

GUILTY

DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

Vol. 2 — No. 5

March, 1958

CONTENTS

SHORT STORIES

- VAMPIRE GIRL *by Bryce Walton* 2
She had a delusion she needed to drink blood
- HIRED FOR THE KILL *by Al James* 14
Paul had a sure-fire set-up for murder
- WOMAN AND THE AXE *by C. B. Gilford* 23
His wife thought he was sick mentally
- THE SHOWDOWN *by Gilbert Schechtman* 32
Bernie was out of stir. Could he stay top dog?
- CRIME LESSON *by Arnold English* 37
The kid got instruction from his victim
- DESPERATE KIDNAPPER *by Sidney Roberts* 46
Kent was given one year to live
- YOUR DAUGHTER WAS ATTACKED *by Carroll Mayers* .. 57
The law was too slow for a father's vengeance
- HOT MONEY *by James P. Duff* 66
Harry wanted cash and a new woman
- ONE MINUTE TO DEATH *by Dan Stribe* 79
Convicted of murder, must I die now?

NOVELETTES

- MOVE IN, TAKE OVER *by Robert Bowen*86
Joey tried to crash to the top of the gang
- NIGHT OF HORROR *by Koller Ernst* 112
A doctor's hideous revenge on young hoodlums

W. W. Scott — Editor

GUILTY DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE is published bi-monthly by Feature Publications Inc., at 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial office at 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Holyoke, Mass., August 20, 1956, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Single copy 35c. Subscription rates, \$4.00 for 12 issues. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts; and all such material must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes. All stories printed in the magazine are fiction, and any similarity between the characters and actual persons is coincidental. Copyright 1957 by Feature Publications, Inc. All rights, including translation, reserved under International Copyright Convention and Pan American Copyright Convention. Printed in the U.S.A.

HORROR IN THE NIGHT

by KOLLER ERNST

The doctor vowed hideous revenge on the young hoodlums

DAVID CONDON, MD., put his arm around Elsie, his bride of 24 hours, trying to reassure her. He wished, fervently, that there were someone to put a reassuring arm around his own shoulders as he faced the four overgrown kids on the black, lonely cut-through in Allegany State Park

between Bradford and Salamanca.

It was 3 A.M. The kids stood in the glare of the headlights; big, silent now against the blackness, the whispering of the forest which hung over them. They leered suggestively at Elsie.

It's not real, he thought in



growing panic. A road-sign, white in the glare of lights, read:

"Ranger Station 1 Mi." A black, painted finger pointed straight ahead.

People are there, he thought. Good people, peacefully sleeping. The camps are there. Help was there, all around them. Only a mile away. Yet, there they stood, captives of four oversized boys, smiling among themselves, deadly as four mad wolverines.

"I thought you kids were in trouble," David repeated, motioning toward the battered, topless jalopy which was skewered sidewise in the road, blocking two-thirds of it.

"He thought we were in trouble," said the one with the woman-like hips they called Fatso. "Imagine that."

Elsie squeezed close to David. He could feel the violent tremble of her slender body tight against him.

"He thought we were in trouble," repeated the tall one they called Slim. "Now ain't that nice. Always worryin' about us teenagers."

"Sure," said Fatso. "Why, kids," he mimicked. "Can't I

help? Is somebody hurt? I'm a doctor. Polite bastard, ain't he?"

Somewhere an owl said whooooo.

The boys laughed, came a step closer, flowing like a human wave.

"Who?" the stocky one called Crusher said. "Why the Doc, that's who." He stepped out, squat, bulge-chested for all his baby-fuzz which still shone on his round chin. "You are a gentleman, aren't you, Doc?"

"Look, boys," David said, tightening his arm around Elsie, "I'm glad nobody's hurt. Thought you'd had an accident. We'll go now."

He took a step, but they tightened around him.

"You afraid, Doc?" Slim asked. "There isn't anything to be afraid of. This stuff you hear about teenagers is for the birds. We're just misunderstood boys, aren't we, fellas?"

"Sure," said the slight one, the blond with the heavy duck cut and the surprising basso voice. "We're really a bunch of Galahads at heart, Doc." He winked at Elsie. "Say, chick, this guy been molesting you?"

Elsie found her voice. It was a shaking treble in the quiet night.

"Please," she said. "My husband and I would like to go now. Glad...glad no one was hurt in the...accident."

"The chick is scared," Slim said. "You think she's scared of us?"

"Naw," said Fatso, he with the hips and waddle of a woman. "She's scairt of the square. Maybe he's kidnapping her."

"Listen," David said tightly. "We're going. Make way through, or, so help me, I'll punch a way through. Come on Elsie. Now open up."

He took a step and stopped. They lined up tightly in the lights, four teen-age boys, the smallest as big as he; four boys with the bodies and muscles of men. Dave looked longingly at the car. If only I could get to my bag, he thought. The sight of a scalpel might frighten them off.

BUT they lounged before him, wary, watching, their eyes cold, their lips curled, contemptuous. Like cats, they were cats with tails

twitching, crouched, ready to pounce upon an unwary field mouse.

"Listen, he says," mimicked Blondy. "He says they're going through. Make way, fellas. The creep is going through. Through what, pop?"

David felt Elsie's tremble increase. She pressed against him like a frightened animal. Her fingers bit into his arm. He could sense the panic rising in her like a running tide.

"Damn you," he said harshly, "One at a time I'll take you on if it's only a fighting thrill you want. One at a time I'll teach you, what society forgets to teach you when it brings you hoodlums into court. Is there one who isn't afraid on a man-to-man basis, or do you only hunt in packs, like rats?"

He drew no rise from them. They merely laughed.

"Hear, hear," said Slim. "He wants to fight us one at a time. Doc wants to be a hero."

"Shame," said Blondy. "He has his values twisted. He thinks we're hoodlums. You know what I think, fellas?"

"What?" They chimed into the game.

"I think we'd better rescue the frail," Blondy said. "I think he's transporting her across the state line for immoral purposes. You know what that means, fellas."

"Look, boys," David said, feeling the icy undercurrent come into his bowels. "You've had your fun. Let's forget this and we'll all go home. How about it?"

"Mann Act," said Slim, paying no attention to him and answering Blondy. "We gotta save the frail from the Mann Act."

For a terrible moment the park was as quiet as a grave. The lights accentuated the blackness which hemmed them in; whispered at them, cackled at them. Yet, only a mile ahead began the trail camps; Buffalo Trail, Camp Turner, Beaver Run, the dozens of others. Hundreds slept peacefully at that moment almost within shouting distance. But there in that little patch of glare, they were nevertheless as isolated as though they stood on top of Mount Everest.

THEN Elsie sobbed. It was a pitiful, frightened sound,

a quivering slice out of David's heart. He tightened his grip on her trembling shoulders.

"Get out of the way," he said grimly.

Angrily he stepped forward, fists clenched, feeling the bite of his nails into the palms of his hands, ready to lash out, to fight his way clear. "If they attack," he said clearly to Elsie, "get into the car and lock it. They can't harm you then. Drive to a ranger station. I can fight these hoodlums off long enough for that."

Miraculously, a path opened before him. He felt a surge of triumph, even though his back crawled as he passed between them and reached for the car door.

They struck then, a quick staggering blow at the back of his neck. Elsie was wrenched from his side. He heard her startled sob, then arms seized him. Fists rained against his head and face, raising blinding stars in his brain. He fought back like an animal, turning and squirming, his teeth bared, ripping at them, snarling.

He hurled one away. Knocked down a second. But they came back cursing. A

shoe caught him in the stomach. His breath exploded in agony. A fist caught his jaw. rocked him. Then he was down and they were kneeling him and kicking him and pounding his head on the road.

For an instant he lost consciousness. When he opened his eyes he saw Elsie struggling in Slim's embrace. He tried to rise. But Blondy, Fatso and Crusher, panting and cursing, held him down.

"God damn you!" he cried. "Touch her, and I'll kill every last bastard of you, if I have to hunt you down for the rest of my life!"

Blondy slammed him across the mouth.

"Shut up, Pop," he said. He yelled at Slim. "For Crissake, get done with the frail. We can't wait all night. Or can't you handle her alone like a man?"

There was a ripping of clothes, then Elsie's quavering scream. It was cut short immediately, followed by the thud of savage blows crunching against soft, tender skin. Then there was silence except for the sound of a body being thrown onto the seat of the car.

Dave struggled. He got an arm free, smashed a fist upward, felt the shock of knuckles breaking against teeth; felt the give, the shatter of the teeth and for a moment, he fought in a manic frenzy, back to the ground. He hurled Blondy clear. But the blocky ones continued to smash him. He got a headlock. An ear brushed his face. He bit, ripped it away, spat it out. A terrible scream of pain cut the night.

Then a boot descended, grated off his forehead. He remembered nothing after that.

IT was still dark, the headlights were still on when he finally groaned to consciousness. There remained only one car. His own.

For an instant he lay in the road. Then came remembrance, like a terrible, unendurable hot stab. He crawled to his feet, fell, crawled and finally staggered up.

"Elsie!" he called. Elsie! Elsie! Elsie!"

Only the sighing trees answered him, waving gently above him. What they had

seen, they had seen. Being part of nature, they would never give up their secret. But they sighed gently their sympathy.

He staggered to the car, wrenched open the door.

"Thank God," he gasped, falling into the seat. "Thank God at least you're here."

He fell against Elsie. But she did not move. She sat in the front seat, staring straight ahead. Her clothes were ripped from her. In the light from the dash her face was twisted and misshapen and swollen. She whimpered softly, like an animal. Her beautiful body was a mass of gouges, scratches, fist-big bruises.

He took her in his arms, rocked her, tried to cover her with the shreds which remained. Finally he put his own, tattered coat about her.

"Elsie," he crooned, "Elsie, Elsie. It's over now. It's all right now. We'll be all right. We're going home now, Elsie. To your new home."

Hopelessly, he kept saying it over and over, although he could not believe it himself, and inside him his soul ran hot like rushing lava, and his heart beat like red hammers,

and his stomach hurt and his mind screamed.

But Elsie, who had not yet seen her new home, did not answer. She stared straight ahead, whimpering, trembling.

She never did answer. Then, nor at the Ranger Station where he reported what had happened. Nor at the State Institution when they placed her in the single, solitary room and David held her and kissed her and wiped her face and whispered to her, his heart broken, his mind still paralyzed at the horror, the savagery, the suddenness of it all.

"Darling," he whispered to her. "My poor darling."

He kissed her broken, bleeding lips, and her vacant eyes and her shell ears. And she just sat and trembled and stared and whimpered.

In the institution office he turned to the head psychiatrist and asked, although he too, knew the answer.

"Will she ever?"

The psychiatrist made some squiggles on a pad. Then he looked up with a smile, one meant to be reassuring, but one which reminded Dave of his hopelessness that night.

"There is always hope," the doctor said. "Where there is life, there is hope. She's had a terrible experience."

"Yes," David said.

Mutely he turned and walked from the institution. Outside, he stopped and looked at the red building, with its black barred windows. One of them belonged to her. His Elsie. His bride of 24 hours. It was her honeymoon room.

Then he walked down the street, blindly, past people who stared at him, to his car.

"A juvenile," he said as the starter whirred and the car sprang to life. "A juvenile with a part of an ear missing; a juvenile who is blond, like a girl, but has a bass voice; a pimply juvenile they call Slim, and a fat, rumpy one they call Fatso. God, please God, let me find them.

HE drove first to the Salamanca trooper barracks. No, they said. No luck on the juveniles. Too bad he didn't get the license. The descriptions? A Lieutenant MacDonald, said sadly, sympathetically:

"All juveniles look alike. All have Slims, and Crushers, and Blondies and little fat, girl-like guys they call Fatso. They could be from Buffalo. Olean. Hornell. Bradford. Kane. Rochester even. Or Pittsburgh. Or any one of a hundred little towns around here. But we don't remember four such kids."

"If I found them," Dave said, "what would happen to them?"

The lieutenant spread his hands.

"If they're real juveniles, we're helpless," he said. "A judge could send them to Randall's Island. A reform institution."

"That's all?"

"That's all."

"That's nice," said David. "We actually encourage juvenile delinquency, don't we, lieutenant?"

Lieut. MacDonald nodded slowly. "In a way," he said guardedly.

"In every way," snapped David. "They assaulted me. But worse even than that, they erased her mind with the horror of that night. That's worse than murder. Murder is merciful."

ful. You are dead. But she is dead and she is alive. Can't you understand what we're letting these juvenile delinquents do?"

"What can I do?" the lieutenant asked. "What do you want me to do? Shoot them?"

"No," David said. "That would be too easy for them. And certainly, a couple years in Randall's Island is not the answer. The law is wrong. The system is wrong. These are not juveniles. These are monsters, not yet 18. They haven't a right to be classed as human beings."

The lieutenant reached across the desk, touched his arm.

"Take it easy, Doctor," he said. "I know how you feel. God knows, I'd feel the same. I got two young daughters. But we can't do anything. We can't even touch them. There are old women's sob societies that would scream their stupid heads off if we so much as slapped one of these damned bastards. I sure know how you feel. Sometimes I can't look at myself. But...that's the way it is."

David nodded. The trem-

bling anger which had been shaking him, left suddenly. It left him cold and rock-like.

"Perhaps, lieutenant," he said. "Perhaps you can't do anything. Perhaps I can."

He walked out. At the door the lieutenant's voice stopped him for a fraction of a second. His words were soft, sympathetic.

"Be careful about it, Doctor," he said. "And...good luck."

GOOD luck.

The words haunted David for weeks. He moved from town to town, delaying his return to Niagara Falls to open his practice. He was young. Just a year out of his internship. Proud he'd been, because he had managed to get a nice Colonial near the American Falls. Elsie, a Pittsburgh girl, had never seen it. It was to have been her honeymoon surprise.

They had been coming home, cutting through the park north from Bradford.

Now he hunted. Like a restless jungle beast he hunted, for a terrible hunger was in

him. He combed the Southern Tier towns. A week here. Two weeks there. Staying until he had rooted out all the hang-outs of the juveniles.

Looking, seeking, searching, dying for the sight of four boy-men, one with a half ear. There wasn't a day that passed without some motorist pulling up behind him in a torture of brakes, a curse on his lips as he pulled past. For there wasn't a day that David didn't see the four hoodlums, and stop suddenly to make sure.

He drove the streets of the towns, his eyes on every adolescent that walked by. He was lucky that he wasn't killed. He narrowly missed smashups dozens of times. But there is a God who protects the seeker, the dedicated, and David continued on, looking.

Each time he thought he saw one, or all of them come from a pool hall, or gin mill, or hot dog stand, he felt the red brain fire. Until he had a second, closer look. Then he saw these were other boys.

They look alike, he thought savagely, hopelessly. Just like the lieutenant said; every

teenage gang has a Blondie, a Slim, a Crusher, a Fatso.

And so he drove. He grew thin and haggard. He let his beard grow. He did not want to look at himself in the mirror to shave. He began to look like an eccentric. His eyes were sunken, blazing pits which frightened people.

Doggedly he continued his search. He reasoned the youths must have been from somewhere in the Southern Tier. They'd had a topless jalopy. They couldn't have driven that too far. Why, it wouldn't run too far. They had to be from the State. He felt hot panic whenever he thought they might have been from California, for instance. Or Florida. Or Ohio, even. His task would be hopeless.

He wiped these thoughts away and drove, blindly, with eyes only for young men who walked the streets, or drove past in cars; or even buses.

He lived on hot dogs and black, scalding coffee. Quick meals, so that he could continue his quest. First in Olean. Then Hornell. Then down to Bradford. Then Kane. Then back up to Wellsville, Sala-

manca, Corning, Dunkirk. Back through Allegany State Park, slowly through the dozens of camps. Searching. Looking. Hoping. His soul screaming with impatience at the terrible injustice of it all.

But, although he pulled up short many times, nowhere was there a boy with a missing half ear. Nowhere was there a blond with a thick duck cut. Nowhere was there a tall one with pimples, nor a fat one with hips like a woman and narrow shoulders and a waddle like a bear.

Nowhere.

Not until he came, finally, to Franklindale, a town of 900, a dozen miles north of Allegany State Park on route 219 toward Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

There he found the missing half ear. There he found Slim, and Blondy, and Woman Hips.

THEY were tumbling out of a pool hall as he drove along Route 219. He'd just spied it and was looking around for a rooming house where he could stay. They piled into the old, topless Ford.

He recognized it with a shiver of savage delight. For an instant he had an urge to drive headlong against them. Smash them, his mind said. Destroy them! Maim them!

But he had to be sure. Certainly, there was the blond, and the tall one, and the two blocky ones. There were laughing and joking and jostling each other into the car. The last one to enter was the fat one. He turned to watch a woman walk across the street, whistling at her and they all shouted.

David saw the half ear. It was the right ear. He'd thought it would be. But in that jumble of bodies that night, he couldn't be sure.

"Hey, Slim," the fat one cried. "How about that hip movement?"

"Cool, Crusher," Slim said. "Cool."

They roared away, cutout open, the old jalopy cracking and snarling like a racing car.

David backed around, followed until he was close enough to get the license number. Then he braked and stopped, lest they discover him. After that he looked

around for a single house. He'd changed his mind about a room.

In the town's real estate agency, a little hole in the wall along the two-block main street, he learned of an empty farmhouse, for rent on Losson Road. He took it, saying his family would follow in a few days. Then he located the police station and drove there. A greying man in a crumpled blue shirt was dozing behind a littered desk. Wanted posters hung slabsided on a little blackboard.

"I want to report reckless driving," Dave said.

The old man opened his eyes, focused on him and slowly groaned to an upright sitting position.

"Your car hit?" he asked without interest.

"No," David said.

He made up a story, about how he'd been cut off on the road. A car full of juvenile delinquents, he said. He gave the license number of the jalopy. The old man grinned, scratched his head.

"Hell," he said, "that ain't no juvenile delinquent, though

the boys are a mite loud at times. That's Judge Bevan's son, Slim. A young hellion, he and his crowd. What he do, did you say?"

David spread his hands, forced a smile. He looked like a hungry Satan. He'd had what he want to know. He had intended to report the reckless driving and thus, get the name and address of the jalopy owner. The village policeman had unwittingly supplied it right off the bat.

"Forget it," he said. "If he's a judge's son, I must have been mistaken. Probably got the license number wrong."

The old man relaxed, settled back and grinned.

"Just as well, stranger," he said. "You bring a charge against Slim in this town and his pappy'd shore enough throw it out. Mebbe throw you in jail. Though, I ain't sayin' the boy hasn't got some licks comin'."

"Thanks," David said.

"Don't mention it."

AT a corner drug store David bought coffee and a hamburg. Then he looked up

Judge Bevan's number. When he was finished he returned to the real estate office and arranged for a telephone under his assumed name of Martin Wilson of Pittsburgh. Then he waited.

That night he spent sitting in the living room of the old house, staring out at the moon-bathed road and the gently waving trees. The smell of mint and ripening blueberries was strong in the air. But he was not aware of these things. He saw Elsie, in her barred room, 90 miles away, pale-faced, staring, whimpering, trembling.

He saw the headlights etching the boys against the black trees. He saw Slim, savaging her toward the car. He saw terror and horror and sheer brutality. And he heard her scream; hopelessly, pitifully.

After a while he went and opened his black bag and injected a sedative. He wanted time to pass quickly. He wanted to be unconscious until it was time to arise; time for action; time for justice.

The following day the telephone men came and installed his phone. Then he waited for

nightfall, impatience burning in him, hate a red acid seared his heart and mind. Haggard-eyed, he watched the slow passage of time on his watch. Finally, it was night.

At midnight he made his first call. He spoke in a treble and asked for Slim. After a while he heard the voice and, for an instant, he couldn't speak, so violent was his reaction. It was the voice of that night in the park.

"Well, who is it?" Slim was saying. "Speak up. This is Slim."

"Slim," David whispered. "This is Blondy." He lowered his voice to a growl. "We got a caper. We're in the old farmhouse, you know, on Losson Road. Hurry up, meet us here."

"I don't get it," Slim said. "I just leave you guys, now..."

"Shutup," snapped David. "This is something we stumbled on after we left you. Shake your fanny and get over here. Or do you want to chicken out?"

"Don't you call me chicken," Slim said. "I'll be there in ten minutes."

Softly David hung up. Then he went into the kitchen to wait. Fifteen minutes later Slim drove into the deserted farm yard. David went out to greet him.

"Hello, Slim," he said, as the tall, pimpled youth slid from behind the wheel. "Imagine meeting you again."

Slim started, stared at him uncertainly.

"Hey," he said, "what's the gag? I don't know you. Where's Blondy and the guys?"

"Inside, you scurvy bastard," David said.

He grabbed the tall youth suddenly by the throat and shook him. All the anger, all the pent-up emotion, all the bottled savagery exploded in him in a frenzy of strength which left Slim helpless, terrified.

"Inside, you scurvy bastard," David snarled.

He propelled Slim ahead of him. He flung him against the wall and hovered over him. Slim's eyes were big, white with fright.

"What's the matter?" he whimpered. "What I ever do to you?"

"You're not so brave now, alone, are you?" David asked. He slammed his hand across the youth's face, and Slim whimpered some more and crouched like a dog. He tried to press himself into the very wall. He shivered so his heels clacked.

"Why don't you fight?" David asked. "You were brave enough before."

"Cheez, mister," Slim said. "I ain't done nothin'. Wait till the law hears about this. You know what you can get for beating up a juvenile."

"Yes, I know. But who will you tell them beat you up?" He laughed sourly. His beard was a perfect disguise. "Imagine, a big boy like you, afraid."

He slammed his fist into Slim's face. Then he smashed a crunching right on his nose, felt the bridge give, saw the spurt of blood over the boy's face and chin. Slim began to cry. David was tempted to tell him why, to remind him about the woman, the bride of 24 hours, on the black road. But this, he knew, would have been folly. He seized Slim by the

throat, dragged him to the phone.

"Now," he said, "I want you to call Blondy. Have him meet you here. I have work for him, too. After that I'll have Blondy call Crusher and then I'll have him call Fatso. Then we'll have a picnic."

"A . . . a picnic."

"A picnic. Dial."

Slim's hand shook as he put through his call to Blondy. Then David dragged him into the bedroom and bound him securely.

ONE by one he tricked them there, fought them, overcame them with implacable savagery; feeling disgust at himself for what he was doing, but grimly hewing to his task; feeling surprise, too, at the ease with which he was able to handle them alone.

"You're cowards!" he screamed. "Cowards! Cowards! Cowards! Cowards! You have courage only in gangs! Fight!"

Then, when it was all over, and they were all bound, he took a syringe from his black bag and injected a strong dose of morphine into each. He

waited until it took hold. Finally they lay still, no longer moaning and tossing. Then he gave each a local anaesthetic.

"Now," he said, stepping back to study the four of them, stretched side by side on the bed.

Slowly he rolled up his sleeves. Swiftly he worked then. Swiftly and expertly he performed his operations in the yellow light of the bedside lamp. Then he bandaged them, washed his bloody hands, counted their pulses, nodded dispassionately and left the bedroom with his bag.

In the living room he picked up the phone, dialed. A gruff voice said:

"Franklindale police."

"You'll find four hoodlums in the Losson Road farm house. Get them to a hospital."

He hung up immediately, packed his meager belongings and drove quickly away, heading northwest, where his empty Colonial waited. It was 3 A.M. when he arrived home.

HE felt heavy, terribly lonely as he walked slowly up the stairs of the little Colonial, a quarter mile from

the brink of the American Falls, deep in a setting of gently waving elms. Tiredly he unlocked the front door.

For a moment he gazed at the sign beside the door. It read:

"David M. Condon, Surgeon. Hours 1-3 daily except Thursdays and Sundays."

Then he went inside, shut out the woman behind the bars and sat down and cried. Elsie, he whispered. Dear God, why?

He tried to sleep, but he could not. The face of his wife haunted him. The black, staring eyes, the terrible shiver. Elsie, who had been so gentle, so happy, like a kitten.

"Darling," he had said even as they drove with the joy fresh in them to the church for the marriage, "being a doctor's wife is hard work. Your life isn't your own. Up in the middle of the night. Emergencies, always emergencies. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy."

They laughed. Elsie touched his cheek, brushed her lips against his face.

"I'll love it," she said simply. "I'll love being part of

you. Helping people. Doing good for them. When they get you up in the night, I'll make hot coffee while you dress to open your eyes and steady your nerves."

"I believe you really mean it," he said.

"Of course. Isn't that what a doctor's wife is for?"

Yes, he thought, that was what a doctor's wife was for. But not one cup of coffee had she been destined to make; not one night call had she been destined to share. Damn these kids. Damn them to the deepest hell forever.

Then he saw again the four still forms on the bed, and suddenly they haunted him.

Had he the right? Was it man's right to exact vengeance? Wasn't that the right of God, of God alone? Weren't there courts?

No, he cried. No, no, no, no. Courts are too weak. There comes a time when man must act like a man to stamp out a disease. This juvenile madness was a disease. Worse, it was unhuman. Someone had to take action. Someone had to take violent steps to bring the age back to normalcy; to bring

back youth to respect decency and fear the law.

He sat up, sweat streaming from him. He was trembling. Elsie looked at him out of the darkness. "Darling," he whispered, "I had to do it for you. For you and every other girl like you." And she smiled sadly and vanished. He slept.

At noon he awoke, feeling like one of the damned. He took a shower. Then he shaved. Then he went downstairs to his office. The receptionist nurse he had hired when he had left to bring home his bride, was already there. She rose when he entered. Her face was lined with sympathy. Her long, pale hands fluttered.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Condon," she said. "So..."

Wearily he held up a hand.

"The mail," he said. "I'll catch up with the mail first. Then patients if there are any."

AT 1 P.M. the nurse brought in his first patient. David looked up, started.

"Why, Lieutenant MacDonald," he said. He waited.

The tall state trooper sighed

with infinite weariness, seated himself before David's desk and slowly spread out that afternoon's newspaper. It carried a big, black, 72-point, 8-column shock headline.

"4 Teenagers Mutilated. Bearded man sought."

"Why do you show me this?" David asked.

"There was an operation," the lieutenant said.

"Yes? Should I be interested?"

"It was a professional job, Doctor. A skilled operation. Whoever did it, even thought to have them taken to a hospital."

"Really?"

"Yes. And a remarkable thing, one of them had only half a right ear."

"Remarkable?"

"Yes. We found the other half a month ago on that park road after you'd reported to us what had happened. I thought you'd like to know who these boys really are."

David rose, walked to the window and stared out across the expanse of park toward the American Falls in the distance. At that moment the sun caught it and there was a rainbow in

it. That meant good luck. But not for him. But he didn't care. He was tired. He was worn. He had exacted vengeance. Now he no longer cared what happened to him.

"I knew it, Lieutenant," he said turning. "You come to the right place. I did it. I..."

"It's a funny thing," Lieut. MacDonald said, "but sometimes I can't hear a thing. What do you suppose causes that, Doctor?"

"I operated on them," continued David woodenly. "They had no right to have children; they forfeited their right to have progeny carrying their kind of genes. They..."

"It's a kind of dull roaring. Now, it's better. What were you saying?"

David looked at him then. The lieutenant's big, long face was very solemn. There was sympathy in his eyes.

"I got the report on your

wife," he said softly. "It's rough."

David understood what he was trying to say; that he was absolving him; that here was, finally, law, willing to abide by the code of vengeance.

"You look tired," David said. "Shall I prescribe something?"

The lieutenant shook his head. "No. But let me prescribe something for you, Doctor."

"Yes?"

"Get some sun. You're pale where you shaved. Some goody-goody biddy might remember about your wife and get the idea you were wearing a beard recently."

David watched him leave.

"Thanks," he said.

He sat down then, put his face in his arms. He was terribly tired, terribly lonely.

THE END
