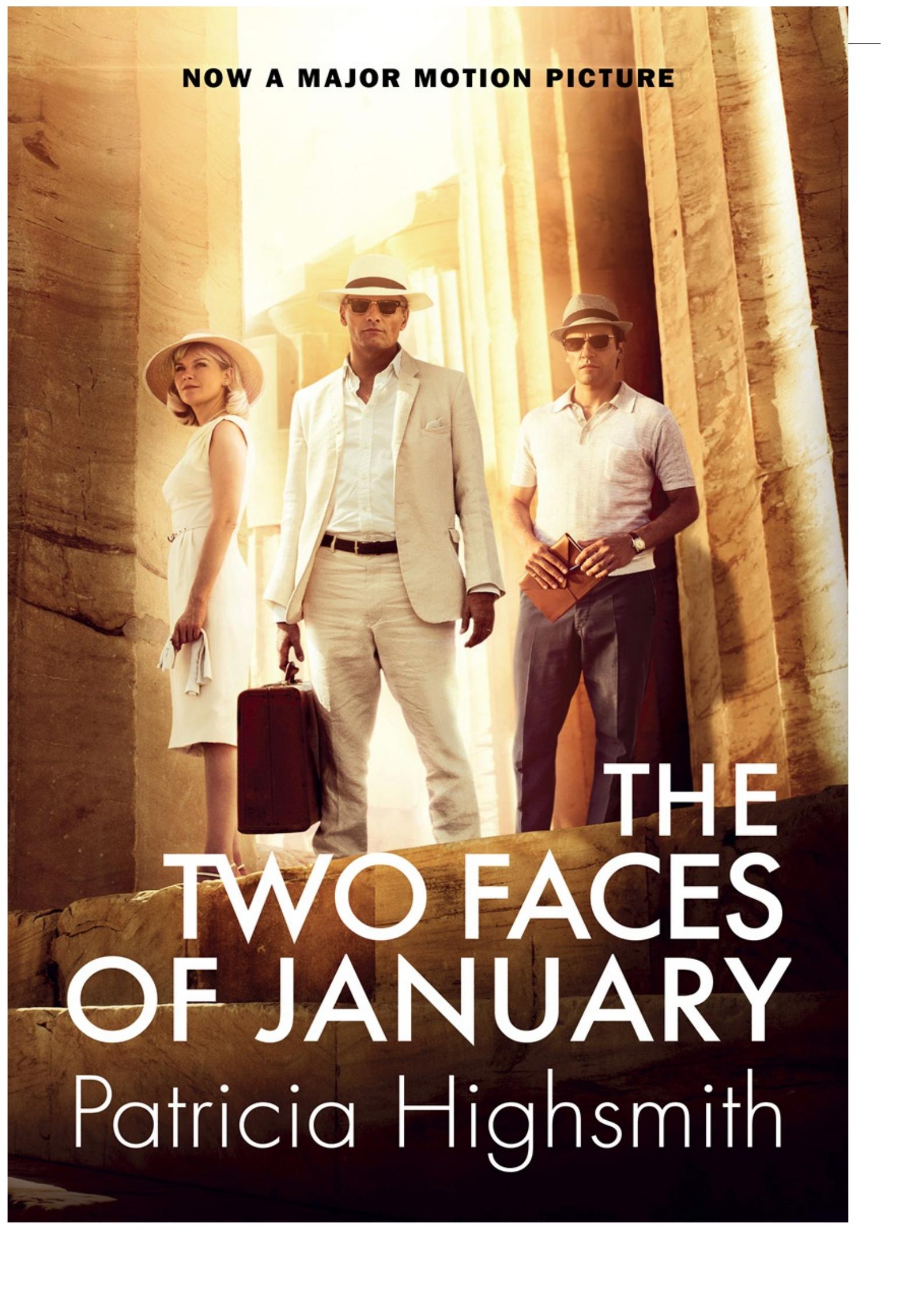


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THE TWO FACES OF JANUARY

Patricia Highsmith

The Two Faces of January

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The
Two Faces
of January

Patricia Highsmith



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For my friend

Rolf Tietgens

At half past three of a morning in early January, Chester MacFarland was awakened in his berth on the *San Gimignano* by an alarming sound of scraping. He sat up and saw through the porthole a brightly lighted wall of orangey-red color, extremely close and creeping by. His first thought was that they were grazing the side of another ship, and he scrambled out of bed and, still half asleep, leaned across his wife's berth and looked more closely. There were scribblings and scratches and numbers on the wall, which he now saw was rock. NIKO 1957, he read. W. MUSSOLINI. Then an American-looking PETE '60.

The alarm clock went off, and Chester grabbed for it, knocking over the Scotch bottle that stood beside it on the floor. He pressed the button that stopped the alarm, then reached for his robe.

"Darling?—What's going on?" Colette asked sleepily.

"I think we're in the Corinthian Canal," Chester said. "Or else we're awfully close to another ship. We're due to be in the canal. It's half past three. Coming on deck?"

"Um-m—no," Colette murmured, snuggling deeper into the bedclothes. "You tell me all about it."

Smiling, Chester pressed a kiss into her warm cheek. "I'm going on deck. Back in a minute."

As soon as he stepped out of the door onto the deck, Chester ran into the officer who had told him they would pass through the canal at 3:30 a.m.

"Sississi! Il canale, signor!" he said to Chester.

"Thanks!" Chester felt a thrill of adventure and excitement, and stood erect against the chill wind, gripping the rail with both hands. There was no one but him on the deck.

The canal's sides looked four storys high, at least. Leaning over the rail, Chester saw only blackness at either end of the canal. It was impossible to see just how long it was, but he remembered its length on his map of Greece, one half inch, which he thought would be about four miles. Man-made, the vital waterway. The thought gave him pleasure. Chester looked at the marks of drills and pickaxes that were still visible in the orangey rock—or was it hard clay? Chester lifted his eyes to where the side of the canal stopped sharp against the darkness, looked higher to the stars sprinkled in the Grecian sky. In just a few hours, he would see Athens. He had an impulse to stay up the rest of the night, to get his overcoat and stand on deck while the ship ploughed through the Aegean towards Piraeus. He'd be tired tomorrow, however. After a few minutes, Chester went back to the stateroom and crawled into bed.

Some five hours later, when the *San Gimignano* had docked at Piraeus, Chester was pushing his way towards the rail through a grumbling tangle of passengers and porters who had come aboard to assist people with their luggage. Chester had breakfasted in a leisurely way in his state-room, preferring to wait until the majority of the passengers had debarked; but, judging from the number of people on deck and in the corridors, the debarking had not even begun. The town and the dock of Piraeus looked like a dusty mess. Chester was disappointed not to be able to see Athens in the hazy distance. He lit a cigarette and looked slowly over the moving and stationary figures on the broad expanse of dock. Blue-clad porters. A few men in rather shabby-looking overcoats walking about restlessly, glancing about the ship: they looked more like money-changers or taxi-drivers than policemen, Chester thought. He

eyes moved from left to right and back again over the entire scene. No, he couldn't believe that anyone of the men he saw could be waiting for him. The gangplank was down, and if anyone had come for him, wouldn't he be coming right on board now, instead of waiting on the dock? Of course. Chester cleared his throat and took a gentle drag on his cigarette. Then he turned and saw Colette.

"Greece," she said, smiling.

"Yes. Greece." He took her hand. Her fingers spread, then closed tightly on his. "I'd better see about a porter. All the suitcases closed?"

She nodded. "I saw Alfonso. He'll bring them out."

"Did you tip him?"

"Um-m. Two thousand lire. You think that's okay?" Her dark-blue eyes looked up widely at Chester. Her long auburn lashes blinked twice. Then she repressed a laugh that came bubbling out of her, a laugh of happiness and affection. "You're not thinking. Is two thousand enough?"

"Two thousand is perfect, darling." Chester kissed her lips quickly.

Alfonso emerged with half their luggage, set it on the deck and went back for the rest. Chester helped him carry it down the gangplank to the dock, and then three or four porters began arguing as to who would get to carry it.

"Wait! Just wait, please," Chester said. "Money, you know. Got to change some." He waved his traveler's check book, then trotted off to a money-changing booth near the gates of the dock. He changed a twenty.

"Please," Colette said, patting a suitcase protectively, and the quarrelling porters folded their arms and stepped back and waited, looking her over with approval.

Colette—it was a name she had chosen for herself at the age of fourteen, in preference to Elizabeth—was twenty-five years old, five feet three, with reddish light-brown hair, full lips, a perfectly straight nose lightly sprinkled with freckles, and quite arrestingly pretty dark-blue, almost lavender eyes. Her eyes looked widely and straightforwardly at everything and everyone, like the eyes of a curious, intelligent and still learning child. Men whom she looked at usually felt transfixed and fascinated by her gaze; there was something speculative in it, and nearly every man, whatever his age, thought, "She looks as if she's falling in love with me. Could it be?" Most women thought her expression and even Colette herself rather naïve, too naïve to be dangerous; which was fortunate because otherwise women might have been jealous or suspicious of her attractiveness. She had been married to Chester just a little more than a year, and she had met him by answering an advertisement he put in the *Times* for a part-time secretary and typist. It hadn't taken her more than two days to realize that Chester's business was not exactly on the up and up—what stockbroker operated out of his apartment instead of an office, and where were his stocks on the Exchange, anyway?—but Chester had a lot of charm; he plainly had plenty of money, and evidently the money was rolling in steadily, which meant he wasn't in any trouble. Chester had been married before, for eight years, to a woman who had died of cancer two years before Colette met him. Chester was forty-two, still handsome, graying slightly at the temples, and just a bit inclined to develop a tummy, but Colette was inclined to put weight on all over, and dieting was a normal thing with her. It was easy for her to plan menus that were appetizing as well as low in calories.

"Here we go," Chester said, waving a fistful of drachma notes. "Pick a taxi, honey."

There were half a dozen taxis standing about, and Colette chose the one of a driver who had friendly smile. Three porters helped them load the taxi with their seven pieces of luggage, two which went on the roof, and then they were off for Athens. Chester sat forward, watching for the Parthenon on its hill, or some other landmark that might appear against the pale-blue sky. And then he found himself looking at an imaginary Walkie Kar, big as all Athens, red and chromium, with its horrible rubber-lumped handlebars and its ugly, cupped safety seat. Chester shuddered. What stupidity, what a needless, idiotic risk that had been! Colette had told him so, too. She had got a bit angry when she found out about it, and she was perfectly justified in getting angry. The Walkie Kar had come about like this: in a printer's shop where he was having some business cards made up, Chester had noticed a stack of handbills advertising the Walkie Kar. There was a picture of it, description, and the price, \$12.95, and at the bottom an order blank that could be torn off along a perforated line. The printer had laughed when Chester picked up one of the sheets and looked at it. The company was out of business, the printer said, and they hadn't even paid him for his print job. No, the printer wouldn't mind at all if Chester took a few of them, because he was going to throw them all out anyway. Chester had said he wanted to send them to a few of his friends as a joke, his heavy-drinking friends, and at first he had wanted to do that only; and then something—temptation, bravado, a sense of humor?—had compelled him to try peddling the damned things, and by ringing doorbells and making with the old spiel he had sold more than eight-hundred dollars' worth, mainly to people in the Bronx. Then he had run into one of his purchasers in his own apartment building in Manhattan, and moreover, just as he was opening his own mailbox. The man said his Walkie Kar had not arrived though he had ordered and paid for it two months ago, and neither had the Walkie Kar of a neighbor of his arrived. When that happened to two people who knew each other, they got together and discussed something about it, Chester knew from experience; and, since the man had taken a good look at his name on the mailbox, Chester had thought it just as well to get out of the country for a while, rather than move to another apartment and change his name to something else again. Colette had been wanting to go to Europe and they had planned to go in spring, but the Walkie Kar incident had hurried them up by four months. They had left New York in December. Yes, Colette had reproached him pretty severely for the Walkie Kar episode, and she had been annoyed also because she thought the weather wouldn't be as pleasant in winter as in spring, and she was right, of course. Chester had given her a new set of luggage and a mink jacket by way of making it up to her, and he wanted to do everything he could to make the trip a happy one for her. It was Colette's first trip to Europe. So far she had liked London best, and, to Chester's surprise, liked London more than Paris. It had rained more in Paris than in London; Chester had caught a cold; and he remembered that every time he got his feet wet or felt rain sliding down the back of his neck, he had thought of the God-damned Walkie Kar, and he had reminded himself that for the wretched bit of money he had got out of it, he might have caused, might still cause, Howard Cheever (which was his current alias and the name that had been on his mailbox in the New York apartment building) to be exposed to a thorough investigation which could mean the end of half a dozen companies on whose stock sales Chester depended for his living. Europe was safer than the States just now, and Chester MacFarland, his real name, was a name he hadn't used in fifteen years; but he was guilty, among other things, of defrauding through the mail which was one of the few offenses the American Government could extradite a man for. It was

remotely possible that they would send a man over after him, Chester thought, if they ever made the connection between Cheever and MacFarland.

The taxi-driver asked him something over his shoulder in Greek.

"Sorry. No capeesh," Chester answered. "The main square, okay? The centre of town."

"Grande Bretagne?" asked the driver.

"Well . . . I'm not quite sure," Chester said. The Grande Bretagne was unquestionably the biggest and best hotel in Athens, but for that very reason, Chester felt wary about stopping there. "Let's take a look," he added, though he didn't think the driver understood. "There it is," he said to Colette. "The white building over there."

The white edifice of the Grande Bretagne had a formal, antiseptic air in contrast to the less tall and dirtier buildings and stores that stood around the rectangle of Constitution Square. There was a government building of some sort far to their right, a Greek flag flying from a pole on its grounds, and a couple of soldiers in skirts and white stockings standing guard near the doors.

"What about that hotel?" Chester asked, pointing. "The King's Palace. That looks pretty good, don't you think, honey?"

"Okay. Sure," Colette said agreeably.

The King's Palace Hotel was across a street at one side of the Grande Bretagne. A bellboy in a red jacket and black trousers came out on the pavement to help with the luggage. The lobby looked first-rate to Chester, maybe not luxury class, but first-rate. The carpet was thick underfoot, and, judging from the warmth, the central heating really worked.

"You have a reservation, sir?" asked the clerk behind the counter.

"No, no, we haven't, but we'd like a room with a bath and a nice view," Chester said, smiling.

"Yes, sir." The clerk pushed a bell, then handed a key to the uniformed boy who came up. "Show them six twenty-one, please. May I have your passports, sir? You can pick them up when you come down."

Chester took the one that Colette drew from her red leather case in her pocketbook, pulled his own from his inside breast pocket, and pushed them across the counter to the clerk. It always gave him a little throb of mental pain, a small shock of embarrassment such as he felt when a doctor asked him to strip, whenever he pushed his passport over a hotel counter or had it taken from his hand by an official inspector. Chester Crighton MacFarland, five feet eleven, born in 1922 in Sacramento, California, no distinguishing marks, wife Elizabeth Talbott MacFarland. It was all so naked. Worst of all, his passport photograph, so untypically for a passport photograph, was a very good likeness, showing receding brown hair, aggressive jaw, good-sized nose, a rather stubborn, thin-lipped mouth with a moustache above it—an excellent portrait of him, depicting all but the color of his blue, staring eyes and the ruddiness of his cheeks. Had the clerk, Chester always thought, or the inspector been shown the same picture of him and told to keep his eyes open for him? This moment in the King's Palace Hotel was not the time to learn, because the clerk pushed the passports to one side without opening them.

A few minutes later they were comfortably installed in a large, warm room with a view of the white geranium garnished balconies of the Grande Bretagne and of a busy avenue six stories down, which Chester identified on his map of Athens as Venizelos Street. It was only 10 o'clock. The whole day lay before them.

At that moment, in a considerably cheaper and shabbier hotel around the corner on Kriezotou Street, sometimes called Jan Smuts Street, a young American named Rydal Keener was pressing the button for an elevator on the fourth floor. He was a slender, dark-haired young man, quiet and slow in movement. There was an air of melancholy about him, melancholy turned outward rather than inward, as if he brooded not on his own problems but the world's. His dark eyes seemed to see and to think about whatever they looked at. He appeared also very poised, not at all concerned with what anybody thought of him. His insouciance was often taken for arrogance. It did not go with the worn shoes and overcoat he had on now, but his bearing was so confident that his clothes were the last thing people noticed about him, if they noticed them at all.

It was an even bet every morning whether the elevator would come or not, and every morning Rydal played a game with himself: if the elevator came, he would have breakfast in the Taverna Dionysiou in Niko's street, and if it didn't come, he would buy a newspaper and have breakfast in the Café Brasil. Not that it made a bit of difference one way or the other. He would buy four newspapers anyway, in the course of the day, but in the Taverna Dionysiou he knew so many people, he was always talking too much to read anything, and in the Café Brasil, a fancier place, he never knew anyone, and so always took a newspaper with him for company. Rydal waited patiently, walking in a slow circle over the threadbare carpet in front of the elevator shaft. No annunciatory rattle from below or above showed that anyone had heard or heeded his ring. Rydal sighed, threw his shoulders back, and stared with serious attention at an extremely dark and obscure painting of a country landscape that hung on the wall of the corridor he had just walked through. Even the sky was a sooty black, as if the picture—surely no artist in the world, however bad, would paint a hillside and sky so smutty you could scarcely see where one ended and the other began—had over the years accumulated the dirt of the atmosphere, absorbed the very breaths of the Greek, French, Italian, Serbian, Yugoslavian, Russian, American and whatever people that had passed back and forth in that corridor. Two sheep backsides, dingy tan, were the brightest spots in the composition.

The elevator was certainly not coming. He might have rung again, could eventually have got service if he kept ringing, but his game was over, and he no longer cared to ride. He would go to the Café Brasil. Rydal walked slowly down the first short flight of carpeted stairs. There were two holes, each the size of a large foot, in the carpet, and Rydal wondered if anybody had ever tripped in them and fallen. They would have fallen against a cement vase, phony third-century B.C., which stood on a Victorian flower stand of cast iron. Rydal went by a mirror some ten feet long on the wall, crossed a small, meaningless foyer where there was another opaque painting and a pot of dried out ferns, and took some stairs that led down in another direction. On the next floor, a tall and somewhat angular woman in tweeds, not a bit masculine but flat and sexless as something out of a 1920 British fashion drawing, pressed the elevator button with a confident air, then returned Rydal's gaze with calm greenish eyes. Rydal's eyes lingered on hers a little too long for the look to be merely one that on

gives a stranger encountered in a hotel hall, but that was another game Rydal played, and the Hotel Melchior Condylis was just the place to play it. The game might be called Adventure. It depended on meeting the Right Person, male or female. Something would take place when his eyes met the eyes of the Right Person, there would be a shock of recognition, one of them would speak, they would have some kind of Adventure together—or there wouldn't be anything in the eyes, and absolutely nothing would happen. This woman was certainly an odd and fascinating type, but nothing really happened in her eyes. The Hotel Melchior Condylis was full of odd and fascinating-looking people. It was not a place for the well-heeled, not a place the average American would be drawn to, but it had almost everyone of other nationality staying in it, as far as Rydal could see. There was an East Indian couple now, and an elderly French couple. There was a young Russian student whom Rydal had tried chatting with, but the Russian was not Russian, but the Russian acted as if he were suspicious of him, and their acquaintance had not progressed. Last month there had been an Eskimo travelling with an American oceanographer, and they were both natives of Alaska. There was the predictable sprinkling of Turks and Yugoslavs. It was amusing to think of little points all over the world where people who had been to the Melchior Condylis would mention its name, in one or the other of twenty-five or thirty languages, and perhaps recommend it (or could they really, except for its cheapness?) to their friends as a place to stop at on the way to Athens. The service was awful, worse than non-existent, because it was often promised when it did not come. The corridors and stairs of the place had to Rydal the anticipatory air of a stage when all the props are in place and before the first actor makes his appearance. Not one item in the rooms—Rydal had been in three of them—the corridors or the lobby was wrong for its character, and its character was that of an old, tired, Mitteleuropa stable hack.

Rydal found the elevator operator, who also doubled as porter, reading a newspaper on the wooden bench by the door and picking his nose.

"Good morning, Meester Keener," said Max, a black-moustached man in an ancient grey uniform behind the desk.

"Morning to you, Max. How are you?" Rydal laid his key down.

"You want lottery ticket?" Max asked with a hopeful grin, holding up a sheet of tickets.

"Um-m. Am I feeling lucky today? Not particularly. Not today," Rydal said, and went out.

He turned left and walked towards Constitution Square and the American Express. There might be a letter for him at the American Express, there most likely was a letter, because this was Wednesday and he'd had no mail Monday or Tuesday, and he averaged two letters a week. But he decided to wait until afternoon before going in to ask. He bought yesterday's London *Daily Express* and an Athenian newspaper of this morning, gave a wave to Niko, who was shuffling about in his gym shoes a few yards away on the pavement in front of the American Express Travel Agency, his figure beige and more or less round under the sponges that hung on strings all over him.

"Lottery?" Niko yelled, swinging up a ticket sheet.

Rydal shook his head. "Not today!" he yelled back in Greek. It was evidently a great day for lottery tickets.

Rydal went into the Café Brasil, climbed the stairs to the second-floor bar where one could also get breakfast, and ordered a cappuccino with a jelly doughnut. The news in the paper was dull today. A small train wreck in Italy. A divorce case against an M.P. Rydal rather enjoyed murder stories, and he

liked the English best. He smoked three Papistratos after his coffee, and it was getting on to 11 when he went out. He thought he would drop by the National Archaeological Museum for a little while, then buy a present for Pan—Pan's birthday was Saturday, and he was giving a party—in some haberdashery or leather shop in Stadiou Street, have lunch in the hotel restaurant, then work on his poems in what was left of the afternoon. Pan had said something about going to a movie tonight, but the date might not come off, and Rydal didn't care if it didn't. It was obviously going to rain, and the Athens paper predicted it also. Rydal enjoyed loafing in his room and working on his poems when it rained. Out on the pavement, he was inspired to call at the American Express now instead of the afternoon, so he walked through the arcade that brought him out on another street more or less parallel to Constitution Square, where the American Express mail office was located.

There was a letter from his sister Martha in Washington, D.C. Another slight reproach, Rydal supposed. But it wasn't. It was actually almost an apology to him for having "spoken a little sharply in December". She had written, not spoken. Rydal's father had died in early December, Rydal had been notified by a cable from his brother Kennie two days before the funeral, he could have flown home but he hadn't. His father had suffered a heart attack, and died within four hours. Rydal had delayed undecided, for twenty-four hours, and had finally wired Kennie in Cambridge that he was sorry to hear the news, and that he sent him and the rest of the family his love and sympathy. He did not say he was not coming, but that was evident, since any mention of his coming was left out. Kennie had not written him since, but Martha had, and she had said, "Considering the family is so small, just you and I and Kennie and his wife and children, I think you might have made an effort to get here. After all, he was your father. I can't believe that your conscience doesn't bother you. Are you going to nurse your grievance even after the object is dead? You would be happier, Rydal, if you could be bigger about it—and if you'd come and stood by with the rest of us." Rydal remembered the letter almost verbatim though he had thrown it away as soon as he had read it. Now his sister wrote that she understood that he had his grievances

"... which, as you know, I've always considered rather warrantable. But don't be bitter, if you can help it. You once told me you understood the uselessness of hatred and resentment. I hope it's true now more than ever, and that you're finding some kind of peace over there. Somehow I like the idea of your being in Athens rather than Rome. . . . When do you think you'll be coming home?"

Rydal refolded the letter and pushed it into his overcoat pocket. Then he walked out of the American Express office and turned in the direction of the arcade again. He was not going to be in Athens much longer. The Right Day would come, and he would take the plane for Crete, have a look at the Palace of Knossos and the Iraklion Museum of Cretan antiquities, and then fly home. Then he would see about getting a job in a law firm, he supposed in New York. He had about eight hundred dollars left in traveler's checks and a little cash. His money had held out quite nicely over the two years he had been away. His dear grandmother's ten thousand. His grandmother had been the only one in his family who had believed in him at the time of the crisis with his father. She had made her will then, and had died when Rydal was twenty-three, midway in his year of army service. He had made up his mind then what he was going to do with it: go to Europe and stay as long as it lasted. His father had wanted him to get started right away in a law firm, and even had a position in a junior capacity arranged for him with Wheeler, Hooton and Clive on Madison Avenue (his father had known Wheeler), but Rydal

hadn't and didn't want to start work with any firm that had any connection with his father. *You're late enough*, said his father, mostly in regard to his not getting out of Yale Law School until he was twenty-two, so unlike the precocious and scholarly Keeners, but his father's sending him to reform school for two years hadn't helped, and he had not entered Yale until he was nineteen. His father had graduated from Harvard at nineteen, Kennie at twenty, Martha from Radcliff at twenty also. All Phi Beta Kappa. Rydal was no Phi Beta Kappa.

Rydal found himself standing in front of the Café Brasil's glass doors in the arcade, awoke to the present and remembered he'd just been there, then went on through the arcade in search of Niko. Yes, he'd buy a couple of lottery tickets today, after all. There was Niko, still shuffling and stomping in the cold in his gym shoes. Niko had bunions, and sneakers were the only kind of shoes he felt comfortable in. Rydal smiled as he watched Niko approach a well-dressed gentleman just emerging from the American Express. Lottery tickets or sponges, which would you like, sir?

Then Rydal came to a stop. The man talking to Niko looked remarkably like his father. The blue eyes were the same, the jutting nose, the color of the moustache. This man was about forty, heavier and redder, but the resemblance was so astounding Rydal had an impulse to ask the man if they were related, if his name were possibly Keener. The Keeners had some English cousins, and this man could be English—but his clothes looked American. The man put his head back and laughed, a hearty laugh that carried to Rydal and made him smile, too. Niko's hand jerked back under the sponges, but Rydal had seen a white flash that might have been pearls on his palm. The ruddy-faced man in the dark overcoat had declined whatever Niko had offered, but was buying a sponge. Rydal folded his arms and waited quietly near the newspaper kiosk on the corner. He saw the man push a second bill into Niko's not unwilling hand, saw him wave and heard him call, "So long!" as he walked away.

He was walking towards Rydal. Rydal kept looking at him, seeing even in his walk his father's confident stride. The sponge bulged his overcoat pocket. In his left hand he carried a new-looking *Guide Bleu*. He glanced at Rydal, looked away, then looked again, walking past him now, but turning his head so as to keep him in view. Rydal stared back, and it was no game now, he was not waiting for a sign, he was simply fascinated, spellbound, by the man's resemblance to his father. The man at last looked away from Rydal, and Rydal followed him, walking at a slower pace. The man glanced over his shoulder at Rydal, hurried his steps, ran off the curb at Venizelos Street, then slowed at the wrong place—in front of an oncoming car—as if trying to give the impression he was not hurrying. Now Rydal had passed the Grande Bretagne, and Rydal had expected him to turn in there. Rydal kept him in view, but already his interest was flagging. What if he were an English cousin? Who cared? The man went into the King's Palace Hotel, whose front door was set at an angle on the corner, and he looked back—Rydal couldn't tell if he saw him or not—before he went in.

It was that last looking back that roused Rydal's suspicion. What was the man afraid of? What was he running from?

Rydal walked slowly back to Niko and bought two lottery tickets. "Who was your friend?" Rydal asked.

"Who?" asked Niko, smiling and showing his lead-framed front tooth, next to it a gap.

"The American who just bought a sponge," Rydal said.

"Ah. I don't know. Never saw him before this morning. Nice guy. Gave me extra twenty drachas."

Niko shifted and the sponges swayed. The broad, dirty-white gym shoes, all that was visible of him below the panoply of sponges, did slow ups and downs like the feet of a restless elephant. "Why you ask?"

"Oh, I dunno," said Rydal.

"Plenty lettuce," said Niko.

Rydal smiled. He had taught Niko the word lettuce, and a lot of other slang words for money, subject Niko was very interested in. "But you couldn't get rid of the hot stuff to him?"

"Reed?" asked Niko, puzzled.

Niko knew "hot stuff," but not "rid." "Couldn't sell him any jewelry?"

"Ah!" Niko waved a barely visible hand among the sponges, laughing with a sudden and uncharacteristic embarrassment. "He think it over, he say."

"What was it?"

"Pearls." After a glance to either side of him, Niko pulled a hand out and displayed a circle of pearls a two-row bracelet on his wide, soiled palm.

Rydal nodded, and the pearls disappeared again. "How much?"

"To you—four hundred dollars."

"Ugh," Rydal said automatically, though they were worth it. "Well, good luck with the ruddy American."

"He be back," said Niko.

And Niko was probably right, Rydal thought. Niko had been a fence or a messenger for fences since childhood, and he could size people up. Then Rydal realized that there had been something vaguely dishonest looking about the ruddy American, even in the few seconds Rydal had seen him talking to Niko. Rydal could not quite say what it was. At first glance, he looked a jolly, talkative type, open as a child. But he'd certainly had a furtive manner as he walked towards his hotel. The man probably would come back and buy the bracelet from Niko, and what honest or even reasonably cautious person would buy real pearls from a street peddler of sponges? Perhaps the man was a gambler, Rydal thought. It was a funny incongruity, to look so much like his father, Professor Lawrence Aldington Keener of the Department of Archaeology at Harvard, who had never dreamt of doing anything faintly illegal, a veritable pillar of respectability, and to be possibly a gambler, a crook of some sort.

It was three days before Rydal saw the ruddy American again. Rydal had forgotten about him, or he had thought of him once in that time, had supposed he had moved on somewhere; and then, one noon, Rydal ran into him at the Benaki Museum among the costume exhibits. He was with a woman, young and quite chic American woman, almost but not quite too young to look like the man's wife. From the way the man solicitously and affectionately touched her elbow now and then, the good-natured way he strolled about and chatted with her as she looked, with obvious pleasure, at the embroidered skirts and blouses on the glass-enclosed dummies, Rydal thought that they were either married pretty recently or were lovers. The man carried his hat in his hand, and Rydal could see the shape of his head now, high at the back like his father's head, the hair above his temples receding. His father's hair had receded, like an ebbing tide following the contour of a shore. His voice was deep and resonant, a bit more taut than his father's. He chuckled easily. Then, after perhaps five minutes, the woman looked directly at Rydal, and Rydal's heart stopped for an instant, then beat faster. Rydal

blinked and looked away from her, but looked at the man, who, seeing him, frowned slightly, his lips parted in surprise. Rydal turned, slowly walked to a case full of jeweled scimitars and daggers, and bent over it.

Less than a minute later, the man and woman were gone. The man certainly thought he was trailing him, watching him, Rydal thought; he'd made the man uneasy, and Rydal had an impulse to go to the King's Palace Hotel, wait for him, just to assure him he meant him no harm and that he wasn't an idiot. He hadn't been shadowing him. Then that struck him as, after all, uncalled for and a bit silly, and Rydal decided to do nothing about it. Rydal walked slowly out of the museum, feeling suddenly lonely, sad, and vaguely discouraged. He knew now what had struck him about the young woman, but it was irritating and disturbing that his heart had known before his brain, or his memory. She had the same sexy comehitherness, the same soft, plumpish charm that his cousin Agnes had had at fifteen.

"Son of a bitch," Rydal whispered as he walked down a broad avenue. "Son of a bitch," to no one and with no one in particular in mind.

The woman had blue eyes, anyway, and Agnes's were brown. Agnes's hair was dark brown, and this woman's was reddish. But there was something. What was it? The mouth? Yes, a little bit. But most of all just the expression in the eyes, he thought. He hadn't fallen for it since, Rydal assured himself. But had he seen it since? No, he hadn't. Well, it was a funny thing, a man who looked like his father's twin brother, in the company of a woman who had called up Agnes to him, straight and fast as a lightning bolt turned on in his face, or a knife that laid his heart wide open. It had been ten whole years ago. He had been fifteen. So much had happened in the ten years since. Now he was supposed to be a mature man. He remembered Proust's remark, that people do not grow emotionally. It was a rather frightening thought.

That night, the night of Pan's party in his family's house over by Hadrian's Library, Rydal drank a few more glasses of ouzo than he needed, and found himself thinking of the ruddy-faced American—his father twenty years ago—making love in bed to the plump woman whose reddish hair and blue eyes kept changing to Agnes's brown hair and brown eyes. But the soft red lips were the same. Rydal was inclined to be ill-tempered at the party. He tried to be very careful in the last hour to make up for a cutting remark he had made to Pan's girl friend. The next morning, with a slight hangover, he wrote a four-line poem about "the marble ghost" of his boyhood love.

Monday, he went by bus for the fifth or sixth time to Delphi and spent the day.

The memory of the pink-cheeked American and his beddable wife still nagged at him. He was exaggerating the resemblance, he was sure, especially the resemblance of the woman to Agnes. He decided that he should see them once more, look at them straight on from a distance of just a few feet, and he felt that something would happen, the spell would be broken, the illusion dispelled. If he asked their hotel clerk, he would find out they were Mr. and Mrs. Johnson from Vincennes, Indiana. Or Mr. and Mrs. Smith of St. Petersburg, Florida. They would never have heard of anybody named Keener.

Chester had been reassured on his third day in Athens by a letter that came from his man Milwaukee, Bob Gambardella. It said, in part:

Dear Mac,

No news is good news and that's the way it is. Seven new subscribers this week and the proceeds as usual deposited, less my commission. Shall be expecting your dividend instructions shortly on Canadian Star's semi-annual. . . .

It meant that Bob had had no trouble as yet from the police. This was the second letter from Bob, and he'd had one in Paris from Vic, his salesman in Dallas. The police hadn't come around to Vic or Bob asking them if they knew a Howard Cheever or a William S. Haight or, thank God, a Chester MacFarland. Wm S. Haight was the name Chester stamped on his dividend checks as Treasurer of the Canadian Star Company, Inc. Seven new subscribers was quite good, Chester thought, considering he had written Bob last month not to make any effort to get new people until further notice. Bob might have taken in fifty thousand dollars from the seven people, perhaps more. Certificates were issued to the stock buyers, dividends were paid in modest but regular amounts, and if the stock never did quite get on the Canadian exchange in the newspapers, so long as the stockholders got their dividends, who should they complain? Bob and Vic, when talking a prospect into buying, always said they were letting him in on a new thing that was going to be listed in a few months, when the stock would certainly start skyrocketing. So it went, too, with Unimex, Valco-Tech, Universal Key—sometimes Chester could not remember them all. Once in a while, if a stockholder asked too many questions in his letters, Chester would instruct one of his representatives in Dallas, St. Louis or San Francisco to get on the telephone to the man and offer to buy his stock for more than he paid for it, and to give him a pitch for some new stock. Nine times out of ten, the suspicious people would hang on to their old stock and buy the new also. Physically, the land on which the Canadian Star stock was founded did not exist, it was simply worth very little, and very probably had no uranium in it. It was up in northern Canada—Chester or his boiler-room men could tell the customers just where to look for it on the map—and they made it sound as if uranium was going to come pouring out as soon as the engineers made a few more calculations as to where to dig. Actually, on the back of the stock contract, some very fine print near the bottom stated that the land was "being explored at present", and it did not say for what. And the stock company could not be prosecuted for its intentions or hopes, which were certainly to find uranium.

The Unimex Company was a non-existent offshore oil concern around the Texas and Mexico border. It had brought in over a million dollars on stock Chester offered over the counter at eight dollars per share. Chester had certified financial statements showing Unimex's assets to be worth six million dollars, and he had even had New York brokers sent to inspect certain sites in the Gulf of Mexico which, however, were owned by other people. Chester had bought a very small abandoned site, but he had laid claim to a hundred square miles around it. Unimex and Canadian Star were now Chester's chief

sources of income.

After a few days in Greece, Chester found that he breathed more easily. He enjoyed the strange meals at tavernas, the little oily dishes of this and that, washed down with ouzo or a bottle of wine that usually neither of them liked, though Chester always finished it. Colette bought five pairs of shoes and Chester had a suit made of English tweed in a fraction of the time and for less than half what would have cost him in the States. Still, it was a habit, a nervous habit, for him to glance around the hotel lobby to see if there were anyone who looked like a police agent. He doubted if they would send a man over for him, but the F.B.I. had representatives abroad, he supposed. All they would need was a photograph, the collected testimony of a few swindled people, and, by checking with the passport authorities, they could discover his name.

In their six days in Athens, Chester and Colette had gone twice to the Acropolis with their *Guide Bleu*, had taken a bus to see the sunset at Sounion and Byron's famous signature in one of the marble columns of the ruined temple there, had done the main museums, gone once to the theatre—just to get because they hadn't understood a thing about the play—and had made their plans for the rest of the country. The Peloponnesus was next, with Mycenae and Corinth, for which they planned to rent a car and then Crete and Rhodes. Then back by plane to Paris for another week or so before going home. They were apartmentless in New York now, did not want to live in Manhattan again, and they planned to buy a house either in Connecticut or northern Pennsylvania.

Around six o'clock of the evening before their departure for Corinth and Mycenae, Chester went out of the hotel for a few minutes to buy a bottle of Dewar's. When he walked back into the lobby, he noticed a dark man, in a grey overcoat and hat, standing with his hands in his overcoat pockets near one of the cream-colored columns that supported the ceiling. The man had thick black eyebrows, and Chester could not be sure the man looked at him, but he thought so. Chester looked away, glanced around him quickly, and noticed the young man in the dark overcoat he had twice seen before, standing now near the door and smoking a cigarette. Agents, Chester thought. His eyes had been drawn to the man in the grey overcoat as a result of conditioning, he knew; though because he had felt secure the last couple of days, his habit of glancing around the lobby had left him. He'd suspected the younger man was an agent, and now he was sure. Chester went casually over to the hotel desk and gave the message he had intended to give when he came in:

"We'll be leaving tomorrow pretty early. Can you make up our bill so we can settle it tonight? That MacFarland in six twenty-one." His voice lowered involuntarily, but only a little, on "MacFarland".

As Chester walked on to the elevator, the older man moved, following him. The elevator arrived and the door slid open, and, being closest, Chester went into the elevator first. The man followed, removing his hat. Chester kept his on.

"Six, please," said Chester.

The boy running the elevator glanced at the man.

"Seex," said the man.

A Greek, Chester thought. He felt perhaps one degree better. The man had a thick, somewhat Semitic nose, black and grey hair, and his face was pock-marked. Chester got out at the sixth floor and the man followed him. Chester was just raising his hand to knock on his door, when the man said:

"Pardon me. You are, I think, Richard Donlevy?"

The name meant Atlanta to Chester. The Suwannee Club. "No," said Chester blankly.

"Or—Louis Ferguson?"

That was Miami. Chester shook his head. "No. Sorry."

"You are travelling with your wife, yes? May I have a few words with you in your room, sir?"

"Why? What's all this about?"

"Perhaps nothing," the man said with a smile. "I represent the Greek police. I should like to ask you a few questions."

Chester looked down at the billfold the man had opened. In a window of it was an authentic-looking card covered with Greek print and signatures, and, in heavy black letters in the middle of it, GREK NATIONAL POLICE. If he refused to talk to him, Chester thought, it might make matters worse. "All right," Chester said indifferently, and knocked.

The door opened at once, but only a crack. Colette was in her dressing-gown.

"Excuse me, dear," Chester said. "I'm with a gentleman who wants to talk to me a moment. May we come in?"

"Why, of course," said Colette, but her face had gone a little pale.

They went in. Colette wrapped her dressing-gown closer about her, and stepped back near the cheval of drawers.

The Greek agent bowed to her. "Madam. Forgive my intrusion." He turned to Chester. "May I ask under what name you are registered here?"

Chester drew himself up and frowned. "What's this about? What right have you to ask me that?"

The man pulled from his overcoat pocket a small looseleaf notebook, opened it to a certain page and extended it to Chester. "This is not you?"

Chester's heart stumbled. It was a photograph of himself, fuzzy from enlargement but still recognizable, laughing, with a highball glass in his hand. It was from a group photograph of the dinner guests at the Suwannee Club maybe three years ago, when he'd been Richard Donlevy, with more hair and no moustache then, and he'd been selling some kind of stock. Selling what? He'd forgotten. Chester shook his head. "That's not me. I see some resemblance, but . . . I don't know what you're trying to say."

"It is in regard to various—how do you say—investment matters in the United States," said the agent, still calm and pleasant. "I have not the details with me, and it is not my place to say them now, if I knew. I am only working in cooperation with the American authorities, who suspected you were in Europe."

A chill of panic passed over Chester and did not quite leave him. They were on to him in the States. Someone had tried to put up his stocks as collateral or something like that, and had been told they were phony. Or perhaps it was even the Walkie Kar. He looked at Colette and saw his own fear leap to her face for an instant, then she controlled herself and gave him a quick smile. "But you're looking for somebody with another name, you told me," Chester said.

"Various names. It does not much matter. You will please to come with me, anyway, to answer some questions, will you?" the man asked with an air of being very sure that Chester was going to come with him.

"No. Why should I? It's your mistake," said Chester, taking off his overcoat.

Colette came forward, lifted the notebook in the agent's hand, studied the picture, and said, "Wh-
that's not my husband."

"Madam, under what name are you both registered here? It is the easiest thing in the world for me
find out. I shall simply call down and ask who is in room six twenty-one."

Colette looked at him, and said in her high, young voice, "I don't think that's any of your business."

"I would like you to know that I am armed. I should not like to have to take you away at gun-point.
The Greek agent's black eyebrows came down in a puzzled way as he looked at Chester.

Chester shrugged, not moving from where he stood. He was glancing around the room, however, as
he might find a weapon in some corner with which to defend himself.

The Greek walked quickly towards the telephone.

Chester darted for the bathroom.

"Stop!" the agent said. "I have a gun!"

Chester glanced behind him, saw the man running towards him with a gun pointed, and calculated
that he wouldn't use it. He leapt to the tub edge and yanked the window up. It was sticky and moved
only about eight inches.

"Chester!" Colette cried.

The man pulled at Chester's jacket tail, and Chester looked over his shoulder, raised his left foot and
kicked backward, catching the fellow in the pit of the stomach. He got down from the tub edge, and
before the man could straighten up, Chester hit him on the back of the neck. The man's forehead
banged against the rim of the basin. Chester swung him up again, hit him on the jaw and knocked him
into the tub. He started to pull him up for another blow, and realized he was out cold.

Chester stood with his fists clenched, panting.

"My God!" Colette was standing in the bathroom doorway. "You're all right, darling?"

Chester nodded. He picked up the agent's gun, which had fallen on the bathroom floor. A drinking
glass had been knocked down, and there were pieces of glass on the tiles. Chester kicked on
nervously with the side of his shoe.

"I'll clean that up," Colette said.

"Got to get him out of here," Chester murmured, "before that other agent—there's another one
downstairs."

"Really?" Colette gasped. "Let's see. The balcony?"

There was a balcony outside their windows that ran the length of the hotel. "No. He's going to come
to in a couple of minutes. I'll think of something. Start packing us up, will you, honey? We've got to
get out of here tonight."

Colette hurried out of her dressing-gown, pushed it into a suit-case and grabbed the skirt of a day
suit that was hanging over a chair.

"I've got it!" Chester said, and took one of the man's limp arms.

"What?"

"There's a store-room down the hall." Chester heaved the man across his shoulder. "Red light over
it. Saw it one night when I was looking for a loo and you were in the tub. Uff! Guy's heavy." Chester
staggered across the room with him. "Take a look in the hall. See if there's—"

Colette nodded and quickly opened the door an inch or two. "Someone at the elevator."

"Damn," Chester said, and tightened his hold on the man's wrists. "He's going to come to before can—" But that tub was hard, Chester realized, and so was the basin. In fact, the fellow could be dead. With this thought, Chester's strength ebbed, and he let the man down gently to the carpet. He was about to say something to Colette about feeling for a pulse, when Colette said:

"It's okay now. Nobody in sight."

Chester summoned his strength and hoisted him again. Dead or not, he thought, the store-room was the best place for him. If he were dead—Well, Chester had never seen him before. Someone else had killed him. The man had never knocked on his door, never said a word to him. Chester went on towards the door with the little red light over it, praying it would be open as it had been before.

Then, from around the corridor corner in front of him, the other agent appeared, and stopped short in surprise. Chester stared at him, paralyzed. The young man's mouth had opened slightly, and Chester saw the start of a faint smile—of satisfaction, sarcasm? Chester expected him to pull a gun. His right hand hung empty, his left carried a newspaper. The young man advanced.

"Where're you taking him?" Rydal asked, with a quick glance up and down the corridor.

"I was—" Chester went suddenly limp, and the dead weight slipped to the floor. "That room," Chester said, motioning weakly to the door with the red light over it.

The young man dropped his newspaper, bent quickly and took the Greek under the shoulders and began to drag him towards the store-room.

Chester stared.

"Didn't he have a hat?" Rydal asked, and, at Chester's frightened nod, "Better get it."

Chester opened the store-room door—it was unlocked—then ran back to his room. Colette had unlatched the door and was standing right behind it. "Honey, get me his hat. It's there by the telephone."

Colette got the hat from the telephone table and handed it to him.

Chester trotted up the hall with it. The door under the red light was half open, and he heard a clatter of buckets. "Here." He handed the hat to the young man.

"The man's dead?" asked Rydal.

"I don't know."

"I think he is." Rydal, with rather shaky hands, pulled out quickly the contents of the man's inside pockets, and the billfold that was buttoned into his hip pocket, and stuffed them into his own. "Was there a gun? He's got a holster here."

"I've got it," Chester said. Dead, he thought, his hands twitching. He watched the young man shove the feet farther in, so the door would close, and then the door shut on the first man he had ever killed—a man with a lolling, bleeding head, seated among buckets and mops and dirty grey rags.

Rydal pulled Chester by the arm, back towards his room, and scooped up his newspaper as they passed it.

Chester drummed on the door with his fingertips. It was a strange way for an agent to behave, he thought. Did he want to protect the hotel patrons from the sight of a corpse?

Colette opened the door and drew in her breath.

Chester went in quickly.

Rydal followed him, automatically giving a little bow of greeting to the woman. He did not care for

the sight of blood, and he was beginning to feel a bit airy in the head. "My name . . . my name is Ryd
Keener," Rydal said to both of them. "How do you do?"

"How d'y'do?" Chester mumbled.

"My husband hit the man in self-defense," Colette said quickly, looking straight at Rydal. "I saw the whole thing happen."

"Don't say anything, Colette," Chester said.

"But . . . allow me to tell you," Rydal said, and was ashamed of the "allow me" as soon as it was out of his mouth, "that I'm not a police agent."

"Not a—Then why—" Chester said.

Rydal didn't know why. It had been such a fast decision, it was no decision at all. "I'm just an American tourist. You can consider me a friend." It was odd talking to them; it made him feel very odd. Or was it the blood drops on the pale-green carpet? "You'd better wipe up those blood spots while you can," he said to the man.

Helpless himself, Chester motioned for Colette to do it.

She went off to the bathroom and returned at once with the sponge Chester had bought for her. "I've wiped it all up from the bathroom," she said. She got down on her hands and knees and began scrubbing away.

Her derrière looked perfectly round under her straight black skirt. Rydal looked at her instead of the blood spots. Then he moved quickly to the door, opened it cautiously, and looked out into the corridor.

"Hear something?" Chester asked.

"No. I wanted to see if there was any blood in the hall. There probably is, but it doesn't show on the black carpet. Now," he said after he had closed the door again, (But now, what? The man was looking at him, blank and expectant.) "the thing to do is get out of this hotel before that fellow's missed—his headquarters or whatever."

"Yes. Or found," Chester said. "Well, we're nearly packed and ready, aren't we, honey?"

"Two more minutes for the stuff in the john," said Colette. "You get your razor and things, Chester. I've practically got this finished. Toss me a towel, will you?"

"A towel?"

"A towel, so I can dry this."

Colette sounded very practical. She was certainly cool-headed. She looked up and saw Rydal looking at her and smiled at him, then adroitly caught the towel Chester tossed across the room to her. "What a mess," she said, bending to her work again.

Rydal remembered the papers he had stuffed into his overcoat pocket, and pulled them out. There was a chunky notebook, and he flipped through it. There were many photographs, and he found Chester's at once. He walked closer to Chester, who was putting things into a suitcase. "This is you?"

Chester looked embarrassed, but he nodded.

The comment, in Greek, said that he was wanted for fraud and embezzlement. There were several different names under the picture, in Greek and English characters. "Which of these names is yours?" asked Rydal.

Chester held the notebook's edge and looked over the names, looked a little wildly. "None of them

My name's—I'm Chester MacFarland." There was no use in hiding it, Chester thought, because the fellow could just ask the hotel desk who was or had been in room six twenty-one.

"Chester MacFarland," Rydal repeated softly.

Chester gave a nervous smile. "Heard of me?"

"No . . . no." The Greek agent's name, Rydal saw, was George M. Papanopolos.

"Uh . . . we were going to Corinth tomorrow. I don't suppose you know if there's a train or bus there tonight, do you? We were going to rent a car tomorrow, but—"

"I don't happen to know, but I can call down and ask the desk to find out," Rydal said, moving towards the telephone.

"No, wait!" Chester spread his hands. "Your calling—from this room—"

"Well, it just occurred to me," Rydal said to Chester, and the woman, too, who was now standing in the middle of the room, looking at him, "since nobody saw me come up, I can just as well say I've been here with you all afternoon. Or at least a few hours." The man looked blank still, so Rydal said, "I didn't take the elevator up. I saw it went to the sixth floor, so I took the stairs up. I don't think anybody noticed me. I mean, in case that man is found before we get out—I'll provide an alibi." The words seemed to come out of him from nowhere. He was offering to perjure himself. And for what? For whom? A man whose look of a gentleman didn't go very deep, Rydal could see now; a man whose clothes were well cut and tailor made, but whose cuff-links were flashy; a man whose over-all manner looked dishonest, because he was dishonest. "Take your choice. I'm not insisting," Rydal added. "mean, whether I call downstairs or not."

"Yes. Do call. That's fine," Chester said. He looked away from Rydal's eyes.

Rydal picked up the telephone and, without thinking, began to speak in Greek, asking about trains and buses to Corinth. The woman, after closing a couple of suitcases, returned to staring at him curiously, unself-conscious, apparently, as a child. Rydal hung up and said, "The last bus left at six. No train until tomorrow. You could perhaps rent a car at this hour, but it's an odd time to be starting off for Corinth. The view along the sea is considered the best part of the trip. Kinetta Beach, you know."

"Hm-m. Yes. Kinetta Beach," said Chester. He looked at his wife.

"You're very kind," Colette said to Rydal. "Kind to endanger yourself for us."

Rydal had no reply. He noticed the bulge of the gun in Chester's jacket pocket for the first time. It occurred to him that the MacFarlands were going to need different passports at once. By tomorrow anyway. Niko was the man for that.

"What about Crete?" Chester asked. "We did want to go to Crete."

"That I happen to know about," Rydal said. "There's a plane out every morning and a boat a little earlier every morning, but nothing at this hour."

"Are you part Greek?" Colette asked Rydal.

Rydal smiled. "No." He was trying to think, and he was thinking only that he was very bad at this kind of thinking. His mind should be working like lightning, conjuring up the exactly right, brilliant thing for them to do. Niko's place as a hideout? Rydal somehow didn't want them there. But why not? Get Colette and Chester into a taxi with their luggage and drive to Niko's. Niko's wife Anna would be there now, and would be agreeable to anything. But their apartment was so unspeakably sordid, and

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