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*Dion Landess was irresistible to women and Don
let them have their fun, up to a certain point.*



"I could kill you," his wife said.

But Dion Landess went on looking in the mirror and tying his green-and-yellow tie. "You're hardly the type for that, Merle darling," he said. His voice was calm, with the artificial calm of the practiced sophisticate. The unrest inside him was no different than usual, merely a perpetual dissatisfaction.

GIGOLO

BY
C. B. GILFORD

"The only thing you're capable of, darling," he went on, "is making a scene. Though I'll admit you're damned good at that."

He swung into the jacket of his charcoal-gray suit. Then he passed a comb through his dark hair several times. Not too often, not enough to destroy the slightly tousled look.

"Don't go, Dion," she said.

He turned to face her as she lay on the bed. She was in pajamas and a bed jacket, but she'd been in them so long she looked rumpled and perhaps even ill as she was pretending to be. Pretended illness to keep him home. But it hadn't worked.

"Merle," he said, "I told you we were both invited. So you can come along if you like. But I'm going anyway. If you think I'm going to sit here all evening and just stare at you, you're crazy."

Tears came to her eyes again. But she could cry so easily, as easily as turning on a faucet. She'd been pretty, but these crying jags weren't doing her any good. Ye gods, how could she expect him to care for her company in the shape she was in?

"You know why I don't want to go," she said.

"You've told me, yes. But it doesn't make sense, I'm afraid. It doesn't explain anything."

"Dion, I just can't go to a party and watch those women fawning over you, pawing you, throwing themselves at you. I can't watch it. I just can't."

He smiled a little. It was always so flattering to hear that particular complaint of hers. But his ego was old and tired. He smiled only a little. "Aren't you exaggerating a bit?" he answered.

"I wish I were. And that crowd up at Kati Roth's, they're the worst. They're vultures."

He put a foot up on her bed and adjusted a loose shoe lace. "I would think you'd enjoy the exhibition," he pointed out. "Seeing the vultures flapping around. When the vultures are so helpless, I mean. They can't steal anything. You have official title to the property." He finished with the laces, flicked an imaginary speck of dust off the toe of the shoe.

"I wish I did have you, Dion."

"Don't you? All paid for too."

"Paid for, yes, but apparently I don't have you to the extent that I can tell you what to do."

"You're working on it, darling. You're working on it."

"And you're fighting me."

He looked at her without concealing his contempt. But why was he bothering to argue with her? "I've got to keep fighting, to stay alive," he said. "I've got to keep one little spark of independence burning. I've got to keep one little corner of me that belongs to me. Darling, I won't pretend to be anything different than what I am. But the day I let any woman swallow me whole, digest me entirely, that's the day I hope I'll be dead."

"You'll be dead some day."

"I expect to be," he said.
"And then you'll be sorry."
"Maybe."

"Some day I'll kill you myself."

Her eyes were red-rimmed, puffy, and she was trembling visibly. Quite emotional. But it was an act, and he had seen it before. "Don't be ridiculous," he said.

"I took your revolver out of the drawer this afternoon."

Revolver? He had to think a moment. Oh yes, the little .22 that he had taken away from that chorus girl years ago. A toy gun, almost harmless. Well, Merle *was* getting melodramatic.

"There are some bullets in the drawer too," she said. "I tried them in the gun, and they fit. I held the gun in my hand for a few minutes. And I couldn't help thinking how easy it would be."

"What would be easy?"

"Killing you. That's the only thing that would stop you."

He laughed in her face. "Darling," he said, "there are undoubtedly some women who are constitutionally capable of committing murder. I've met some of them. You're not one, I'm afraid. You're selfish, possessive, even passionate sometimes. But inside you're soft, like a jelly. This is another one of your tricks, and I'm not in the least impressed by it."

He bent over and kissed her. He did it well, without a qualm or a tremor, even though he had no taste for doing it. There were still

times when he enjoyed kissing Merle. Not now when she was blubbery like this. But he was vastly experienced at simulating either passion or affection as the occasion demanded.

"Look," he told her, "I'm going upstairs to Kati's. If you'd care to stop acting like a fool and get yourself looking presentable, you can join me there. If you don't I'll probably be home about midnight or so. Depends on how interesting or boring it turns out to be."

He kissed her again, lightly, and left. In the living room he stopped for a quick, small drink. He was a bit late for the party, so he needed a fast start. He went out the door and down the hall, silently on the thick carpet. He was going to use the elevator, but then he changed his mind. Kati Roth's apartment was only two floors up. He climbed the stairs instead.

His ears didn't detect Kati's party till he was just outside the door. A quiet affair. He felt disappointed. He was in the mood for something noisy tonight. But he went in anyway.

They were all there. All his current friends. Or at least the nearest thing he had to friends. "Dion!" they shouted when they saw him, and they engulfed him instantly. He was popular here.

Kati Roth finally caught his arm and drew him a little aside. Kati looked exquisite. She was in her thirties, he happened to know, but

her state of preservation was magnificent. Her blonde, lacquered hair was piled high on her head to give her the stately look she liked. Her green eyes were cool, yet not so cool. And her black dress was cut low enough to interest even him.

"Where's Merle?" Kati wanted to know.

"She's not feeling well. But she may be up later."

"You know she won't."

"Probably not."

"How come she let you out, darling?" The question was a deliberate needling.

"Don't be nasty, Kati," he said, and tried to leave.

But she hung onto his arm. "Darling, we all know Merle."

"Well, you don't know me."

"Darling, why do you put up with her?"

A good question. He'd asked it of himself plenty of times. "What else can I do?" he asked her.

"Darling, I'll take you over any time you say the word."

He had to smile. "That's an apt phrase, I must say. Take me over. But I doubt if I'd profit by the switch. We tried it once, remember? Didn't work. You were just like Merle is now. So I'd merely be changing owners again."

"Variety is the spice of life, darling." She took him by the lapels and kissed him languidly, without insistence.

"Katie, my girl," he said after she'd finished, "what could I pos-

sibly gain by taking you on as a new owner that I don't already have?"

She slapped him on the cheek lightly, almost caressingly, for that remark. "Dion," she said, "you're a beast."

"I'd divorce Merle and marry you," he told her, "if you'd promise me one thing."

"What's that?"

"That you'd take enough sleeping pills on our wedding night to make me a widower by the next morning. Provided, of course, that you'd willed me what's left of your first husband's money. Then I'd be financially independent for the rest of my life. I'd put flowers on your grave every day and remain spotlessly true to you for all eternity. Because I could afford to then."

Her green eyes narrowed. "You're a devil," she said.

"I'm only what your sex has made of me, darling."

"I don't think I even like you."

"I know you don't. Why don't you send me home then?"

"I should. But I'd be miserable all the rest of the evening if I did."

"Mustn't have that. I'll make the sacrifice and stay."

"But I'm going to pout. You can find the bar by yourself."

"I'll manage. I have an unerring instinct."

She drifted away. He watched her bare shoulders idly. But he was more interested in the bar. His hand felt empty without a glass in it.

He knew almost everybody. Cory Michaels and Alex Magary gave him their hearty back thumpings. Sally Beckwith wanted to go to the bar with him, but he evaded her skilfully. Leslyne Karnes begged him for a tete-a-tete in Kati's den. He promised he would meet her there, although he had no intention of doing it. At the bar, sipping alone, was Paige Grayson.

He didn't mind Paige as much though. Paige was a smart girl, had something in her pretty head. And right now she looked stunningly different from the rest of them. She had a fresh new tan that went beautifully with her dark hair and eyes and her virgin white dress.

"You look like you've come straight from the sun lamp," he told her.

"No," she said. "Florida."

"Why on earth did you hurry back here?"

"Lonesome."

"For what?"

"You, Dion."

He wasn't easily surprised, but that surprised him. Paige Grayson was one of the few women in this crowd he hadn't played around with. She was kidding, of course. She'd always acted just a little superior to the rest of them, as if she failed to understand what so many of them saw in him.

"Look," he said, "I could follow through on that."

She watched him over the rim of her glass. "How?"

"You look delicious with that tan. I'd like to make your trip back from Florida worthwhile."

Her eyes had a sort of somber humor in them. Anyone except Paige Grayson might have taken him seriously. She laughed with him silently. Or was she laughing at him?

"Name the place and time," she said.

Was she kidding? The mystery of it tingled pleasantly inside of him. "Look," he said, "I have a weakness for suntans. So don't say things like that. It makes me nervous."

"That's encouraging," she answered. "So finally somebody's found your weakness."

Yes, she was kidding. And being vaguely insulting, in that superior fashion of hers. It made him feel a little angry, and to cover the anger, he ordered another drink. She didn't go away, but watched him. Why was he angry, he asked himself. Paige Grayson was simply different. She wasn't asking for possession of the property. He should appreciate that fine point.

"Time and place," he repeated finally. "You live across the street in the Towers, don't you? Right now."

She set her empty glass down on the bar top, and continued to watch him.

"Well?" he asked.

She shrugged.

But the barman interrupted.

"Phone call for you, Mr. Landess."

He handed his half-empty glass to Paige in an unmistakable gesture. But he had an uneasy feeling about the call. He asked the barman where there was a more privately located extension. The man suggested the kitchen and he went there. The kitchen was empty. He lifted the receiver and spoke.

"Dion!" There was a click then as the barman hung up in the other room.

"What do you want?" he asked her coldly.

"What are you doing, Dion?"

"You know damn well what I'm doing. I'm at Kati's party."

"Who else is there?"

"Lots of people."

"Please come home, Dion."

"I'll come home, Merle, when I get ready."

"No, right now."

"Look, don't give me orders..."

"If you don't come home, I'm coming after you."

The threat infuriated him. "Merle," he started to say, "I'm warning you..."

"I've got the gun, Dion." Her voice had calmed suddenly. "I'm holding it in my hand right now. I'll bring the gun with me. I know what's going on up there. And I won't stand for it. Do you understand that, Dion? You're my husband. You belong to me. You have no right to be up there with those women. I'm coming up there and take you home."

In a panic, he realized that she'd do it. Or try to. Make a big scene trying to. Wouldn't that be juicy? The jealous wife pointing a gun at him right there in front of everybody. A scene? It would be a production.

"Merle," he said quickly. "Stay there. I'm coming right down. I promise you. I'll be there in two minutes. Do you understand? Don't come up here. Please. I'm coming home."

There was a click at the other end of the wire. He didn't know for sure whether she'd heard him or not. So he had to get down there before she could leave the apartment. Paige Grayson, still holding his half-finished drink, was completely erased from his mind.

If he were lucky he could be unobtrusive about this. Too many of these people knew Merle too well. He would prefer they wouldn't be aware he was dashing home in response to his wife's threat. The rear door was here, in the kitchen, convenient. He slipped out, sure that he hadn't been seen.

He scorned the elevator and went down the stairs several at a time. Running along the carpeted corridor, he dragged out his keys. Well within the two minutes he had promised he was inside his own apartment with the door shut behind him.

It was the clicking of the door that brought her out. He didn't know what he was expecting. She

had been alternately calm and hysterical on the phone. But she came out of the bedroom still in her pajamas and bed jacket. She wasn't crying. Her face was set in hard lines. And she was holding the gun.

He wasn't afraid though. "Well, I'm here," he said. "What do you want?"

"I want you here," she told him. "What does that mean?"

"You're here, and I want you to stay here. With your wife, where you belong."

"And what if I don't stay here?"

"Then I'll kill you."

He tried to keep his anger under control. "Merle, you can't treat a grown man like a child. You know that won't work. Now try to be sensible. We could get along pretty well if you weren't so damned possessive. We've gotten along well enough in the past, haven't we?"

"We're going to improve," she said, "starting tonight." And the gun didn't waver.

"You know I'm not going to submit to anything like this. Why do you try?" The fury inside him was growing.

"You have a choice, Dion. Either you act like my husband, or I'll kill you. And I don't mean just tonight. I mean from here on out."

If she'd been crying or pleading with him, he would have known what to do. But this was a new Merle he faced, calm, dry-eyed, sounding as if she meant every

word. It puzzled and angered him at the same time. He hesitated.

She took advantage of his hesitation to walk around him. She kept the gun pointing at him every second, but she edged around him, till she was standing between him and the door. He maneuvered slowly to keep facing her.

"You've tried everything else, haven't you?" he said.

"Yes, I've tried everything else."

"You've threatened to leave me, divorce me, everything you could think of. It was all bluff. You're bluffing right now."

"Try me, Dion."

"I'm walking out. I'm going back up to Kati's."

"I'm warning you, Dion..."

He took a step toward her, saw her hand tense. But he still wasn't afraid. She had to be taught a lesson. She couldn't order him around, with a gun or any other way. He kept on moving toward her.

Then at the last moment, he knew he was wrong. But it still wasn't fear that motivated him. Anger was the strongest emotion he felt. Sensing now that she would try to shoot him, he dodged aside from and under the line of fire. He lunged toward her at the same time, drove his shoulder in against the lower part of her body.

The swiftness of his movement prevented her from pulling the trigger. He knocked her off balance, and against the door. His hand

reached for the gun, found her wrist first. They wrestled away from the door. She wasn't strong, but her desperation lent her strength. For the first few seconds she was almost a match for him. Tumbling against chairs, crashing tables and lamps, she still kept her feet. But then his other hand reached the gun. She went down on the rug backwards, with him on top of her. They fought for possession of the gun. He pried her fingers from around it. And then when he had it, he staggered to his feet.

She opened her mouth to scream. He knew from experience how piercing her screams could be. He hated any and all screaming women. He fired.

Just once. She didn't scream. Her body writhed and twitched there on the rug. Then her arms went limp, her hands unclenched, and she lay still. There was a small black hole in her bed jacket, with a growing circle of red forming around it.

And one thought, a huge thought, filled his mind. I've committed murder, but somehow I've got to escape, because I'm not going to die or go to prison for the sake of that woman lying there dead. There are too many women in the world, one woman isn't worth it . . .

Seconds went by. The shock of that tremendous surge of hatred he'd felt, of pulling the trigger, of seeing Merle with that bullet hole in her, took time to master and

defeat. But his instinct for self-preservation was strong too. Gradually his mind turned practical.

There was no convenient possibility of disposing of the body. He ruled that out quickly. No, the body would have to stay here, and be discovered here. But if he didn't kill her, who could have? A burglar? Who thought the apartment was deserted, entered it, surprised the occupant, then panicked? Maybe, if the door had been left unlocked.

The gun. He held an advantage here. He'd kept the gun illegally. It wasn't registered as belonging to either him or his wife. She'd been killed then by a strange gun. If he could dispose of it, that is.

But the main thing was his alibi. If nobody had missed him from Kati's, or at least if no one had seen him leave, he was all right. He made a quick decision. To get back up to Kati's as fast as he could.

He switched off all the lights in the living room. That would make the killing seem all the more accidental. He put the gun in his pocket and went out the door. On the way out he carefully unlocked the door. Anybody therefore could walk right in. Then he ran, ran all the way, down the corridor, up the stairs, through the rear entrance of Kati's apartment, and into Kati's kitchen.

He was in luck. The kitchen was empty. His actual re-entrance was unseen. But the moment after his arrival, a whole group of people

stormed in. "Hi, Dion," Felix Jeson said.

So simple. Just "Hi, Dion." Not "Where have you been, Dion?"

Then he remembered Paige Grayson. And the barman. The barman had passed along the phone call. Had Merle identified herself to him? Of course not. Or the man would have said, "Your wife is on the phone." But he hadn't. He'd said, "Phone call for you, Mr. Landess." It wasn't a sure thing quite, but he'd have to count on it.

Paige Grayson was another problem. He'd been in the middle of making a date with her, had left his drink with her to keep her there while he answered the phone, then had abandoned her. Those things would need an explanation. A good one, if Paige had been really disappointed by his sudden exit. Then he got the inspiration. He hurried out to the rest of the party to find Paige.

He was a little surprised when he found her still there at the bar, still holding his glass. But he was confident too. He walked over to her, retrieved the glass, and finished its contents. When he looked down at her finally, he felt no qualms.

"I thought I'd been stood up," she said.

"You under-estimate yourself," he told her.

"That must have been quite a phone call."

"It was," he agreed.

"I'll bet it was your wife."

He felt the tiny shock of fear. But it passed quickly. "Merle? No, guess again."

"One of your many women, I suppose. I can't guess."

"You know, I can't either."

She frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Well, it was a woman all right. She made some very indecent propositions. I told her I had better plans. But the strangest thing was that she wouldn't tell me her name. One of my unknown admirers, I suppose."

It was a touch of genius, no less. If he didn't know who it was who called him, then there'd be nobody for the police to double-check with. The indecent suggestions part was good too. He'd curl some detective's ear with that, till the poor man would be completely distracted from the point at issue.

Paige Grayson had her eyes fastened on him. "What were the better plans you told her you had?" she wanted to know.

Luck! His luck was terrific! This was what he needed. Go across the street to the Towers with Paige Grayson. Then later, if anybody would remember that he seemed to have been absent from the party for awhile, he could freely admit that he had been. He'd been at the Towers. With a witness to prove it. And besides—he had to get this gun out of his pocket—Paige's apartment was the place for at least temporary disposal.

He looked down at Paige Grayson and he used his very best manner. "I was thinking about you," he said. "Or have you changed your mind?"

She shook her head.

"We can slip out," he said, "and probably no one will notice."

They tried it. He took her arm, and they threaded through the maze. No one stopped or delayed them. The party was gayer by this time, noisier, more confused. It made their escape ridiculously easy.

They rode the elevator silently. The doorman let them out of the building, and across the street another doorman let them into the Towers. They rode upstairs in the same silence.

"You're being pretty grim about this," she told him while she was unlocking her door.

"This kind of thing calls for concentration, not chit-chat," he said, and they went inside.

He had an opportunity to glance around while she was fixing a pair of drinks. It was a nice apartment. But what he was most interested in, of course, was a hiding place for the gun.

They sipped their drinks together on the sofa, and he realized he would have to make this business look more like what it was really supposed to be. This was a smart girl. He couldn't seem to be too pre-occupied.

"Why haven't we done this before?" he asked her.

"You've been pretty busy."

"Is that the only reason?"

The suntan shrugged prettily. "What else?"

"I don't think you've ever been in the mood before."

She smiled. "Oh yes, I have. But I can control my moods."

"That makes you different," he said admiringly. "But why did you bother with control?"

Her smile was more mysterious all the time. "Let's put it this way," she said. "I had to wait for our moods to coincide."

Really a bit puzzled, he said, "Do you mean this has been waiting for me all the time, and all I had to do was to say the word?"

But she didn't answer. They emptied their glasses in silence, watching each other like wary duelers.

Then finally she stood. "Would you excuse me, Dion?" she said, and she went into the next room.

This was the chance he'd been waiting for. He'd selected the place already. The moment she disappeared, he went over to the bookcase. It was quite a large affair, and the thought ran through his mind—either this girl is really on the intellectual side, or her act is not the usual one.

Now supposing she were the intellectual type, which of these books would she be least likely to use in the next few days? Guesswork. Who could predict a woman? He decided against the novel section,

which contained Proust and Wolfe and things like that, because those seemed to be things she might casually take out to read. And he skipped over the art tomes. She might want to look at pictures sometime. He chose finally—just on a hunch—the Shakespeare set, five gorgeously bound red-leather volumes. Show pieces, with little or no sign of wear. *If it were done when 't is done, then 't were well it were done quickly.* The line flashed into his mind, and the appropriateness of it pleased him somehow.

He took the gun from his pocket, slipped it behind the Shakespeare, and returned quickly to the sofa.

He was ready now for all eventualities . . .

Considering the circumstances, considering that he was trying to escape being punished for a murder—and one can expect a reasonable amount of inconvenience in that situation—the rest of it went off amazingly well.

He had killed his wife at a little past eleven o'clock. He left Kati Roth's apartment with Paige Grayson about eleven-fifteen. He returned to Kati's, still in the company of Paige Grayson, about twelve-thirty.

Their re-entrance at Kati's didn't go unnoticed. The reaction was varied but predictable. Ill-concealed anger in people like Kati. Solicitous clucking from Felix Jesson. Bawdy remarks from Alex Margary. Frank jealousy from Leslyne Karnes

who apparently was still waiting for that promised tete-a-tete.

"Let's all take Dion home and see what Merle thinks about this," somebody suggested.

They had just reached that state where they thought something like that was a good idea. Curiously enough, Dion agreed with them. Secretly, of course. He made an outward show of reluctance.

So they all trooped downstairs. Cory Michaels was in the lead, and he made the proper remark about the strangeness of the unlocked door. It was he who went inside first, who stumbled around finding a light, and who therefore and thereby also found the corpse. Sally Beckwith, right on cue, supplied the scream.

They got out of there pretty quickly and went back upstairs. Felix sagely told them that they should go back, since nothing in the Landess apartment should be touched. Kati, her anger completely evaporated, insisted that not even Dion should remain at the grisly scene. He needed a drink and moral support.

Back up at Kati's, much soberer than before, they all had several drinks. Felix telephoned the police. A Detective Shannon and a large and assorted crew of cops arrived quickly and just as quickly went to work. Everybody stayed around till dawn, and everybody got questioned.

The pattern of affairs emerged

easily and clearly enough for Detective Shannon. Merle Landess had been shot around eleven o'clock. The condition of the body and the chance testimony of a neighbor across the hall from the Landess apartment who "had thought" he'd heard a shot, both indicated the time of death. The unlocked door perhaps pointed to an unknown intruder. The most likely suspect, Dion Landess, seemed to have an air-tight alibi. Yes, he'd been absent for a while... maybe it was around eleven... but he hadn't gone home to his wife... he'd been over at the Towers with Paige Grayson. And where was the murder gun? Dion Landess had never owned a gun.

Detective Shannon summed up this case to Dion two days later. He had come to his conclusions rather reluctantly. "At first I was real sure everything pointed to you, Mr. Landess. You weren't getting along with your wife. You were playing around with other women and she resented it. Trouble is though, you've got a damned good alibi, and there's no positive evidence—no gun, for instance—to link you with the murder directly. So I guess we'll have to leave it at that. Looks like it was done by somebody who walked into your apartment because the door was left open."

"Look," Dion told the man, "I won't pretend that my wife and I were on the best of terms. Though if she'd been a little more broad-minded, we'd have done all right.

I didn't hate her. I liked other women, but I also liked my wife. So I hope you find the person who killed her."

"So do I," Detective Shannon agreed. "So do I."

Paige looked magnificent in the negligee. It was a stunning effect, the filmy white against her tanned skin. But he was bored with the sight of her.

"I thought we were going out," he told her, as he shut the door and came farther into the apartment.

"Out?"

"Yes, I told you Sally Beckwith was giving a party. Now go and change. I'll wait for you."

But instead of going obediently to the bedroom, she came into his arms instead. "Darling, do you think it's proper that such a new widower go partying so soon? Not even a week yet, darling. It's indecent."

"Let's don't pretend, shall we not?"

"But, darling, I don't want you to act like a barbarian. Even if you don't, I have some pride, you know."

He pried her arms off his shoulders, and backed away a step. "What do you mean you have some pride?" he wanted to know. "What have you got to do with it?"

She went right on smiling. "You and I are sort of associated now, aren't we?"

"Associated? Not that I know of."

"Well, linked together then. In the public eye, that is."

"I hadn't been aware of it."

"Well, darling, I have inherited you, haven't I?"

With a great effort he controlled himself. "No, you haven't inherited me," he told her gently. He wouldn't have been so gentle if that little revolver weren't still behind those books. He had come to reclaim it, and once he had it, he'd talk as he pleased. He just had to get her out of the room half a minute, that was all.

But she walked instead over to the sofa and curled up on it, sitting on her legs in one corner of it, quite like a beautiful cat. And looking just as pleased.

"Perhaps I didn't phrase it rightly," she was saying. "No, I didn't quite inherit you. Because Merle didn't leave you to me in her will. You're mine now all the same though. But let's don't argue about it."

"Well, we will argue," he said, going toward her. "What makes you think there's anything at all between us? Just because I happened to be here making love to you while my wife was being murdered across the street? What does that make me to you?"

"My property."

"What!" He was hearing Merle, the dead voice, saying the words.

"All right, my lover then. What does it matter what we call you? *What's in a name? That which we*

call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

He stared at her. Now he knew why she looked so pleased.

"Shakespeare, darling. I read Shakespeare all the time. Didn't I ever tell you I wanted to be an actress?"

But just to make finally sure, he walked across the room to the shelves of books. With one sweep of his hand he dislodged the five pretty red volumes and hurled them to the floor. The space behind them was empty.

"Where is it?" he asked, turning.

"Where it's safe," she told him.

"What's the price?"

"You, darling. Is that so bad? Am I so hard to take?"

He looked at her. No, she wasn't.

"Come here then, Dion, and sit by me," she said.

His decision formed slowly.

"I'd rather not go to Sally Beckwith's party. I want to stay home and have you make love to me. Come here, Dion."

He went. He walked toward, but then past her. To where the telephone stood in a corner by the door. He dialed a number.

He looked at Paige Grayson while he spoke. It gave him a great deal of satisfaction, perhaps the greatest thrill he had ever felt in his life with women. "I want to get in touch with Detective Shannon," he said. "Tell him I have some information on the Merle Landess murder."