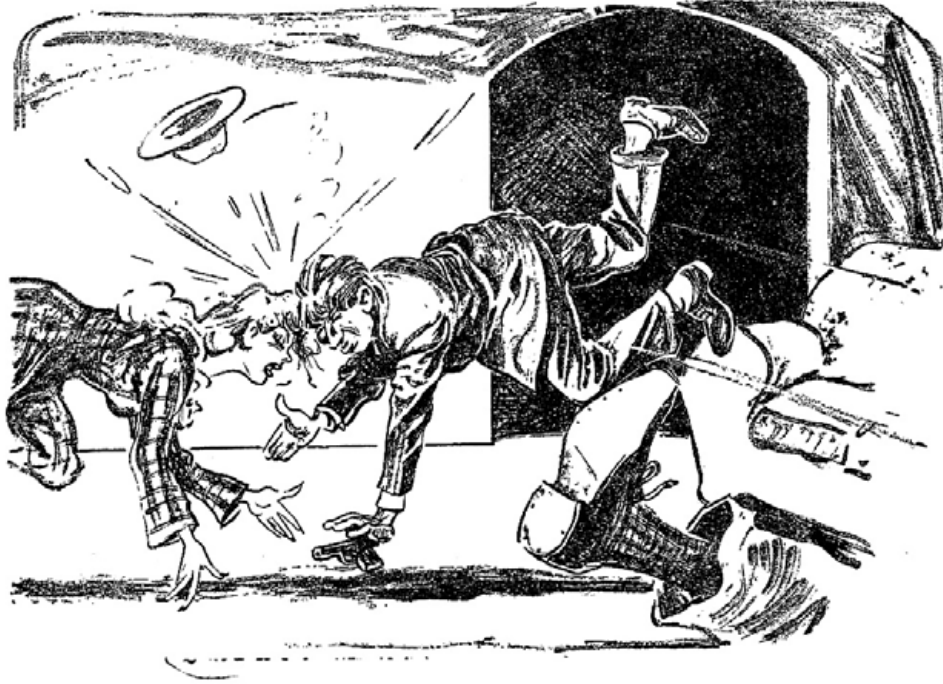


# Rhyme Does Not Pay

*“Alvin Hinkey” Yarn*



By Joe Archibald

*Alvin Hinkey, the goofy Gotham dick, read blood between the lines of verse that had been penned by the dead greeting card salesman. And Hinkey, in his crackpot way, showed a killer the writing on the big-house wall.*

Mr. Louis Garfunkle  
APO 133  
c/o Postmaster, San Francisco

**D**EAR LOUIE:  
Your letter received saying you are thinking of making the Army your life's work. The D.A. says to ask if it was by request from the U.S.A., and will you be stationed at Leavenworth where he can send you a saw in a pound cake. But you know his sense of humor, Louie. He runs to all the fires just to see if the life nets are out and a citizen would miss one. You telling about the Shintzo committing hari-kari reminds me of a case me and Hambone Noonan just got finished

with and which would of gone down unsolved for all of Hambone.

Noonan is about as much use to the police department as a jelly-bean pistol.

Well, anyway, a call comes into the precinct station house in the Bronx where me and Hambone have become attached and it is from a dame who is quite gaga and says her husband has committed suicide. His name is Cadwell Wiltz and lives at 1119 Katonah Avenue, and to please hurry.

I hate self-inflicted homicides, Louie, and anyway I was right in the middle of a swell book tellin' how the F.B.I. does more with brains than Roscoes. "Did he jump or fall or was he pushed?" I says

tartly.

“If they’d give bums who bump themselves off capital punishment,” Noonan sniffs, “they’d think twice before—”

“Oh, come on,” I says. “Won’t take us long to get a gander at the stiff.”

It is a frame house with shingles the color of yellow jaundice and has a garage in the back. A cop is on the porch with Mrs. Wiltz who is quite a dish any way you look at her and makes us wonder why any citizen would want to leave her so permanently. The doll is weepy and is wringing her hands as if she figured she could drag some tears out of them too.

“Nice pair of gams,” Noonan says.

“Haven’t you no delicacies, Hambone?” I admonish. “Good afternoon, ma’am. I am Detective Hinkey.”

“Come on inside,” the cop says. “I busted down the garage door out there an’ found him. Haven’t touched nothin’. It sure wa’n’t no accident as when Mrs. Wiltz shows you—”

“The corpse exp—er—medical examiner should be here any moment,” I says.

**W**E GO INTO the Wiltz living room and it seems there are greeting cards everywhere. “Don’t tell us he did it on his birthday or anniversary?” Hambone asks.

“It was Cadwell’s profession, writin’ the sentiments on cards,” the bereft widow explains. “Such wonderful thoughts he had.”

“Like the one he had today, huh?” I sniff, and pick up a card. It is for a mother-in-law of all things. This is what I read:

*I love my dear wife.  
There will ne’er be no other.  
But how would I ever got her,  
If it wa’n’t for her dear mother!*

“Touchin’,” I says. “Did he write a bye-bye card. A swan song?”

Mrs. Wiltz comes up with a letter. “Cadwell must have left it sometime durin’ the night,” she divulges. “He had a little office downtown where he wrote, an’ three or tour nights every week he came in very late. He wouldn’t wake me up an’ would sleep in the guest room. Well, this morning I do not see him anywheres an’ get frantic an’ call his office. It is two hours before I find the suicide letter as it fell behind the table in the hall.”

I read the jumping-off epistle, Louie.

My precious one:

By the time you get this I shall be gone. I am a failure. Don’t come into the garage. Call the police. Good-by, partin’ is such sweet sorrow, but the last checks do come tomorrow. Use my insurance wisely.

Cadwell

Mrs. Wiltz emotes quite effusively. “Oh, he never told me,” she gulps. “He must of got fired.”

“I s’ppose there was a suicide clause in his policy, huh?” Noonan asks.

“How else would anybody sell writers any insurance,” I snap at Hambone.

“I think we better go out and view the remains, Alvin,” the lemonhead says. “A car just pulled up and it must be the stiff appraiser.”

We go out to the garage. Cadwell Wiltz is slouched behind the steering wheel of a green jalopy. The medical grad says Cadwell has been across the Styx for at least nine hours.

“The needle on the gas gauge was pointin’ close to zero when I finally cut the ignition,” the cop says. “He must of took enough oxide gas to knock off a regiment of leathernecks.”

“We’ll have to photograft for prints,” Noonan says. “Although I don’t see any

use to waste time here, Alvin. This is as sure a self-afflicted a job as I ever seen. If that is the late Wiltz's handwritin' on the farewell foolscap, we can write this one off."

There is no use looking for footprints between the house and garage, Louie, as the ground is covered with bluestone. For once it looks as if Noonan was tagging something right.

"An' not everybody is a poet," Noonan adds. "The deceased could not help but rhyme while standin' on the brink of externity."

"Awright, they can take Cadwell to the deep-freeze unit," I says.

We go back into the house. Mrs. Wiltz is holding a picture of her late husband in her lap, and dabbing at her photogenic peepers with a lacey nose doily. "Cadwell was dressed for the occasion," I says. "Even a white carnation in his buttonhole."

"He was very fastidious," the widow says. "Every day he wore a fresh flower. All spruced up, he used to tell me, he could better woo the muse, Mr. Hinkey. If you looked a success you was one, Cadwell always maintained."

**I** TAKE a quick gander at Noonan. I never saw a worse failure, Louie. The cop hands Mrs. Wiltz a droopy carnation with a pin sticking through the stem. "If the gas had give out," he says, "he could have stabbed himself with it."

"Please consider the dame's feelings," I snap. I sit down and listen to the last-ride limousine rumble away and pick up a travel folder and eye it listlessly. "Yeah, I bet you an' your husband was goin' on a trip, too. Mexico City, it says here."

"Y-yes, we planned to," the doll says.

"Come ah-h-n," Noonan sniffs. "It is all we can do here."

Outside, near the gate, I says we had

better go down to the late Cadwell Wiltz's office and check up. We do. It is a little coop on the eleventh floor of a building on Nassau Street and has a desk, a chair, a typewriter, and a dictionary the size of a cornerstone. There is a wastebasket overflowing with verses Cadwell went sour on. Noonan reads one. "Stay in there an' fight, old kid, your trouble is only elementary, it could be worse you know—you could be in a cemetery."

I ransack Cadwell's desk and come up with six personal letters. One is from the Cheerup Greeting Card Company, Inc., Kankakee, Indiana. It is dated ten days ago and is as follows, Louie.

Dear Mr. Wiltz.

We regret to say that in view of the fact that your verses are not of the caliber they have been in the past, and that we find conditions do not warrant maintaining too large a staff, you can consider yourself no longer a part of our organization.

DANFORTH SMILEY, President

"That did it, Alvin," Hambone says. "He brooded and brooded until somethin' snapped in his noggin."

"It looks like," I admit. I toss aside three more letters which are from public utility companies and then peruse another bit of correspondence from the Cheerup Greeting Card Company dated just two days after the one I read.

"Hambone, listen to this one. 'Dear Mr. Wiltz: Our deepest apologies. Please disregard letter of fourteenth instant as we got your name mixed up with another contributor, Mr. Pladwell Zwilch. Believe us, you are our most valuable employee and a raise will go through for you immediately. Kindest personal regards, Danforth Smiley, President.' What you think, Noonan?"

"That is the breaks, Alvin. Wiltz knocked himself off before the mistake was erectified."

Louie, a lot of citizens are born dumb, but unlike Noonan, most of them try to stop working at it early in life.

"Look, Stupe," I says. "It was only last night the character snuffed out. Look at the dates on these letters. You tell me he had ghost writers, I will slug you."

"Yeah, Alvin. But anybody gits mixed up. An' don't think you can tell me how to investigate crimes," Noonan sniffs.

"I am glad you suspect that murder might have been done here," I counter.

"It is silly," Hambone asserts. "That dame would not hurt a fly."

"Cadwell was not one," I says. "I knew a citizen once wearin' seven church attendance pins and one day he did a job on his pa with a meat cleaver."

"I won't have no part of tryin' to frame a defenseless widow, Alvin Hinkey," Noonan yelps.

**R**IGHT then a well-dressed citizen comes into the office and introduces himself as Jimson Spinney. "I was Cadwell Wiltz's best friend," he says. "Olivia asked me to take over for her and get what belonged to poor Cadwell."

"You will have to hire a truck to take the dictionary home," I observe as I drop the letters into my pocket. "Not much here—huh?"

Jimson starts shaking like a character getting his pant leg slit up at the death house. Rivulets of salt water trickle down his nice-looking pan. Me and Noonan tell him we'll send an M.D. up as soon as we can get one.

"M-malaria," Spinney says. "Got it on Guadalcanal, y-y-yeah. Be all right in a m-m-minute."

He snaps out of it and is left as weak as a kitten with anemia. Outside, I ask Hambone did he notice anything unusual about Spinney.

"Why, yes, Alvin. Each one of his ears

grows on different sides of his head. An' he threw a fit. What else do you want?"

"What is your opinion of it all?" I asks the lemonhead.

"Suicide of course. Of his own violation," Noonan sniffs.

"He was wounded also," I says.

"Huh?"

"An' not on Guadal's canal," I reply.

"My report is final," Hambone snaps. "What you tryin' to build out of nothin', Alvin? A B pitcher?"

Just the same, I go over to the undertaker's after I get rid of Noonan. Sure, I says to myself, Spinney could have got stuck with a rose thorn, but did he? He had adhesive on his index finger. I ask the corpse tidier for Cadwell's gray suit.

While the mortician is busy in the next room I cut a circular piece of cloth out of the sleeve of the pinstripe coat and put it in my pocket. Louie, I can see a murder has been committed and that certain criminal persons very nearly turned in the perfect crime which is rarer than a no-hit ball game. I have a plan to bring them to justice.

I go to see the D.A., Mr. Fergus Strepp, and show him the letters we found in the late Wiltz's office. "Alvin," he says, "you couldn't convict nobody with these as it is nothin' but circumstantial evidence. The fact remains Mrs. Wiltz has a letter in her husband's handwritin' to show a jury. Cadwell Wiltz could have rubbed himself out just the same, as once a character gets the idea in his dome it fascinates him. I would drop it, Hinkey."

"I hear you intend to run for lieutenant to the governor," I says. "How many convictions have you got the last three years, huh?"

"Well, there was the—er—Herpy case—never mind, I lost that one," the D.A. sniffs. "Then there was—Hinkey, maybe I'll go along with you for a while.

How will you prove it was murder, huh?"

"Look," I says. "If you didn't know nothin' about nucleus fissures and a character says to you an atom can be split four ways if the cycletrons an' sansifrans was isolated, would you argue with him?"

"You've talked me into it, Hinkey," Strepp says. "I'll see you work on this case all alone. You better prove homicide or it won't be long before you are considered an ex-cop."

"I can take a hint," I retort. "Of course if it had looked like homicide right away, we could of took the cadaver to the morgue an' had some carvin' done. If we moved it from the embalmin' emporium now, some citizen might get suspicious an' start coverin' up."

"He knocked himself off in an auto, you forget?" the D.A. asks. "You got no clues that says somebody forced him."

**B**UT I am persistent. "I have got a hunch he was handed a Mickey," I says. "No writer who got praised for his stint and a raise at the same time would affixiate himself with carbon mynoxide. And besides that he had a nifty dish like Olivia to come home to. More than that, Cadwell Wiltz's hair was thinning out on top and he used store choppers. Did you ever have a best friend, D.A.?"

"I certainly did," Strepp snaps. "I went a note for him three months ago an' had to pay up yesterday."

"See what I mean?" I toss at him.

"Hinkey, leave me think this over, huh? I got a chowderhead assigned to this office already named Feet Feeney," Strepp sighs.

"Awright," I says. "But don't forget you need a build-up with the voters worse than a wolf needs a whistle. "

"I will give you my answer tomorrow," the D.A. groans. "I admit them letters you found in Wiltz's office

don't add up with the suicide note, Hinkey. Say, what has a best friend got to do with all this, huh?"

"Wiltz had one, too," I reply. "Wouldn't have done the character no good if he had got hold of the letters as I would of most likely contacted the Cheerup Greeting Card outfit for a motive for Cadwell to take the way out he did. An' we could still threaten to exhume the remains later if we trip a criminal up. See?"

"No," Strepp says. "However did people like you and Noonan ever get to be detectives?"

"Well, I must be gettin' along," I says. "First we will make sure Cadwell did write the suicide note which I'm sure he did."

"It is where we came in," Strepp says sarcastically. "Go away, Hinkey."

It is easy to solve most murders, Louie, when you got clues all over the place. The smart operator makes them. So wait.

At the lab the experts agree that the handwriting on the bye-bye memo is most certainly the late Cadwell Wiltz's, after comparing his scribbles with samples contributed by Olivia Wiltz. Soon after that info, Louie, I run uptown to the Wiltz residence and Olivia answers the bell and she looks six to ten years younger than she did the day before. She is quite surprised to see me.

"I hate to trouble you," I says, "but somewheres I lost my card case with auto license in it. Could it be it was here when—oh, I wish I could catch my breath. Oh, my ticker—it has a knock in it at times—" I collapse in a chair and Olivia gets upset and says for me to hang on as she will call Doctor Kilgare.

"No," I protest. "I am okay again. It is bad enough for you as it is to have just got rid of one corp—I will leave before such a terrible thing happens, Mrs. Wiltz."

"Do see Doctor Kilgare," Olivia says.

“He is only two blocks from here.”

She isn't kidding, Louie. The next stop is Doctor Kilgare's. A gall bladder case is just ahead of me so I wait a half hour. When I walk in, the M.D. says to take off my shirt even though he has diagnosed my condition already. Malnutrition.

“Very funny, Doc,” I sniff, and flash my credentials. “You heard about Cadwell Wiltz, of course?”

“Too bad,” the M.D. says. “Poor fellow. Wonder what gets into people?”

“A good question,” I quip. “Maybe you could tell me, Doc. The widow is a patient of yours? Why?”

“The nervous type,” the M.D. says. “Insomnia and all that.”

“An' you perscribed sleepin' pills?”

“In moderation, of course,” Kilgare says, quite aloof. “Only as many as I say is prudent.”

“What kind of hop?”

“I beg your pardon?” Kilgare sniffs. “It is a barbiturate.”

**I**T IS ALL I want to know, Louie. Then I go back to the precinct house and Noonan leers at me. “Ha, ha,” he laughs. “Hinkey tripped over a molehill an' is tellin' everybody he fell off a mountain. If he found a safety pin in the park, he would start right off trackin' down the kidnapers. For two years I been tryin' to learn him somethin' an' told him all I knew an' he's still a moron. Ha—that can't be right—”

I ignore Noonan and pick up a phone in private. I call the Spinney Exterminating Consultants with offices on West Forty-seventh Street and ask for Mr. Spinney. He is out, a doll tells me, and have I a message?

“Well, it is our business—ha, ha—to find out when business executives plan a vacation trip,” I tell the chickadee. “It has come to our attention Mr. Spinney is expectin' to take one. So I suggest that he

get in touch with us, the Marco Polo Travel Service. Right now we have a bargain cruise to Bagdad—”

“I'm sorry, but you're wasting your time,” the secretary says. “Mr. Spinney has already made reservations for Mexico City at the Hotel Chihauhau, for the month of April. Some other time—”

“Well, that's his hard luck,” I says. “I bet it'll be his last vacation there.”

I hang up. It means Jimson Spinney will take off in about three weeks, Louie, and isn't it a coincidence there was a Mexico City travel folder on Olivia's table? The Spinney Exterminating Company, huh? Suppose a gangster named Cocky Robbins was knocked off and you found out he had a mortal enemy named Asparra. You sure would look into it, huh?

My next step is to make a deal with the telephone company and the public utility citizens are quite anxious as usual to cooperate with the law. Four days later I have a record of calls received by Olivia Wiltz. Eleven out of twenty came from Jimson which proves he was the best friend of the Wiltzes, especially when Mr. Wiltz was busy sapping his noggin composing verse for greeting cards.

I am put to the end of my wits about one thing I have to have, Louie, until a certain character named Meatball Mazurka comes to my mind. Meatball can generally be found outside the gyms where box-fighters tune up for the commitment of modified murder and he always said his ambition was to hear a ref count all the way up to ten.

Meatball, it is known by most on Broadway, would jump off the G. Washington Bridge holding two anvils, for five bucks. I go looking for him, Louie, and finally catch up with him a block from Lindley's where he is dusting off quite a nice-sized cigar butt.

“Meatball,” I say, “want to earn ten

bucks?”

“Yeah, pal, if you furnish the gun or knife.”

“Not that,” I sniff. “Come into the gin mill here and I will explain.”

It takes me quite some time to get it straight in Meatball’s cup custard he calls a brain. Finally he nods. I pay him five in advance. “Awright, let’s go over it once more to be sure,” I says. “You will go to the office and wait until Spinney comes out. He’s been bothering your young and pretty daughter and you let him have it. By a strange coincidence I will be passin’ Spinney’s office about that time and will rush in after you’ve pasted him. An’ spruce up a little, Meatball.”

“I got me a blue serge I keep in case I pass out, Hinkey,” Meatball says.

**T**HE next afternoon I am loitering in the corridor outside Spinney’s office. Two hours before I called the citizen’s secretary and wheedled out of her that Spinney most always called it a day at four P.M. It is five minutes after that hour when I hear Meatball’s gravelly voice. Then Spinney’s.

“Why, you bum,” Spinney yelps, “I never saw you before in my life. I never heard of no dame named Louise. Outside, before I—”

*Whap!* Ever hear the broad side of a plank hitting a sack of cement, Louie?

A dame screams. I rush into Spinney’s office. Meatball Mazurka passes me on the way out. Jimson Spinney is sitting against the wall, his nose bleeding and his eyes crossed. His secretary has passed out. I yank Jimson’s hanky out of his breast pocket and transfer it to mine just as four employees appear. One is a very big character who says he intends to kill me, so I flash my badge. “I was just passin’ by,” I growl. “Ask the doll here who it was

hit her boss when she gets her marbles picked up.”

Ten minutes later I get Meatball’s description from the secretary and promise her I will apprehend the rough assailant by sundown. Jimson Spinney finally emerges from dreamland and ogles me.

“Haven’t I seen you before?” he asks, and gropes for his hanky. The doll lends him her lacy one and says it is a shame his nice gray flannel suit is such a mess.

“Well. I’ll be getting along,” I says. “If I arrest the citizen, I will let you know.”

“I know I have seen you before,” Spinney insists.

“Okay, so maybe I have been there,” I retort, and hurry out.

Three blocks away I stop in a quick-and-dirty for a hamburger and wonder is Spinney, being in the exterminating business, beginning to get the scent of the rodent. I decide to hurry over to the precinct house and brush up more on the book which tells how the F.B.I. and others trip up smart crooks with test tubes and crucibles. Tonight better be the night, I says to myself. Even on the sidewalks of N. Y. a citizen can let grass grow under his feet too long.

Spinney has an apartment in a little more than modest shack on East Sixty-seventh Street just off Second Avenue. At nine P.M. I lean against his buzzer. A radio is playing inside the joint and it is music that pitches woo. I am quite sure I hear ice tinkling merrily in a glass. Then the door opens and Jimson Spinney, quite the man of distinction in a claret-colored wolf’s kimoner, peers out at me.

“You!” he says unpleasantly.

“You was maybe expectin’ an insurance adjuster?” I counter suggestively. “I am Alvin Hinkey attached to the D.A.’s office. I wish to discuss the

attack made on you earlier in the day," I says.

"Come in," Spinney snaps. "Make it brief!"

I enter. Then I gasp. A doll does likewise. It is Olivia Wiltz and she is wearing a black silk number she must have to peel off her when it is bedtime.

"Why, Mr. Hinkey," Olivia gulps. "You do get around, don't you? I came here to see Mr. Spinney to see if he would help straighten my affairs. A woman is helpless, you know."

"All right, Hinkey. Let's have it," Spinney grinds out.

"I wish I could make it rhyme like Cadwell did," I says. "I could try, huh? But what could rhyme with carnation and barbiturate? Mind if I sit down?"

Olivia's company face nearly washes off and Spinney spills hooch out of his glass.

"What was that crack for, Hinkey?"

"Look, let's stop kiddin' around," I says. "Cadwell did write a suicide note and left it for his dear loyal wife, or how could she have shown it to the cops? He gets a letter from the Cheerup Greetin' Card Company sayin' one other letter was a mistake so hurries home to grab the note he left.

"He an' his wife had quite a laugh over it, but he didn't make sure she tore it up. He hands a perfect crime over to her like a platter of horse derves. So the night of the payoff his dear wife and best friend put a mickey in his grog."

**O**LIVIA WILTZ backs against the wall and ogles Jimson Spinney. Jimson, after a husky belt of rye, says he is indignant and for me to leave at once. "You are drunk or crazy!" he yelps.

"So when it is very late the two-timers pick poor Cadwell up and tote him out to the garage and place him behind the wheel

of the jalopy. They switch on the ignition, then go out and close the doors. After all, it said in the letter that his dear wife should not go to the garage." I pause and look at the doll and she has to sit down as her pretty gams seem to be buckling under her.

"Leave this instant, you crackpot!" Spinney chokes out.

"The male character lifted the corpse by the arms while arrangin' him in the sedan," I said. "He got stuck with the pin holding Cadwell's posy in place. I see you have got rid of the adhesive, Jimson!"

"Olivia," Spinney squawks. "Call the police."

"Would you bring rice to a Chinese Restaurant?" I scoff. "I am the police, Junior."

"All right, Hinkey!" Spinney says, drawing himself together. "Supposin' you guessed right, huh? How could you ever prove it?"

Olivia pours herself a stiff hooker and downs it. "Yeah—ha, ha!" she says cheerfully.

"First we could resurrect poor Cadwell and carve him in front of bona fried M.D.'s," I says. "Traces of the mickey would still be there, they tell me. The kayo drops perscribed for you, Olivia Wiltz, by Doctor Kilgare."

"The doll bangs her glass down. "I begin to see, you dirty low-down—"

I laugh. "I have the strongest ticker known to medical science, babe. What jury would believe a citizen put himself to sleep first before he walked out to the garage an' turned on the carbon mynoxide? It is like askin' them to believe a suicide victim cut his throat before he jumped off a chair with the clothesline about his neck."

"He could have taken just one or two to quiet his nerves so's he would have courage enough to knock himself off,"

Spinney says triumphantly. "We got him, sugar."

"He knows everythin' but also from nothin,' honey," Olivia sneers.

"Okay, hold onto your hats," I says. "A drop of your blood was found on the sleeve of poor Cadwell's coat and I cut it out for evidence. I also got quite a sample of your gore after Meatball Mazurka pasted you on the nose, Jimson. Guess most citizens do not keep up with criminal science.

"Now accordin' to certain experts of the F.B.I., no two human bloods are the same especially the agglutinogens and corpuscles when subjected to the Sansifran test whereby the agglutinins of the groups AB an' BO, the category you come into, Spinney, are susceptible to holdin' onto malaria for dear life, especially the activation kind. How many best friends of Cadwell had malaria?"

Olivia Wiltz lets out a frightened squeak. Jimson Spinney winces and drops his glass. It is the haymaker, Louie.

"I bet a magnifyin' glass will still show a puncture on your finger, Spinney!" I says. "We could still git an autopsy on poor Cadwell to determine the amount of mickey you give him. You think you two criminals will ever get to Mexico City, huh?"

"We sure will!" Spinney says, and proves he is something of a magician as well as an exterminator as what appears in his right hand but a wicked-looking Betsy!

"Let him have it, Jimson!" Olivia screeches. "I will slam a book down to muffle the shot!"

**I**T LOOKS like the end, Louie. I should always carry a Roscoe, but I don't. There is murder in Spinney's peepers. He was a GI and shot at Japs and couldn't have afforded to miss. He couldn't now. I brace myself and wish I was wearing a

reinforced steel girdle. It looks like that is where I am going to get the works.

Then Jimson starts shaking like a Model T flivver going over a corduroy bridge and the worry dew pours off him. He shoots at me once, but misses by a mile and then throws the Betsy at Olivia.

"K-k-kill him, b-b-baby, we-we—"

Louie, I did not just stand there after the first salvo. I was going in at the doll like a Notre Dame tackler after Felix Blanchard of Army, just as Spinney tried the last-ditch pass. Olivia dives for the Betsy and so do I. Our heads meet and did you ever hear two bowling balls merge in midalley?

Of course it is common medical knowledge a male's noggin is thicker than a female's. Olivia *Wiltz*, and no kidding, Louie. For a few minutes I wander through a planetarium holding an armful of asteroids and satellites. I fall into the milky way and am going under for the third time when somebody drags me out by the seat of my pants.

I sit up and see eight cops, Louie. They keep melting away until only one is left. He asks what goes on.

"What good is the UN if it can't stop wars?" I ask, and then clear my brains of clinkers. "Arrest them two. They assassinated Cadwell Wiltz."

Jimson Spinney proved himself a heel as well as a murderer, Louie. Right away he says he was influenced by a beautiful doll and was under a spell. "Wait until we git to the D.A. and his stenog," I says. "Keep the two of 'em apart," I tell the cop. "That dish won't know her own name for another two hours." I go to the phone and call the homicide boys and tell 'em to bring Noonan.

Over two hours later we tell Olivia that Jimson Spinney has let down his hair and has put her down as the instigator of the rub-out of her husband. Olivia blows her

pretty top.

“That low-down skunkeroo!” she yells. “It was his idea all the time. I was putty in his hands—he hypnotized me. Leave me have a stenographer and I’ll fix his wagon! If this ain’t one aitch of a note!”

“The one Cadwell wrote?” I ask.

“Drop dead,” Olivia says.

Well, it is up to Strepp, the D.A., Louie, to see which story the jury will believe. Olivia, with her looks, has a ten-run lead on Spinney. Like I told him and Noonan, nobody can prove whose blood is whose and the like of that. They can tell if

blood don’t come from a citizen, that is about all. But how many citizens know that? Any more than the D.A. knows how atoms are split up.

Hambone is not speakin’ to me, Louie, as he says I hid clues on him. He couldn’t have found them if I had, huh? I am the top man around here and I guess Spinney will get rid of his malaria soon, the hard way.

You might as well stay in the Army, Louie. All your old dolls have got married.

ALVIN