

# EERIE STORIES

*Startling Adventures  
in Chilling Horror*

AUGUST, 1937

- VIRGINS OF THE STONE DEATH (Novel)** . GATES ALEXANDER 10  
*The glorious young body of the girl Terry Grant loved was fated to feel the cold embrace of death, instead of his own warm, protecting one—as her shapely limbs turned slowly into solid stone!*
- THE SOUL-SCORCHERS' LAIR (Cover Story)** . RONALD FLAGG 36  
*He had a mad desire to scorch his wife's soul, sending the intense heat of a blow-torch through her flesh.*
- CORPSE GIRL'S RETURN** . . . . . ERIC LENOX 44  
*She was alluring, desirable—but the newshawk shuddered. For he knew she had slept the sleep of death with the cadavers in the morgue.*
- DEVIL'S BREW** . . . . . BRANTON BLACK 52  
*Sardonically, Gavin Clark planned murder, and visioned his trembling young wife bestowing her caresses upon a corpse. . . .*
- HER ISLE OF HORROR** . . . . . CLIFF HOWE 55  
*Loretta's dark-eyed invitation made the young investigator face the horrific monsters of her storm-lashed island.*
- THE PAIN MASTER'S BRIDE** . . . . . REXTON ARCHER 67  
*It was stark horror that Edmund Neymores learned when he witnessed the ghastly torment of a helpless girl as she posed for a statue of agony.*
- SINISTER SKEIN** . . . . . HORACE STONER 76  
*Trooper Trant had to untangle a bloody murder skein—depending on the help of a beautiful girl who didn't trust him because he had seen her wearing the briefest of clothing.*
- REHEARSAL WITH DOOM** . . . . . TERRENCE FLINT 86  
*Middle-aged Graham Munster arranged a rehearsal with doom to force his pretty young ward to become his bride.*
- LUST FOR BLOOD** . . . . . CLIFFORD GRAY 94  
*The boat club's secretary floated over corpse currents to a madman's hideaway where the price of life was blood.*
- MATE OF THE BEAST** . . . . . LEON DUPONT 102  
*Len Oakley found that no mortal man could steal a bride of the beast.*
- TERROR'S TOMB** . . . . . JOHN GREGORY 107  
*Private Detective Manton wanted to know why lovely Anne Seymour went willingly into a pit of terror with a parchment-faced fiend.*
- STEP-DAUGHTER TO GREED** . . . . . PETER REGINALD 119  
*Terrified, the girl forced her trembling legs to carry her into the tomb of the dead—to search for an inheritance in hell. . . .*

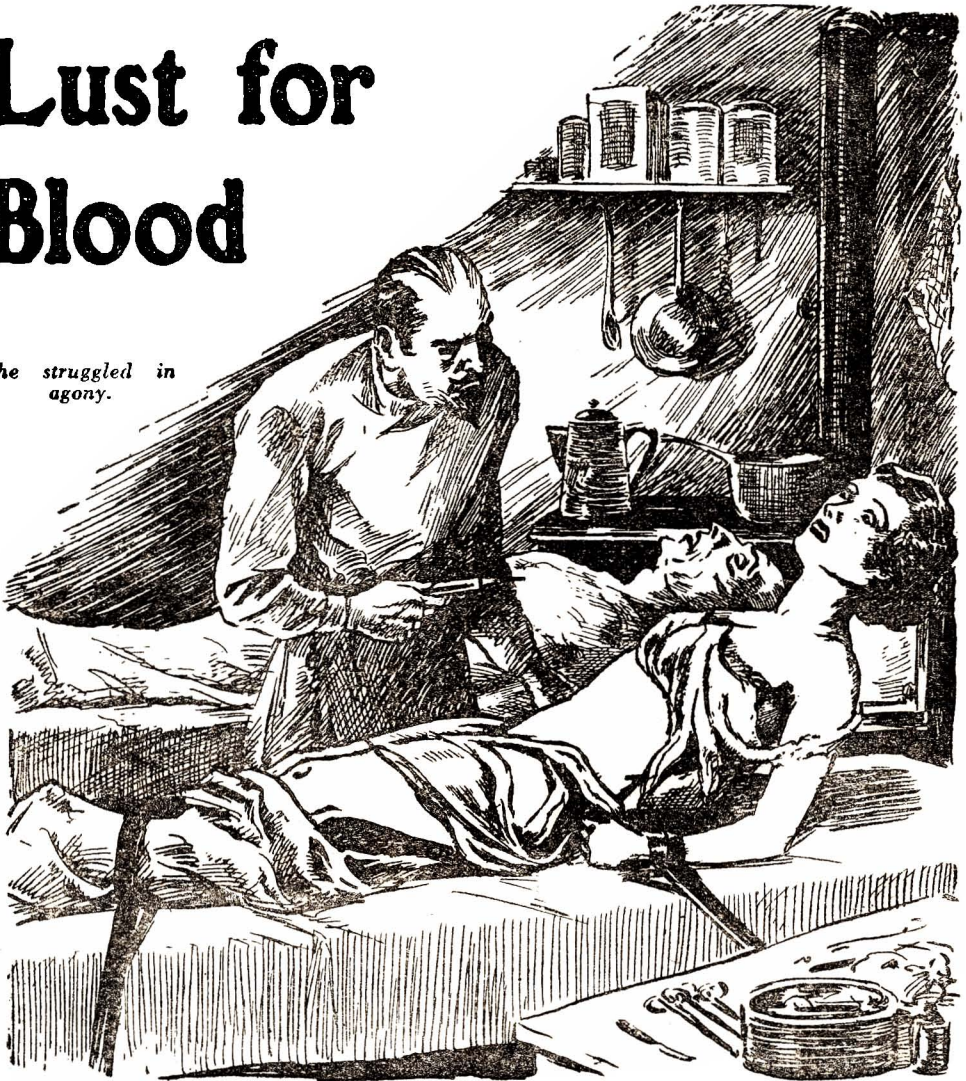
*Cover by Norman Saunders  
From "The Soul-Scorchers' Lair."*

Published bi-monthly by Magazine Publishers, Inc. Office of publication, 29 Worthington Street, Springfield, Mass. A. A. Wyn, President. Editorial and executive offices, 67 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y. Application pending for second-class entry at Post Office at Springfield, Mass. Title registration applied for at U. S. Patent Office. Copyright, 1937, by Magazine Publishers, Inc. Manuscripts will be handled with care, but this magazine assumes no responsibility for their safety. For advertising rates, address Ace Fiction Group, 67 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y.

Twelve Issues, \$1.50; Single Copies, Fifteen Cents

# Lust for Blood

She struggled in agony.



*By Clifford Gray*

*The young secretary of the Long Island Boat Club became the mariner of weird waters when he floated over corpse currents to find a missing girl in a madman's hideaway where the price of life was blood.*

**M**ALLORY, young secretary of the smart Long Island Boat Club, would never have thought to look for Mary Fallon, the nurse, on that bleak Connecticut shore if the bodies of the men with the slashed wrists had not been washed up on the beach of the swanky Long Island Boat Club.

It was fortunate that Mary Fallon's family were wealthy enough to institute a thorough search for her when she disappeared after answering a call for duty at an address which later proved fictitious.

When her apoplectic banker father gave Mallory the check for the advance fee he said explosively, "If

she's kidnaped, I'll pay any ransom they ask—but wait till I get that girl home! She's not too old for a good old-fashioned spanking. Imagine a young woman with everything she could want in life going out to do nursing and support herself!"

The banker was already employing an army of private detectives, but he wanted Mallory to work on the case, too. The banker was a member of the Long Island Boat Club, where he had met Mallory and learned that the young secretary had solved several crimes when he was a reporter.

On the way back to the office, Mallory tried to get his mind on something tangible—some clue to work from in starting the search. It was after five, and the staff was gone for the day. He had to use his key to get in. The phone was ringing.

Ralph Dorrance, the manager of the Long Island Boat Club, was on the other end. He sounded desperate. "Thank God I caught you!" he exclaimed. "Look here, Mallory, I want you to drop everything and shoot right out here. Never mind," as Mallory started to protest. "I don't care what you have on hand."

"I've got a stiff here," Dorrance rushed on. "The night watchman just went on, and he found him on the beach. His wrists are slashed."

"Sounds like suicide. Why get excited?"

"Excited! This is an exclusive club. The members can't be annoyed with the publicity. I've got to stop it!"

Mallory laughed, puzzled. "How you going to stop it? Hasn't a guy a right to hop himself off any more?"

Dorrance swore. "Dammit, you don't understand. This is the *second* one that's been washed up *in a week!*"

Mallory just uttered a short "Oh!" into the transmitter. Then he said, "I'll take a cab—be out there in a half-hour, Mr. Dorrance."

**D**ORRANCE was waiting for him at the entrance to the pier. He was a well-tailored, middle-aged man

with an appearance that was ordinarily sleek but was now disheveled. He dragged Mallory down to the office at the foot of the pier, talking excitedly.

"I've got to get some action on this. Some very distinguished people belong here, and the first thing you know they'll quit coming. Then they won't renew their membership."

"The cops here yet?" Mallory asked.

"I—er—haven't notified the police yet. Yes—I know it's wrong and all that, but I thought it would be better if you had a look first. You've had some crime experience as a police reporter."

The night watchman, a stocky Italian, was holding lone vigil over the corpse on the floor in the office. The manager introduced him. "This is Vic Arcuro. He found the body."

Mallory stooped and pulled off the tarpaulin with which it was covered. The dead man was about thirty, fair-haired, of medium build. He wore trousers and a shirt which were drenched. No underwear. Mallory saw that the radial artery had been slashed in each wrist. The man had bled to death.

"What do you think of it?" Dorrance demanded anxiously. "The one last week was just the same—dressed the same, too. He had no underwear, either."

There was a short rope around the man's waist, ending in a wide noose. Mallory asked the watchman, "Was there anything tied in that noose when you found him?"

Arcuro nodded vigorously. "A beeg rock—so beeg." He spread his hands to indicate the size of the rock. "I took heem out—no can carry heem up here."

Dorrance said, "You think it could possibly be suicide? You think it could be a coincidence, the two of them doing it the same way within a week? Maybe it was a suicide pact!" The last suggestion was offered hopefully.

Mallory gazed down at the body. "Would they slash their wrists—and drown themselves? One of those methods is generally conceded to be plenty."

Mallory knelt beside the body. There were half a dozen punctures in the left forearm. He said, "Either this guy took dope, or else—"

"Or else what?" the boat club manager demanded.

**Y**OUNG Mallory stood up and shrugged, "Or else, who knows!" He turned to Arcuro. "If these bodies were both washed up on this beach, there must be a current in the Sound around here. Do you know about it?"

"Sure," Arcuro replied. He explained that the Connecticut shore was directly across the Sound from the beach, and that there was a powerful undercurrent that brought up many things from the opposite side.

Mallory muttered a thoughtful "Hm-m." Then he said, "Let's take a look outside." He led the way, Dorrance following. At the door, he called Arcuro who was covering the body again. "You come too, Vic. Leave him there."

They walked out to the end of the pier. An edge of the sun illuminated the sky across the Sound with a blood-red vermilion. It was the sunset hour, when men's spirits are lowest, and when dying people give up the ghost.

The detective said, "Show me where that current starts, Vic."

The Italian's skin was grayish under his swarthy skin. He crossed himself. Then he pointed a shaky, dirty forefinger at the shore across the Sound. "You see da dock over t'ere? Da current, he come from da dock, an' swing across," he described a wide parabola with his hand, "an' drift right up to t'is beach. It's ver' strong current."

Dorrance said, "That's right. The Sound is full of these cross-currents."

Mallory asked him, "Who does that dock belong to?"

"The family that lives in that white house on the hill just behind it. Lennon is the name. I don't know much about them except what I've heard now and then. The old man is past seventy. His oldest son is a doctor, comes out often. Then there are two more sons living there all the time. One of them is—queer. They say the whole family is queer, for that matter—the old man, too. He's a paranoiac or something." Dorrance wet his lips and jerked a thumb back at the office. "I wouldn't put it past them—murder, I mean."

"So," Mallory mused, "if somebody dropped that body from the dock over there, not knowing about the current, the body would be carried across and washed up on this beach. And whoever did it would think the body was safely out of the neighborhood!"

Dorrance exclaimed, "Huh, if that's so, they must be fiends! What'll we do?"

"You'd better notify the police," Mallory told him. "You can't squirm out of that. In the meantime, lend me a motor boat and I'll go across and investigate. The cops haven't got jurisdiction over there."

**T**HE rim of the sun had disappeared under the edge of the horizon by the time Mallory nosed the little outboard motor boat alongside the old dock on the Connecticut side and stepped up on to the decayed planking. The house on the hill looked white and ghastly in the dusk. Ugly shadows were thickening among the trees which lined the path he had to take.

He pressed his left arm against his body to get the reassuring feel of the shoulder holster, and started to walk. His feet crunched on the gravel. Suddenly he stopped short. A weird form had slid into the path from among the trees. It was a figure of a youngish man, perhaps twenty-seven or eight, of medium height. His body was round and squat, with a fat paunch that protruded from under a flat

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chest. A face that was broad and vacuous sat on a short, massive neck. He was in his shirt sleeves, though the air was crisp.

Mallory looked into the eyes of the man with the weirdly disproportioned body, and he felt little crinkles along his spine. The eyes gleamed with a wild, maniac cunning, from beneath a thatch of disordered black hair. They inspected the detective shrewdly, as if appraising him for some unspeakable purpose.

"Hello," said Mallory, lamely.

"Hello yourself," said the other.

"What's your name?"

"Bruce Mallory."

"Where do you come from?"

Mallory jerked his left thumb over his shoulder. "I came in a boat."

The other's eyes gleamed avidly as they caught the glint of the young man's gold wristwatch. "Gimme that ticker!" he demanded eagerly.

Mallory was taut. If this wasn't a perfect type of homicidal maniac, then there was no such thing. "I need the watch right now. Maybe I'll give it to you later. What's *your* name?"

The other sulked. "I'm Morry Lennon. I live up there." He indicated the house on the hill. "Give me that ticker now, will you? My damn' brothers never give me anything."

"Take me up to the house," said Mallory. "I want to talk to your brothers. If you do that, I may give you the watch before I leave."

Morry Lennon bobbed his head quickly. The muscles of his face arranged themselves into an expression of cunning greed. "You want to come up to the house? I'll take you!"

**H**E turned and led the way up the path. Mallory followed, feeling much like the fly that has yielded to the spider's blandishments. He spoke at Lennon's back. "You don't like your brothers, do you?"

Lennon spat out a spiteful, "No!" He looked over his shoulder. "They're both crazy—Andrew and Benson.

Benson's the crazier of the two. He beats me up. Andrew's a doctor. He don't live here. But when he comes out, he treats me pretty bad, too." He snarled. "Some day I'll kill 'em both!"

Mallory clucked sympathetically. "Your father lives here too, doesn't he? How's he?"

Lennon cackled. "Dad's crazy, too. He thinks everybody wants to poison him so we'll get his money—that is, he used to. He don't think that way any more."

"How come?"

"Well, Dad made a will last month. While he lives we get an income every year—Andrew and Benson and me. But if he dies, all the money goes to charity. So it's up to Andrew to keep him alive. That's why I can't kill Andrew yet."

They were only a few yards from the front porch of the house, now. From within came the thin wail of a terrified woman, followed by a man's angry oath.

Mallory stopped. "What was that?" he demanded.

Lennon chuckled. "It's that girl. She's crazy, too. She won't let them—"

He was interrupted by the sudden opening of the front door. A girl with red, bobbed hair burst out. She was dressed only in a filmy nightgown that was torn along one shoulder. Mallory saw the look of abject terror in her face as she pattered under the dome light of the porch, and raced down the steps.

For a moment the young secretary stood motionless, watching, determining what course of action to take. The girl ran faster and faster, plump knees and white-gleaming legs churning up and down through a rent that split the front of her nightdress.

After her pounded a big brute of a man, face contorted with anger. He was in his shirtsleeves, and held a queer sort of syringe with a needle at the end.

The girl raced down the path toward Mallory and his guide, not seeing them. Morry Lennon put out a foot to trip her.

**M**ALLORY got into action. He had recognized the girl as none other than Mary Fallon.

Mallory swung a hard fist to the side of Morry's head, and the maniac staggered across the lawn, out of the girl's path. The detective put out his arm and stopped her headlong flight. She collapsed in his arms.

"All right, Miss Fallon," he reassured her. "I'm a friend."

"Thank God!" she gasped. "Don't let them—" Then she fainted.

The big man was off the steps now, rushing at them. Morry was picking himself up ten feet away and sputtering filthy curses. Mallory supported Mary Fallon with one arm, and got his gun out with the other hand. He pointed it at the big man and growled:

"Hold it!"

The big fellow pulled up short. His face purpled as his close-set eyes focused on the barrel of the gun. "Who the hell are you?" he barked.

"You'll do all the answering of questions now," Mallory said softly.

Just then a window in the upper floor of the house was shoved open. Mallory saw a gaunt face with a mustache and a Vandyke beard. He caught a glimpse of the silencer on the end of the rifle barrel that was thrust out of the window. He started to raise his gun. There was a wicked little "phut," and a slug tore into the fleshy part of his right arm. The rifleman had evidently wanted to avoid hitting the girl whom he was supporting on his left side. The impact bore him backwards. He dropped the girl and staggered. He couldn't lift the gun.

Benson was on him in a flash, battering at him with two brutal fists. He went down under the rain of blows.

Morry ran over and started to kick him. "Gimme his ticker, Benson," he shouted. "I want his ticker!"

Benson gave him a back-handed blow that sent him reeling.

Mallory felt his senses dimming. The numbness in his arm was spreading. A wave of nausea engulfed him. Vaguely he felt himself lifted in powerful hands. He heard some one come running out of the house and glimpsed the gaunt, bearded face of the one who had shot him. He heard the man who carried him say, "Take the girl, Andrew. The little devil almost got away from me."

Across the lawn, up the steps, into a dimly lit hallway, he was carried roughly. He got dizzy. There were dancing spots in his eyes. He lost consciousness.

He opened his eyes in a brightly lighted room. He moved his arm. It was neatly and efficiently bandaged. But his wrists were handcuffed—with his own cuffs.

He looked around and his eyes opened wide with horror. The room was a good-sized kitchen. But it was no longer used for that purpose. It had been converted—into an operating room.

Morry Lennon crouched in a corner, playing with the key of his handcuffs. Benson was stolidly watching his brother Andrew, who wore a surgical robe and was arranging a series of syringes on the washtub beside the sink.

**I**N the center of the room were two surgical tables. Mary Fallon was strapped to one. She had apparently put up a struggle, for there was a welt on the side of her face.

On the other table lay a skeleton of an old man, with the pallor of death upon him. His breath came fast and short, and with great difficulty. His head was tilted sideways, and he was watching Mallory out of deep-sunk eyes.

Mallory jerked to a sitting position. He had been laid on the floor along

the wall. The others turned to him as his handcuffs clinked.

Doctor Andrew Lennon smiled. His lips were bright red under the mustache. "You're just in time to witness the transfusion," he said. "It'll give you an idea of what's in store for you."

Morry cackled, "He's awake. Gimme his ticker!"

Benson turned at him with a snarl, and he cringed.

Mallory struggled to his feet. "What's this all about?" he demanded.

Andrew dipped a wad of cotton in a bottle marked "Mercurochrome," and swabbed the girl's arm with it. "Just a blood transfusion, my friend," he said softly.

Mallory looked at the old man on the second table. "For him?"

"Yes. This is my father. If you know anything about medicine you can tell from his appearance that he is afflicted with pernicious anæmia. He will need half a dozen transfusions. Miss Fallon, here, is number three."

Mallory was puzzled. "Did you have to kidnap her for the transfusion? And did you have to kill those other two men? Couldn't you have gotten blood donors in the usual way?"

Andrew laughed. "You don't understand, my friend. This is not the ordinary case of anæmia. It is the last stages. Ordinarily a transfusion of five or six hundred cubic centimeters of blood is sufficient for a temporary cure. In my father's case it requires a continued flow of not less than ten thousand cubic centimeters. And that, my friend," the doctor leaned forward to stress his words, "is all the blood there is in the human body!"

Mallory paled. "You—you're going to drain her body dry of blood!"

"Exactly. And we'll use you next week. By that time you will have recovered from your injury."

Morry chuckled. "All to keep Pop alive so we'll get our income!"

Benson growled, "Shut up!"

The old man's eyes gleamed with sardonic amusement. He tried to talk, but he was too weak.

In horrified fascination, the young boat-club secretary stared at the girl. Helpless though she was, Mary Fallon writhed her milk-white legs and arms against the straps that bound her to the table. Mallory could see every muscle of her girlish body tense and strain, for only a wisp of her night-dress remained, looped over one shoulder, after the struggle she had put up. An angry-red welt streaked across one breast, and ugly abrasions marred the smooth perfection of a thigh upon which she must have fallen.

**M**ALLORY saw the hopeless expression on Mary Fallon's face, and something snapped in his head. He raised his manacled hands above his head and rushed at Andrew. But Benson seized him about the middle in a crushing bear hug and held him helpless. Fiery pains shot through his right arm, and he dropped it weakly, slumping in Benson's grip.

Andrew said coldly, "Take him out, Benson. Cuff him to the steam pipe in the next room and leave Morry to watch him. I don't want him raising a fuss when I start to work."

"He's fainted," said Benson.

Mallory kept his eyes closed and shammed. He was dragged out of the room with Benson's hands under his armpits. Morry followed.

In the next room, Benson took the key from Morry and unlocked the cuffs. Mallory had counted on that moment. He straightened up in a lunge, but Benson was too quick for him. His wrists were gripped cruelly in the big man's paws. He was helpless, weak from his wound. His arms were forced around the steam pipe, and the cuffs were snapped on again.

Benson said, "Playin' possum, huh!"

Mallory struggled to his feet and glared. He said nothing. In the short struggle, Benson had dropped the key. Morry picked it up. He begged:

"Gimme his ticker, Benson. He ain't gonna need it any more."

"You just watch him," Benson grumbled. "If you watch him good, I'll let you take it later."

"Attaboy," Morry crowed. He patted his brother's sleeve. Benson shook him off impatiently and strode out.

They were left alone. Morry produced a hollow needle from his trousers pocket. "I stole it off one of them syringes that Andrew uses for drawin' the blood out o' them," he confided. He regarded Mallory out of mad, narrow-slitted eyes. Then he laughed in childish glee and came closer, pointing the needle at Mallory's face. "Let's play a game. I'll try to jab you in the eye, an' you see if you can duck. I like to jab people!"

Mallory said desperately, "Listen, Morry. Benson isn't going to let you have my watch. He's going to keep it for himself!"

Morry stopped to think that out, holding the needle in the air. After a moment he said, "The dirty skunk. It'd be just like him. I bet you're right!"

"I'll tell you what," Mallory went on, talking swiftly. "Let's fool him. You take the watch now."

Morry's eyes gleamed crazily. "Swell!" He dropped the needle and extended his hand. "Gimme!"

"I can't take it off. I'm handcuffed."

Morry cackled and waved the key in his face. "It's a trick. You want to make me let you go. But I won't!"

Mallory extended his wrist. "Here, take it off yourself."

"Fair enough." Morry's fingers flew to the strap buckle. He bent over it eagerly.

**M**ALLORY gathered his energy, and with every ounce of remaining strength he brought his fists

up in a smashing blow to the maniac's chin. He heard Morry's teeth click together as his head was snapped back. Morry would have fallen backward, but the detective clutched his shirt front and held him till the key fell from nerveless fingers. Then he let him drop, to sprawl limply on the floor.

Mallory ran his hands down the pipe and knelt to recover the key. In a moment he was free. Disregarding Morry's unconscious form, he gripped the steel handcuffs as the only weapon available, and lurched out of the room. His arm bothered him. The exertion had started it bleeding.

In the hallway he saw the light through the open kitchen door. As he approached cautiously, he heard Andrew Lennon's voice addressing the girl. He talked softly, gloatingly, not as a physician, but as some abnormal being enjoying the agony of a victim.

"Now, Miss Fallon, you will see how we make the incision in the artery. Soon your blood will be spurted into these syringes, to be transferred to my father's veins. It will be practically painless. After the first few syringe-fuls you will grow a little faint, then you'll become numb. Before we have finished, your heart will have stopped beating . . . . You can watch yourself die."

The boat-club secretary stood tensed for a moment, his muscles gathering tight for action, as he watched the scene before him; watched the girl's agony. Mallory had seen Mary a few times at the club dances. Somehow or other he had not managed to meet her; felt that her wealth put her beyond his reach. But she had made an unknowing conquest of his heart from the first.

The girl seemed to have given way to utter resignation. Her legs and arms now lay flat and motionless. Only the soft mounds of her breasts and the round contours of her small stomach surged laboriously with the exertion she had expended.



Mallory saw red. He forgot everything but that hateful voice of evil; forgot that Benson was in the room, too. He swung into the kitchen with the handcuffs raised high in his left hand.

Benson was saying, "We'll slash your wrists like the others, and put you in the Sound so it'll look like suicide—" He turned a startled gaze to the door as Mallory came at him. Mallory brought the steel cuffs down on his forehead before he could raise a hand to protect himself. The secretary experienced a strange satisfaction as he felt Benson's skull cave in under the blow.

Mallory seemed to be infused with renewed energy. He pivoted sharply toward Andrew who was on the other side of the old man's table from him. The table moved on casters.

Andrew recovered from his first moment of stupefaction. He held a syringe with a sharp-pointed hollow needle at the end. With this in his hand he started to come around the table, his red lips parted over white teeth.

Mallory put his two hands to the old man's table and heaved mightily. The table skidded into Andrew. It caught him in the stomach and doubled him over. Mallory leaned forward and brought the handcuffs down on the doctor's head. There was a nasty crunch, and Andrew sprawled over the old man, who had been trying to raise himself on his elbows.

The old man's eyes were terrible to see. His breath began to come in quick gasps. He put a hand to his throat and wheezed, then dropped back to the table. The excitement had been too much for his heart.

Mallory stood still for a moment, chest heaving. He saw Mary Fallon looking at him with eyes that mirrored the horror of her ordeal.

He dropped the bloody handcuffs. Mechanically he walked over and started to undo the straps that held her helpless.

She closed her eyes tight, and opened them again. "Take me home," she moaned in a small voice.

"I'll take you home all right," Mallory said grimly, "but you won't thank me. Because there's one whale of a spanking waiting for you!"

Now that she was safe, a hint of a smile crept into Mary Fallon's eyes as she said: "Not—not if you stay with me for a while when we get home. I—I liked you the first time I saw you at one of the club dances."

Mallory had finished unstrapping the girl, and had cloaked her in the curtain torn from a window, when he replied: "I didn't think a simple secretary would have a chance for your friendship. But I certainly noticed you—very much."

Mary Fallon smiled boldly into Mallory's face, and whispered: "Yes, I noticed you did. But surely you didn't expect me to do then what I'm going to do now—after all this that's happened." She made a gesture to indicate the horror scene of but a few minutes ago. "After all, a girl wants to be sure of a man before she throws herself at him."

Mary Fallon came close to Mallory, lifting her arms, tilting her chin to raise her mouth to his. The curtain fell away from her shoulders and whispered to the floor. But she only smiled—and put her arms around the secretary's neck. In a second Mallory was holding her soft, eager form closely to him; was kissing the full-shaped, willing young mouth that sought his arduously.

It was fully half a minute before their lips parted and Mallory said: "No, I guess you won't get that spanking—now. Let's go."