

# MANHUNT

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## CONTENTS

### FEATURE STORY

- THE PORTRAITS OF EVE *by Bruno Fischer*..... 50

### NOVELETTES

- MEET ME IN THE DARK *by Gil Brewer*..... 13  
 HOOKED *by Robert Turner*..... 33

### SHORT STORIES

- BLACK CAT IN THE SNOW *by John D. MacDonald*..... 47  
 BE A MAN! *by Talmage Powell*..... 29  
 PRESSURE *by Arnold English*..... 9  
 THE HELPING HAND *by Avram Davidson*..... 24  
 THE BABE AND THE BUM *by Mike Brett*..... 62  
 THE PAINTER *by Michael Zuroy*..... 1  
 A REAL QUIET GUY *by Tom Phillips*..... 4  
 YOU CAN'T LOSE *by Laurence Block*..... 43

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*Rose hated her aunt. That was why Rose  
made love to the young drunk...*

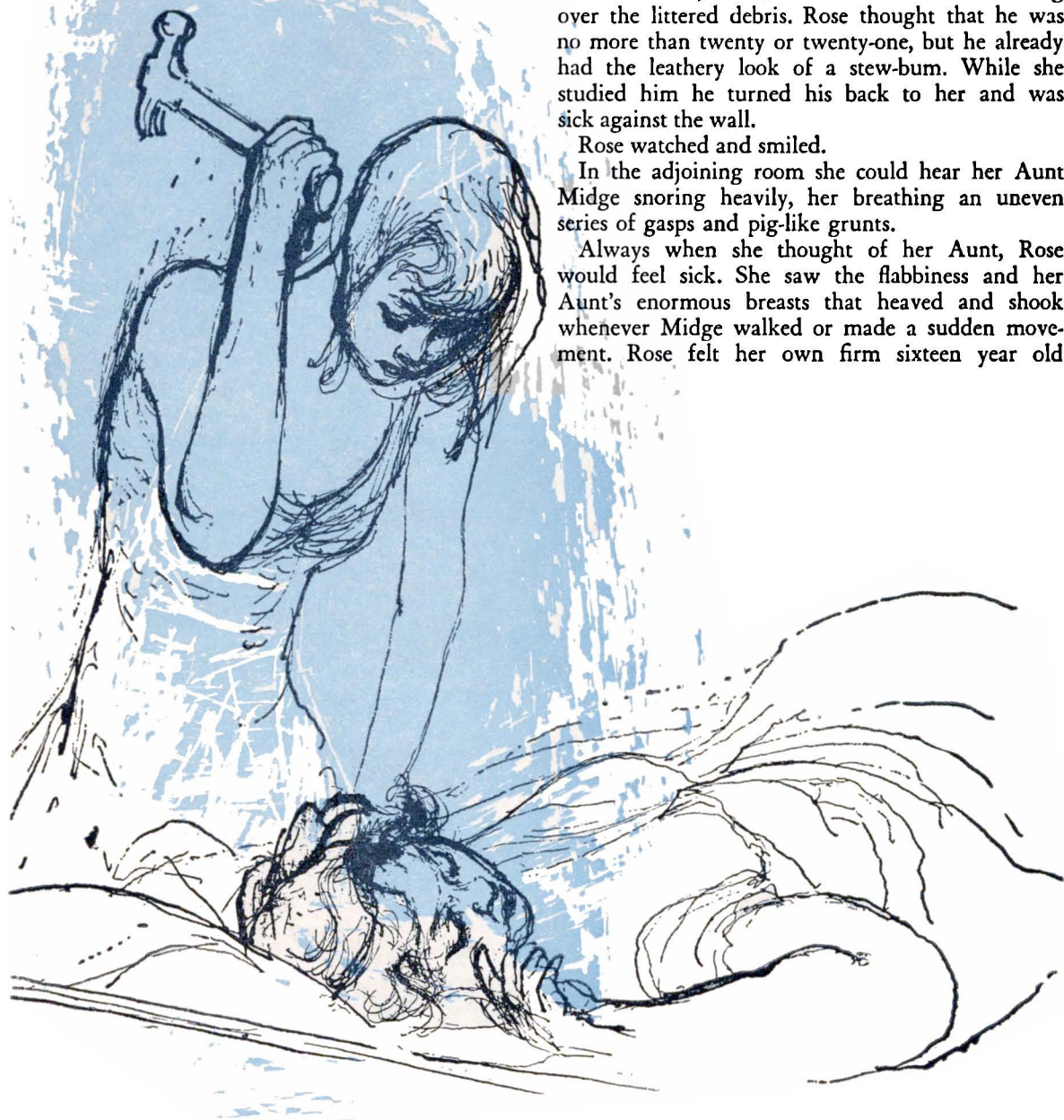
**I**N HER NIGHTGOWN Rose walked quietly to the window that overlooked the back alley and saw him in the lightening morning shadows. She watched him tilt the pint to his mouth, his hands shaking and drain almost half the bottle. Some of the red wine had spilled on his chin.

She had seen him for the past three mornings when the hissing and clanking of the radiator had awakened her, and she had heard him stumbling over the littered debris. Rose thought that he was no more than twenty or twenty-one, but he already had the leathery look of a stew-bum. While she studied him he turned his back to her and was sick against the wall.

Rose watched and smiled.

In the adjoining room she could hear her Aunt Midge snoring heavily, her breathing an uneven series of gasps and pig-like grunts.

Always when she thought of her Aunt, Rose would feel sick. She saw the flabbiness and her Aunt's enormous breasts that heaved and shook whenever Midge walked or made a sudden movement. Rose felt her own firm sixteen year old



by  
**MIKE BRETT**

## the babe and the bum

body and thought how different she was than Midge. And there was the unwashed body smell and the purple print dress that Aunt Midge never changed.

Outside in the alley the bum had taken another drink, his breath exhaling into white vapor in the morning cold. Rain had started to fall, big hard slanty drops. And now, Rose quietly opened the window and the rain pinged and splashed on the sill, the cold sending a chill into the room and she shivered in her nightgown.

In his drunken stupor he hadn't noticed the sound of the window opening and Rose quietly called to him. "Hey, mister."

Startled, he spun around and looked up at the first floor window, and then seeing Rose in her nightgown a foolish smile split his face.

He swayed. "Hya baby, whasamattah?"

His thick tongued voice was too loud and she hurriedly put her forefinger to her lips urging silence. She leaned out of the window watching with amusement as his eyes caught a glimpse of her smooth white flesh beneath the transparent gown. She let him look for a minute and then she moved her shoulders forward sensuously.

His mouth fell slack, a stupid blank expression crossing his face. The rain was stronger now, the wind whipping it through the alley in gusts that bounced off the brick alley walls. Rain ran off his head pasting down his hair and ran in rivulets into the soiled white collar of his shirt.

"Meet me under the stairs, in the hallway," Rose whispered. "I'll be right down."

He nodded agreement, "Okay baby, I'll wait for you."

When she shut the window Rose wasn't sure but she thought she had seen him smirk. She listened for Midge. And now she threw a duster over her nightgown and noiselessly went out into the hall leaving the door unlatched. He was under the stairs his eyes boozy bloodshot, his breath foul, and his face an eager mask of anticipation.

Rose loosened her robe and found herself shaking as she went to him. She stood before him, watching his eyes hungrily run up and down her body. Silently she listened for sounds in the building; they'd have to be fast, real fast, and quiet. Suddenly then, Rose leaned forward, the roundness of her body flattening against his soggy clothes. She could feel his breath and his mouth kissing her face and her neck, his hand shaking uncontrollably, tearing at the straps on her gown.

His voice was thick and hoarse, "Come on baby."

"Don't, don't hurt me," she whispered.

And then they both heard it, somebody's footsteps on the stairs directly over them.

She sprang away from him and stood silent, her heart pounding painfully until the sound of the steps grew faint and they were no longer heard.

He reached for her again, but now doors were

opening and slamming. The people in the building were on their way to work.

He was pawing her again, "You're nice, baby. C'mon."

Rose put her hands on his chest and pushed. "It's too late, it's too late," she said and she could feel the excitement raging within him.

But his arm had circled the small of her back and was pulling her in . . . in, the other hand groping, exploring. Her mouth struck with the fury and the swiftness of a snake on his cheek, violent and hard. His hands fell away, "What the . . . ?" and he felt the purple teeth marks and his florid face sobered and then became angry white. "Damn you!"

Rose hurriedly backed away from him, into the hall, out of his reach. She giggled nervously. "You asked for that. Come back in an hour. Can you get in through the window? I don't want anybody to see you going in the front door. You'll need a box, or something to stand on. I'll be alone. I'll be waiting for you."

His sullen face relaxed and his hand fingered the teeth marks. "What did you do that for? Jeez, you're a hot tempered gal."

She studied him for a moment. "I do everything that way. Gone man, all the way. You coming back?"

The drunk grinned. "You can't keep me away. I'll be back in an hour."

Rose turned and walked back into the apartment and locked the door. A sense of exultation and power came over her. She hummed, she laughed to herself, she felt like singing. She removed her duster and the nightgown, and she stood before the cheap distorted door mirror and looked at herself. I'm beautiful, she thought, not at all like Aunt Midge. Ever since she had left the girls House of Correction and gone to live with her Aunt Midge, Midge had hated her. Midge had been jealous of Rose and Joey. That was why Midge was always checking and had accused her of being a slut; just because she had been necking with Joey in the back of his car. And if Joey hadn't been so stupid and parked so close to the house, even though it was dark, Midge would never have spotted them. Besides, nothing had really happened. Why couldn't her Aunt leave them alone. She loathed Midge.

There was another time, when Midge said she was going to play bingo, and Joey had come over to the apartment when she left. They had gone into the bedroom and Joey was so wild about her, so crazy wild about her. She'd do anything for Joey. Midge had come back into the apartment and they hadn't heard her come in. She hadn't gone to play bingo, instead she had stopped at the corner bar and had a couple. Then Aunt Midge had found her with Joey.

Midge was so loud. "You cheap little whore."

You aint nothin! Turn my back on you for a minute and I find you in the bedroom with this bum." She screamed hysterically at Joey, "Young punk! I know who you are. She's a minor and you're not going to get away with it. I'm going to get a cop." And then she had charged out of the apartment.

Joey had dressed and had left. The police had arrested him later and they had taken her to the hospital. And they had put Joey on probation after the doctors had examined her. Now Midge wouldn't allow her out at night.

Noiselessly Rose walked to Midge's room and now she turned the knob very slowly and swung the door open. Midge was still sleeping, the slatted light from the window blinds streaming across her face and the rumpled bed covers.

And now Rose walked into the kitchen and then under the sink she found the hammer she was looking for. Strangely enough she felt calm. Midge was still snoring in her bedroom and now Rose stood next to her over the bed. And suddenly the hammer was shaking in her hand and her mouth felt dry. Nervously she ran the tip of her tongue over her lips and then without thinking she swung the hammer down with all her strength; down into Midge's face. A sharp sucked in gasp came from Midge's mouth and her hands opened and closed spasmodically. Then Rose brought the hammer down again in a swift murderous arc that ended with a bone crushing sound in the center of Midge's forehead.

For a brief moment Rose stood poised, the bloody splattered hammer ready, and as she watched, Midge's clenched fists fell open and she knew it was over.

She felt her legs tremble and the panic rising in her breast, and she almost dropped the hammer and ran. But in that split second she grew calm again and then she walked into the bathroom and put the hammer into the sink and turned the faucet on. She was careful to wet the handle only. The water ran red, then pink and when it ran clear she wiped the hammer handle carefully with tissue. Rose disposed of the tissue when the hammer was dry. Then she washed her hands and she looked carefully at herself in the bathroom mirror for blood-stains. Abruptly she carried the hammer into the

kitchen and placed it on the table.

Until this moment her actions had been mechanical but now her thoughts raced ahead. It had worked exactly as she had planned it. Her Aunt was dead and the drunk would soon be climbing into her own bedroom through the window. And when he did she had a special request for him. He'd surely go into the kitchen and pick up the hammer to nail up a curtain rod for her. She'd wait until he had picked up the hammer and his prints were on the handle. He'd be so excited he wouldn't notice the blood on the head of the hammer. Then she'd run screaming into the hall.

"Help, help, please help me," she'd cry. "He's killing Midge." How could it miss? They'd catch him and they'd blame him for the murder.

Almost an hour had passed and she found herself at her bedroom window looking out into the alley, waiting for the drunk to return.

And then she saw him and almost laughed out loud at the sight. He was half running, half staggering, the rain pouring down in angry gusts on an empty orange crate he held over his head. The crate he needed to stand on so he could climb through the window.

And then suddenly, fear, real fear clawed at her throat. There was a cop following the drunk. He was right in back of him. And behind the cop was Mr. Tresca, the man who owned the corner fruit stand. Tresca pointed at the drunk. "That's him."

The cop grabbed the drunk. "Where you going with the crate?"

The drunk looked directly at her open window, indecision on his face. She barely heard his reply. "It's raining officer, I need this box to keep my head dry."

The cop smirked, "You're a real fancy guy, gotta have an umbrella when it rains, so you steal a crate; only it's full of oranges and you dump them all over the street. Let's go!"

The cop held the drunk under the arm and walked him out of the alley followed by Mr. Tresca, who carried the empty orange crate.

Rose thought of Midge lying still in the other bedroom and then she thought of Joey and she knew she'd have to run alone.

