

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume	CONTENTS FOR	Number
34	SEPTEMBER, 1939	3

- Cover Design** **Virgil Finlay**
Illustrating Edgar Allan Poe's poem classic, "The Raven" (see page 101)
- While Zombies Walked** **Thorp McClusky** 5
A dark story of living dead men
- Spanish Vampire** **E. Hoffmann Price** 23
Strange romance of a filling-station attendant and a beautiful vampire girl
- The Door Without a Key** **Seabury Quinn** 33
The Chinese magic of Yai Ching and a weird romance of the American Civil War
- King of the World's Edge (Part 1)** . . . **H. Warner Munn** 55
The odyssey of a strange voyage to America in King Arthur's time, and eery adventures
- Spawn of the Maelstrom**
August Derleth and Mark Schorer 84
What hideous thing stalked the earth in the likeness of Jason Warwick?
- Cool Air** **H. P. Lovecraft** 95
A ghastly mystery enveloped the Spanish doctor's attempts at artificial refrigeration
- A Night in Malneant** **Clark Ashton Smith** 102
An exquisite weird fantasy about the death of the lady Mariel
- Weird Story Reprint:**
Gray Ghouls **Bassett Morgan** 106
*A story of stark horror from an early number of *Weird Tales**
- The Eyrie** 120
Our readers exchange opinions

Published monthly by *Weird Tales*, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. Entered as second class matter September 24, 1928, at the post office at New York, N. Y. Single copies, 15 cents. Subscription rates: One year in the United States and possessions, Cuba, Mexico, South America, Spain, \$1.50; Canada, \$1.75; elsewhere, \$2.00. English Office: Charles Lavell, Limited, 4 Clements Inn, Strand, London W.C.2, England. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor

Copyright 1939, by *Weird Tales*
COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH



"Most people run and scream if they see me."

Spanish Vampire

By E. HOFFMANN PRICE

The story of a lovely California vampire, who had lain in her lonely grave for more than a hundred years—the strange romance of a filling-station attendant

WAXING Prof Rodman's spare Packard meant eight bucks more for the boss, and no sleep for me that night. Not a chance to study *McKelvey on Evidence* for that a.m. class.

But when I saw Judge Mottley roll up to the gas pump in his big black bus, I dropped my polishing-cloth and put on my best Green Gold smile.

That's the one the division sales man-

ager makes us wear when we sell a customer a quart of lube he doesn't need. Green Gold makes your motor smile. It plates the moving parts with oil.

"Good evening, Judge"—though Mottley wasn't a judge any more. He'd quit that job as soon as he learned enough about law to make a good thing of private practise. He was a precise fellow, with a squarish jaw and the sort of eye that puts no one at ease. He didn't stand for anything as vulgar as "Fill 'er up?" so I shot a quick look at the gage and said, "About twenty-two gallons, sir?"

He ate that up. What clicked with him was the time I said, "Twenty-three and a half," and hit it right on the head. That, plus my industry, energy, and perseverance in working my way through law school gave me an in with the judge. Which I needed plenty, as you will presently perceive.

"I do not need fuel. I do not need Green Gold," he answered. "Indeed, I do not need anything but a moment of your valuable time, Mr. Binns."

That meant me. I was too groggy to remove my smile or start polishing the windshield. I said, "Uh—um—uh."

The judge did not notice the interruption. "I am pausing," he said, after clearing his throat, "to tell you that you will not be employed by the firm of Mottley, Mottley, Bemis & Burton. Not even if you stand first in the final ratings.

He adjusted his glasses. "I refer to this matter of student riots. I saw you overturning the ticket-seller's booth in the Campus Theatre. I will not employ a lawbreaker. Good evening, Mr. Binns."

Before I could explain that the riot was not really a riot, and just a boycott of the Campus Theatre, whose management would not give students special rates, the judge was gunning that big engine and making a precise shift into second.

Why pick on me? The ticket girl wasn't

in the booth when I pushed it over. Anyway, the crowd inside did all the damage. They pulled up something like forty seats, and jerked the fire exit curtains from their rods before the cops arrived. But Judge Mottley had to see me, out in front about the time I saw the law and checked out.

I shut off the gas pump and hung on for support. It is tough, being fired from a job one has not yet gotten. Then the boss came roaring out of the office.

"Judge," he yelled. "Oh, Judge——"

But Mottley was in high gear now, and not listening. Mr. Hill turned to me. "Eric, you jackass, if you insult another customer—by God, I'd fire you now if it wasn't for the prof's Packard—get busy and shine 'er up!"

I GOT busy, and he slammed the door. Judge Mottley had awakened him from a sound sleep and that always made him peevish. Maybe he would fire me, though if he did, he'd make a liar out of himself. I was anything at his house, and only because he'd signed a certificate stating I was a distant nephew.

The catch is, students can't live off the campus these days, except with relatives. Nobody seems to marvel at the number of chain store clerks, truck-drivers, and the like who have collegiate kinfolk. But that's the way it is.

The only ones who don't have devotees of learning in their families are the boys who own the gin mills in East Palo Verde. That is another funny thing. Liquor can't be sold in the limits of Palo Verde, so anyone with the price of a drink has to walk two miles to get one.

"Law, hell," I said to myself. Unless a fellow has good connections, he'll starve when he graduates. An LL.B can't be traded for a ham on rye anywhere in the state of California, which is an eleven hundred mile stretch of marvelous climate and nothing else.

I began getting up a heavy sweat, bending on that hood. When I got to the doors, I needed a rest. Also, there was *McKelvey* to study. My shift was from four till midnight. So I planted myself in the back seat of the prof's car, switched on the dome light—I might sell him a battery recharge, later—and opened the book.

Nuts for law. Maybe I ought to study medicine. Prof Rodman had the chair of biochemistry, or something of the sort. He was working on a crackpot theory of making synthetic blood, for use in transfusions. A great idea if it worked. He was kinked on blood. But he had two Packards. Maybe he wasn't so kinked.

I was too worried to concentrate, so I dug into the briefcase the prof had left in the back seat. More blood. All about building up red corpuscles for pernicious anemia—about fortifying the professional blood donors so they could put out a quart a day and not miss it. He had something there, if it worked.

Finally I realized I'd better shine that car, so I could deliver it for the prof to drive to work in the morning. I turned on the steam, and made a job of it. The boss had gone home, so I said, Be damned to keeping open till midnight. I closed the station and headed on foot across the campus. Mr. Hill lived a couple miles beyond, in the wooded foothills.

I didn't want to go home. I stopped at a narrow path that branches from the dirt road. It led past a thicket which surrounded a little cleared space; the angle of an old-fashioned snake fence. I'd often caught glimpses of it, and now I had an urge to plant myself on the top rail and play scarecrow. Meditation, you know; I had a lot to meditate about, with Judge Mottley going off his chump that way.

A big moon was rising. It made me say, I'll go to China and fly a crate, now that Spain's washed up. Not that I can fly, but a fellow can learn.

Chaparral slapped my ankles, and poison oak brushed my face. A lot of people can't stand that last, but like some, I'm immune.

THE fence was too rickety. Then I saw the flat stone. It was long and narrow and smooth, and oddly enough, the grass didn't grow up thickly about it. I parked myself and began reasoning thus: "I'll take a tramp steamer to Suva or Samar or Cebu. I'll be a planter. I'll plant my frame under a coconut tree and nuts for school."

I was plenty surprised when a girl said, "Aye you going to sit there all night and not even speak to me?"

Her English had a Spanish accent. So did her face and hair. I don't know what surprised me the most, seeing how lovely she was, or just seeing her. Not being an expert on ladies' wear, I didn't make many details of her dress, except that it reached from her chin to her ankles. Just a bit like an old-fashioned shroud, but you never can tell what these co-eds'll wear next.

"Uh—say—I didn't hear you come in."

"Hardly anyone hears me," she said.

"You were sitting on my front door as if you belonged there. But it's nice, meeting you."

She had the kind of eyes you read about. Her hair was stacked way up, and a lace scarf, all white, reached down and about her shoulders.

"That's mutual," I admitted. "But this front door. I don't get it."

She pointed toward the slab where I had been sitting. The stone was about two and a half feet wide and six feet long. A second look at it made me feel funny all over. I hadn't noticed the words chiseled at one end.

"*Aquí yace Doña Catalina . . .*" I'd been sitting on a grave that dated back to the Spanish Occupation. The inscription said, "Here lies Doña Catalina."

"Wait a second," I said, making a quick

recovery. "Quit ribbing me. If you're a sleepwalker, I'll show you the way home."

She thought I was gosh-awful stupid. "I'm a sleepwalker. I live here, and you were sitting on my front door. Me, I am Catalina Maria Perez y Villamediana." She added, somewhat sadly, "I am a vampire."

"Oh, yeah?" With this apt retort, I caught her hand. It was somewhat chilly, as what girl's wouldn't be, running around that way. "Let's talk this over."

"You're awfully sweet. Most people run and scream when they see me. Back in 1827, a poor fellow just ran and ran until he dropped dead. Heavens, can I help if I'm a vampire?"

"Listen, honey," I told her, "don't call yourself a vampire. I know you're gorgeous, and that's a nice gown, but there are better words."

"It's a shroud," she cut in, sighing. "I do wish I had some nice clothes."

That last was reassuring. Absolutely normal after all. Pretty much like Mr. Hill's wife, only better looking. I skipped that quip, and went on, "Baby, they quit calling them vampires about the time you were born. It's bum stuff, being so out of date."

"But"—she made a gesture, Spanish as her comb and hair—"I *am* one. I come out of my grave. Usually at midnight. And—oh, I'm afraid to tell you. You'll hate me."

"Yeah, I know. You roam around drinking people's blood, and you have to be home before sunrise, and you can't cross running water."

"Oh." She smiled and wrapped both arms around me. "My dear, you do understand!"

When a dame like Catalina plants a blistering kiss smack on my mouth, without even wondering whether I have a car and/or a bottle, it is cause for triumph. Of course, she was a bit dotty on this business of living in a grave, and that makes a

law student introspective. On the other hand, she was born in 1793, which certainly was an ample margin.

Finally Catalina broke away and patted her hair. "I'm awfully sorry, but I simply must eat."

They all get to that, sooner or later. I had three dimes and a couple of pennies in my jeans. "How about a hamburger, at the Greek's?"

She shook her head. "I tol' you, *querido*, I must drink blood."

"Oh, all right." I took her hand and helped her from the tombstone. "Let's both have a droppie. I'll string along with you."

Clouds had begun to gather, and the moon darkened. I could just see a graceful ripple of white as I followed her to the road. Then she took a shortcut, and it kept me breathless, going over fields and through groves. Catalina had a trick of handling barbed wire. I didn't, so my shoulder and the seat of my pants were a lot the worse for that jaunt.

A dog bayed. His chain rattled. "Butch," I thought, "if anyone sees me with this doll, I'll be moving in with you." But Catalina was heading for the bungalow across the road. I fell back a bit. If this was where she lived, and her old man heard her go in, and saw me, there'd be some embarrassment. Palo Verde is a narrow-minded town.

She made another Houdini at the back door. Slick! Got in without a click or squeak. In a minute, a curtain moved. Catalina leaned out over the sill. I expected her to beckon, and I was ready to back down. Tombstones were one thing, and boudoirs were something else.

But she didn't ask me in. Quite the contrary. Her gesture meant, "Stand fast, buddy. I'll be back soon."

Going to get dressed, huh? Oh, all right. Someone inside was tossing, restlessly. I heard a kid make a funny little sound like

it was going to wake up and cry, and then it decided not to. Someone was humming, though the lights weren't on. A drowsy, sleepy sound. It made my eyelids droop, and my fingers began to relax from the fence.

SOMETHING startled me. It was Catalina. She'd come out of the house, and slipped right up on me. She caught my hand as if I belonged to her, and we set out across the fields and through the thickets. She hadn't put on another dress.

Catalina was whispering things in Spanish. English didn't quite express her thoughts. She was tickled to meet someone who didn't run and scream. Her hands were warm now, and so were her lips.

Once we were back on the tombstone, she told me the story of her life. That proved she was wired up one hundred percent feminine. It seems she grieved herself to death about a fiancé some Gringo ruffian had shot to pieces.

She laughed right out when I asked her about the chances of seeing her turn into a wolf. "Oh, you are so funny! A vampire, she is a vampire. A werewolf, that is something different."

None the less, I was doing some tall pondering. She seemed more substantial, since that queer, short trip to the cottage. And there had been a lot of pernicious and common anemia around Palo Verde. The butcher shops were sold out of calf liver by nine every morning, and at sixty cents a pound, the working classes couldn't afford it. I began to get new angles on Prof Rodman's frenzy about synthetic blood for transfusions.

This put me on the spot. Vampires are settled by having a wooden stake driven through their hearts while they're lying in their graves. A prospective jurist has to be public-spirited, like the judge who sentenced his own son to hang. Professional ideals, I mean.

But Catalina was alive, in a way, and even if I were licensed to practise law, it would take a lot of constitutional amendments before I could be judge, jury, and executioner. Anyway, I liked her a lot. Maybe I could get her to change her ways.

"Honey," I said finally, "you're a damn devastating menace, picking on kids. Whyn't you tackle grown-ups?"

Tears were in her eyes when she looked at me. "Ees too many of the college people. They drink gin, they smoke fealthy cigarettes. My stomach"—she patted herself in the appropriate spot—"she is weak."

Me, I hadn't smoked for so long I'd forgotten the taste. I was economizing, having to pay that fine for rioting at the theatre. Catalina's grief touched me. She needed young blood, and the way people live in this year of grace was unpalatable.

Then I got the answer. I said, "Baby, I'll save you and the kids of Palo Verde." With a dramatic gesture, I bared my throat. "Drink deep!"

She slowly drew back. "But no. I love you, do you understand? It will kill you, and you are nice. You do not run and scream. Have you ever lived one hundred and twenty-nine years without *any* friends?"

"It's been bad enough the past four years, going to school and being broke," I told her, which was the truth. "But listen. Prof Rodman is inventing a tonic that builds blood. I'll take a bottle of it. That way, it'll be fine for everyone concerned."

This intrigued her, though explaining it was tough. In the first place, I didn't understand the details, and in the second place, women are awfully dumb about scientific things. She ended by saying it was perfectly clear.

"If you are sure," she said, eager yet hesitant.

Catalina's teeth were whiter than a toothpaste model's. For a second, I felt

squeamish, and she seemed to read my thought. "Will not hurt," she whispered. "I don't really make the bite. I just drink, with the lips and tongue."

"Uh—sort of a supercharged kiss?"

"You understand everything!"

So I finished unlimbering my egg-stained necktie. Catalina made contented little sounds that became a sleepy humming. In a moment or so, I wasn't dizzy or nauseated. Her hair was the softest that ever touched anyone's cheek or throat . . . hell, a pint blood transfusion didn't seem to hurt the professional donors. . . .

"I mus' not be piggish," she finally said.

Somehow, Catalina seemed to be getting more substantial. If she hadn't been such a perfect lady, I'd have slapped her hip just to check up on the sound. I was groggy, all right, but altogether, it was nicer than I'd ever figured it could be, sitting on a tombstone with an armful of vampire.

When the air had the taste of dawn, she stirred and said, "Is time to go home. The sun will soon rise, no?" She made a sudden gesture. "Look. Over there!"

I turned. There was nothing to see. When I faced back toward Catalina, she was gone. A spiral of whitish fog seemed to be sinking into the stone. That did make me feel funny.

She actually lived under the slab. The real article. It'd be nice if Prof. Rodman's blood-builder didn't work. Which gave me some long thoughts as I trudged wearily homeward.

THE sun rose before I got there. The boss had backed his heap out of the garage and was playing a saxophone solo with the accelerator to give her a fast warm-up. He uses Green Gold lube, so he figures you can't ruin an engine, no matter how cold it is when you gun it.

He saw me trying to sneak in, and he poked his head out and yelled, "No damn

wonder I been catching you asleep in the battery room! If you don't get Judge Mottley's business back, I'll fire you."

Mr. Hill was not playing. The judge's account gave the station prestige. I had more than Spanish vampires to contend with.

Mrs. Hill was blinking and smoking her morning cigarette when I stepped into the kitchen. I used to think she was nice-looking, but now blonds seemed a bit stuffy. She said, "You're up awful early, Eric."

"Yeah, and I feel faint, too," I said, and dug into the oatmeal.

She looked at me rather funny, but said no more. Getting up in the middle of the night to get Hill's breakfast was tough, I gathered.

So was that day at school. Most of the time I didn't know whether they were talking about *torts* or tarts. What with sleepwalking around the campus, I was cyeing more co-eds than I ever had before. I was looking for the honey who had ribbed me last night.

Somehow, I lived through the day. Four bowls of chili under my belt bucked me up enough for the night at the filling-station. It was on El Camino Real, the old Royal Post Road that reaches from San Francisco to San Diego. The good *padres* used to march from one mission to the next, on foot. It was a laugh, picturing what they'd have thought of Catalina.

That idea led me to a detour. There was enough time, so I went to that slab in the thicket. By daylight it looked bleak and lonesome, but this was no time for sentiment. I lifted a picket from the snake fence and pried at the slab. It was easy to work it away.

There was no digging to do. The burial crypt was of squared stones. In the bottom was a home-made casket, with handles of tarnished silver. Like the plate on the lid, they'd been hammered out by a smith.

I dropped down into the hole. There was room enough for my feet, without standing on the coffin. I lifted the top and pretty nearly let it slam down. Catalina had not been feeding me moon-dust.

She was lying there, eyes shut. Her hands were crossed on her breast. Talk about complexion. Transparent olive, with a rosy flush.

"Snap out of it! I found you."

She didn't answer. There was a sleepy little smile that kept her lips from closing too tight. No mortician ever made a girl up that cleverly. Her nails were pink and long. There was not a trace of a scratch on her little feet, nor any dust. That was what made me lower the lid in a hurry. I climbed out and spent some minutes working the slab back into place. Talking to a girl about how cozy it must be in her coffin is one thing, and seeing her in it is another.

I didn't feel quite natural until I reported for duty. Mr. Hill eyed me as though something was missing. I said, "Watch me sell Judge Mottley a refill of Green Gold."

"You'd better, you chump," he grumbled. "I'm giving you another chance, maybe. I can't fire you today account me and the missus is going to a movie."

WHEN I closed the station and locked up the water and air hoses, so the public can't steal them, I made the next move to reform Catalina's diet. After taking on another bowl of chili, I had Mike put some in a carton to take along.

Catalina was sitting on the grave, waiting for me. "Everyone but you is frighten," she said, adoringly. "Now we will eat, no?"

She kissed me and made a job of it. I said, "Well, if you just got to, you got to, I guess. But it seems to me you could gradually get off that blood diet. I was down to Mike's and here's some chili for you."

"Oh!" She wiggled free and gave me a reproachful eye. "You have eat the chili? With garlic?"

"What's the matter?" It got me down, the way she looked at me. "I always figured you early Californians were nuts about it. Anyway, I took some of those drunkard's delights. They kill your breath. The boss keeps them at the station, so the missus won't know he's tossed off too many noggins."

"But you don't understand. The vampire, she cannot smell the garlic, but it is poison. That is the danger. So I must call on selected people. Now you are——" She shrugged. I wasn't fit to eat. "I mus' go back, over there."

She gestured in the direction of the place we'd been the other night.

I felt like a heel. But I tried to square myself. "Then suppose you go on the prowl again tonight, while I work on some plans. You need some nice clothes, and then people won't say *EEK* or *AWK* and pass out when they see you."

That worked, as I knew it would. Not to be outdone, Catalina said she'd skip her dinner that night. She'd go on a hunger strike, and all for me.

We finally compromised on a raid on Prof Rodman's laboratory. Catalina had a way with locks, as I previously remarked. When we came back, she wanted me to sit around while she gossiped about the Ortegas, who were her neighbors in 1809, but I had to get some sleep and do some thinking. So she solemnly promised to lay off blood-drinking.

It was several days before I got rid of the garlic taint, and Catalina was decidedly peaked-looking. In the meanwhile, I'd drunk most of Prof Rodman's mixture. Likewise, I'd doped out a way to get Judge Mottley back in line.

The Palo Verde papers ballyhooed the startling recovery of several pernicious anemia victims. Under the prof's daring

treatment—handled by a local physician—a cure was being effected. This was hot news, but it meant that my missionary work and not the tonic was doing the job.

It looked as if one Eric Binns was nicely on the spot. The only out seemed to be eating two-three pounds of liver a day, and keeping Catalina on a reducing diet. That, or sharpen up a wooden stake.

I sneaked out one afternoon to do just that, but she looked too pretty, lying there in her coffin. Vampire or no, it was next door to murder. Anyway, I wasn't developing anemia myself, not yet.

So for the next move, I snatched Mrs. Hill's evening gown—the one she took on approval, and wore, and got a cigarette burn on it, so she couldn't return it the day after the party. It was a shade of red that looked like hell on her, but with Catalina's early Spanish architecture and coloring, she'd roll 'em in the aisles.

I was planning a complex trick that only a legal mind could follow. There was one of those dances to replenish Palo Verde's fund for the underprivileged. With all the refined people and members of civic organizations attending *en masse*, you'd call it a ball, I guess.

Judge Mottley would be there. Mrs. Mottley also. Likewise, Catalina and I would be among those present. The Hills would not attend. She had nothing to wear, and he couldn't afford the ten bucks admission. Neither could I, but look what Hannibal did about the Alps.

CATALINA was thrilled silly when she saw the red dress and silver shoes. Her hair never got mussed up, and she never needed make-up, which is one of the handy things about being a vampire. I was getting awfully fond of her. A swell dame, and good-hearted. Tolerant of my plans for her future, just in case Prof Rodman's blood-builder didn't work out right.

"Baby," I expounded, "the human or-

ganization is the most versatile thing on earth. Particularly when it comes to diet." We were sitting on the tombstone when I went into my pep talk, as it wasn't quite late enough for Catalina to get dressed for the ball. "Now, I'm standing these blood transfusions well enough. And here's how you can gradually switch—"

It was simple. Look at the Hindoos, they eat practically nothing but starch, and so do millions of Chinese. Then there's the Eskimos: hundred percent blubber diet. Why couldn't Catalina shift, bit by bit, to beef blood, or chicken, or something? And finally to bullion cubes.

Even if Prof Rodman's tonic did work, I'd feel a little less like a human *hor d'oeuvre*. Another thing, he'd missed his bottle, and the police were investigating. No telling when we could snatch some more.

Catalina was reasonable about it all, and open-minded. So I was thrilled and light-hearted when we started out for the ball. At times I had to carry her to save her shoes. She whispered, "When you are a famous lawyer, *querido*, we will move the coffin to our house, no?"

You see, as I got used to her, I realized she'd never really been dead. Being in a coffin doesn't mean you're a corpse. Maybe Prof Rodman, with all his biochemistry stuff, could have explained things. No, there'd be too much publicity, and so I didn't dare take it up with him.

We hailed a taxi at the S. P. Station. I'd told Mr. Hill I wanted the evening off, by way of getting in good with Judge Mottley, showing him I was public-spirited.

THE Civic Center is a low and rambling building with a red-tiled roof and arcades along the patio. Being California Spanish, it was strange and thrilling to Catalina. There was a fountain in the court, and festoons of colored globes made artificial moonlight.

She didn't know the latest steps, but no one cared, not even the handful of collegians who had showed up, for some unheard-of reason.

Judge Mottley was particularly thrilled when he saw her. He forgot all about his wife and the other battle-axes and tapped me on the shoulder, just about the time I cut in on a tall and handsome and started edging Catalina into the patio. The women were making dirty quips about her dress, and not even a vampire can take that.

I wasn't surprised about the judge. He'd been eyeing us all evening.

"Ah . . . Mr. Binns. I am pleasantly surprised to see you here."

"Civic spirit, sir," I said, and presented him to Catalina.

When she got through turning the magnificent eyes on him, he hailed a flunkey who was distributing glasses of punch. Then he changed his mind and asked us to drive to the country club for a spot of Scotch.

Catalina said she never drank and didn't smoke, but the drive would be lovely. He was too cagey to try to edge me out. That would come later; he was a foxy old buzzard. In the meanwhile, he was much impressed by a fellow who had a girl who didn't gargle furniture polish. I began to seem the sort of person who fitted into the firm of Mottley, Mottley, Bemis & Burton. It was really a nice evening, in spite of finally having to get back to the ball.

While the judge was telling me how well he liked Green Gold, the tall and handsome snagged Catalina. By the time I got rid of the judge, I couldn't find my date.

Not for a while, that is. I was worried. Suppose she had reverted to type and was taking a light lunch? Suppose her victim yeeped or started talking later? I was in a sweat, dashing around looking for her.

I got good and sore when I missed the tall and handsome. When a fellow is

neither, he is inclined to be sensitive about such things. So when I found them in a parked car, I was relieved and hog wild at the same time—relieved because she wasn't doing any blood-drinking, and griped because the big lug was kissing her breathless, and she liked it. Liked it, and wearing the red dress I furnished. One hundred and twenty-nine years in a shroud, and double-crossing me, who'd got her into the social whirl.

He got out of the car when I cracked off. I just measured him and flattened him. This was no time for politeness, and if I'd given him a chance, where'd my chance have been?

He flopped to the running-board. That was what finished knocking him cold, I guess. There was a general departure from the other parked cars, but a crowd of newcomers who hadn't been committing themselves came out of the patio to watch the show.

I turned around to give Catalina hell. She straightened up and showed her claws. "Go away! My poor Johnnie—" She knelt beside the big lug and began crying. I had to check out before the judge heard I was a law-breaker again. Assault and battery at the Civic Center was as bad as having leprosy.

The minute she saw a good-looking fellow, she made a sap of me. That burned me up. That I had Judge Mottley on the right side again fell flat. With the evening totally sour, I hoofed it to East Palo Verde and began lapping up firewater.

AFTER about eight noggins of fifteen-cent Bourbon, I began to see the joke of it all. Catalina was now so used to me not screaming and running, she'd be tactless with Johnnie. Funny, huh?

Positively excruciating. It never occurred to me to think of what'd happen if she did scare him silly. I guess I must have been drunk when I went into the next place.

Anyway, I was when I toddled out of there, singing, "I love a lassie . . ."

Also, being hungry, I went to Mike's and scooped up all the chili he had in the pot. He was making a fresh batch, so he gave me a cut rate on the bottom stratum. What's more, he dug out a bottle of mastika and gave me a big shot. That's Greek brandy with a flavor like varnish, only spicy.

When Mike looked at the bottle, he handed it back and said, "Take him along. Need eye-opener, huh?"

Maybe I would, so I took it and wove my way home. That was the only thing I hadn't forgotten. But habit, I learned later, is stronger than mastika.

When I woke up, I was frozen stiff and lying on the tombstone, where I had passed out. Catalina was bending over me. My throat felt funny. She was smiling and licking her lips. The moon made her shoulders white and beautiful, and there were tears in her eyes.

"I was just teasing you," she whispered. "When you went away, everything she is spoil. I am lonesome, but I pretend I like it. Only, I cannot stand the ball any more, so I come home. You forgive me?"

"Uh—um." I was groggy, and trying to think of something, but I forgot what it was. Supposing Mrs. Hill's silver slippers had been ruined? "Sure. What time, is it?"

She shrugged. Time didn't matter. She knew now who was boss, and she liked it. Socking that big lug had been a good move after all.

"I was so hungry," she went on. "This dancing."

"Say no more about it, honey. Gee, my damn head!"

Catalina frowned. She sat up real straight, and tried to smile.

"I have the headache, too."

She looked sick. I rubbed my throat. I should have known the answer then, but

I didn't. Not until she made gagging sounds and doubled up. Then she wrapped both arms about me and said she was going to die.

There was nothing to be done. Whoever heard of an antidote for chili and Bourbon? But I was on my feet, with wild notions about dashing to a drug store. When she screamed, I turned back to get her. It'd save time, taking her along.

I was all rattled, but that was nothing to what I was when I saw Catalina huddled face down on the slab. The red dress was collapsing as I stared. A queer sort of mist swirled up like cigarette smoke. *Up* this time.

Her cry was not out of my ears before the dress and shoes were empty. I grabbed them and ran. There was no work and no school for me the next day. What kept me busy was thinking of what'd happen when someone wondered about my girl friend; when someone trailed my footprints to the grave, and began to figure it was a nice place to hide a corpse.

Mrs. Hill had a hunch someone had worn her dress and shoes, and she looked at me a lot, the next couple days. Half the wives in town were gabbling about the girl in red. One thing about that, Judge Mottley wouldn't be asking me about her!

Finally I went to the grave and opened it.

The coffin wasn't empty, but anyone could see that what was in it had been there for years and years. Now that that was settled, I sat down and bawled like a kid. Even when I learned that the epidemic of pernicious anemia was over, and Prof Rodman was the big scientist of the day, I felt rotten.

Anyway, I got the job with Judge Mottley. I'm a member of the firm. And in odd moments, I sit on that slab, closing my eyes and trying to bring Catalina's face back in memory. Just what did happen to her is one for Prof Rodman to figure out.