

KEYHOLE MYSTERY

Magazine

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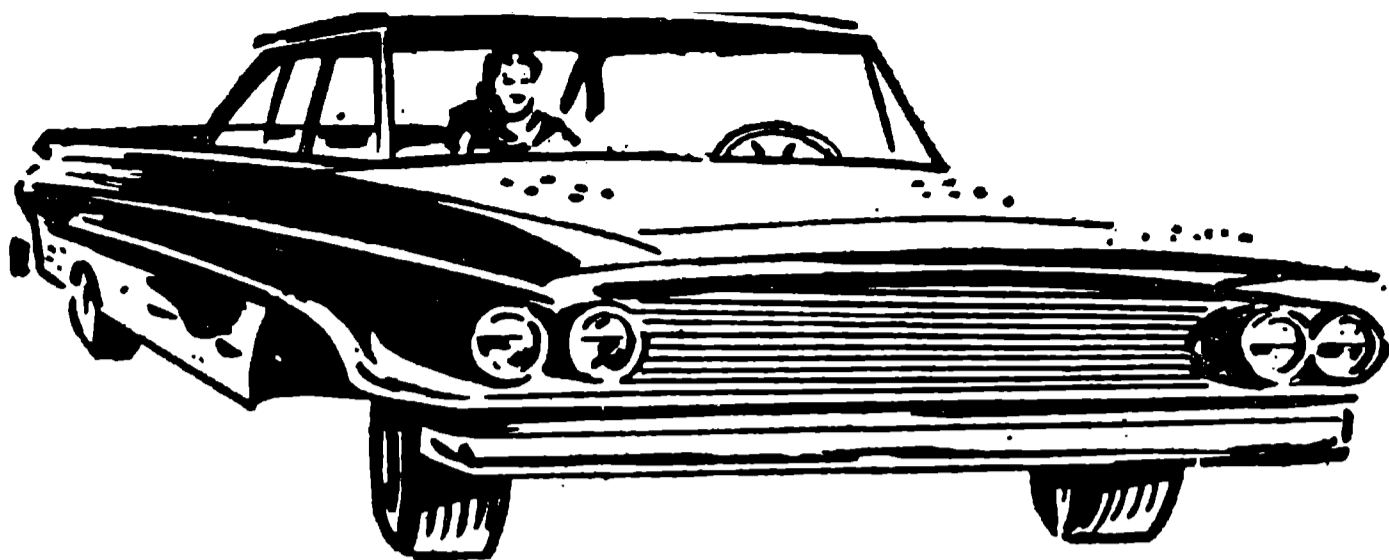
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AUTHOR'S CHOICE

"What is your favorite story?" —the question is one that every writer hears many times during his life. Some writers find it difficult to answer, because they cannot honestly say that they prefer this one to that. The reason? An author may cherish a particular story for an unusual character who came alive during the writing and "took over" the plot, forcing the author to discard his original story line. But it turns out to be a jewel of a story, a sort of bonus to the writer (he never would have thought of that plot idea originally). Or an author's favorite story may be the one he wrote on the day he fell in love (unlikely) or on the day his creditors delivered an ultimatum and if he wanted to eat the next day he had to sit down and write a story that night (much more likely).

Or a dozen different reasons.

But my reason for choosing "I.O.U." is not so dramatic. I like this story above all others that I have written because:

- 1. It is about a family situation. (I prefer this kind of story to the dashing, high adventure type.)*
- 2. It is about a father—teenage-daughter relationship (my favorite family situation).*
- 3. It poses a very serious problem: a choice between gratitude and duty—a difficult choice for anyone to make.*

Cornell Woolrich

I. O. U.

by CORNELL WOOLRICH

TO THE OTHERS IN THE BACK room, Second-Grade Detective Clinton Sturgess said, "So long, fellows—see you tomorrow." He went down the hall, past the sergeant's desk, out of the precinct house and into the velvety softness of an August dusk. He went around the corner to the garage, got his old car out. He swung it up the ramp to the street, stopped long enough to light a cigarette, exhaled an enjoyable "Aahh!" and started homeward, whistling.

It was a swell night. It was a swell life. He was thirty-five, had a nice wife and a nice kid, he was a second-grader and he wasn't stopping there. He had it all lined up before him, step by step: first-grade, lieutenant, captain, inspector.

He was out on the lake shore drive now, with its lights curving around before him in a long vista and the lake gray-violet in the twilight.

He was whistling *My Blue Heaven*. It was old but it stayed with him, and the words in his mind fitted his contentment:

*A turn to the right—
A little white light—*

He made the turn (but it was to the left) and climbed the steep grade that led to their house. The development was called Lakeview Heights because it was strung along the top of this bluff. He parked at the curb instead of backing into the garage because he'd decided to take his family to the movies. He sounded the horn, and the porch light went on and they both came out in a flurry, his wife just to the lower step, the kid flying out all the way to swing from his neck as he stepped from the car and caught her.

The kid was pretty. Everybody said so. She'd been on loan to them from heaven for seven years now, and each time he could see

the place she'd come from just by looking at her.

"Get your things ready. We're going to the movies."

The flurry became a whirlwind. His wife said, "I've got supper waiting for you on the table. We're finished already. Barbara, come in and get your hat."

He turned the car around to face downhill, to save time leaving, and braked once more. The kid came racing out past him a second time as he got up to the porch. "I'll wait for you in the car!" she cried gaily.

"All right—but don't monkey with the horn now."

He wasn't even sitting down yet, he was crouched above a chair in the act of pulling it forward under him, and his wife was passing him a plate across the table. He was in a straight line with the porch door. He happened to turn his head that way, and there was something wrong. There was a blankness out there where there shouldn't have been. He could see the opposite side of the street.

His chair cracked over and he was running through the living room to the porch. Behind him a plate shattered on the floor and the SOS of his wife's heels came tapping after him.

He could still hear the whisper of the car's going, receding on the hushed night air. No engine. So then he knew what had happened, and the knowledge nearly felled

him, like a crowbar across the top of his head, even before he got out to the porch and could see.

Street lamps made it bright all the way down, all the way to where—the lake was. The car was going straight as an arrow. It didn't swerve at all. Its momentum held it gripped too tightly. A little arm was thrust briefly out at the side, then withdrawn again.

There wasn't a sound behind him. Somehow he knew, without looking, that his wife had fallen senseless there on the walk. But he was already yards down that fearful incline. He ran down that hill like nothing that had ever run down it before.

It was all over so quickly, so soundlessly. He had been gaining on the car, but the foot of the street came too quickly. Horror such as a man sees only once in a lifetime was fleetingly there before his eyes, then gone again. But never quite gone again until the day he'd die. For the car reached Lakeshore Drive, swept across its triple-lane width, unerringly hurtled the pitifully low pedestrian parapet—it was such a new development, and it would have hidden the beauties of the lake to have built it any higher—cleared the barrier almost by the unaided resiliency of its own tires and springs, with a flaring of dust and a crumbling along the top, and was gone from sight.

It was as instantaneous as the

exposure of a snapshot. Two of the limestone blocks along the upper tier, a car's width apart, had been knocked out by the wheels, giving a battlement effect. But the spray that had risen on the other side never seemed to finish falling back into place.

There was a screaming of brakes off to one side of him as he darted across the roadway, and some kind of a pitching, swerving beam of light flicked at him.

A horrid heaving was there below him as he mounted one of the loosened blocks. The high-posted driveway lights behind him played up a single blister-like bubble formed there in the water, a bubble that refused to burst, that kept renewing itself from below. He didn't bother about his coat. He aimed himself face forward into those roiling eddies, and as he went down the thought that he couldn't swim was with him, but that didn't matter.

He went in wrong, with a spanking blow across the chest and stomach. He went down a little way, arms groping before him—toward nothing. Then he was being pushed up again, and he didn't know how to make himself go down any farther. He didn't know how not to breathe either, and long before he could get up again he was nothing but a mass of convulsive muscular spasms, drawing in destruction at every inhalation. He broke the

surface briefly, but he didn't know how to take advantage of it. He was already dying himself now, as he went under again.

Something swift and safe and sure got him at some point after that. He never knew when, and it drew him backward through water and up into air; air that now hurt as much as water, but didn't kill. Then he was lying there heaving like a bellows, on a tiny lip of soil that protruded at the base of the parapet, and there was a man standing over him, dripping but not spent, looking down at him with a sort of scorn that had no solicitude or consideration to it. The man said, "What the hell did you go in for, if you can't swim?"

Sturgess turned over on his face, supporting himself on his hands, and between spasms of coughing managed to strangle out: "My kid! In a car down there—!"

The man was suddenly gone again. And in a little while, in only the space between two paroxysms of coughing it seemed, she was there again before his eyes, cradled in the man's arms, her face blue and still in the darkness. From where he lay Sturgess just mutely looked his gratitude, as the stranger climbed up over the parapet still holding her, toward the waiting arms of quickly gathered spectators reaching down to help.

When the inhalator squad had

finished, and Sturgess had held her tight to him a minute, with her open-eyed, breathing, he looked around and asked: "Where is he? Where'd he go?"

He saw a car start to glide furtively off in the background. He shouted, "Wait!" and ran directly across the path of its headlights. The car stopped with a poor sort of grace, and the man at the wheel hitched his head in surly inquiry as Sturgess came up alongside. One hand, on the wheel rim, was bandaged.

Sturgess poised his own two hands downward across the edge of the door, and gratitude was somehow expressed even in the gesture itself. But the man inside grated impatiently, "Well, whad-dye want?"

It was hard to put into words, especially when it wasn't welcome. All Sturgess could say was, "You don't know what this means—"

The man said with a jeer, a jeer for himself, "I don't know how I come to do it. I never done a thing like that before."

"But isn't there anything I can do? Won't you at least let me have your name?"

The answer was almost venomous. "What d'you care what my name is? I don't go around giving people my name!"

Sturgess would have taken a kick in the teeth from him. His balked gratitude had to find some means of expression, so he gave

the man his own name instead.

The stranger just looked at him stolidly. Sturgess couldn't tell if he was bored or contemptuous. His eyes flicked to Sturgess' fingers, which were folded across the rim of the car door. The meaning was plain: Take your hands off; get away from me.

The car inched away, and Sturgess dropped his hands.

"If there's ever anything I can do—" he called out helplessly.

His benefactor stayed in character to the end. A cynical "That's what they all say!" came floating back above the dwindling tail light.

The reports on the Torrington murder were coming in faster and more promising by the hour. There had been a lull of half a week first, that preliminary lull that the outside world always mistakes for inactivity, even defeat. But they hadn't been idle. They'd been working behind the scenes, in the laboratory, in the Bertillon files, on the weapon-testing range, in the world of the exact sciences. They had built up their man from nothing, with the aid of nap from his suit, body oil from his fingertips, a hundred and one other microscopic things. At the end of half a week they had him, although they had never seen him. They had his height, his weight, his habits, almost the way he walked, and what his blood count

was. Now came the time to get him, to pull him out of thin air, the way a magician makes a rabbit appear out of a hat—to match him in the flesh to his preconceived identity.

The murderer had had plenty of time to leave the city during those three and a half days. He had left. They'd expected him to, they'd counted on his doing just that. They cast their net in a great wide loop first, overreaching the farthest possible limits of his flight; for in his own mind he was still safely anonymous. They began to draw the net in by telegraph, by radio, by all the means they had. Too late by a matter of hours he tried to break through. He was recognized, the alarm sent out, the highways blocked off. He turned and fled back again; the chase went into reverse. He plunged back into the sanctuary of the city. The net was drawn in slowly but surely.

Yesterday his car had been found, abandoned just inside the city limits, and by that they got his name. It was Murray Forman—there were infinite variations to it, but none of them was of paramount importance. He was guilty of cold-blooded murder, and that was.

Tighter and tighter the noose was pulled. From citywide it narrowed to a single neighborhood, from an entire neighborhood down to a single street. And

presently they would have the very house, and then the exact room inside that house and then they'd have him. It was a matter of hours only, fractions of hours. They were old in guile, and remorseless, and their combined intelligences never slept. But single they were only human beings.

First-Grader Sturgess, of the Homicide Squad, was relieved temporarily at two that morning, almost at the zero hour, and sent home subject to immediate recall. He had slept only in snatches for a week past, his reflexes were no longer dependable, and much as he rebelled against it, he recognized the advisability of the respite.

He put his key to the door and let himself into the empty house. The wife and kid were away in the country with relatives for two weeks, and the summer mustiness of rooms that have been shut up tight all day clung to the air. He put on the lights and saw halos around them, from his fatigue.

The image of his girl leaped out at him from the green-gold easel on the radio, and already he was less weary. Just the sight of her likeness was restful. She was still on loan; and now, at twelve, more than a hint of the way she was going to be was apparent. And she was going to be the tops.

He said, "Hello, honey," to her. He said it every time he got back, just as though she were here.

"Your old man's all in," he mourned to her under his breath. He opened the windows first of all, to freshen up the place a little. Then he took off the things that bothered him most, in order—his tie and then his shoes and then his coat.

He pattered around in his socks a minute or two. He thought, "Where did she keep the cans of salmon, now?" He thought, "I'm too tired to bother." He went in and stood over the bed, sketchily straightened since the last time he'd been in it. He looked at it questioningly. It was too much trouble to pull down that spread. It would take too long—he couldn't wait another minute. He turned slightly, let himself fall back on the bed in a straight line from shoulders to heels, so that his feet kicked up slightly with the fall. The bed sang out threateningly under the impact but held, and before the springs had stopped jarring he was already out of the world.

The tapping alone would never have roused him. It was too low, too furtive. It was the sharper note of the bell that brought him up through layers of oblivion into the shallows of awareness.

The ring came again, cut short as though no more than a peck had been given the button. The tapping was blurred, like hail or

gravel striking on wood. He got up, wavered through the two rooms toward the front door, said sharply, "Who's there?"

The tapping broke off short.

He opened the door and a man was standing there in the dim light. The man acknowledged the opening with a peculiar, warning gesture, a diagonal cut of his hand that held a plea for caution in it.

He seemed to take his right of admission for granted. His hat was low, and Sturgess didn't know him, didn't know why he should. The visitor inserted himself obliquely between Sturgess and the door frame, and then as Sturgess gave ground before him, the man closed the door and sealed it with his own body, pressing himself against the knob.

His pushed his hat higher, but inadvertently, by backing a hand to his forehead as though in unutterable relief. "I thought you'd never open the door," he said. "I saw you come in before."

Sturgess said on a rising inflection that held no anger, yet led the way toward it, "Who are you?"

The man leaning dejectedly against the door—he was starting to sag a little now as if some long-sustained tension had relaxed—sneered: "You don't know me?"

There was memory in that sneer alone, in that characteristic tone that never gave the benefit of the doubt. "You better know

me," he said. And then he jeered, "Or don't you want to?"

His eyes found the picture, rested on it, guessed, came back again with a mocking gleam. But he didn't say anything. He didn't have to. Sturgess knew by now.

He'd never been good at saying things. He said, "You're the fellow, you're the man—the lake, that time." His face lit up with long-stored gratitude, but then the light died again as the man brushed by him. The man found his own way across the room, pitched into a chair.

There was blood on one side of his face, or rather vestiges of it, a thin dark patina.

Sturgess was awake now. He was frightened too, by some kind of foreknowledge. He ran his tongue across his lower lip, said, "What'd you do, hurt yourself?"

The man lowered his head abruptly, glared challengingly. "No, I didn't hurt myself. A bullet grazed me getting over here. From one of your crowd."

Sturgess flinched. "Don't tell me anything you're liable to be sorry—" he said quickly.

"No you don't! I've got something coming to me. What're you trying to do—leave an out for yourself, welsh out of it? So that when they come ganging around here in a minute or two—See no evil, hear no evil, eh? Well, you're looking at Murray Forman, and what are you going to do about

it?"

Sturgess ran a hand through the bird's-nest tangle of his hair. "My God!" he groaned. "Don't you know who I am?"

"D'you suppose I'd be here if I didn't? You're my trump card, the last one I hold. Somebody else told me who you were that night. I came across your picture in the paper once after that, when you were promoted for running down those cop-killers. It gave your address." He laughed mirthlessly. "It pays to change addresses more often, when you've got debts outstanding."

He looked rested now, fit, compared to Sturgess. His color was high alongside Sturgess' agonized pallor.

Sturgess flung the door open, folded it back flat against the wall as if he couldn't get it wide enough. "Get out!" he said in a choked voice. "Get out of here! That's the most I can—"

Forman kept looking at the picture, as though he hadn't heard. He said softly, "Is her hair gold-brown like it looks on there? Is that how she smiles all the time, with a little dent in the middle of her cheek?"

"Get out, you dirty killer!"

"I know how they do; sometimes they slip their arm around your neck from behind your chair, and hug you tight. Sometimes they get down on the floor at your feet and lean their head

against your knee, and look up and over at you, backwards. She wouldn't do all that, Sturgess, if it wasn't for me. What's her name, Sturgess?"

"Barbara," said Sturgess limply, and closed the door again very slowly, as though it weighed a ton.

They didn't say anything for a long time—either of them. It seemed like a long time anyway. Forman stayed in the chair, which was the most comfortable one in the room. Sturgess stood against the door.

Forman spoke finally, as matter-of-factly as though they had known each other all their lives. "Gimme a cigarette. Got one on you?"

Sturgess felt absently for his coat pocket without looking up. He didn't have any. Forman must have got up and helped himself from the humidor. The next thing Sturgess noticed he was back in the chair smoking.

Sturgess said finally, as though the trivial request had managed to restore his own power of expression, "I'm a police officer, Forman. There isn't anything I can do."

The man in the chair snapped ashes from his cigarette. "You don't have to do a thing. Just let me stay here till the heat cools a little, then you'll turn your back and I'll be gone, the way I came.

That's all, and then we're square—quits."

"You struck down and murdered a man in cold blood—"

"That doesn't cancel *your* obligation. I'd already croaked someone long before that night you first came across me. That didn't keep you from accepting your kid's life from my hands, did it? She breathes just as good, her lungs are just as empty of water, her eyes are just as wide open, as if a right guy saved her, aren't they? I didn't argue the right and wrong of it before I went in, did I? You owe me a life—"

("Two lives," Sturgess admitted to himself. It was clever of him, good psychology, not to mention having saved Sturgess himself, to emphasize only the one that really mattered.)

"—and I want a life back from you. My own."

Sturgess said fiercely, "D'you want a drink? I do!" Three times he started out in the wrong direction, before he could remember where the liquor was kept.

Forman was thoroughly at ease now, sure of himself.

He said, holding his little whiskey glass up to the light and studying it idly, "Don't take it so hard." He went on with detached curiosity, as though confronting for the first time some rare trait he'd often heard of but never encountered until now: "You're dead on the level, aren't you? So

straight it hurts." He made a grimace. "Gee, it must be hell to be like that! I had you figured that way even that night. The way you jumped in without knowing how to swim. I'm good that way at sizing people up. I've had to be. That's why I came here. D'you think I'd have taken a chance like this on one of those other guys you string along with?"

Sturgess had sat down now, staring sightlessly at the problem as though it were spread out on the carpet before him.

"It's simple enough," Forman remarked. Meaning nothing to lose your temper about, nothing to go up in the air about.

"Shut up," Sturgess growled. "The less you say the better." He looked over at the open bedroom door. "When'd you sleep last? You can go in there and lie down if you want to. Get out of here!" Then as Forman rose to his feet, crooked his arms behind his head and yawned—he was that composed—Sturgess added: "Wait a minute. Have you got a gun on you?"

"Sure. Want it?" He brought it out and indifferently pitched it across at Sturgess butt-first. "You didn't have to worry about that," he assured him. "You're my trump card. I have everything to lose and nothing to gain by—" The rest of it was lost as he went, calmly and leisurely, into the bed-

room. —

Sturgess heard his shoes drop, one after the other, and the bed creaked a little as it had under him, earlier. He balled his hands into fists and put them up alongside his temples as though he were going to bash his own head in. After a while, as if to give his hands something to do, he picked the gun up from the side of the chair and started to empty it. Long before he'd finished, the harsh breathing of a man in deep sleep was coming from the bedroom

The knocking came within ten minutes. He stopped dead in the middle of the oval he had been coursing endlessly around the room, one heel raised clear of the floor and held that way. It came again, and the bell chirped, and a voice said, "Sturge! Are you in here?" He recognized it as Hyland's. Hyland was one of his team-mates.

He went over and closed the bedroom door first. Then he came back to the front door, put out his hand to it, breathed deeply and threw it wide open.

Hyland was out there and another man named Ranch, and two uniformed cops. The last two had their guns out. But they'd already started away by the time he got the door open, as though summoning him had been only in-

cidental.

Sturgess said, "What's up?"

Hyland said, "Forman broke through again! At the last minute, just as we were ready to close in! We've picked up a cab driver that brought him as far as the corner below here—he's holed up around here some place! I'm going to case the back."

"You won't find him there," Sturgess said.

He didn't offer to join them. All he said was, "I'm off duty."

Hyland gave him a look, but he turned and went loping off. His voice came drifting back with a cutting edge to it. "Sleep tight—sorry we bothered you."

Sturgess closed the door and stood by it a minute, head down. Down as low as if he were looking at his shoes, but he wasn't.

Behind him Forman's voice said slurringly, through the narrow opening of the bedroom door, "So you went to bat for me."

Sturgess answered viciously through clenched teeth: "I don't have to turn you in behind your back while you're asleep! That isn't my way! I'm not afraid of you!"

"No," was the grudging admission, "it's your own conscience you're afraid of."

"You let me do the worrying about that. And stay in there." Sturgess took a threatening step forward. "Stay out of my sight, or I'll settle the problem with my

own two hands!"

The door eased mockingly closed again.

Sturgess was standing in his wife's kitchen, awkwardly jockeying something hot with the help of an enveloping dishcloth, when Forman came out the second time. It was still dark, the gun-metal pall preceding dawn.

Forman lounged there in the alcove a minute, watching him. "What's this, the prisoner's last breakfast? Why so early?"

Sturgess just motioned to a chair drawn up at the formica-topped table. The guest sat down. Sturgess brought over an aluminum percolator, snatched his hand away, blew on his thumb. He sat down opposite the killer.

Forman studied him, detached.

"You look like you been pulled through a knothole. I bet you pounded the carpet in there the whole time I was asleep."

To that Sturgess said, "It took me three tries before I got this right." The sink, lined with black coffee grounds, looked like some kind of flower bed. He pointed to a loaf of white bread. "You can cut some of that, if you want any."

They sat there, after that, facing each other across the table with a peculiar sort of normality, an everydayness; like two men at a kitchen table while their women

were away. Forman, wolfing great chunks of spongy white bread, looked around appraisingly. "How much you pay for this place?"

There may have been a method in his assumption of unshaken confidence, his taking of immunity for granted; or there may not. He may have been as artless as he sounded, or he may have been as wary as a man cornered in a cage with a lion, who knows that to show fear is fatal. Sturgess was past knowing or caring. "Eighty-five," he said.

Forman mused, while he picked his teeth, "I never stayed in one place long enough to pay by the month."

"It might have been better if you had."

They sat a while longer in silence. Then little by little the tension grew—tension that was coming from Sturgess. His hands went down to the edge of his chair seat, gripping it on each side, like a man reluctantly about to stand up. Forman started smoking a little faster, shortening the intervals between puffs. Finally he said, "What're you getting all white like that for? You're getting white as a ghost. You ought to see yourself!"

Sturgess said, "We're going over there. If you feel like starting anything, now's the time."

"Still looking for a way out, huh? No you don't! You don't get off that easy!"

Sturgess got up and left the kitchen without a word. When he came back he had his coat on and was holding an open manacle in his hand. He said thickly, "Come on—let's get started. Shove out your hand."

Forman slowly extended a hand flat across the table top; he started drawing back his sleeve until he had bared his forearm nearly to the elbow. On its upper reaches were transverse white scars, from breaking the glass in the submerged car window that night. He just sat and looked up at Sturgess, holding it exposed that way.

Sturgess' lips got white, he blinked, and the manacle clicked shut on the other's wrist. Forman got up and followed Sturgess out of the kitchen. "You can't go through with it," he said quietly. "It's written all over you; you can't."

The window was open a little from the bottom, just below the shade. Sturgess threw out the handcuff key with a flick of his free hand.

Forman said, "You don't trust yourself, do you? It's going to be a devil of a job now to—"

The picture was lying face down on the radio as they went past. "Is that the way you had to do it?" Forman said. Sturgess turned down the wall switch and the picture vanished. There wasn't enough light outside to penetrate

the room. "You'll have to see her again," Forman pointed out. "You'll have to see her every day of your life. You can't keep her face turned away from you. What'll you do then?"

Sturgess opened the front door, swept his arm around in an arc, and towed Forman through after him. "I'm not going to beg or whine," Forman said. "I'm going to make it tough for you. It'd be a lot easier for you if I went yellow, wouldn't it?"

Sturgess closed the door and they went out side by side. It was steel blue overhead now, but still a little murky down at street level.

"You'll get a citation for this," Forman taunted. "You'll get promoted. You'll be the envy of every man in the department. And without having to lift a finger either. A man comes to you, that gave you the one thing you've got that you give a damn about, the one thing that holds you together, that makes you tick, he comes *trusting* you— You're the lowest thing on the face of God's earth, Sturgess. Even an alley cur has gratitude."

"Shut up!" Sturgess roared.

They went on slowly, almost waveringly, but Sturgess was breathless with effort, as though he'd been running. The green lamps of a precinct house blinked at them as they rounded a corner, and Forman recoiled involuntarily. Sturgess could feel the hitch

through the manacle.

Forman said, "They're going to kill me if you take me in there. You know that, don't you? You know that once we go up these steps no power of yours, nothing you can do, will get me out alive again, don't you? I gave you your kid's life, Sturgess. For the last time—*I want my own from you!*"

Sturgess' face was glossy with sweat, and gray in the early dawn. He brought his forearm up level to his chest and nudged Forman into motion.

"Copper!" the man beside him breathed with contempt as they trudged up the steps.

Sturgess just stood there rigid, watching the clock, that last night. They tried to tell him, "Sit down, Sturge, don't take it like that," but he didn't seem to hear them.

When the phone call from upstate came through, you couldn't see him breathe at all while the lieutenant was talking. The lieutenant hung up and was quiet.

Sturgess asked, "Was that it?"

"Yeah, that was it."

"Did he leave any word, say anything about—forgiving anybody?"

"He left a message for you," the lieutenant said, unwillingly, looking down at his desk.

Sturgess came closer still. "Tell me what is it! I've got to know!"

"He said, 'Tell Sturgess I'll be

seeing him again. *He* knows where to find me. In her eyes. Tell him I'll always be waiting there.' ”

Sturgess put his hand to where he carried his badge, as if something hurt him there, and turned around and walked out of the room without another word.

Barbara said, half-laughingly, when he squatted down before her, his face so strained and white, and peered so closely, “What're you looking at me like that for?”

“Hold still,” he said huskily, “and look at me.” There was

sweat all over his forehead.

Then when he had drawn a great deep breath and straightened up again she asked playfully, “Did you think you'd see something in my eyes?”

His answer to that was, “Yes. The ghost of the man who saved your life—” but he didn't tell her that.

“Well *did* you?” she insisted.

“Yes,” he admitted sadly, “I guess I always will—a little.” He took out his badge and started polishing it. “But the other way,” he added mysteriously, “I wouldn't have been able to look into them at all.” ■ ■

