's another hundred pesos for you."

"Why?"

"I just want to give it to you."

María took the hundred-peso note, folded it carefully, and slipped it down between her ample breasts. "If I suddenly have one hundred pesos, my block captain will report me as suspicious."

"Say an old boy friend gave it to you."

"Was it worth it?"

"As I remember, yes."

"I remember it. You don't."

"Yes, I remember it. I just don't remember how it was."

"It was good. Very good. It could be good again."

Wilson reached across the bar and patted her worn hand in what for him was an awkward gesture. "I know it could be good, but I can't find out."

"Why in hell did you come here?" she asked angrily. "Why in hell did you come in?"

"I just happened by."

"Then, damn you, get out. Go back to where you come from. You are no part of Cuba. This is no affair of yours. You are not *simpatico* and you are not welcome."

Wilson nodded and moved toward the door. "I'm sorry," he mumbled.

"You are sorry!" María yelled at him. "You are sorry? Mother of God!" She began to sob and scream insults at him. Wilson plunged through the beaded doorway and loped down the street until he could no longer hear her coarse, angry voice with its edge of rising hysteria.

He stood on a street corner and lit a cigarette. "Crazy dame," he thought. "How in hell was I to know that she'd gone crackers?"

At ten o'clock Wilson was standing in the lamp-light in front of the Vedado talking with a Negro taxi starter when Paco Gomez swung into the curb with a squeal of tires. He was driving a dusty red Cadillac convertible and was smoking a cigar. "Hop in, *compañero*, the party is just warming up. He swung down narrow Calle Humbolt and emerged into Malecon Drive. A cool breeze was blowing in off the Gulf and as Paco accelerated down the nearly deserted ocean front boulevard, Wilson relaxed with one hand along the back of the seat and breathed in the salt air.

"This is still a hell of a beautiful city, Paco."

"Still? Under the revolution it is even better."

"Oh, sure. I meant I hadn't seen it in some time." Paco took the sweeping switchback turn where the Almendares River empties into the Gulf and dipped into the tunnel linking the Vedado district with residential Miramar. They drove about a mile up Fifth Avenue with its broad landscaped center and turned off into a winding residential street of large homes and tall, stately palms.

"Who lives here now, Paco, now that the exploiters have left?"

Gomez chortled. "Big shots like me, student groups, diplomats, foreign advisers. No home is empty. We use them all."

They turned into a curving driveway that led up through towering bushes of red bougainvillea to a huge pink stucco house designed in a style vaguely suggestive of the Mediterranean. The sound of an orchestra vigorously playing a Cuban beat drifted down toward them. Paco slapped Wilson on the back. "Like old times, Chicol! Wait until you see the girl I have for you!"

They shouldered their way through the crowded entry hall and living room and out into the garden, Paco shouting and embracing guests as they moved along. The interior of the house had the worn, shabby look of faded elegance subjected to hard, indiscriminate use, but, under scores of artfully placed lights, the garden with its carefully chosen tropical plants was beautiful. Down a broad brick staircase and across a deep lawn a lighted swimming pool shimmered in the semidarkness.

"Where's Rita?" Paco bawled. "I got Jack Wilson here for her. Where is that stupid *chica*?"

A dark-eyed girl in a plain black bathing suit arose from a table beside the pool. "*Aquí, aquí*, Francisco."

Paco laughed. "She calls me Francisco. Such a sweet one!"

The girl climbed the staircase from the swimming pool, smiling at them shyly.

"Rita, this is my old *compañero*, Jack Wilson. I want you to be nice to him."

"Sí, Francisco."

Jack Wilson put an arm around the girl's shoulders and hugged her to him. "Rita. I like that. Rio Rita or was it Rita Rio?" He laughed. "Remember that girl in Santiago, Paco? We called her Rita Grande and I sure as hell remember why." He looked down at the girl. "How about a dance, sweetie? Right down there beside the pool?"

"Yes, I would like to dance."

They danced dreamily at first to tangos and slow foxtrots until Paco shouted at the orchestra, "What are you trying to do? Kill the party? Let's have that Cuban beat."

Wilson danced with Rita until he was soaked with perspiration. Like most of the other men in and out of uniform, he took off his jacket and threw away

his tie. Five or six bars had been set up in the house and throughout the grounds. The men congregated around them, laughing and talking coarsely while the women sat in chairs about the garden, chatting with animation to one another or carefully repairing makeup and coiffures ravaged by the evening's activities. From time to time a man would detach himself from his all-male group, and taking one of the women by the hand, disappear toward the pool area or into the house. About an hour later he would rejoin with a little swagger a group at one of the bars.

As the night wore on the number of persons at the party increased until nearly two hundred shouting, singing, and dancing men and their women filled the house and the pool area. Wilson left Rita and went from group to group exuberantly greeting old acquaintances with a half drunken *abrazo* and slapping new ones on the back. Paco reappeared from time to time to grab Wilson's left bicep in a tight grip and inquire earnestly, "You having fun, old pal? Everything all right?" Then he would steer him to another group. "I want you to meet Jack Wilson, a real friend, a Canadian, a friend of Cuba."

Wilson shook the offered hands, some strong and dry, others soft and wet. He looked into smiling faces and into a sea of Latin eyes, eyes that sparkled, hooded eyes, eyes that shifted, intent eyes, eyes that watered at the corners, warm eyes, calculating eyes, cruel eyes, in-different eyes. To each, to all, he offered the same bluff, good-natured friendliness. They, in turn, weighed him and judged him or ignored him and forgot him.

At one side of the garden, barbecue fires had been built and iron spits erected. Cooks, barefooted in white duck pants and stripped to the waist, their hairy chests running wet with perspiration in the flickering firelight, were intently barbecuing suckling pigs and

chickens. At about two A.M. iron triangles were vigorously rung and an unruly stampede began toward the tables of food set up beside the swimming pool. By three the food had been devoured and the tables cleared away.

Shortly afterward a chorus line and orchestra arrived from a nightclub. The chorus was composed of tall, lithesome mulatto girls, their heads and ankles decorated in feathers of red, yellow, and green, their brown bodies unclothed except for great plumes of feathers tied around their waists and rising arrogantly from their rumps. They danced to a harsh, brassy beat under lights that slowly changed from cool blues through greens, yellows, and reds to pulsating shades of reddish purple. As the rhythm and the dance reached their erotic climax, the chorus line danced across the pool deck and fell one by one into the water, followed with a great shout by a score of enthusiastic male spectators in their clothes.

Paco staggered up to Wilson and threw an arm around him, "You havin' a good time, *amigo*? You havin' one hell of a good time?"

"Best damn time I ever had," Wilson shouted back thickly.

"This is all for you." Paco waved his arm expansively. "Your party." He grabbed a disheveled girl going by and disappeared into a singing, stomping group near the dying barbecue fire.

It was the heat of the midmorning sun flooding down on the pool patio that awoke Wilson. He returned to consciousness slowly with a warm, growing sensual awareness accompanied by a roaring headache and a dry, sour mouth. One arm ached slightly, and opening his eyes in a painful squint, he became aware that he was lying on a long blue sunbathing cushion with a

nude girl asleep beside him. It was Rita. He shifted slightly and discovered that he was also nude. The pool area was deserted. Some articles of clothing and an empty bottle rested at the bottom of the clear, quiet water of the pool and debris was scattered about, but there were no other signs of the party. The girl moved closer to him in her sleep, her soft body giving off a heat that caused him to perspire against her. Her thick, burnished brown hair fell across his face. She was breathing deeply. A few tiny beads of perspiration had formed on her forehead and on her full upper lip.

He rolled away and plunged into the water. He swam into the cool recesses of the pool and when his lungs were bursting, surfaced in the shade cast by a blue bougainvillea hanging over the water from a nearby stone wall of gray coral. He found a towel and wrapping it around him, padded across the patio and up the brick stairs into the house. A tall, strong-featured Negro man dressed in a soiled white house coat nodded at him without smiling. "Come with me, Señor Wilson. Major Gomez has set aside a bedroom for you and we have cleaned your clothes." He spoke in the thick, accented Spanish of Oriente Province.

The bedroom was on the second floor. Wilson's clothes, freshly laundered, were neatly laid out on the bed. The Negro showed him a set of toilet articles in the bathroom, including a razor and a toothbrush. He paused as he left the room and said, "We will serve you some breakfast when you are ready. Major Gomez has gone to his post, but he asked me to tell you that this house is at your disposal."

Wilson nodded. "Thanks. After breakfast I'd like to go back to my hotel."

"We shall have a car for you. And the girl?"

Wilson rubbed a hand over the stubble on his face. "I don't need any more of that."

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AT the hotel he had a message: "Diana 22-3678." He took the elevator to his room and gave the number to the operator.

Diana Vogel's voice was mildly reproving. "I heard nothing from you yesterday and nothing last night. Did I make such a small impression?"

"No. I was tied up on business."

"Oh, yes. You are a businessman. I understand."

"You don't understand at all. I want to see you."

"Are you busy this afternoon? Would you like to go to the beach at Varadero?"

"It sounds great."

"I will come for you in one-half hour."

"Right." He hung up the telephone and hummed tunelessly as he changed into slacks and a loose-fitting cotton pullover.

Wilson sat back in the white convertible as Diana drove rapidly along the undulating coast road

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toward Matanzas and Varadero Beach beyond. He still had a faint headache. The warm sun and the wind ruffling his hair felt good. He looked at the blue of the sea and idly watched the old fishing villages and the newer clusters of pastel-colored villas flash by.

"It's stuffy, your being a businessman," Diana said after a time, her eyes intent on the road. "What business are you in?"

"Export-import."

"What is that?"

"I buy and sell."

"What?"

"I'm not particular. Anything I can make a profit on. Novelties, mostly." He turned and looked at her out of the corners of his eyes, his head still resting on the seat back. "Satisfied?"

"Of course, *lieblich*. It is nothing to me. I was only making conversation."

Wilson grunted and closed his eyes.

They drove to the oldest and the best of the beach hotels at Varadero, and changing in the locker rooms, walked barefooted through cool sand shaded by a growth of tall, lacy evergreens to one of the round thatched sun shades which had been raised on single peeled poles along the beach. They laid their towels and beach robes under the sun shade and walked across the beach toward the ocean. The talcumlike pink sand pressed up warmly and softly between their toes until it blended almost imperceptibly with the azure water that gently lapped the shore. The color of the water darkened as the beach dropped away until, moving through the darker shades, it blended along the horizon with the deep royal blue of the Atlantic. They waded out to where a gentle surf was breaking. The water was so clear that they could see the corrugations of the bottom in every detail and the flow of grains of sand im-

pelled by the currents created by their passing. They swam out several hundred yards from shore and then turned and raced each other back to the beach, arriving at their sun shade laughing and breathless, the clean salt water still cascading off their faces and bodies.

A breeze came up and Diana shivered slightly as she toweled herself dry and slipped into a white terry-cloth jacket. Wilson lit their cigarettes. They sat on the sand watching the surf rise in the freshening wind.

"How long will you be in Havana, Jack?"

"A couple of weeks."

"Such a short time," she murmured regretfully.

"I was one of those who fought with Fidel in the hills. I come back once in a while to see my old buddies."

"And to see how the revolution goes?"

"Sweetie, I couldn't care less. I just enjoyed the fight. I never gave a damn about the revolution one way or the other."

"You are nonpolitical."

"You said it. I am for Jack Wilson."

"But you do business here?"

"Maybe. I seem to spend all my time chasing tail. It hasn't left much time for business."

"I don't think I understand you."

"It's just as well. It was a crude expression. I'll show you." He leaned over and kissed her on the lips. She put her arms about his neck and responded languorously, then she slowly leaned back, pulling him down upon her.

The sun had dipped beneath the horizon and the flash of the lighthouse at Cardenas Point became visible.

"We should be getting back," she said at last.

"O.K. How about a late supper and a dance at the Tropicana?"

"Wonderful." She looked at her wristwatch. "We can be in Havana before nine. Why don't you drop me at my apartment, take the car, and pick me up at eleven?"

"Will do."

Wilson swung into the curb outside La Torre shortly after eleven o'clock and called to the doorman, "Señorita Diana Vogel, *por favor*."

The doorman nodded and called Diana's apartment on a wall phone near the entrance. He left the phone hanging from its cord and walked over to the Cadillac. "She wants to talk with you, señor."

Diana's voice sounded strange. "Jack darling, I have developed the most awful headache. Too much sun, I am afraid. Can we give up the Tropicana for tonight? Just give the keys of the car to the doorman and I will call you tomorrow."

"No, I can't do that. I am dressed to the teeth and raring to go."

"Sometimes I do not understand your English."

"I'm not giving the keys to the doorman. Come on down."

"But, Jack. I have a headache."

"To hell with the runaround, baby. Come on down or I'm coming up."

There was a brief silence. "You are being a boor." Her voice was low and tense.

"Maybe so, but I'm not going away. You can't turn it off and on, sweetie, not with Jack Wilson. Either get down here or I'll come up and carry you down."

"Give me ten minutes, then. I'm not dressed."

"Five. I've already waited ten."

Wilson hung up the phone and grinned at the doorman. "That's the way you handle these broads." He

walked over and leaned against the hood of the convertible, his legs crossed, as he lit a cigarette.

Diana was bright-eyed and flushed when she emerged from La Torre dressed in a knee-length white sequined evening dress that clung to her figure. Her hair was swept up off her face and she was wearing a more vivid makeup with a perfume that was distinctly suggestive.

Wilson threw away his cigarette. "You don't look like you've got a headache."

She gave him a hard, direct kiss on the mouth.

"It's gone."

"I thought it would be," he growled.

He swung the car out into the street, driving fast and with precision through the traffic until they turned through the elaborate gates of the old estate which had been converted into the Tropicana nightclub. They moved up a tree-lined gravel drive and under a portecochere where the doorman took the car. Walking through the old house, which served largely as an entrance hall with cloak rooms, they emerged into a tropical garden with a small dance floor in its center and terraces of tables rising above it. On a long runway constructed in a half circle at the opposite side of the garden an elaborate musical number was being presented. They were given a table overlooking the dance floor.

"What will you have?" Wilson asked, looking at the menu. "I am really hungry."

"You choose. I'll like whatever you will like."

Wilson turned to the waiter. "Two cheese omelettes, salad, and beer."

"How about a dance?" he asked her.

"I would love to."

She stayed very close to him while they danced,

and when they returned to their table she kicked off one of her shoes and rubbed her foot slowly against his leg. Her bright eyes were fixed on his face.

"You're acting like a whore."

"Perhaps I want to be treated like a whore."

He grimaced at her. "Eat your omelette."

They watched the floor show as they ate. A waiter leaned over Diana's shoulder. "Miss Vogel? You have a telephone call."

She squeezed Wilson's hand as she slipped out of her chair with a graceful sidewise motion. "I shall be back in a moment."

She was gone over twenty minutes.

"Was that one of your other boy friends?" he asked sourly when she returned.

"No, darling. My silly maid." She leaned across the table and caressed his cheek. "Would you like to take me home?"

"I guess I'd better. You act like you're going to jump at me over the table or ditch me all together."

He paid the check and they walked through the lighted gardens toward the parking area. She put an arm through his and drew him down a darkened side path. "Please, darling, just for a moment. I can't wait longer. I must be kissed." They moved farther into the darkness. He took her roughly in his arms and kissed her. She clung to him breathing heavily. "Do you like to see boys and girls together?"

"You mean an exhibition?"

"Yes. Have you ever seen one?"

"Yeah, but not with a woman. Why do you want to visit an exhibition? It's pretty raw."

"It is a thrill. Something different." She looked at him expectantly, her lips parted and her eyes glittering. He hesitated.

She continued to look at him intently. The tip of

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her tongue moved slowly across her lips and back again.

"O.K." He shrugged. "Let's go."

She drove back to Vedado, past his hotel, and turned down Humbolt street to stop before an ancient, unlighted townhouse a few hundred yards from his hotel. He looked up at the worn, ornate façade and at the heavy, carved double oaken door. "You know your way around, don't you?"

"One hears things."

"You still want to go through with this?"

"Of course."

He shook his head. "I get my kicks as a participant, not an observer."

She got out of the car and took his arm as they waited before the door for an answer to the peeling ring of the bell he had pressed under the white-on-blue plate with the street number. The door opened a few inches. "Sí?"

"We are here to see the girls and boys."

The door opened wider and a thin, sharp-eyed woman with the dark, leathery complexion of the middle-aged gypsy gave them an appraising look and nodded. "Come in."

They passed through a small entrance hall and into what had been a formal salon room. Its carved cornices and woodwork were now painted jet-black and the walls were a vivid scarlet. The woman ignored Diana Vogel and addressed Wilson. "One boy and one girl is twenty-five pesos. Two girls and one boy is forty pesos. One boy and one girl is like doing it yourself. For the money I recommend two girls and one boy . . . then you see something."

"O.K. Let's have the whole show." He peeled off some bills and gave them to the woman.

"Buena. Wait here."

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Wilson gave Diana a cigarette and lit one himself. He inhaled deeply and then exhaled, looking at her through the smoke. "Are you still game?"

"Game? I don't understand."

"With it. Do you still want to see this?"

"But of course. You have paid your money."

"That I have, and we mustn't be wasteful."

A door to an adjoining room opened and the woman beckoned to them. Wilson and Diana entered an empty room whose walls and ceiling were completely covered with mirrors. An uncovered, soiled mattress laid in the center of the floor. Four floodlights at each corner of the room, covered with red filters, lit the room. Five or six straight chairs painted gold were placed in a row along one wall. The woman gestured toward them. "Sit there."

They sat on the chairs primly, as if they were about to receive instruction. Two powerfully built men, their nude bodies deeply tanned, entered the room. One had brass knuckles over his right fist and the other carried a rubber truncheon. A naked mulatto girl, her hair dyed a bright red and her body glistening with oil, entered from another door. Wilson turned to Diana and was shocked at her wanton appearance. Her mouth was gaping open, her wide eyes were black in a face hot with rising blood, and her breath was coming in little short pants.

"I thought it was two girls and one boy," Wilson said, staring at Diana.

She did not answer, and while he was still looking at her the man with the brass knuckles strode over to Wilson, jerked him to his feet, and struck him violently on the chin. Wilson's head snapped back as his assailant's other fist drove hard into his stomach. He fell to his knees vomiting as the rubber truncheon fell hard across his upper right arm. Dimly he was aware of

the two male figures standing over him and of Diana Vogel, who had lept to her feet, watching him with a delighted smile of limitless cruelty.

They struck him now in a methodical, unhurried way, timing and locating the blows as if they were carefully working out a formula. It was some time before he swam into the merciful oblivion of unconsciousness.

He regained consciousness slowly, gradually becoming more and more aware of the pain. He moved his head slightly. He was lying with his face against the cool damp surface of cobblestones. Spitting out blood, he coughed heavily and pushed himself into a sitting position. He sat at the street's edge for some minutes and then, carefully getting to his feet, staggered over to the sidewalk and leaned against a building. He shook his head and ran a hand through his blood-soaked hair. He overcame an urge to vomit and waited for his strength to return. After an interval he looked about him. He was in Humbolt Street. A painful grin touched his swollen lips. The arrogant bastards had just thrown him out the door.

He began to walk stiffly toward his hotel. At the corner he passed a small ornamental fountain and stopped to bathe his face and the back of his neck. He straightened and took several deep breaths. He pulled his tie straight in an unconscious gesture and walked the short distance to the Vedado. It was four A.M. and no one noticed him enter the lobby and take the self-service elevator to his room.

EXCERPT

walked slowly into the bathroom and used the toilet. There were no traces of blood. He decided not to call a doctor. That meant reports and explanations. He took three aspirins and stood under a hot shower for several minutes. He then poured half a water glass of rum from a bottle on his dresser and eased himself into the room's single upholstered chair. He sipped the rum slowly and began to feel better.

About nine p.m. Paco Gomez called him from the lobby.

"Come on up, Paco. I've had a working over. I can't make it down there."

Paco whistled through his teeth as he stood at the foot of Wilson's bed and looked at him. "Mother of God! They did a good job."

Wilson shifted gingerly and moved into a sitting position on the pillows. He ran a bruised hand through his hair and, wincing, looked at it. "The bastards must have stepped on it. I don't remember hitting anybody."

Paco looked grave. "Who did it?"

"I was out with a fancy whore by the name of Diana Vogel. I guess they did it for her." He swung slowly out of bed, walked stiffly into the bathroom and emerged, wiping his face and the back of his neck with a wet towel. "There's a bottle of rum on the dresser, Paco. Pour us a drink." He put a cigarette between his cut and swollen lips and lit it. "I sure as hell can't figure out why. It wasn't a jealous husband."

"Did you do anything to her?"

"Nothing she didn't want done."

"I'll check into it," Paco said thoughtfully. "I'm curious myself. It doesn't sound like a triangle."

"Triangle, hell. There were two guys that beat me up. That makes four of us." He sipped his drink and then managed a distorted grin. "Well, nothin's for nothin'. Maybe she was worth it. We really had a thing

Wilson awoke shortly after noon in his hot, stuffy hotel room and lay quietly on his back staring at the ceiling. His right eye vision seemed normal enough, but he could see little with his left eye except its lashes. He cautiously touched the eye area with his finger and winced. Minutes passed before he was able to move into a sitting position on the bed and with the aid of a hand on the nearby night table push himself to his feet. He shuffled over to a mirror fastened to the closet door and looked at his reflection. The left eye was nearly swollen shut, his lips were thickened and cut in two places, and there were several abrasions and purple bruises on his face.

He had fallen on his bed the night before in his shirt and pants. He now carefully removed them and examined his body. He was covered with welts and scratches, his back felt wrenched and his abdomen was very sore, but he seemed to have no broken bones. He