

**A NEW**

# JOHNNY LIDDELL

**MYSTERY**

## MAID IN PARIS

“You wouldn’t  
dare search me,”  
the brunette said.

Liddell smiled.

**FRANK KANE**

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“Now that we’re in business together,” Liddell said, “how are you on orgies?”

The tip of Andrea’s pink tongue wet her lips. “With me it is a matter of mood. Why?”

“I believe it’s customary to bring your own partner.”

There was a new sparkle in the brunette’s eyes. “Well, since we’ll be working together that closely, I suppose we must become better acquainted. . . .”

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**Johnny Liddell goes abroad and finds that women and murder are the same in any language—and just as deadly.**

# MAID IN PARIS

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**FRANK KANE**

A DELL MYSTERY  
an original volume

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# MAID IN PARIS

# Chapter 1

THE apartment on Boulevard Saint-Germain was within easy walking distance of the Deux Magots. It was small, dim and hot.

A man sat sprawled in a well-worn leather armchair, his feet extended full length in front of him, staring at the tips of his unpolished shoes. He was heavysset and sported a full beard. The corduroy jacket had once been green, but had faded to a bluish gray. His worn jeans, looking as if they had been painted on him, had a few picturesque rents in the sides of the legs. He reached up and raked half-clenched fingers through the thick mane of his hair.

Finally, he pulled himself out of the chair, walked to the window, stared out over the roofs and chimney pots of the adjoining houses, and noted the length of the shadows. He checked his wristwatch and snorted.

The woman had promised to bring the verification he needed by noon. Now, it was almost four.

The tap on the door, when it came, was so light he almost missed it.

He hurried over and pulled the door open.

The woman stood in the doorway; a chunky man in a square-cut blue suit stood beside her. The bearded man squinted at the woman.

“Do you ask us in or do we discuss your business from the hallway?” the woman asked. She was taller than her companion, wore her hair short. The top buttons of her blouse were unbuttoned, a snug skirt hugged the curves of her long legs.

The bearded man stood aside, gestured for them to come in, closed the door behind them.

“This is Auguste DuClos. During the Resistance he was known as Colonel Duc,” she introduced the chunky man. “This is Barry Lee, the writer I told you about,” she informed DuClos.

Lee eyed the man incuriously. His fedora was pushed to the back of his head, baring a balding pate, his tie was off center in his collar. There was a

faint stubble along the side of his jowls, his eyes were beady, red-rimmed.

“You would know Fritz Mendl Stein by sight?” the bearded man asked.

“Mademoiselle Gregory has told you I was a leader in the Resistance during the war. Mendl Stein was head of the Gestapo in Paris during that time. Would I be likely to ever forget him?”

Barry Lee thought for a moment, then turned to the girl. “What have you told him, Helena?”

Helena shook her head. “Just that he would be well paid for a few minutes’ work. You told me it must be very confidential.”

The writer bobbed his head, turned back to DuClos. “I’m a writer. I am about to publish a book called *The Redoubt*. Does that mean anything to you?”

The short man screwed his features into a scowl. “During the last days of the war, there was such a place. Not the mythical Bavarian Redoubt, but a real one. It was a Nazi stronghold somewhere in Austria—”

“Alt Aussee,” Lee told him. “It was never defended because Hitler’s élite ran out on him.” He walked back to a curtained recess where a percolator was beating out a bongo rhythm on the counter. He brought out three cups. “They buried their loot and escaped into Switzerland. The rank and file, with no leadership, just laid down their guns.” He filled the cups, added some cognac. “For the past twenty years, the big shots have been showing up there, digging up their loot.” He brought a cup to Helena and DuClos, went back for his own.

“Wouldn’t the natives have gotten it first?” she asked.

Barry Lee shook his head. “They wouldn’t know where to look. The British and American troops tried everything, even mine detectors. There was too much iron in the ground to do them any good.”

DuClos noisily sipped a mouthful of his coffee. “What does this have to do with Mendl Stein?” he asked.

Lee sniffed the fragrant steam rising from his glass and studied DuClos over the rim. “Stein was one of the Nazis who buried their loot at the Redoubt. He’s been back for it since the war.”

DuClos snorted derisively. “Mendl Stein died in Berlin in 1945. In the bunker with Hitler.”

“Mendl Stein was alive as late as 1960,” Lee said.



“You would have to prove it to me.”

“That’s why you’re here,” Lee told him. “I want you to help me prove it to the world.”

“You have seen a man you believe to be Mendl Stein?”

“Not exactly. But I have a picture of him. A picture taken in 1960, fifteen years after he is supposed to have died. I’m sure it’s Stein but I need someone who knew him to verify it.” He turned to the woman. “Helena said she knew someone who could identify the man in the picture as Stein.”

The chunky DuClos shrugged elaborately. “You are wasting your time, but I will look at your picture.”

Lee walked into the bedroom, came back with two photographic prints in his hand. He passed over a postcard-sized picture to DuClos.

DuClos took the picture and glanced at it incuriously. He rolled his eyes up to the bearded man’s face. “There are many men in this picture. Which one did you think was Stein?”

Lee failed to mask his disappointment. “You don’t see him in that group?”

“The faces are too small,” DuClos complained. “I could not identify anyone from such a picture.”

“How about this one?” Lee passed the second picture to the other man. “It’s a blow-up of the face identified to me as Stein.”

DuClos took the second picture, walked over to the window. He studied it for a moment, puffed his lips in and out. “There is a resemblance,” he conceded. He looked up. “If you have never seen Mendl Stein, what made you think this was he?”

“I was in Alt Aussee, researching my new book. The local innkeeper was full of stories about the Nazis who returned after the war to dig up what they’d hidden there. His father had told him that Fritz Mendl Stein, who was second only to Himmler, had come back. He had the group picture to prove it.”

“Then this old man could identify him for you,” DuClos pointed out.

“The old man is dead. His son did not know Stein, just had his father’s word for it.” He eyed the man at the window glumly. “Ever since I returned from Austria, I have been trying to find a picture of Mendl Stein or someone

who would know what he looked like. Helena told me about your activity in the Resistance and offered to bring you here.”

“May I see the picture?” Helena asked.

Lee picked the group photo off the table and handed it to her.

“Which one is he?”

Lee transferred his coffee to his left hand, leaned over and indicated a face with his pudgy right forefinger. “That one.”

Lee’s back was to the man at the window. DuClos started toward him.

Something in the woman’s expression caused Lee to start to turn. It was too late. The chunky man was on his back, his thick forearm around the writer’s throat in a murderous mugger’s grip.

The cup fell from Lee’s hand and spilled its contents on the floor at his feet. He clawed at the arm that was cutting off his breath. DuClos put his knee in the small of Lee’s back, bent him back, slowly, inexorably. Lee’s struggles to break the hold that was strangling him became frantic; beaded perspiration popped out on his forehead.

Relentlessly, DuClos tightened his grip. Lee’s eyes started to pop, his struggles began to weaken. Finally, his arms became too heavy to claw at the mugger’s arm. They dropped to his sides, fingers clenching and unclenching spasmodically. After a few minutes, even the fingers stopped moving. Lee’s body went completely limp.

Satisfied that Lee was beyond further resistance, DuClos released his stranglehold. The unconscious man collapsed into a heap on the floor.

DuClos wiped the wet smear of his mouth with the back of his hand. “We’d better make sure there are no other copies.” He walked over, picked up the pictures, slipped them into his pocket. “I’ll take the bedroom. You take this room.” He shrugged out of his jacket, hung it over the back of a chair. The armpits of his shirt were half-mooned with sweat; the back stuck damply to his body. A .38 was stuck in the rear waistband of his trousers. He pulled it out and laid it on the table.

On the floor, Lee was breathing with gargling snores.

DuClos frowned at him, brought his foot back and kicked viciously at the fallen man’s head. It made a sound like an overripe melon. The breathing became noisier and more irregular.

“I thought it was supposed to look like suicide,” Helena protested.

DuClos grinned at her. “Don’t worry. A contact wound will cover any damage.” He walked into the bedroom.

Fifteen minutes later, he came out again. The woman was standing at the window, looking out. A heat mist shimmered over the city. There was no indication that any relief was in sight. Helena turned as he closed the bedroom door behind him.

“Anything?” she asked.

DuClos shook his head. “You?”

“Nothing.”

The man’s eyes hopscotched around the room for evidence that Lee had company. “The coffee cups?”

“Back in the cupboard.”

The man nodded his satisfaction. He walked to the table and picked up the gun. He brought out a handkerchief and wiped the gun carefully. He laid the handkerchief-wrapped gun on the table, reached down and caught Lee under the arms. He grunted as he wrestled the dead weight onto the chair. Perspiration glistened on his forehead and upper lip. He held the unconscious man upright by the collar of his jacket, reached for the gun.

He brought the muzzle of the .38 to within inches of Lee’s temple and squeezed the trigger. The impact of the slug toppled the body sideways out of the chair. DuClos leaned down, pressed the gun into the dead man’s hand.

When he straightened up, he grunted at the greenish tinge in Helena’s face. She seemed to be losing the struggle to tear her eyes away from the body on the floor.

“You’ve seen dead men before,” he snapped at her.

She nodded. “I’ve seen dead men before.”

“You’d better get some air. I’ll report that everything’s taken care of.” DuClos lifted his jacket off the back of the chair and shrugged into it. Then he turned and headed for the door. Helena hurried after him.

# Chapter 2

IN PARIS, FAUBOURG SAINT-HONORÉ is a district filled with fashionable hotels, apartments and private homes. One of the apartments in the most desirable section of Rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré was listed in the name of André Leroux. It is a district where one tenant knows his neighbor only by name and where social intercourse is restricted to an occasional nod to pass the time of day.

Auguste DuClos looked out of place in his old fedora and old-fashioned square-cut suit as he hustled up the avenue. He turned into the building housing Leroux' apartment, passed up the elevator as too slow, and climbed up the broad stone staircase two steps at a time.

He was breathing heavily when he stopped in front of the apartment on the third floor. He pushed the bell, submitted impatiently to a scrutiny through the one-way glass set in the door. Finally, it opened and a tall, slim man stood in the doorway. He held a cigarette holder between his fingers. He stepped aside, nodding for DuClos to enter. He closed the door after him and led the way to a magnificently appointed living room.

A girl was sprawled comfortably on the oversized couch near the window. Her blonde hair, cascading down over her shoulders, was caught behind her ears with a piece of blue ribbon. The dressing gown she wore, matching the ribbon, was slashed deeply enough to reveal that Nature needed no assistance in the strain she put on the fragile fabric.

“Wait for me inside, *chérie*,” the slim man told her.

The girl pouted, gave no sign that she noticed the expanse of thigh she exposed as she slid her legs off the couch to stand up. She flashed an indignant look at the men as she headed for the bedroom door.

DuClos watched hungrily as her rounded hips worked enticingly against the seat of the gown. When she slammed the bedroom door behind her, he managed to tear his eyes away.

Leroux stood waiting. He had a high forehead, his fair hair was slicked down in a three-quarter part. His middle-aged good looks were spoiled only

by the thinness of his lips and the expression around his eyes. “I presume you have something for me other than appreciation of my taste?” he asked coldly.

DuClos reached into his pocket, brought out the group picture and the enlargement of the face.

The slim man unfolded them, walked over to the window to study them in the light. A scowl ridged the smoothness of his brow. “Where did this come from?”

“Alt Aussee. You were part of a tour booked out of Paris. In 1960.”

The scowl deepened. “This picture. Who took it?”

The squat man submerged his neck in an expressive shrug. “I don’t know. It was in the possession of a man whose father recognized you from the days of the Redoubt.” He walked over to the table where a silver pitcher, its sides beaded with sweat, stood. He poured himself a drink. “The old man is dead and no one believed him, I guess. When this writer was digging around to do a book on the Redoubt, the son gave him this, and told him what the old man said.” He lifted his drink to his lips and took a deep swallow.

“And the writer?”

DuClos swished the remains of the drink around the side of the glass. “By now he can be getting it first hand from the old man. He committed suicide this afternoon.”

Some of the tenseness drained out of the thin man. He walked to the fireplace, brought a lighter from his pocket, touched it to the corner of the pictures, held them as they curled up in flame. When he dropped the ash into the fireplace, he used a poker to stir the ash into powder.

“You left nothing to arouse the curiosity of the police?” he asked.

DuClos snorted. “I am not an amateur.”

The thin man took the cigarette lighter from between his lips, detached the butt, dropped it into the fireplace. “You are not an amateur,” he conceded. “But there have been times when you have been known to grow careless.” The cold eyes rolled up from the cigarette holder. DuClos tried to outstare him, but dropped his eyes.

It had been carelessness, he knew. Carelessness that could have been fatal.

As Colonel Duc, leader of his cell, the word had come to him of a shipment of arms from one police precinct to another to reinforce the Nazi garrison there. The shipment would pass through his district. It would be a feather in the cap of Colonel Duc if he could capture it. Since the news came on the day of the shipment, there was little time for planning or for checking out the information. A quick study of the map showed a short cul de sac where the truck would be most vulnerable.

His men were carefully deployed and waiting when the truck rumbled into sight. The driver tried to swing the heavy truck when three figures suddenly appeared in front of him. There was a stutter of a submachine gun, the windshield shattered and came apart. The truck slewed crazily from side to side. There was a screech of metal, the smashing of glass as the truck headed for the side of the road, came to a shattering stop against the brick wall of a building.

More figures materialized from the shadows along the road, converged on the rear of the truck. Some of them clambered up and started to remove the tarpaulin.

There was a frightened yell from one of the men as he hastily scrambled from the side of the truck. His yell was drowned out by the chatter of the machine guns mounted in the truck and by the hoarse yells of the Gestapo men who were swarming over the side overpowering the raiders. When it was all over, the raiders had lost four men, two were wounded and the legendary Colonel Duc was at last in the hands of the Gestapo.

He was lodged in the old fortress at Fresnes where he was “interrogated” daily by Colonel Fritz Mendl Stein. When his answers were too long in coming, uniformed guards lashed him until he either lost consciousness or talked.

His nights were filled with the screams of other prisoners who were more expendable than Duc and whose survival under questioning was a matter of little importance.

His mornings were filled with the sound of the vans rumbling into the fortress to take on the daily shipment of condemned to Dachau and Buchenwald.

Day after day, there were raids in Colonel Duc’s district. One by one, the members of his cell were captured, executed in the fortress yard or shipped out. Day after day, Duc underwent interrogation until he miraculously effected his escape from the fortress.

Outside, he threw in his lot with other Resistance cells and moved ahead in the Resistance. But things went from bad to worse. The Gestapo stepped up its activities. Nightly, men and women were dragged out of their beds, never to be seen again.

When the day finally came that word was received that General LeClerc and the Allied forces were approaching Paris, Mendl Stein had summoned him and Colonel Duc had responded to the summons.

Stein wanted a prisoner who bore some resemblance to him, one who was not overburdened with family, one whose identity Stein could assume.

The man Colonel Duc had given the Nazi was André Leroux, an Alsatian living in Paris. Leroux was rounded up in the Gestapo's last raids before moving out. He was never heard from again until he returned to Paris long after the war. He kept to himself, seemed anxious to forget the Bad Times.

Auguste DuClos remembered it all too vividly. He reached into his pocket, brought out the familiar blue package of Gauloises, hung one from the corner of his lips.

"I was not careless this time," he told the slim man sullenly. The cigarette waggled in the corner of his mouth when he talked.

"I hope so, for both our sakes." Leroux screwed a fresh cigarette into the holder, tilted it from the corner of his mouth. "The woman. How did she behave?"

DuClos shrugged elaborately. "She is still enough of a woman to grow pale at the sight of blood. The writer was not very pretty when we finished with him." He lit his Gauloise, hollow-cheeked a mouthful of smoke, blew it out in a feathery blue-gray stream. "It was nothing that money could not cure."

"This time she has earned it," the thin man agreed. He walked over to the table next to the sofa, tugged open a drawer and lifted out an envelope. He handed it to the other man. "You will take care of the payment."

DuClos lifted the flap of the envelope, flipped through the bills with a stubby forefinger. He was apparently satisfied with the tally, stuck the envelope in his breast pocket.

"I still don't know how he got on my trail in Paris," Leroux said. "Or how he came to look up Helena Gregory."

DuClos shrugged. “The picture put him on your trail. Gregory’s reputation brought him to her. Who would be in a better position to recognize a high Nazi official than a woman who had slept with half of them? Anyone who knows her would testify that she would do anything for money.” He shrugged again. “There is a large American colony on the Île. Any one of them could have brought the writer and her together.”

Leroux tapped the end of his holder against his teeth. “You’re probably right. It’s probably that simple.”

“Now that he’s out of the way, there’s no danger. I’m sure he didn’t tell anybody else what he was after. He wanted the glory of uncovering Fritz Mendl Stein all to himself. Instead of being paid off in gold, he was paid off in lead.”

“It was a good job,” the thin man agreed.

DuClos sucked on his cigarette. His eyes sought the bedroom door. “Good enough to rate a bonus?”

Leroux rolled the stem of the holder in the center of his lips between thumb and forefinger. He smoked for a moment, then shrugged. “Why not? It always excited me to kill and then make love, too.”

DuClos grinned, took his last drag on the butt, crushed it out in the ashtray on the coffee table. He licked his lips in anticipation, started across the room.

“There’s something you should know about her,” Leroux told him.

DuClos stopped with his hand on the doorknob. “What?”

“She enjoys being naughty. She likes to be disciplined. It excites her to be hurt.”

The anticipatory smile returned to DuClos’ lips. He took his hand off the doorknob, unhooked his belt, yanked it free. He reached for the doorknob again, opened it and walked into the bedroom.

Leroux chewed on the cigarette holder, walked over to the sweating silver pitcher, poured a stiff, blue-white martini into a glass.

He heard the shrill, protesting voice of the girl, the heavy demanding tones of the man. There was a sharp smack, a shrill scream. Another smacking sound was followed by a scream. Then silence.

Leroux smiled appreciatively, removed the cigarette holder from between his teeth, took a deep swallow from his martini.



# Chapter 3

IN PARIS, the flood of afternoon traffic spills from Boulevard des Capucines into the Boulevard de la Madeleine, where it is diverted into Rue Royale. There, it is temporarily dammed up by a traffic light before cascading into the Place de la Concorde.

Johnny Liddell ambled from the Champs-Élysées. He was circling the Place de la Concorde when the light changed.

There was a frightening roar.

A pedestrian in the Concorde could hear the cars before he saw them. Suddenly they came into sight, roaring and backfiring as they circled the open area to split into bridge traffic heading to the Left Bank or avenue traffic heading up into the Étoile. They looked like a stream of ants, pushing and shoving for room.

In the wake of the roar of these monsters came a new sound, a shrill, stuttering sound. This announced the contingent of motor bikes that follows in the wake of the cars to get any pedestrians they may have missed. Pedestrians assiduously cling to the safety of the sidewalk until they have passed. In Paris, it is considered *déclassé* to be hit by a motor bike.

Liddell stood watching, thinking for the thousandth time that Paris traffic is a burlesque, a trick movie chase sequence being filmed for a Mack Sennett comedy with speeded-up cameras.

He continued to the hotel entrance, walked into the cool foyer of the Crillon. To the right, just beyond the entrance, a staircase led down to the American Bar. Liddell nodded to the uniformed bellman at the head of the stairs and started down.

The American Bar is a small, intimate room with leather paneling on its walls and comfortable captain's chairs upholstered in a matching shade of leather. The white-jacketed barman exposed a mouthful of capped teeth in a welcoming grin as Liddell walked in, automatically reached to the backbar for a bottle of Harper.

Liddell stood in the entrance, adjusting his eyes to the dimness after the glare of the afternoon sun. He spotted the thin figure of Alex Ramey, the literary agent, hunched over a drink at a postage-stamp-sized table against the wall.

Liddell walked over, accepted the damp, limp hand the thin man punched across the table at him. He pretended not to notice the grimace on the thin man's face as he squeezed the damp hand and gave it back.

The barman was at the table almost as soon as Liddell sat down. He slid a bourbon on the rocks in front of Liddell and discreetly withdrew.

"I wish that character would stop grinning." Ramey's voice was high-pitched and his Adam's apple bobbed when he talked. "I'm going snowblind from those teeth of his. I've been sitting here in the glare for the past ten minutes." He had a disconcerting habit of barking to clear his throat.

"Sorry if I'm late," Liddell said. "I walked. I don't get into a cab in this town if I can help it."

"You're not late, I'm early," Ramey told him, punctuating the statement with a series of barks. "I'm more grateful than I can tell you for your coming at all. I don't know how long I can stay. It depends on how long they hold Barry Lee's body. The office sent me over here to bring him home. I had to see you before I left."

Liddell dug into his pocket, brought out a pack of Gauloises, offered them to Ramey, drew a firm shake of the head.

"You must be going native to smoke those things," he barked.

Liddell shook his head. "I'm trying to cut out smoking. I figure a couple of packs of these will do the job." He hung one from his lips, lit it and drew a mouthful of smoke. "Real tough about Barry. It kind of shook me up when I read about it yesterday."

"Shook *you* up? What do you think it did for us?" Ramey wagged his head lugubriously. "Our agency handles Barry Lee's books. We've got his latest in the works. It's the best thing he's ever done. So good, it could rate him a Pulitzer."

Liddell raised his eyebrows, blew twin streams of smoke through his nostrils. "With something like that going for him he does the Dutch? Didn't he realize what he had?"

The thin man took a swallow from his glass, let his eyes wander around the room, then leaned forward conspiratorially. "Johnny, I'm convinced that

Barry didn't commit suicide. He was murdered." His Adam's apple bobbed indignantly.

"Not according to last night's paper," Liddell told him. "The verdict is suicide."

"I know. We got word of the verdict yesterday afternoon." He barked twice. "But Barry Lee didn't kill himself. Someone killed him to shut him up."

Liddell sighed softly. "Have you told this to the police?"

"Of course. They're polite as hell and as stubborn as a mule. The case is closed. Lee committed suicide, and that's that."

Liddell picked up his glass, made concentric circles with it on the tabletop. "This book. What was it about?"

"The Redoubt. A Nazi escape hatch in Austria."

Liddell looked up. "It would sell a lot of copies if—"

"You think he killed himself as a publicity stunt? Look, there's no limit to what a writer will do to promote his book, but this is ridiculous!" The thin man quivered with indignation.

Liddell grinned. "No. It could be that the publisher sees a chance to cash in by implying that the stuff in the new book is so hot someone murdered him to cool it off. I've heard that some publishers wouldn't be above that."

The Adam's apple bounded excitedly. "It wasn't suicide, I tell you. I know Barry Lee inside out. He'd never go offstage when there was a chance to steal an extra bow. And he has one coming on this book. It isn't in character."

"It is to me. Death by violence, even suicide, fits the Barry Lee pattern to a tee."

The agent snorted. "Pattern, my eye. That's just part of the Barry Lee legend! He spent a lot of time and energy building up that image." He barked nervously. "There was Barry Lee, the indefatigable lover; Barry Lee, the devil-may-care adventurer; Barry Lee, who loved violence and killing; Barry Lee, the white hunter; Barry Lee, who defied Algerian terrorists and their plastic bombs to haunt places marked for destruction." He snorted again. "That's the Barry Lee legend. And that's all it is, a legend."

Liddell drained his glass, turned to the bar and held up two fingers. The man in the white jacket nodded. Liddell turned back to the literary agent. "I

never knew the guy personally,” he said.

“Believe me, all horsefeathers. Barry used a typewriter to build himself into a legend. He never wrote a book that didn’t have a stirring in the loins of his main character who would thereupon climb into bed with every female in sight. Everybody took it that everything he wrote was autobiographical. The only thing that could stir his loins would be a magnet. He stepped on a leftover antipersonnel mine in a rear area in Korea and it caponized him.”

He waited while the waiter slid fresh drinks in front of them and retreated with the empties.

“His world was peopled with drunks, cowards, prostitutes and brutes of all kinds. But he’s never once created a woman character who was real. He couldn’t. He didn’t know enough about them, even before Korea.” He took a swallow from his glass to clear his throat. “His women are just interludes between the violence. His heroes are bloodthirsty and brutal during the day in their contacts with the others in their jungle. But at night, they’re tender and almost wistful with their women. They’re no more than erotic fantasies of a guy who could never enjoy them. It was just Barry, daydreaming, living through his characters.”

“Sounds like a complex character,” Liddell murmured.

The thin man shrugged. “That’s the explanation for the fact that every woman he creates has rounder heels than a billiard ball. So much for Barry the lover. The same goes for overplaying violence, his thumbing his nose at death and the rest of the Barry Lee legend. Truth of the matter is, he was always scared skinny of death. That’s why his books are so full of blood and guts, killing and maiming. He had some screwy idea that killing was God-like and gave him power over death. So his writing is preoccupied with it. He wanted people to think it was Barry Lee talking through his characters—making incessant love, slaughtering animals and thumbing his nose at death. All part of an image he created of himself with his typewriter.”

“He did a damn good job doing it, then. I always had him figured out to be just the way you read him out.”

“Have you read much of his stuff?”

Liddell nodded. “Quite a bit of it. I liked most of it.”

Ramey managed to look sad. “The son of a bitch could write,” he conceded. “And he was a born reporter. Most of his material was authentic as hell. He wouldn’t stand for a researcher working with him. He researched

everything himself.” He reached down to the floor, brought up a bulky manila envelope. “These are the galleys on his last book. I’d like you to read them. I think you’ll agree that there’s stuff in here that some people would like to keep quiet.” He reached for his drink, let his Adam’s apple bob like a cork as he swallowed. “I told you he researched the bejabbers out of everything he wrote. This was no exception. He came across something while he was in Alt Aussee that convinced him that Fritz Mendl Stein is still alive.”

Liddell wrinkled his brows. “One of Hitler’s boys?”

Ramey nodded and cleared his throat with a bark. “Head of the Gestapo in Paris during the Occupation.” He set the envelope on the chair between them. “Barry’s contention is that the Redoubt was the back door through which a lot of the Nazi big shots escaped to Italy, then to South America or Egypt. He makes a good case for Martin Bormann being alive. He traces Dr. Mengele to South America, Guzman to Peru, others to Egypt.” He paused for effect, lowered his voice. “He says in the book that Stein is right here in Paris.”

Liddell took a drag on his Gauloise and grimaced. He stubbed it out. “Wonder if they ever thought of using tobacco in these things.” He picked up his glass, tried unsuccessfully to wash the taste of the cigarette out of his mouth. “So you figure that he tried to come up with this character under glass as a promotion stunt for the book.” The butt in the ashtray was sending smoke signals ceilingward. He crushed it out with the ball of his index finger. “He got close and got himself killed for his trouble. That it?”

“Something like that,” Ramey told him.

“If he was so scared of violence and death, why would he stick his neck out Nazi-hunting?”

“Who knows?” Ramey’s Adam’s apple bounced up and down. “Maybe he was beginning to believe the Barry Lee legend himself. Maybe he was afraid too many people didn’t and this would cinch it for all time. Who knows?”

Liddell absentmindedly brought the package of Gauloises from his pocket and tapped one out. He started to stick it between his lips, then tossed the unlighted cigarette into the ashtray and returned the pack to his pocket. “The therapy is beginning to work,” he mumbled. “What do you want me to do?”

“Take a look at the picture. If you’re convinced it was suicide—” he shrugged—“then we have to accept it. But if you can prove it was murder, then we want you to find the guy who murdered him.” He coughed. “Don’t worry about the fee. Barry Lee’s ghost will collect lots of royalties.”

“Uh-huh. But the French police can be pretty narrow-minded about somebody butting in on an investigation.”

Ramey barked sharply, shook his head. “There is no investigation. They’ve marked it suicide and closed the case.”

Liddell considered for a moment, then shrugged. “You’ve got something there,” he conceded. “Where do we start?”

“The police have turned over the key to his apartment to us so we can ship back his belongings. Nothing has been touched in the apartment since it happened. Wouldn’t that make a good starting place?”

“You have the key with you?”

Ramey tried to mask a smile by barking. He dug into his pocket and came up with a tagged key. “It just so happens.”

Liddell grinned. “What a coincidence.” He picked up his glass, drained it, set it back down. Ramey dropped some paper money alongside the glass. They got up, Liddell picked up the manila envelope.

“You know something?” he said. “I think maybe you do have a best seller here.”

Ramey frowned. “How do you know until you read it?”

“Since when do you read a book to know you’ve got a best seller? You weigh it.” He hefted the envelope on the palm of his hand. “From the weight of this one, you should have a runaway.”

# Chapter 4

ALEX RAMEY led the way out of the Hôtel Crillon lobby, Johnny Liddell tagging along. They emerged just as a cab was discharging its passengers at the curb.

The doorman held the door for them. Liddell handed him some change and slid into the back seat beside the agent.

“Your meter, my friend,” Ramey called up to the driver. “Set back your meter.”

The cab driver half-turned in his seat. He eyed them hostilely, switched the toothpick from one corner of his mouth to the other. A grease-stained cap sat on the back of his head. “What did you say?” he asked in a cold tone.

“I said turn back your meter,” Ramey barked. “Or perhaps you would prefer that the doorman call a gendarme?”

The cab driver glowered at him wordlessly for a minute; then, muttering under his breath, he swung around and set back his meter.

Ramey gave him the address of Barry Lee’s apartment.

“What was that all about?” Liddell wanted to know.

“An old trick over here. They see you waiting where they’re going to discharge passengers, so they don’t turn back the meter and you pay your fare on top of what’s on the meter.”

“A cab driver is a cab driver is a cab driver,” Liddell said. “Think he spotted us for Americans?”

“Figures.” The agent bobbed his head.

The driver pulled away from the curb in front of the hotel, melted into the traffic heading for the Pont-Neuf and the Left Bank. He zigzagged in and out of the stream of cars, leaving behind a wake of blaring horns and screeching brakes.

“What have they got against Americans?” Liddell asked.

Ramey shrugged, braced his feet against the floor-board as the driver aimed the cab at a troupe of tourists, scattering them to the right and left.

“Probably they feel there are too many of us over here cluttering up the landscape.”

“They’re right,” Liddell said. “There are too many Americans taking up space at watering places like Omaha Beach, picturesque towns in Normandy, resort areas like Chateau Thierry and the Argonne Forest. The cemeteries they loaf around in sure clutter up the scenery.”

The driver swung onto the Pont-Neuf, named the New Bridge, although it is one of the oldest in Paris. Fifteen minutes later, he pulled up in front of a grimy stone building on Boulevard Saint-Germain. He bounced his tires against the curb, jolting his passengers as he lurched to a stop.

Ramey checked the meter, pushed a ten-franc note through the window at the driver. When the cabby showed no signs of offering change, Ramey growled at him. The driver growled back, sullenly counted out the change. He let them know he was unhappy with the tip, roared away from the curb as soon as they stepped out.

Johnny Liddell followed Ramey into the vestibule, where they checked the tenant register.

“The fifth floor,” Ramey said.

Liddell sighed. “Figures. Any time there’s no elevator, wherever you want to go is always on the top floor.”

Unenthusiastically, they plodded up the uncarpeted staircase to the fifth floor. Liddell stood puffing while Ramey fitted his key to the lock and pushed the door open.

Inside, the air was heavy with the smell of a room that had been closed against the heat of the day. There was another odor, an unpleasant odor that made Liddell’s nostrils twitch.

He walked over to the chair that stood alongside a chalked circle on the floor. A dark stain discolored the rug at the top of the chalked outline. There was another, fainter discoloration toward the center of the chalked outline. Liddell squatted on his haunches, studied the top stain. It was caked and reddish brown, unmistakably blood.

He gave the second stain his attention. It was larger, lighter in color than the blood stain. He leaned over, put his nose close to the rug, sniffed it.



Alex Ramey watched without comment.

When Liddell finally got to his feet, Ramey couldn't restrain his curiosity any further. "Something?"

"I don't know." Liddell rolled his eyes up from the chalked outline to Ramey's face. "Where are the clothes Lee was wearing when he died?"

"Our French rep claimed the body. He may know. Want me to call him?"

Liddell nodded. While Ramey headed for the telephone and started dialing, Liddell walked over to the curtained alcove that was the kitchen. He examined the coffee pot, found it half full. On a shelf there was an uncorked bottle of cognac. He lifted the cups down one at a time, sniffed at them, ran his finger around the inside of them.

"The police released the clothes when he claimed the body. He has them there in the office."

"Let me talk to him." Liddell walked over to where Ramey stood.

"This is Johnny Liddell, a good friend of the agency, Emile. He wants to talk to you." Ramey handed the instrument to Liddell. "Emile Soure is our rep over here."

Liddell lifted the receiver to his ear. "Ramey tells me you have the clothes Barry Lee was wearing when he died. Are they handy?"

"They are in a closet in the outside office," Emile told him.

"Would you take a look at the jacket. Halfway down on the left side there may be a stain. Would you check it for me?"

"The wound was in the head, you know."

"I know. Just take a look anyway, will you?"

"Okay."

Alex Ramey grunted. "A stain?" He shook his head. "If you boiled that jacket I'll bet you'd come up with a bouillabaisse. Looking and acting like a beatnik was one of Barry's pet affectations."

Liddell didn't answer. He waited for the man at the other end to come back on the line.

Finally, he heard the sound of the receiver being picked up. "There is a big stain running from the left pocket almost to the armpit," Emile told him. "But it's not blood."

“What would you say it was?”

“Could be coffee. It’s the right color.”

“Thanks.” Liddell dropped the receiver on its hook. He stared glumly at the agent. “I think you may be right. Barry Lee was murdered.”

Ramey’s Adam’s apple bobbed agitatedly. “You found something?”

“Nothing I could take into court,” Liddell conceded. He pointed to the larger stain. “That second stain was made when somebody spilled a cup of coffee. You can still smell cognac on the rug.”

“So how does that prove murder?”

“It doesn’t,” Liddell admitted. “However, there’s a matching stain on the coat Barry was wearing. That means the rug was still wet with the coffee when his body fell on it. Wet enough to stain his jacket.” He grinned glumly at the puzzled expression on the thin man’s face. “There was no cup there. Suppose he spilled the coffee just before he did the Dutch. He sure as hell didn’t take the cup over to the cupboard after he did. Can you figure a guy being neat enough to put the cup away when he’s about to blow his brains out?”

Ramey stared at him, his jaw sagged. “Somebody else put the cup away,” he said slowly. “That somebody must have been the killer.”

“Could be,” Liddell said. “Let’s see what else we can find.” He walked to a closed door that opened on the living room, pushed it open.

Inside was a bedroom. An unmade bed revealed dingy linen, clothing was strewn over a large armchair.

Liddell walked in, stopped, sniffed. He wrinkled his nose, his forehead was corrugated into a puzzled frown. He walked over to the dresser, picked up a bottle of aftershave lotion, unscrewed the cap, smelled it. He did the same thing with a bottle of cologne, set them back on the dresser.

He put his index finger to his lips in a cautioning gesture to the agent, walked to the door to the lavatory. He satisfied himself it was empty, turned his attention to the closed closet door. He walked over to it.

“You in the closet. Come out and let me see that your hands are empty when you do.”

There was no sound from the closet.

“I have a .45 aimed at that door. At the count of three I start to hemstitch it and you with it.” He waited. “One.”

No movement from the closet.

“Two.”

Suddenly, the closet door burst open. “I am coming out,” a husky female voice told him.

A pair of hands came into view, one of them wearing a .22. The hand opened, let the gun bounce off the floor. Then a dark-haired girl followed the hands out of the closet.

Liddell reached down, picked up the .22, satisfied himself that the closet was now empty. He weighed the gun on the palm of his hand. “Where did you wear this? On your charm bracelet?”

The girl’s eyes widened. “You didn’t have a gun.” There was a note of aggrieved accusation in her voice.

“An oversight I promise won’t happen again,” Liddell told her.

“How did you know she was in there?” Ramey wanted to know.

“People who break into other people’s houses shouldn’t wear perfume. I smelled it the minute I walked into this room.”

“I did not break in,” the girl flared at him.

Liddell eyed her from head to foot and back with appropriate stops both ways. Her blue-black hair was piled high on her head. Her skin was dark, her eyes oval and slanted. The only makeup she wore was a slash of crimson on her lips. The skirt was a sheath, made no attempt to disguise the shapeliness of her long legs. Her blouse was cut deep in front, revealing the deep cleft between her breasts that testified to their fullness. She eyed him defiantly.

“What are you doing here?” Liddell asked.

“I have a right to be here. What is *your* excuse?”

Liddell smiled thinly. “This is Alex Ramey, Lee’s literary agent. I’m just an innocent bystander named Johnny Liddell.”

The oval eyes widened. “You are Americans?”

“What did you think we were?”

The girl smiled her relief. The tip of her pink tongue darted from between the full lips and wet them. “Detectives. I was afraid that you had been hired by my husband to follow me.” Her eyes hopscotched from Liddell’s face to Ramey’s and back, seeking understanding. “Barry and I were having an affair. With Barry dead, I had to make sure that nothing here could be traced to me. My husband is very jealous. It would destroy my marriage.”

“Very narrow-minded of him, I’m sure.”

The oval eyes flashed at him. “I am not asking for your approval.” She turned to Ramey. “If you do not mind, I would like to use the bathroom. It is not every day that somebody tells me that he intends to shoot at me with a large pistol.”

Ramey looked to Liddell, drew a nod.

The girl walked back into the closet, picked up an oversized handbag, walked toward the bathroom, closed it after her.

Liddell stared at the door for a second, turned and headed back into the living room. After a few moments there came the booming sound and the gurgles of the house’s antiquated plumbing system and the girl walked back into the living room, her bag hanging from her shoulder.

“Now, if there is nothing else you want of me—” she started to say.

“But there is,” Liddell said. “You still haven’t told us what you’re doing here.”

The girl’s full lips thinned into a tight, hard line; her eyes went cold. “I have already told you. I cannot afford to be involved in a scandal—”

Liddell snorted. “Barry Lee wasn’t having an affair with you or anyone else, doll. He couldn’t.”

The girl’s jaw sagged momentarily. She made a game attempt at a comeback. “That is a lie!”

Alec Ramey barked nervously, “Liddell is right, miss. Barry had an accident in Korea. Some land mine fragments messed up his lower abdomen. He’s been impotent ever since.”

“Your bag,” Liddell said. “Would you mind emptying it on the table?”

“I certainly would,” the girl said. “Why should I?”

“Because while you were in that bathroom, you stashed something away. I’d like to see what it was.”

The girl glared at Liddell for a moment. Then she slipped the bag off her shoulder and shoved it at him.

He opened it and dumped the contents on the table.

A driver’s license in a glassine case identified her as Andrea Moreau, with an address on Rue du Bac on the Left Bank. There was a metal tube of lipstick, a pad of first-class tickets for the Métro, a rat-tail comb and a money purse containing twenty francs in paper and some change.

Liddell pushed the items around the table with the tip of his finger. He looked up into the hostile eyes of the girl. “Are you satisfied?” she asked.

“It’s not in there. So it must be on you. Do you hand it over, or do I have to go looking for it?”

“You would not dare try to search me,” she told him in a flat, hard voice.

“It would be the first nice thing that happened to me since I arrived in this burg,” Liddell assured her. He started toward her. She backed away. “If you think I’m bluffing—”

“All right.” She stopped backpedaling. She tugged her blouse out of the waistband of her skirt. Tucked in the waistband was a small leather-bound book. She pulled it out, threw it at Liddell. “There is his address book. I merely wanted to make sure my name was not in it.”

Liddell bent over, picked up the book, flipped through the pages. He stopped at the page marked “M”, glanced down through the names listed. “No Moreau,” he told her. “You can relax.” He eyed her again. “Anything else?”

The girl smoothed the tight fabric of her skirt over the roundness of her thighs, juttred her breasts against the flimsiness of her blouse. “I have a filing cabinet secreted upon my person,” she said. “Do you wish to search me?”

Both Liddell and Ramey were preoccupied with the girl. Neither heard the door open.

A man walked into the room, the naked blade of a knife glittered in his hand. He closed the distance between himself and Johnny Liddell, then jabbed the point of the blade into Liddell’s back just above the waist.

“If either of you moves I shall cut,” he told the two men.

“You certainly took your time making an appearance,” the girl complained. “The big one has my gun. Secure it.” She indicated his side pocket. “In there.”

Liddell offered no resistance as the man reached around him, brought up the .22. He trained it on Liddell, backed away. The girl walked around to join him. She took the gun, covered Liddell.

“You may turn around now,” she told Johnny. “Now it is your turn to answer questions.”

Liddell turned slowly, eyed the man who had jumped him. He was tall and thin. His thick black hair was lustrous, flattened against the side of his head over his ears, a mass of gleaming curls on top. His eyebrows were full, heavy, and he had a cleft in his chin. His eyes were big and dark. He returned Liddell’s scrutiny with a half smile.

“A sister act, by God,” Liddell said.

The half smile disappeared from the Pretty Boy’s lips. An angry flush climbed up from his collar to stain his face. Before anybody could stop him, his hand swung in a short arc, chopping at the side of Liddell’s neck. The blow knocked him to his knees.

“Now, wait a minute!” Ramey barked indignantly. He started toward Liddell, froze at the sight of the .22 muzzle staring at his belt buckle.

“Your friend made a mistake in underestimating Henri,” the girl told the agent in a flat voice. “Do not make an even worse mistake in underestimating me.”

Liddell’s voice, when it came out, was a hoarse croak. “There’ll be other times for us. Next time, when I’m done, there’s nothing Elizabeth Arden makes can fix you up.”

Pretty Boy swore softly. He grabbed Liddell by the tie, yanked him to his feet. The judo chop seemed to have rendered Johnny incapable of moving his arms. Pretty Boy brought an uppercut up from his knees. Liddell fielded it with his midsection.

The air whistled out of Johnny’s lungs. He sank back to his knees. When he tried to wrap his arms around Pretty Boys legs, the curly-haired man shoved him over on his back.

The girl didn’t take her eyes off Ramey, whose Adam’s apple was bobbing disconcertingly. “Now his wallet,” she ordered.

Pretty Boy tugged Liddell's wallet from his breast pocket.

"There is an address book on the table. Take it," she snapped.

"I have it," the dark-haired man told her.

"That is all we need now," Andrea said. She waited until she heard him open the hall door. She smiled sweetly at Ramey. "We may see you again," she told him. "Do not open that door for the next ten minutes—unless you wish a demonstration of my skill with a pistol."

She backed to the door, her gun muzzle staring at Ramey unblinkingly. When she closed the door behind them, Ramey hustled over to where Liddell lay sprawled on his back.

Hurriedly, he crossed to the curtained kitchen, found the bottle of cognac, brought it back to Liddell. He held it to Johnny's lips. A trickle of it ran from the corner of Liddell's mouth; he choked as some went down his throat. After a moment, he reached up blearily, wiped his chin with the back of his hand. His eyes traveled around blearily, came to rest on Ramey. He grinned weakly.

"Anybody get the number of the truck?" he asked.

# Chapter 5

JOHNNY LIDDELL sat on a wooden chair, ruefully massaged the side of his neck where Pretty Boy had landed the judo chop. “They take first honors, that’s for sure,” he growled.

Ramey cleared his throat and shook his head. “But where do they fit into it?”

“The only thing we are sure of is that she’s not Mendl Stein. The accessories are wrong.” He twisted his neck experimentally, winced. “Whoever she is and whatever she is, she’s a pro. You noticed there wasn’t a key on her. For here or anyplace else.”

“How’d she get in?” Ramey wanted to know.

“That driver’s license. It was encased in celluloid. A lock like this would be duck’s soup for a skeleton key like that,” Liddell told him.

“Now what?”

Liddell lifted a half-filled glass of cognac from the table, drained it and set it back down. “Now we hope we walked in on her before she did too good a job of shaking the place down. The killers probably checked the place out, but even red hots don’t like to be standing over a fresh corpse with a hot gun too long.” He stuck a cigarette between his lips, lit it, grimaced through the spiraling smoke. “So we take for granted that only a surface job has been done.” He glanced around the room glumly, lifted the cigarette from between his lips, used it as a pointer to indicate the filled bookcases that lined the far side of the room. “Suppose you go through the bookcase. I’ll take the bedroom and bath.”

“What am I looking for?” Ramey asked.

“Anything that could possibly relate to Stein. Anything that could give us a hint of what Barry was thinking and where he was going.”

Ramey sighed and bobbed his head unhappily. “That makes it very clear.”



Liddell walked into the bedroom, stood at the door looking around. Then, he proceeded to strip the bed, turn the mattress and check the paneling for a hidden space. He pulled the drawers out of the bureau, searched their undersides, checked through their contents.

After half an hour of intensive search, he drew a complete blank. There was nothing in the bedroom in any way connected with Lee's search for Fritz Mendl Stein.

He was ready to call it a day, about to admit failure. As a matter of routine, he examined the underside of the sink in the bathroom. Attached to the underside by strips of adhesive was a piece of paper. He ripped it loose, brought it out into the light.

It was a receipt from a photographic studio. Liddell studied it for a moment, rubbed the heel of his hand along the line of his jaw.

He checked the rest of the plumbing in the room, but found nothing else. He walked through the bedroom into the living room.

Alex Ramey turned from the pile of books on the floor as Liddell walked in. He brought a wadded handkerchief from his hip pocket, swabbed at his streaming forehead.

"Anything?" Liddell asked him.

Ramey's Adam's apple bobbed indignantly. "This guy was worse than a squirrel. Looks like he used his books for a filing system." He reached down to the floor, brought up a handful of typewritten sheets and pictures. "Ideas for books and articles, rough drafts of chapters of the new book, some liquor bills, dirty pictures—"

Liddell raised his eyebrows. "Dirty pictures?"

Ramey picked up a small stack of pornographic stills and handed them to Liddell.

Johnny flipped through the pictures, grunted, tossed them aside. "Not even good ones. No imagination at all."

"How about you? Find anything interesting?"

"Maybe. Maybe not." He held up the receipt. "A receipt from a photographic studio."

"Probably the guy who supplies him with the pornography," Ramey said.

Liddell thought for a moment. “It doesn’t figure he’d go to all the trouble he did to hide it if it was.”

“Where was it hidden?”

“Taped to the underside of the sink in the bathroom. The tape was fairly fresh so it hasn’t been there long.” He read the receipt. “Photographer’s name is André Boutin. His studio’s not far from here.” He checked his watch. “Probably too late to check him out today. We’ll get at him first thing in the morning.”

“And if it doesn’t pay off?”

“I go back to sitting at sidewalk cafés ogling all the pretty, slim young French girls and wondering where all the homely, fat, middle-aged French women come from.”

Ramey’s Adam’s apple bobbed indignantly. “You wouldn’t walk away from it, would you?”

“Well, I was sort of counting on doing an encore with Pretty Boy. But I don’t think they know any more about what happened to Barry Lee than we do.” He shrugged. “After we’ve had a heart-to-heart talk, I have a feeling he’ll spill everything he knows. Our problem is whether he knows anything worth spilling.”

Ramey sighed. “Then you walk away?”

“Then I walk away,” Liddell told him.

Ramey sighed. “Some days it doesn’t pay to get out of bed.”

“Depends on who’s in it with you,” Liddell told him.

Johnny Liddell sat sprawled in the well-worn armchair in his apartment in the Hôtel des Étrangers, reread the last few galleys of Barry Lee’s *The Redoubt*. He reached over to the table at his elbow and crushed out the stub of his cigarette.

The hands on the travel clock showed ten-thirty.

He set the galleys on the floor alongside the chair, pulled himself out of it and walked to the French doors that opened on a small balcony.

Off in the direction of Étoile, the floodlights bathing the Arc de Triomphe brightened the sky. There had been no floodlights in the days the

book talked about. The only sound along the Champs-Élysées had been the cadence of marching jackboots.

The story of the *Alpenfestung* itself was new to Liddell. He had never heard of the stronghold in which the Nazis planned to stage the last act of their grisly drama.

A special detachment of the cream of Hitler's fighting men had been detailed to defend it. Bombproof caves were dug into the mountains themselves by slave labor imported from Oranienburg. Neutral Switzerland was at its back to rule out an encircling movement, and the only approach, a frontal one, had to be up a narrow two-mile gorge that could be completely covered by missiles from above.

Yet no attempt was ever made to defend it.

Barry Lee's premise in the book had been that top Nazis, including Mengele, Eichmann, Bormann and others knew the end was in sight. In spite of much publicity about redoubts and werewolf tactics, they were more interested in saving their own skins and loot than in prolonging a lost war. So they buried their loot and ran for it, figuring to come back for the loot after the war was over.

It made sense. If Lee was right in his contention that Fritz Mendl Stein was one of them, Lee's murder also made sense.

Liddell felt through his pockets, came up with the blue pack of Gauloises. He stared at it unhappily for a moment, then threw the whole pack over the railing. He walked inside, found an unopened pack of American cigarettes in his night-table drawer. He slit it open with the nail of his thumb.

"So much for the legend that Liddell has a will of steel," he grumbled.

He dropped back into the armchair, debated the advisability of going out for a bowl of onion soup and some wine. Most of the places along the boulevard started stacking the chairs on the tables around one. After the natives are finished fleecing the tourists in the posh spots, the little side-street bistros come to life. The last time he had dropped into one, the natives made it amply clear that they didn't favor integration.

He dropped the idea and decided to go to bed.

Johnny Liddell awoke suddenly from a troubled sleep. Slowly, without moving a muscle, he opened his eyes.

The figure of a man was visible in the semidarkness of the room. It was standing alongside the bed. The gun in his hand glistened dully.

The man raised the gun, started to prod Liddell with its muzzle.

Liddell grabbed at the gunman's wrist, twisted. The man's feet left the floor, he flew across the bed, slammed into the wall with a bone-jarring thud. Liddell swung out of bed, hustled over to where the man was trying to untangle his arms and legs.

Liddell reached him, leaned down to pull him to his feet. Suddenly, light spilled into the room.

Johnny spun around.

The girl he had surprised in Barry Lee's apartment stood in the doorway, her finger on the light switch. In her other hand, she held the .22.

The man on the floor finally managed to disentangle himself. He got to his feet, started for Liddell.

"Stop, Henri," the dark haired girl said.

"Why don't you put the popgun away and turn him loose?" Liddell said. He eyed the other man hostilely. "Next time I wake up and find you leaning over me with a gun, I'm going to feed it to you."

Henri's hair was no longer flattened back over his ears. It hung lankly down over his face. He reached up, combed it out of his face with his fingers, tried to paste it back into place.

"The next time I come, you will not wake up," he told Liddell.

"Stay with him until he dresses, Henri," the girl said. "I shall be waiting outside. And try not to let him take your pistol away from you." She waited until the slick-haired man had picked up his gun, then she walked out, closing the door behind her.

# Chapter 6

ANDREA MOREAU was sitting in the armchair, glancing through the galleys of Barry Lee's book when Johnny Liddell walked into the room, followed by Henri.

She looked up, replaced the galley proofs on the floor. "Very well, Henri, there will be no further need for your services tonight," she told the man behind Liddell.

Henri started to protest, then shrugged. "Shall I wait downstairs?"

"I shall call you when I need you," the girl said.

The man replaced his gun in the waistband of his trousers, flattened his hair against the side of his head with the flat of his hand. He scowled at Liddell, turned and walked out the door.

The girl in the chair turned back to Liddell. "I should apologize for the weapons, but I was afraid you might be bad-tempered when awakened in the middle of the night." She wet her full lips with the tip of a pink tongue. "Is it not customary to offer a drink to a lady whom you have lured into your apartment in the middle of the night?"

"Lured?" Liddell snorted. "Looks like a locked door is a challenge to you. Mind telling me to what do I owe this call?" He glanced past the girl to the travel clock. "Do you know it's two-thirty?"

"It is only nine-thirty in New York," Andrea said.

"What the hell does New York time have to do with it?"

She reached over, picked up a pack of cigarettes, shook one loose. "It took until now to get the report on you." She placed the cigarette in the center of her lips, held it there between thumb and forefinger. She waited until Liddell finally broke down, stalked over and held a light for her. "I had to be sure you were what you said you were."

"And was I?"

The girl tilted her head back and blew a feathery stream at the ceiling. “Even more so. My people in New York checked the police department. You are well known there. I have brought back your wallet and credentials.”

Liddell walked to the closet and took out a bottle of bourbon. He brought it over and set it on the table near the girl. She wrinkled her nose. “Whiskey. You Americans are so primitive.”

“We don’t go around waking people up by shoving a .38 under their noses. If I had known you were coming I’d have had champagne and caviar. Who are you anyway?”

“I told you this afternoon. My name is Andrea Moreau.”

“What are you?”

The girl inhaled another deep draught of smoke and let it escape from half-parted lips.

“I am Shinbet,” she said.

“I never argue religion,” Liddell told her.

Andrea smiled around her cigarette. “Shinbet is not a religion. It is an abbreviation for Sherutei Betahan, just as CIA is the abbreviation for your Central Intelligence Agency. Shinbet is Israeli intelligence.”

“You’re a spy?” Liddell asked.

Andrea considered for a moment. “I am in a special section of Shinbet. Our function is to locate and hunt down war criminals who have thus far eluded justice.” She took the cigarette from between her lips, studied the charred tip. “When we find them, we try to bring them back for trial. Like Eichmann. If we cannot, they are executed on the spot. Like Guzman in Peru.”

Liddell raised his eyebrows. “A female executioner?”

“Why not? The ovens did not question the sex of the people being fed into them. Neither does a trigger question the sex of the finger squeezing it.”

Liddell nodded. “So that’s why you were in Barry Lee’s apartment. You’re after Fritz Mendl Stein.” He walked over to a small table set next to the door, brought back two glasses. “You think he’s still alive, too?”

Andrea returned the cigarette to her lips, sucked her cheeks in in a last drag. “We have never closed the file on Stein.”

Liddell uncorked the bourbon, tilted the bottle over each of the glasses, spilled in a generous portion. “Then you agree with Alex Ramey that Barry Lee was murdered?”

Andrea stubbed out her cigarette, nodded. “It follows a pattern.”

“There have been others?” Liddell handed the girl a glass, picked up the other.

“Not with Stein. One of our operatives, a woman who had been sterilized by Mengele at Dachau, got close to him in Brazil. Somehow, he discovered who she was and what she wanted.” She shrugged. “Her body was found at the base of a cliff. Mengele is still at large.”

Liddell took a swallow from his glass, shook his head. “I can’t get used to drinking this stuff without ice and getting ice in this country is like getting a good word for Americans from de Gaulle.” He set his glass down. “What were you really doing in Lee’s apartment this afternoon?”

“Barry Lee informed Shinbet that he had just completed a book, and that he had reason to believe Fritz Mendl Stein was alive and in Paris. He requested any help we could give him. Since I am the expert on Stein in the Bureau, it was forwarded to me. I was in Brazil at the time. There was always a possibility that Barry Lee merely sought publicity, so I had to complete my assignment in Brazil before I flew to Paris.” She sipped at her drink. “He was dead when I arrived. That, more than anything else, convinced me that he really was on Stein’s trail.” She shrugged. “I went to his apartment to see if he had left any clues as to the project he was working on.”

Liddell drew up a wooden chair and sat down. “How come you’re the expert on Stein at Shinbet? You aren’t old enough to have had contact with him.”

“My parents did. They were French Jews who lived in Paris during the Occupation. The Gestapo arrested them one night and they were taken to Fresnes, the Gestapo prison. My grandparents smuggled me out of the country.” Her eyes went hard. “I was sixteen before I finally learned what happened to them.”

“The ovens?”

The girl shook her head. “Worse. Stein took pleasure in forcing women prisoners to participate in sex exhibitions. They practiced every form of perversion in the texts, and some he invented, to avoid being sent to Dachau. My mother avoided both Dachau and Stein. She committed suicide.”

“Your father?”

“He heard the news through the prison grapevine. He tried to kill a guard. They took him out into the courtyard and shot him.”

“So you have a personal interest in Stein?”

Andrea took another swallow from her glass. “I prayed for him every night. Prayed that he survived. I studied every scrap of information about him I could find. This is the closest I have come to him—”

“The address book. Did it give you any leads?”

“Thus far, very few. We went through it page by page and eliminated all but Paris addresses.” She opened her bag, rummaged through it, came up with a typewritten list of names. “We are checking every address. Our men here—Henri is typical—wear a bigger size in shoes than they do in hats. They are not clever, but they plod on endlessly. They do not miss much.”

“What do you have in mind?”

“I have a proposition. We both want Stein. It does not matter whether his neck yields to the guillotine in Paris or the hangman’s noose in Tel Aviv. I suggest we join forces and work together.”

Liddell swirled the liquor around the inside of his glass. “If Lee was murdered because he was getting close to Stein, it means we’re after boys who play for keeps.”

The girl smiled at him. “If you fear that I will be a burden, please rest assured that I am a big girl who can take good care of herself. If you wonder what advantage you would gain by cooperating, just remember that I have an organization behind me. You are alone in a strange country.”

“What’s the advantage to you?”

Andrea sipped at her glass, studied him over the rim. “I have all the muscle I need. I wish to add the thing which is in short supply—brains.”

“You didn’t seem to be much impressed this afternoon when you let Pretty Boy beat a tattoo on my neck.”

She shrugged. “I had no dossier on you then. I have it now.” She let her eyes wander over the heavy shoulders, the strong jaw. “Besides, you are not the fragile type.”

“Suppose we do tie up together. What do you have to throw into the pot?” Liddell asked. “Besides your organization?”



“The fact that I know more about Fritz Mendl Stein than anyone living. He made certain to slaughter any prisoner who ever met him face to face. All records and pictures of the Gestapo were destroyed when they withdrew from Paris. That was one of the things that frustrated Lee. He had combed the files in Interpol, in Berlin and even in the Hôtel de Ville here in Paris where all records are stored. He could find no pictures.”

Liddell finished his drink, set it down. “But?”

“The reason there were no files in Berlin is that Allied bombing had leveled the Documents Center where dossiers of all the party greats had been kept. What he did not know is that the Berlin Documents Center was moved to a paper mill in the country. Our agents reached it first. There were many dossiers we wanted. One of them was on Stein.”

“A picture?”

The girl nodded. “A picture.” She paused for a second. “When you have convinced me of your sincerity, the picture will be made available to you.” She set her glass on the table. “You stayed at the apartment for almost an hour after we left. Did you find anything?”

Liddell grinned wryly. “You left Pretty Boy to tail me?”

“We had to know where to find you.”

“He did a pretty good job,” Liddell conceded. “I didn’t make him.”

“In his mindless, muscular way Henri is one of the best.” She eyed Liddell patiently. “You did not answer my question.”

“Did I find anything,” he repeated. “Matter of fact, I didn’t realize I did until just now.” He got up, poured himself a fresh drink, brought it back to the chair. “We found a lot of dirty pictures in the apartment. At the time, it struck me as funny—and sad—that a guy in Lee’s condition would get his kicks from them. It would be like self-torture. But something you said makes sense.”

“How?”

“You said Stein had a ripe reputation where women were concerned. He liked to degrade them and torture them. Right?”

Andrea nodded wordlessly.

“As head of the prison Gestapo, he could do anything he wanted with them, make them do anything he ordered to avoid punishment. He must

have had some pretty far-out tastes to cause women to commit suicide rather than provide him with entertainment.”

“That was twenty years ago.”

“A pervert doesn’t change as he gets older. If anything, he goes in for it more and more. It’s like taking dope. You have to increase the dose to keep getting kicks. Where would he get the opportunity to indulge his perversions today?”

The puzzled look faded from Andrea’s eyes. “Orgies? Peep shows? Circuses?”

Liddell nodded. “They don’t sell souvenir programs from that kind of show. They peddle pictures of the action. Barry Lee wouldn’t have wanted to be conspicuous by not buying them. So he bought them along with all the rest of the voyeurs.”

The girl studied Liddell’s face for a moment. “He would not attend such exhibitions for kicks, to use your term. He went to them hoping Stein might some day appear. Is that your reasoning?”

“That’s the way I read it. But in order to recognize Stein he had to have some picture or description to check him with. That’s probably why he needed your people to help.”

Andrea drained her glass, held it out for a refill. “I might get used to bourbon if I had someone to swallow my first drink for me.” She watched him pour two fingers of liquor into the glass.

“How are you on orgies?” Liddell asked.

Andrea took a deep swallow from her glass. “With me it is a matter of mood. Why?”

Liddell freshened his drink. “I believe it’s customary to bring your own partner. The exhibition sets the theme. The rest of the evening is an individual variation on a theme.”

“You really take this working together theme seriously.” The girl smiled at him. “How about Barry? Do you think he had a partner?”

Liddell considered the question. “He must have.” He frowned slightly. “The address book. Any women’s names?”

“A few.”

“We’ll check them out. Your boys are only checking the males to see if any on the list look like Stein.” He sipped at his drink thoughtfully. “If Lee could hire her, I could probably do the same thing if you didn’t want—”

Andrea held her glass out again. There was a new sparkle in her eye.

“What kind of a partner do you think I am?” she demanded. “I am a working partner, that is what I am.”

“Oh,” Liddell said. “I see.”

Andrea set down her glass, pulled herself out of the chair. She motioned for him to sit in it. Then she climbed into his lap. “Since we shall be working together so closely, we must become better acquainted,” she told him.

They did.

# Chapter 7

THE telephone on the night-table started to peal shrilly, interrupting Johnny Liddell in the middle of a particularly enjoyable dream. He grunted, turned over and buried his head in the pillow. The phone continued to ring.

Liddell muttered something impolite, started to turn over again and collided with the other body under the covers with him. He opened his eyes, got up on his elbow.

Andrea Moreau lay on her back, her long black hair a tangle on the pillow. The sheet had been pushed down, baring her to the waist. Her breasts were pear-shaped, the nipples delicate pink blurs on the whiteness of her skin. There was a faint bluish tint to her closed lids.

Liddell reached out, snatched the receiver off its hook.

“Johnny?” an almost unbearably cheerful voice barked at him. “Alex Ramey here.”

Liddell expressed an opinion of people who went about telephoning other people in the middle of the night.

“Middle of the night, hell,” Ramey told him. “It’s almost noon.”

“To me it’s the middle of the night,” Liddell complained. “I was up until almost five this morning working on this damn case.”

The agent’s sniff came across the wire. “Anybody I know?”

“I was reading your damn galleys.” Liddell’s eyes sought out the empty bourbon bottle. He groaned softly.

“Good. Reason I called is that I have to get back to the States. They’ve released the body. I’m flying it back on Air France tonight. If you’re finished with the galleys, I’d like to take them back with me. Can you meet me for a drink at Fouquets or do you want me to send a messenger for them?”

“You dropping the inquiry into Barry Lee’s death?”

Ramey barked his horror into the mouthpiece. “Of course not. We want you to go ahead with it—” He broke off. “I guess I could stay if you need me, but—”

“No, Alex. You go ahead home. I’ll handle from here. I’ll leave your family jewels with the concierge for your messenger. I’d have that drink with you but I’ve got a lot of things to do today.” Liddell glanced at Andrea, who was sitting up in bed, the sheet held modestly to her throat. “A lot of things.”

“If there’s anything you need, call our Paris office. They’ll be handling the disposition of Barry’s stuff.” Ramey cleared his throat. “In the meantime, I’ll send our retainer as soon as I get back to the office.” He hesitated for a moment. “He was murdered, wasn’t he?”

“He was murdered, Alex.”

“Then take it easy, Johnny. I don’t want you on my conscience.”

Liddell chuckled. “It’s been tried.”

“It’s like the guy said to the girl in the back seat. There’s got to be a first time.”

“Don’t worry about it, Alex. I’ll be seeing you.”

“I hope so. Let us know as soon as you come up with anything. If you do.”

“I’ll be in touch.” Liddell dropped the receiver back on its hook.

“Anything?” Andrea asked from the bed.

“Alex Ramey is flying Lee’s body to New York tonight. I think he’s beginning to get cold feet.”

“You are not?”

“No. But if I keep on standing out here, I will. So I’ll just crawl under the covers and warm up. That won’t take long.”

Andrea shook her head. “It would. And we don’t have the time.” She eluded him as he reached for her, slid out of bed and padded toward the bathroom. Her buttocks were rounded and satiny as she ran.

Liddell sighed as she closed the door behind her. He picked up his robe from the back of the chair, walked through into the sitting room and through the French doors onto the little balcony beyond.

A few minutes later, Andrea walked out of the bathroom fully dressed. She had piled her thick black hair on the top of her head. Her eyelids were carefully tinted to enhance the oval effect. She wore no lipstick.

Stiletto heels clicked as she crossed to the balcony, stopped in front of him and smiled up into his face. Then she slid her arms around his neck, pressed her lips against his mouth. He encircled her waist, pressed her body against his. After a moment, she put the flat of her hands against his chest and pushed him away. She jabbed at her hair with the tips of her fingers and took a deep breath.

“Take a little, leave a little,” she told him.

Inside the living room, she dug into her bag for her lipstick, leaned close to the wall mirror, and applied it.

“When shall I see you and where?” she asked his reflection in the mirror.

“How about a drink at Fouquets about four?”

“I shall arrive as close to four as I can. If you arrive first, be sure to take a table in the third or fourth row. The dogs in this town prefer nylon to hydrants.” She smiled at him, turned and headed for the door.

Liddell went back onto the balcony. He leaned on the railing until Andrea exited onto the sidewalk below. She paused, looked up, and waved. Then she walked to the curb and flagged a cab.

The address on the photographer’s receipt taped to the underside of the sink in Barry Lee’s apartment was a white stone building on Boulevard Saint-Michel. The building had been sand-blasted into whiteness in conformance with the government’s edict. It succeeded in giving the block a mottled appearance since some of the other buildings were half white, half soot colored as work on them was progressing. The one adjoining it was coal black in defiance of the clean-up edict.

Johnny Liddell walked into the lobby, studied the tenant registry. The building apparently was a headquarters for photographers and model agencies. Gorgeous young things, portfolios under their arms, stood clotted in little groups gossiping and exchanging notes.

The registry listed André Boutin’s studio on the sixth floor.

An ancient open-cage elevator creaked and groaned its way to the sixth floor. Johnny Liddell got out, walked to the end of the hall where two

ground-glass doors bore the information “André Boutin Studios.”

The anteroom was filled with girls of all sizes, shapes and hair colorings. Most of them carried a portfolio or a hatbox, the symbols of their profession.

A telephone operator-receptionist sat in a glass booth that faced out into the anteroom. She was engrossed in flipping through the pages of *Realtiés*, stopping to examine critically the fashion photographs. She reminded Liddell of a postman going for a hike on his day off.

He waited for a moment for her to acknowledge his presence. When she showed no sign of looking up, he rapped his knuckles on the glass. She looked up, making no attempt to wipe the boredom out of her eyes. As though it was a wasted effort, she reached over and slid the panel open.

“Yes?”

“I’d like to see André Boutin.”

The girl looked doubtful. “He is very busy. He never sees anyone when he is shooting.”

“Try him. Tell him my name is Johnny Liddell. I’m a private detective from the United States. I won’t take up much of his time.”

A flicker of interest wiped some of the boredom out of her eyes. “A private detective?” She looked around, dropped her voice. “You are on a case?”

Liddell went along with the gag. He, too, looked around, lowered his voice. “Yes.”

The receptionist slid the panel shut, stuck a plug in a hole in the switchboard, wiggled her key back and forth. She spoke into the mouthpiece, nodded, yanked the plug out. She slid the glass partition open. “He can give you five minutes.” She pointed to a door at the far side of the booth. “The studio is at the end of the hall.”

As Liddell walked up to the door, an electric latch stuttered and the door opened. Beyond, a corridor with closed doors on either side led to double doors at the far end.

Liddell opened one of the double doors and walked into the studio.

André Boutin had damp, dreamy eyes. These, combined with an esthetic pallor, a long face and pouty wet lips, gave the photographer the appearance of being far removed from the crass facts of life.

He was adjusting the folds of a drape over the prominent breasts of a well-endowed redhead when Liddell walked in. He wasted an incurious glance on Liddell, nodded slightly, and turned his attention back to the drape. He continued to fuss with it until it seemed to reveal rather than conceal the breasts.

The girl sat placidly, giving no sign that she noticed the photographer maneuvering her breasts, tucking the drape around them until he got just the right effect. He stepped back, squinted at her, finally nodded his approval.

“This will not take long,” he assured Liddell.

“Don’t hurry on my account,” Liddell said.

The photographer walked back to his camera, stuck his head under the black cloth, studied the effect through the lens. He ducked his head out from under the cloth, slid a plate into the camera, held up a warning hand, then squeezed the bulb.

“One more for insurance, my dear,” he told the girl.

He replaced the plate with a new one, waited for a moment, then squeezed the bulb again. He nodded to the girl. “That is all for today,” he told her.

The redhead stepped off the stool, slid the drape back off her shoulders, baring C-cup breasts. She headed for the dressing room beyond. Her rear clenched and unclenched softly as she walked.

The dreamy-eyed man walked over to Liddell, offered a clammy hand in greeting. “I do not often interrupt my shooting sessions, but I was curious to know what an American private detective would want of me.”

“I don’t blame you for not wanting to be disturbed.” Liddell glanced in the direction of the dressing room. “With something like that to demand your attention.”

“It is like any other business,” the photographer shrugged. “After a while it becomes only merchandise.”

“I know why you keep your hands off the merchandise. What I don’t know is how you can do it.” Liddell grinned.

“One develops an attitude. When you have seen one naked woman, you have seen them all.”

“I know.” Liddell sighed. “But I’ve got such a bad memory.”



Boutin checked his watch. "It is early. But could you use a drink?"

"You just said the magic word," Liddell told him.

The photographer led the way into a large, tastefully appointed office just off the studio. The rug was heavy pile, the windows were draped. The illumination in the room came from hidden indirect-lighting fixtures.

A large hand-carved Jacobean desk of black walnut dominated the room; the chairs were deep and comfortable-looking. On the walls, in recessed frames, a dozen famous models gave ample samples of their dental and breast works.

Boutin walked over to a small portable bar set against the wall. He brought out two glasses. "Pernod? Raphael? Champagne?" he asked.

"Pernod," Liddell told him.

The photographer scooped some ice from a silver bucket, dumped it into one of the glasses. He poured the greenish Pernod over it, added some water to turn it a milky color.

For himself, Boutin half-filled a goblet with champagne, added cognac. He carried Liddell's glass over to him, indicated one of the chairs, walked around the big desk and dropped into his desk chair.

"Now we can talk. What is this about, please?" He sipped at his French 75, smacked his lips.

"You knew Barry Lee, the American writer?"

The photographer nodded. "He lived only a few blocks from here. We met a number of times at local parties." He sipped at his drink, waited.

Liddell fumbled through his pockets, came up with the receipt he had found in the apartment. He leaned over, handed it across the desk to Boutin.

The photographer glanced at the receipt, flipped it onto the desk. "I was doing some work for him. This was his receipt."

Liddell took a swallow from his glass. "What kind of work?"

Boutin took the base of his glass between thumb and forefinger, stimulated the bubbles by swirling its contents around the sides. "You are a private detective. You are making inquiries on whose behalf?"

"Lee's literary agent. Barry had promised some additional material on a new book. It hasn't arrived. We're trying to locate it." When the

photographer continued to hesitate, he added, “Alex Ramey is his agent. He’s at the Royale. You can check him.”

The dreamy-eyed man gnawed at his lips. “I believe I am supposed to ask for your credentials. That is what they always do in the crime shows I watch on television.”

Liddell grinned, brought out his wallet, spread his credentials on the desktop.

Boutin picked them up, fingered through them with interest. “It must be an exciting way to make a living,” he told Liddell as he passed them back.

Liddell returned the wallet to his breast pocket, glanced around the room at the framed pictures. “Stimulating,” he conceded, “but not as stimulating as your way of doing it.”

“It’s overrated,” the photographer told him lugubriously. “The same thing day after day.”

“What a way to go, bored by it all,” Liddell said. “About this work you were doing for Barry. Do I get to see it?”

The photographer shrugged. “Perhaps I am making a fuss over nothing. Barry said it was confidential, but no doubt he intended to give his publisher the facts.”

He took a deep swallow from his glass, set it down on the desk and got to his feet. He walked across the room, slid back a wood panel that concealed a built-in filing cabinet. He unlocked a drawer with a key on his chain, pulled it open and fumbled among some manila envelopes. He selected one, brought it back to the desk, unwound the string on the cardboard discs on the back of the envelope.

“One day Barry approached me at a cocktail party. He wanted to know if I could pick one head out of a group and enlarge it. I told him it would be very simple.”

He spilled some glossies and a postcard-sized negative onto the desk.

“A week or so later he came by and left me the picture.” He handed the negative to Liddell. “I made this negative of it for the enlargement.”

Liddell held the negative up to the light, squinted at it. He saw a number of men against what appeared to be a background of mountains. He handed the negative back. “And the head he wanted?”

Boutin picked up one of the glossies, handed it over.

It was a three-quarter view of a thin face. The man wore no hat, his hair was light-colored, combed in a three-quarter part, flattened down against his skull. His middle-aged good looks were marred by a thin, cruel mouth and hooded eyes.

“He didn’t say who the man was?”

The photographer shook his head. “No. He merely emphasized the fact that it was confidential and was in some way connected with a book he had written.” He indicated the prints on the desk. “I was rather busy, so I turned it over to an assistant. I was not satisfied with the result, but Barry was very excited with it and took the first print with him. I promised to work on it myself, as soon as I had the time, and get him some better prints.”

Liddell picked up the negative, studied it again. “Any idea of where the picture was taken?”

“The background reminds me of the Alps, but that is just a guess.”

“A good guess, I think,” Liddell said. “The locale of the book he mentioned was in the Austrian Alps.” He flipped the negative back onto the desk. “I’d like to take along a copy of the blow-up if it’s all right with you.”

Boutin shrugged. “Why not? Barry Lee will not need it, certainly. And it is of no use to me.”

# Chapter 8

THE headquarters for Interpol is on Rue Valéry, a few hundred yards from Avenue Victor Hugo. It is housed in an unpretentious, unmarked building that could be the town house of a banker or a diplomat. To add to the illusion of peace and quiet, it has its own courtyard where bourgeois Peugeot and Citroën grudgingly leave space for Mercedes-Benz.

Johnny Liddell dropped his cab at the curb, walked up to the two huge doors. They opened into a large, plain hall.

To the right, a staircase led to the upper floors, its railing decorated with the flags of the seventy-eight participating nations. It always annoyed Liddell that the Stars and Stripes are conspicuous by their absence. Although the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover was one of the prime movers in reviving Interpol after World War II, he withdrew the United States from membership when Communist Czechoslovakia used the facilities of the world police organization to track down refugees who had fled to West Germany. Although the U.S. is not a member, the FBI continues to make its files available to Interpol and has continued to offer its cooperation.

Johnny Liddell crossed to the receptionist at a desk in the far corner of the foyer. The girl behind the desk watched his approach with no sign of interest.

"Is Inspector Ricot in?" Liddell asked.

"Your name, please?"

"Johnny Liddell. The inspector knows me."

He waited while the girl plugged in on a miniature switchboard and murmured a few words into the mouthpiece. When she tugged the key out, she nodded.

"He will see you. Room 243 on the next floor."

Inspector Ricot stood up as Liddell walked into his office. He was a squat, heavyset man with a completely bald cue-ball head. He had high cheekbones, a nose that had been broken and badly reset. His eyes were

almost colorless, steel gray. With his chunkiness and the way his head sat on his heavy shoulders, he gave the impression of being muscular.

“Ah, Liddell!” He smiled as he pushed his hand across the desk, gave Johnny’s a firm grip, returned it. “I thought we would be seeing you back in Paris.” He indicated the chair on the far side of the desk, waited until Johnny had made himself comfortable before he sat down himself. “Pleasure, this time?”

Liddell scratched his head. “It started out that way.”

The bald-headed man raised his eyebrows. “And now?”

“Now I’m not too sure.” He dug into his pocket, brought up the pack of American cigarettes, held it out toward Ricot, drew a shake of the bald man’s head. “You are familiar with the recent death of the American writer, Barry Lee? It was supposed to be a suicide.”

“Supposed to be?”

Liddell grinned glumly. “His literary agent contacted me yesterday. He’s convinced that Lee was murdered.” He hung a cigarette from the corner of his mouth and watched the inspector’s expression.

Ricot thought for a moment, then raised his shoulders in a Gallic shrug. “I would know nothing of this. That is a matter for the Metropolitan Police, not Interpol.”

“The Metropolitan Police have written it off as suicide. I’m convinced it was murder.” At a gesture from the bald man, Liddell pulled a chair close to the desk and sat down.

“The motive?”

“Barry Lee has a book coming out shortly based on the Redoubt at Alt Aussee.”

Ricot grinned. “Surely it is not bad enough that someone should murder him. Isn’t that usually left to the reviewers?”

“Some of the material in it could be hot enough to cause someone to want him dead. Fritz Mendl Stein, for instance.”

The man behind the desk drew open the center drawer, brought out a half-empty blue pack. He shook a cigarette loose, tapped it on the edge of the desk. “Mendl Stein died in the bunker with Hitler, according to the records.”

Liddell snorted. “If all the guys died in that bunker that are supposed to have, it was more crowded than a Times Square express during rush hour.”

Ricot set fire to the cigarette, exhaled twin streams of blue smoke through his nostrils, giving off the pungent aroma of French tobacco. “You think Mendl Stein is still alive?” he asked softly.

“You were on the scene back in 1945, weren’t you?”

The bald man shook his head. “When Mendl Stein was running the Gestapo in Paris, I was in London doing liaison work between the Comité Français Liberation Nationale and the Americans.” He smiled ruefully. “Between de Gaulle and your people, it would have been easier on the nerves to be in Paris. When LeClerc made his move to liberate Paris, I joined his staff as head of intelligence. That was when we first heard of the *Alpenfestung*. The word was that it wouldn’t be breached in a hundred years.” Wincing as the spiraling smoke stung his eye, he dried the corner of the eye with the ball of his pinky. “In the end it turned out to be no more than an escape hatch for the top Nazis.”

“Including Stein,” Liddell said. “Isn’t there any file on him? Records of some kind?”

“No files, no records. Officially he is dead.” He eyed Liddell with interest. “Can you prove otherwise?”

Liddell reached into his pocket, brought out the glossy print he’d gotten from the photographer. He laid it on the desk in front of the Interpol man. “Is this Fritz Mendl Stein?”

Ricot looked from the picture to Liddell’s face and back. “I don’t know. Is it?”

“I don’t know, either. Barry Lee was convinced that this is a picture of Stein taken in 1960, fifteen years after he was supposed to have died. In his book, Lee claims that Stein escaped through the Redoubt and is still alive. He was trying to expose Stein before his book came out.”

The butt in Ricot’s mouth had almost burned down to his lips. He lifted it out, dropped it into the ashtray to smoulder and send weaving smoke ceilingward. “So you were retained by Lee’s agent to prove that Lee was murdered because he was on the trail of Stein, is that not so?”

Liddell nodded.

“Can you be sure that it isn’t a case of a smart agent taking advantage of a suicide to build up a legend that will add sales to the book?”

“It’s a possibility,” Liddell agreed. “But Lee had been in touch with Israeli Intelligence. They still have an open file on Stein.”

Ricot rubbed his chin thoughtfully. “The Israeli Bureau of Nazi War Crimes keeps an open file on every important Nazi until they receive positive proof of his death. They rarely work through Interpol. They have an organization of their own.” He leaned back in his chair, laced his thick fingers at the nape of his neck. “If Stein were alive, it would be a master stroke to come back to Paris. It would be the last place anyone would think of looking for him.”

“He probably spoke French like a native,” Liddell pointed out. “All he’d need would be an identity and papers to prove it. With all the expert forgers and engravers they had in the concentration camps, that should be the least of his worries.”

Ricot rocked back and forth in his desk chair. “It worked for Gluecks and Müller,” he said. “Both pretended suicide, both are living somewhere in Germany today. Müller, Stein’s chief in the Gestapo, was supposed to be buried in the Berlin-Neukolln cemetery. When they opened the grave under his head-stone, they found three bodies in it. None was Müller’s.”

“Stein could have done the same thing. Assumed another identity.” Liddell watched the expression of the Interpol man. “Those Gestapo boys always played follow the leader. If one of them got away with it, they’d all try it.”

“What do you want me to do?”

Liddell scratched at the side of his jaw. “If Stein assumed the identity of one of his prisoners, the record would show that that prisoner was released. Probably at the time Stein left Paris.”

“There are no records. The Gestapo was very efficient. When it withdrew, it burned all of the records at Fresnes and slaughtered all of the prisoners. Most of them were unidentifiable. It would have sickened you to see what was left of the poor devils.” He reached over, picked up a telephone. “Still, there is a possibility that some of the guards would be willing to talk,” he told Liddell. Into the mouthpiece, “This is Ricot,” he told the clerk on the other end. “I have a Blue Circulation. Send a messenger.”

Interpol in Paris has a staff of only fifty-one men and women, but it is in constant contact with the federal police agencies of its seventy-eight member countries. It coordinates the work of all these forces through its

radio and television network. In a year this network receives and handles over a hundred thousand calls.

Interpol sends its requests for information in the form of a “circulation.” The Red Circulation is top priority and urgent. It requires the immediate arrest and extradition of the person involved. The Blue Circulation seeks information about the person, his identity, his aliases, a list of his friends, associates and his criminal record. The Green Circulation merely advises that the person mentioned is under suspicion and should be watched.

Ricot dropped the receiver on its hook and nodded to Liddell. “It will go on the wire immediately.”

Liddell stood up. “I guess there’s nothing more I can do around here until you get a kickback. You’re probably too busy just to sit and talk.” He shoved his hand across the desk and gave the inspector’s hand a firm grip. “Thanks for the assist.”

“Check with me tomorrow,” Ricot told him. He watched Liddell cross to the door, walk out into the corridor and close the door behind him.

If Fritz Mendl Stein really is alive, Ricot thought, Liddell is doing *me* the favor.

Outside of Heinrich Müller himself, there was no member of the Gestapo Ricot would rather find alive. Two of his sisters would never forget the day when the S.S. had splintered the door of the Ricot home. The S.S. had produced warrants signed by Fritz Mendl Stein ordering the arrest of their husbands.

A local Vichy official told them that the family of André Ricot had been deprived of its French citizenship because he was fighting with General de Gaulle. All male members of the family had been decreed enemies of the Vichy government and had been condemned to death by the Gestapo.



# Chapter 9

FOUQUETS sits at the corner of the Champs-Élysées and Avenue Georges Cinq. The five rows of tables on the boulevard side are considered to be the world headquarters of the Girl Watchers Society.

Here, the table sitter has an unobstructed view of the Arc de Triomphe if his tastes run in the direction of that kind of architecture. If, however, his tastes run more to bouncing breasts and rounded bottoms, he also has an aisle seat from which to judge a goodly portion of the female population of Paris. Hour after hour, the girls ankle by, giving their hips an extra wiggle or walking with a bouncy stride that causes a pleasant stir, like a rippling of waves, in their superstructure.

Johnny Liddell sat at a table in the third row. He checked his watch for the third time, noted that Andrea was already ten minutes late. He signaled to the waiter to bring another Pernod.

A few tables away, a blonde with heavily made-up eyes and bloodless lips was eyeing him provocatively. Liddell sighed. It never rained but it poured and it looked as if today was going to be torrential.

Andrea Moreau stepped out of a cab at the curb, crossed the sidewalk and swivel-hipped her way through the tables to where Johnny sat. The interest drained out of the blonde's eyes. She tossed her blonde hair in disdain, let her eyes go prowling for more likely prey.

Andrea slid into the chair alongside Liddell. "I hope I interrupted something," she said.

The waiter flat-footed it to the table, slid the Pernod in front of Liddell.

"Drinking?" Johnny asked.

"Pernod will do." She eyed Liddell curiously. "How did you spend your day? Outside of doublecrossing me, I mean." She let her eyes roam around the adjoining tables to make certain no one was paying them undue attention.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Liddell asked.

“You did not mention visiting a photographer or Interpol.” She picked up his pack of cigarettes from the table, took one, rolled it between thumb and forefinger. “We are supposed to be partners. Remember?”

Liddell eyed her coolly. “Is it customary to have your partner trailed?”

“It is if he withholds information.” She broke off as the waiter returned with her drink, slipped the tab under the ashtray with the others. She hung the cigarette from her lips, leaned over to accept a light while the waiter clumped out of earshot. “Now,” she said. “The facts.”

Liddell added water from the small pitcher to the two glasses, and stirred them. “There was a receipt from a photographer among Barry’s papers. I figured this was where he got his dirty pictures. So I forgot about it.” He took a swallow from his glass, made concentric circles on the table with the wet bottom. “Then, last night we were wondering if he got them at some kind of an exhibition. So, this morning I dropped by to find out what the receipt would buy me. It wasn’t dirty pictures.”

“So instead of bringing it to us you ran to Interpol with it?”

“Not exactly. I wanted to check out an idea. If Stein is living in Paris, it’s certainly not under his own name. There’s a possibility he took the name of one of his prisoners so that, if and when he came back here, he’d have a background to fall back on,” he told her in a low voice. “I wanted Interpol to try to get the names of any prisoners who walked out of Fresnes alive. Especially toward the end of the Occupation.”

The girl’s mouth drooped sulkily. “My people could have obtained the names. You did not have to go to Interpol. I do not like the idea of working with them.”

“You’re not. I am. They’re not particularly crazy about the way your people operate, either.”

Andrea sniffed. “That is because we are interested in uncovering war criminals, not in covering them up.”

“Your people can work on it, too. Maybe they can locate people who were in Fresnes. Interpol may be able to reach former Gestapo guards who were at Fresnes. They’d never talk for you. They might for Interpol.”

The girl smoked for a moment. “You have not told me what you got from the photographer.”

“A picture of a man.”

“Where is it?”

“Where I can lay my hands on it at a moment’s notice.”

“At Interpol, I suppose?” She sneered. “You think we might take it away from you?”

“The thought had entered my head,” Liddell said easily. “Especially when I made your tail when I left Boutin’s.”

“You are bluffing. You would never have known you were being followed if I hadn’t told you.”

“Am I?” Liddell leaned forward, craned his neck. “That’s him down there in the brown suit, nursing the Raphael. Shinbet expense money must be pretty thin. He’s been on the same drink since he got here.”

“You knew all the time?” she asked incredulously.

Liddell nodded. “And it didn’t do much to enhance the spirit of cooperation. As a matter of fact, if you want to keep on playing games, you’re going to have to find another playmate. Maybe this is how you do things in your cloak-and-dagger game, but in my racket we have other ground rules.”

The girl took a last drag on her cigarette, then dropped it to the sidewalk. She carefully stamped it out to lay among a number of other flattened cigarettes. Then, without a word she got up, walked over to where the man in the brown suit sat toying with his glass. She sat down beside him.

Liddell’s attention strayed as the blonde at the other table stood up. A man in a beret and a sleeveless sweater over an open-necked sports shirt and baggy slacks picked up the tabs from under her ashtray and dropped a handful of silver on the table.

When she stood, Liddell could see that her cantilevered construction compared favorably with that of the other national monuments he had inspected. She slipped her hand under the sweated man’s arm and strutted toward the boulevard. The man, a head shorter, had to hop to keep up with her freewheeling stride.

As the couple merged into the stream of promenaders that ebbs and flows the length of the boulevard throughout the day and half the night, Liddell returned his attention to Andrea and the man in the brown suit. The man left the table, headed toward the kiosk of the Étoile station of the Métro.

The Shinbet girl got up and headed back to where Liddell sat. Wordlessly, she slid into her seat. “Satisfied?” she asked finally.

“It’s a start,” Liddell said. “Unless he was just a rough tail.”

“What’s that mean?”

“It’s an old trick. The lead tail is so obvious the guy being tailed makes him easily and is able to shake him. But there’s another, less conspicuous one working behind the lead tail and he doesn’t get shaken.”

“You don’t trust me, do you?”

“No more than you trust me,” Liddell told her.

Andrea picked up her glass. She took a long swallow, studying him over the rim. Then she set the glass down. “There is no other tail,” she told him. “Now, to borrow an Americanism, shall we play it straight this time?”

“All cards on the table?”

“A deal.”

Liddell settled comfortably in his chair. “You know all about my day. How did you do?”

“Nothing sensational. Checking out the names in his address book is a long, slow process. Our men are working on it, but I doubt that we shall find our man in an address book.” She opened her bag and brought out a sheet of paper. “I made a list of the women in the book, as you asked. There were few.”

“Figures,” Liddell grunted. He took the list, glanced at it, then refolded it and stuck it into his pocket.

“We checked every name against our files. There was one that might be interesting. She was a collaborationist. I did not put any of our men on it. I thought you would like to investigate her yourself. That was before I found out how tricky you really are.”

Liddell pulled the list out of his pocket. “She on this list?”

The girl hesitated for a second. “Helena Gregory.”

He ran his eyes down the list, underscored the name “Helena Gregory” with his thumbnail. “Got anything more on her?”

“Just that she lived with a Nazi officer. When the Nazis withdrew he left her to the mercy of the crowd. She got the full treatment—head shaved,

paraded through the streets naked, the lot. She was arrested and tried by the French and sent to a women's prison. According to Lee's address book, she is still in Paris."

Liddell consulted the list. "Rue Boutarel." He looked up. "Do you have any idea where that would be?"

"Île Saint-Louis, just beyond Notre Dame."

"It could be a real live lead," Liddell said. "I'll check it out right away." He started to get up.

"A moment, please. Not so fast." Andrea caught his sleeve. "First, we drop by Interpol and pick up that picture."

Liddell reached into his pocket and brought out the glossy. "See how much better it is to trust each other?"

The girl stared at him. "You had it all the time?"

"That was when we were playing cloak and dagger. You open up, I open up."

The Shinbet agent studied the print.

"Well?" Liddell said.

"He is a lot older," she told him cautiously. "I should like to take this with me. A plain head shot like this makes it more difficult. Since we have no fingerprints, one of our experts must make an anthropometry comparison of the pictures."

"Sounds impressive," Liddell said. "What is it?"

"A method developed by Bertillon before the fingerprint system of identification was adopted. It's still used when no fingerprints are on file." She studied the photograph dubiously. "We don't even have enough here for the full four-point comparison, but I think we have enough to tell us if we are on the right track." She looked up at Liddell. "You have never heard of it?"

Liddell shook his head.

"It is based on a comparison of four parts. They compare measurements of the body—height, reach, length of outstretched arms from fingertip to fingertip. That we cannot check. But in a head shot like this, we can enlarge the head in the other picture to a comparable size, then compare the length and breadth of each head compared to the length and breadth of the right ear.

The third check is the length of the limbs, length of the left foot, length of the left middle finger and the length of the left forearm.”

“Why the left?”

“The left side of the body is less liable to change, to development and alteration resulting from physical work than the right side.”

“And the fourth comparison?”

“A comparison of full-face and profile photographs—expression, details of scars, coloration, deformities and birthmarks, color of hair, shape of nose, ears and mouth.” She tapped the picture. “This will give us two excellent areas of comparison. As I said, it will not be a positive identification, but we can tell if it is the same man.” Her voice dropped. “If it is, we know that our man did not die in 1945 and that he is probably in Paris right now.”

Liddell nodded. “Okay, then we’ve both got our work cut out for us for the rest of the day. When do you think you’ll have some word on the comparison test?”

Andrea checked her watch. “You will be at your hotel tonight?”

Liddell nodded.

“It is now four-thirty. I should have word before midnight. I shall call you.”

# Chapter 10

THE sharp prow of the Vert Galant at the end of the Île de la Cité divides the Seine in two. On its left bank are the university area and the Latin Quarter. On the right bank the business area of the city proper. Notre Dame shares the Île with the Prefecture de Police and the Palais de Justice. The fragilely beautiful Sainte-Chapelle Cathedral and the law courts are within the gates of the Palais de Justice.

The Boulevard du Palais bisects the Île and joins the main street of the Latin Quarter, Boulevard Saint-Michel, with the main artery of the right bank's business district, the Boulevard de Sebastapol.

The cab barreled across the Pont au Change onto Île de la Cité, swung onto the Quai de la Corse. Liddell could see the forbidding pile of stones that was the Hôtel de Ville on the right bank, then they were crossing Pont Saint-Louis into Île Saint-Louis.

Helena Gregory's address turned out to be a nondescript two-story brick building in a row of equally undistinguished brick buildings that lined both sides of Rue Boutarel.

Johnny Liddell paid the cabby, dropped a freshly lit cigarette to the sidewalk and crushed it out. He crossed the sidewalk, climbed a short flight of steps to a vestibule. Inside it was dim and cool. A row of rusting mailboxes supplied the information that Helena Gregory occupied 2A.

The hallway beyond was almost dark, redolent of aging wood and ancient cooking. A napless carpet ran from the vestibule to a flight of stairs leading to the upper floor.

Liddell crossed to the stairs and started up. The old house was breathing softly in repose, with only the creaking of the floorboards under his tread to be heard.

Apartment 2A was in the front. He knocked softly. When there was no answer, he knocked again.

There was a sound of a door opening. Some light spilled into the hallway from the rear apartment. A tall blonde stood in the doorway. She was

wearing a dressing gown that clung closely to a figure that was obviously worth clinging to. Her thick, glossy blonde hair was caught just below the ears with a bright blue ribbon, then allowed to cascade down over her shoulders.

She raised her eyebrows, let her eyes wander from the top of Liddell's head to his feet and back. She seemed to like what she saw.

"Looking for someone?" she asked in French-accented American.

"Helena Gregory," Liddell said.

The blonde looked mildly disappointed. "You'll never find her here this time of day. She's probably across the street in the Chat Vert." She eyed him curiously. "Gregory a friend of yours?"

"Never saw her in my life. She's a friend of a friend. He asked me to look her up."

The girl smiled. "I was wondering. You don't look her type."

"No? What's her type?"

"Soft and cuddly." The grin broadened. "Gregory's a dyke. Now, if it's a *girl* you're interested in—" she underscored the word further by jutting her breasts against the flimsy fabric of her robe—"I might be able to help you."

"Some other time," Liddell told her. "My business with Gregory is strictly business."

The blonde grinned at him lazily. "Any time you're in the neighborhood, drop in." She walked back into the apartment and closed the door behind her.

Le Chat Vert turned out to be a huge subterranean room that had been built by knocking out the wall between the cellars of two four-story buildings.

The main lighting was provided by the stubs of candles stuck in the necks of bottles. Smoke eddied near the ceiling like early-morning meadow mist. The rough cellar walls were daubed with far-out paintings and off-color homosexual slogans.

A half dozen figures in slacks and open-necked shirts stood at a rough bar against the far wall. They eyed Liddell hostilely as he stood in the entrance, his eyes adjusting to the gloom. It wasn't until he walked over to



the bar that he realized that all six were lesbians in drag. They moved away as he stepped up to the bar.

The man behind the bar was almost six two. His hair was wavy and fluffy, as though it had been teased, his jawline blurred by a heavy overlay of fat. His eyes, buttressed by soft-looking bags, were damp-looking. He might have passed in other surroundings, but here, the petulance of his lips, the softness of his eyes and the limpness of his wrist were dead give-aways.

He went through the motions of drying the bar with a damp rag.

“Got any bourbon?” Liddell asked.

The bartender looked up at him with reproachful eyes. “We serve only members. This is a private club,” he said in a fruity voice.

Liddell looked from the bartender to the mannish creatures at the bar. They made no effort to mask their hostility.

“I’m looking for one of your members.” Liddell turned back to the bartender. “Helena Gregory.”

The man behind the stick continued to swab at the bar. “I don’t know if Gregory is here.” He tossed his head in the direction of the entrance, where there was a table far removed from the rest. “If you want to wait over there, I’ll find out.”

Liddell grunted, walked to the table and sat down. After a moment, a waitress in a loose sweater and jeans two sizes too small walked over. “You looking for Gregory?”

Liddell nodded.

“Does she know you?”

“No. We have a mutual friend. Tell her Barry Lee gave me her name.”

Liddell watched with interest the effect of the girl’s rounded bottom on the tight fabric of the jeans as she high-tailed it across the room. He sighed deeply. It was like sitting within reach of a pile of ten-dollar bills with the knowledge that they were counterfeit.

The girl in the jeans stopped at a table in the far corner of the room. The candle on the table was unlit, and only by squinting could Liddell make out the two figures seated at it. After a moment, one of the figures stood up and started over to where he sat.

She was tall and wore her hair short. The top buttons of her blouse were unbuttoned, a snug skirt hugged the curves of her long legs. She was no longer a kid, but Liddell could still see some signs of beauty. She stopped at the table, eyed him coldly.

“I’m Gregory,” she told him in a husky voice. “What do you want?”

“Barry Lee was a friend of mine—”

“Barry Lee’s dead,” she cut him off.

“I hope so,” Liddell said. “They’re about to bury him.” He dug into his pocket, brought out some cigarettes, offered one to the woman. She shook her head impatiently. “Last time I was in touch with him I told him I was doing a book about Paris—”

Gregory squinted at him. “You’re a writer? What’s your name?”

Liddell stuck a cigarette between his lips. “Johnny Liddell.”

“I’ve never heard of you,” she told him flatly.

“The story of my life.” Liddell sighed and lit his cigarette. “Anyway, as I’m trying to tell you, Barry told me that you knew Paris like the back of your hand. I need someone like you to help me gather color for the book.”

“The American Express runs the tours in this city,” Gregory said coldly. “Try them.”

“The book I’m writing is about the part of Paris tourists never see.” He grinned around his cigarette. “The part of Paris that would cause the nice little boy and girl guides of the American Express to faint dead away.”

“What makes you think I know that part of Paris?”

Liddell looked around. “This isn’t exactly finishing-school atmosphere. I’m willing to pay a good fee if you can open some doors for me.”

“Such as?”

Liddell lifted the cigarette from between his lips and blew smoke at the glowing end of it. “The tourists do enough writing about the Lido and the Folies Bergère.” He rolled his eyes up to her face. “I want to write about the kind of shows that would make the Kiwanis back home trample each other to death to read about.”

“And be satisfied with a handshake at the end of the night?”

“I’m not buying anything but a guided tour of places and people and things that I can use in my book.” He held the cigarette in the center of his lips, puffed on it.

Gregory considered for a moment “I hear about things every so often,” she conceded. “Suppose something interesting did come up. Where could I reach you?”

“I’m at the Hôtel des Étrangers. The name is Johnny Liddell.”

She repeated the information to herself softly, then bobbed her head. “You may be hearing from me.” She started to leave, but turned back. “At some of these affairs, you’ll need a friend.”

“Sort of an audience-participation show, huh?” He nodded. “I think I’ll be able to arrange it.”

The woman snorted. “I figured you would.” She turned, headed back to where a baby-faced blonde sat waiting for her.

Liddell got up, ground out his butt on the edge of the table and dropped it to the floor. He headed for the street.

Helena Gregory sat at the darkened table, absentmindedly fondling the baby-faced blonde. As soon as Liddell disappeared through the door, she stood up.

“Are you leaving again?” the blonde pouted.

“Just to make a telephone call,” Gregory assured her. She walked to the rear of the room and stepped into a telephone booth. She dialed a number, then waited.

“Yes? Who is it?” a cultured voice asked.

“Gregory.”

There was a note of annoyance in the voice. “What do you want? You have been paid, have you not?”

“Yes.”

“Then the matter is closed—”

The woman smiled glumly at the mouthpiece. “And if the matter has not been closed?”

“What does that mean?”

“A man just left here. An American. He says he was a friend of Barry Lee’s. He wants to hire me to guide him around the parts of Paris that tourists don’t see. He claims he’s a writer.”

“But?”

“He smells dangerous to me.”

There was a sniff from the other end. “It has been a long time since you have had anything to do with a man. Perhaps that is it?” The voice grew thoughtful. “However, there is no sense in taking chances. You know how to reach him?”

“He’s registered at the Hôtel des Étrangers under the name of Johnny Liddell.”

“You will contact him. Tonight at ten, you will take him to an exhibition. It will give us time to find out who he is and what he is. You will keep him occupied for at least three hours.” A note of finality entered his voice. “How you do it is your concern.” There was a click as the phone on the other end was slammed back onto its hook.

Helena replaced her instrument on its hook, and stared at it for a moment. Then she stalked back to the table.

The baby-faced blonde smirked expectantly as Helena slid onto the chair beside her, close enough for their thighs to touch. The blonde responded eagerly as the short-haired woman leaned over and pressed her lips against her mouth and stroked the roundness of her thigh under the table.

Then, without warning, Helena pushed her chair back, got up and walked away from the table. For the first time in many years, she found that her heart wasn’t in a new conquest.

She didn’t see one of the group at the bar walk over to the table, talk to the blonde and then slide in alongside her. If she had, she wouldn’t have cared.

She had an uneasy foreboding of doom. She had been a fool ever to let herself get mixed up with Stein.

The liberation of Paris with the excesses of the natives, the degradation they piled on her because she had lived with a Nazi officer had left her with a hatred of the city and the people in it. She lived from hand to mouth during the last days of the war and the first postwar years.

No one forgot or forgave the years of the Occupation. They had long since stopped spitting at her on the street and it had been years since anyone had crossed to the other side of the avenue to avoid being near her. But the scars were still there.

It wasn't until the wave of tourists and the influx of American expatriates came that she began to live again. They clustered on the Île Saint-Louis, huddled together to hide their American accents and tried to be more French than the French. Helena Gregory became a minor celebrity in the colony.

The war was long over when she saw Fritz Mendl Stein for the first time since the Occupation. He had aged, he looked and spoke like a native Parisian. But her years of association with the Nazis made it possible for her to see beneath the thin veneer and recognize the arrogance and coldness that marked him as one.

He had tracked her down and appeared at her apartment. When she had opened the door in response to his knock, he stood in the doorway, gloves in hand, a grey homburg on his head. His double-breasted suit showed a real understanding with his tailor.

"It has been a long time, Helena," he told her.

Her eyes widened. She stared at him for a moment, recognition coming slowly. "You're—"

"André Leroux," he cut her off easily. "May I come in?"

She stood aside as he walked past her into a cluttered living room. It was filled with unattractive, dust-catching upholstered furniture. Newspapers were spread out over the couch, the open door showed a kitchenette with a sink full of dishes.

Helena closed the door behind him and walked into the living room, stood arms akimbo, balled fists on hips. "You sure have a nerve coming back here."

He removed his homburg and dropped it on a small table. "Why? André Leroux has every right to be in Paris."

"Fritz Mendl Stein hasn't," she snapped.

"Fritz Mendl Stein died in 1945."

"You mean André Leroux died in 1945 and Mendl Stein took his place."

The man shrugged, looked around. “Not exactly the lap of luxury, is it? I remember from the old days that you liked luxury. The finest of wines, the finest of everything.” He walked over to the couch, bent over and picked up an empty bottle that lay on the floor. He held it to his nostrils and made a face. “A far cry from this.”

“What do you want?”

“I want to give you a chance to go back to those days,” he told her. “I want you to work for me.”

“Doing what?”

“Helping to keep me entertained.”

Helena shook her head. “Things can never be the same. That was twenty years ago. I tried men. They gave me nothing but grief. I want nothing more to do with men.”

The thin man smiled coldly. “If you think I’m asking you to become my mistress, I’m not. You are well established in a fringe of Parisian life in which I am interested. I would want you to keep me informed of interesting events, preferably heterosexual, that I could attend.” The smile grew broader but failed to reach his eyes. “You were around in the old days. You must have heard something of my tastes?”

“I heard.” She eyed him incuriously. “I would not be expected to participate in any way?”

“In no way. You would act in effect as my talent scout.”

Helena thought hard for a moment, then nodded.

That had been the big mistake. Now, her continued existence was intertwined with his. And it was beginning to look as though he was in no position to start reading continued stories.

# Chapter 11

It was nearly seven-thirty when Johnny Liddell walked into the lobby of his hotel. The concierge waved him down from his cubicle near the desk, held out a telephone message to him. Liddell ransomed it with a five-franc piece.

The message, asking Liddell to call Helena Gregory, gave the telephone number of the Chat Vert. The time on the message was seven-ten. He checked his watch and crossed the lobby to the bank of telephone booths.

The fruity voice of the bartender answered from the other end.

“Helena Gregory,” Liddell told him.

“One minute.”

The line went dead for something longer than the promised minute, then the low voice of the woman came across the wire. “This is Gregory.”

“Liddell. You called?”

There was a perceptible pause. “I have heard of the filming of a New Wave picture tonight. You might find it interesting. I could arrange for you to attend.”

“Attend a shooting of a picture? I didn’t know they had an audience.”

“It is a paid audience. It helps defray the cost of the production. The audience sits out of camera range. Much of the action filmed tonight will be cut from the finished picture, by the censors of course. So the audience will get to see much that the theatre audience will miss.”

“From the New Wave pictures I’ve seen, I can’t imagine what could be cut out,” Liddell said. “The last one I saw had six scene changes. They remade the bed three times.”

“Are you interested in attending or not?” Gregory asked coldly.

“Of course. When and where?”

“I will have a car pick you up at your hotel at nine-thirty. You will be driven to where the scenes are being shot. Naturally, in the interests of not

having the subject matter of the story revealed prematurely, the location of the set is changed nightly.”

“Naturally,” Liddell agreed.

“You will be in the lobby of your hotel at nine-thirty then?”

“There’s just one catch. I don’t know where to reach my partner. You said this was a game of couples.”

There was a slight pause on the other end. “I would be willing to go as your partner this time,” she told him. “As long as you understand that I do not participate.”

“Consider it a baby-sitting assignment,” Liddell assured her. “What’s the contribution toward financing this epic?”

“Two hundred francs. Forty dollars American. Twenty for you, twenty for me.”

Liddell grunted. “That’s pretty rich entertainment.”

“The people who are producing it aren’t looking for the Métro trade. If it’s too rich for your blood—”

“Whoa!” Liddell protested. “I didn’t say that. I’ll be in the lobby at nine-thirty.”

“I’ll pick you up there,” Gregory told him.

There was a click as she dropped the receiver on its hook. Liddell replaced his receiver. “I hope the plot isn’t too complicated,” he muttered.

André Leroux stood at the window in the living room of the apartment on Faubourg Saint-Honoré. A sudden squall had come up, darkening the sky and pelting the streets below with a slanting rain that bounced off the pavement like buckshot.

The pale yellow street lights were wearing halos of mist as they spilled puddles of yellow light onto the rain-blackened street.

The peeling of the telephone brought him out of his reverie. He crossed the room and lifted the receiver off its hook.

“This is Gregory,” the husky voice said. “I have made the arrangements. He will attend the shooting of a new film. This will keep him occupied from ten until much past two.”



“Good.”

“Will you attend?”

Leroux hesitated. “No. First, I must know who and what this man is.” He picked up a pencil, pulled a pad toward him. “Give me his name again.”

“Johnny Liddell. Hôtel des Étrangers.”

The thin man scribbled the information on the pad, tore off the top sheet, stuck it in his pocket. “I will get back to you as soon as I have further instructions.” He replaced the receiver on the hook, walked back to the window and resumed staring out into the street.

The Auberge de la Résistance hadn't always been a bistro. In the old days it had been a garage where the cell operated by Colonel Duc met to plan its action. After the war was over and the tourists started flocking back into Paris, Auguste DuClos had capitalized on its romantic history and had transformed it into a restaurant.

Its walls were decorated with framed wanted notices issued by the Gestapo. In some of them, the name “Colonel Duc” had been circled with red crayon. In others the names of other members of his cell appeared. Here, next to the name, the date of the execution was scribbled.

The tables wore red-checked cloths, overhead salamis hung from the ceiling, aging in clouds of pungent tobacco smoke that swirled there like early-morning cemetery mists. Against the rear wall, dusty wine bottles were stacked in a bin.

DuClos was sitting at a small desk near the kitchen door, checking the evening's receipts when the door opened. The thin, elegantly turned-out figure of the former Gestapo chief walked in.

A worried frown ridged the short man's forehead as he crossed the room to greet the newcomer.

Leroux stood in the doorway and glanced around. Most of the tables were already empty, only one party of four sat dawdling over their wine and cheese. He turned as DuClos came up to him.

The short man wiped his hands on his butcher's apron and bobbed his head. “Good evening, monsieur.” With a sweep of his arm, he indicated a table far removed from the lingering diners. “Would you like a table?”

Leroux nodded, followed the other man to the table, sat down and looked around. "I have heard much about the atmosphere of your place. I could not resist the temptation to drop by." His eyes stopped on the framed wanted notices, the corners of his thin lips turned up in a smile. "If these walls could only talk, eh?"

The short man whipped a menu from an adjoining table, handed it to him. "The kitchen is about to close. If monsieur—"

"Just some wine," Leroux said.

The man in the apron walked back to the bin, selected a bottle of Beaujolais, wiped off the slight caking of dust on his apron. He carried it back to the table, uncorked it and half-filled the glass in front of Leroux.

The small party at the other table finally showed signs of leaving. DuClos hustled across the room and started clearing their table. One of the women was having difficulty persuading her poodle to leave the cool spot under her chair. Finally, after much tugging, it succumbed to her honeyed words, emerged and trotted alongside his mistress as she headed for the door.

As soon as the door closed behind the party, DuClos walked over, snapped the lock and pulled down the shade. He walked to the kitchen, told his wife that he was not to be disturbed and closed the door behind him.

Then, he returned to the table where Leroux sat sipping his wine. He dropped heavily into a chair facing him. "Something is wrong?" he asked in a worried tone.

Leroux held his glass up to the light, admired the deep color of the wine. "What makes you ask that?"

"You have never come here before."

Leroux set his glass down on the table. "You run a restaurant. It has a certain notoriety." He shrugged. "I wanted to talk to you. So this time I have come to you."

The man in the apron upended a glass, reached for the wine bottle, poured himself a glass. "You wanted to talk? About what?"

"I heard from Gregory today. There is a man, an American, who wants her to show him around. He claims to be a writer and a friend of Barry Lee. Gregory is worried."

DuClos took a deep swallow from his glass, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. “If he is an American, he is not of the police. Besides, the writer’s death has been declared a suicide.”

“Nonetheless, it is too much of a coincidence that he should locate Gregory and ask her to do almost exactly what the American writer did.”

DuClos sucked his lips in, puffed them out. “What do you think he is?”

“That is what I want you to find out. Tonight.” Leroux brought a cigarette holder from his breast pocket. He selected a cigarette from a package of Players, screwed it into the end of the holder. “He is at the Hôtel des Étrangers.” He tilted the holder from the corner of his mouth, dug into his pocket, brought out a slip of paper which he passed over. “The name he gave her is Johnny Liddell.”

The bistro owner glanced at the penciled note while Leroux touched a match to his cigarette. He looked up. “This will not be easy—”

“Liddell will not be there between ten and one.” Leroux chewed on the stem of the holder. “Gregory will see to it that he is occupied.”

The other man nodded unenthusiastically. “That is good. What am I looking for?”

“Who he is and what he is,” the thin man told him. “Much will depend on what you find.” He grasped the holder between thumb and index finger, tapped it against his teeth. “We may even again need the services of the great Colonel Duc.”

Andrea Moreau sat in the darkened room, stared at the white square of the projection screen. A comparison slide of segments of two heads was flashed on it. Alongside the heads was a scale marked in inches.

A man in a white smock, standing alongside the screen, indicated with a pointer the fact that the depth of each of the faces was identical. “We can only project the width of face in the blown up photograph. But our projection would indicate that it is identical in width with the photograph of the man known to be Stein.” He reached down, picked up the remote control for the projector, and snapped on a new picture. This slide consisted of two ears with a comparison scale between them. “The details of the ear in both cases is identical. Likewise, you will notice that the length of the right ear in both photographs matches.” He pointed to the scale and measured off the length of the ear.

“Then you believe both pictures are of the same man?” Andrea demanded.

The man in the smock snapped off the projector, walked to the wall switch, spilled light into the room. He considered for a moment. “In the absence of other measurements, such as limbs, sitting height and others that are customarily used, I could not make a positive statement. However, on the basis of this comparison study of his face and ears, I would say both pictures are of the same man.” He walked over to a desk, hoisted one hip onto the corner. “After the twentieth year, the only bones in the human skeleton that are likely to grow are the thigh bones. Even this is compensated by the curvature of the spine which takes place at about the same age. The bones in the face, the details of the ear, the measurements of the head all remain the same. Since it is impossible to find two human beings with the same bones, I would say that we have enough right here for an identification.”

“Enough to satisfy a court of law?”

The man in the smock reached over, picked up a charred briar from an oversized brass ashtray on his desk. He tapped out the dottle, pursed his lips. “If it reaches a court of law, I should imagine you would have the person himself, rather than two pictures for comparison.” He stuck the stem of the pipe between his teeth, rattled the juice in it. “Then we would have the necessary measurements for comparison and we could get a positive identification.”

“What I mean is, would this identification stand up in court?”

The man bobbed his head. He dug the bowl of the pipe into a leather pouch and started loading tobacco into the bowl with his thumb. “While anthropometry has been replaced by the fingerprint method of identification almost universally, in this country an old law requires the recording of anthropometrical measurement in identification books issued to gypsies, vagrants and people of that class. In the absence of fingerprints, this method of identification will unquestionably be accepted here in France.” He stuck the pipe between his teeth, scratched a wooden match on the sole of his shoe, held it over the bowl. He sucked a mouthful of smoke and blew a blue-gray stream across the desk. “I hope I’ve been of some help.”

Andrea smiled. “Of great help, Doctor. It is just that—oh, after all this time it is hard to believe that I am really on the right track at last.” She got up from her chair and held her hand out. “I know I need not remind you that all this is very confidential.”

The man in the smock took her hand and gave it a light squeeze. “You will want the slides and the pictures?” he asked.

“Please.”

He walked to the projector, took out the comparison slides. He put them into an envelope, dropped them into the manila envelope on his desk containing the pictures. “If I can be of further service by testifying as to my findings, I shall be happy to appear.”

Andrea took the envelope and tucked it under her arm. “I think that will not be necessary, Doctor. When we get that far we should not need further help.”

# Chapter 12

JOHNNY LIDDELL checked his wristwatch and found that he still had fifteen minutes before he was to be picked up. He regretted for the fifth time that he hadn't gotten a number from the Shinbet girl where she could be reached.

He debated the advisability of calling the Israeli Embassy and asking for her by name. He dropped the decision. Either they would deny that they had ever heard of her, or they knew her by another name. If they knew her at all.

He walked over to the table, emptied his pockets and inventoried his belongings. He decided to leave his license and his credentials at home with his .45. At a bash like this evening's shaped up to be, there was always the chance of someone relieving the participants of their belongings. There was very little likelihood that any protest would be made to the police.

He put his gun and the cellophane-jacketed license in the dresser drawer under his shirts, checked his watch again. He decided he had time for one more bourbon before he left. He figured that before the evening was over he was likely to need it.

He poured a stiff slug from the half-emptied bottle and drank it warm. He coughed; it made his eyes water. "There'd be a fortune in it for the guys who used to smuggle salt butter into Miami if they could figure a way to smuggle ice into Paris," he told no one in particular.

In the lobby of the hotel, he settled down to read the evening paper. He was immersed in an editorial attack on United States foreign policy when a bellboy walked over to him. "A lady is asking for you at the concierge's desk, Mr. Liddell."

Liddell got up, a folded bill changed hands. He recognized the tall, slim figure of the short-haired woman standing at the desk. He crossed to where she stood. She acknowledged his appearance with a curt nod of her head, turned, led the way across the lobby, through a revolving door to the street.

She waved aside the doorman's offer of a taxi, gestured to a car parked halfway down the block. A black limousine pulled away from the curb and

glided down to where they stood. It braked to a smooth stop in front of the canopy. The rain had let up a little and settled into a steady drizzle.

Liddell opened the door for her. Helena slid into the far corner of the back seat. Liddell followed, taking a position in the opposite corner and slamming the door.

The driver headed for the Pont de la Concorde, crossed into the Left Bank. Liddell stared out of the rain-dappled windows at the darkened fronts of the buildings they sailed by. It was obvious that the driver was executing a series of right and left turns in an attempt to confuse Liddell. Johnny had to admit that the maneuver was succeeding admirably.

They ended up in what was apparently an industrial area. Hulking black warehouses lined both sides of the street. The car stopped in front of a warehouse halfway down the block.

“This is it,” Helena told him.

Liddell opened the door and stepped out into the drizzle. Helena joined him. From someplace close, Liddell could hear the sounds of river traffic.

Helena hustled across the sidewalk to the darkened entrance of the building. Liddell stood for a moment watching the tail light of the car that had brought them as it winked its way to the far corner, then disappeared. He followed Helena into the entrance. Deep in the shadows he could see a pinpoint of light that glowed and brightened, then died away.

When his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, Liddell could make out the figure of a man, his beret setting jauntily on his head, sucking at a cigarette.

Helena mentioned a name. The man nodded, pressed an invisible button. There was a wait, then the screech of an unholed door. Helena caught Liddell by the arm and propelled him into the darkness beyond. The door screeched shut.

The beam of a flashlight speared through the darkness. It revealed a tall thin girl, her dank hair hanging down over her shoulders. She affected oversized, circular metal earrings dangling, wore jeans and a turtleneck sweater. She eyed them incuriously and nodded. “Follow me.”

She led the way across what had apparently once been the ground floor of a warehouse, now unused and dusty, to a flight of metal steps in the rear. They climbed the steps to a metal door at the top. The girl with the hanging

hair tugged the heavy door open. Behind it, a thick curtain hung from ceiling to floor. She pulled it aside, motioned for Liddell and Helena to enter.

Inside, the room was dimly lighted. A camera sat on a dolly, a battery of lights were set in place to light a cleared portion of the floor that was bare of any furnishing other than a number of pillows scattered about. Behind the camera area, a dozen or more couples were comfortably settled on ottomans. A cloud of heavily scented smoke rolled out at them as the curtain slid into place behind them.

The girl in the turtleneck sweater held out her hand. "Two hundred francs," she told him.

Liddell pulled out a small roll of bills, peeled two twenties and a ten off it, handed it to the girl. She took the bills and jammed them into the pocket of her jeans. "Make yourself comfortable. We start shooting in a few minutes."

Wordlessly, Gregory headed for some pillows against the side wall. She dropped down onto them and waited until Liddell joined her. "That was the star of the picture," she told Liddell. "As I told you, they operate on a very low budget."

Liddell glanced around the room, studying the features of the participants. None of the men even vaguely resembled the face he had seen in the blown-up picture Barry Lee was so sure belonged to Stein.

The light in the rear of the room slowly dimmed, transforming the faces of the people scattered around it into leering gargoyles. A man in an open-necked sport shirt and dark slacks climbed onto the dolly, adjusted the camera and sighted through it the area to be filmed.

One by one the battery of lights whose beam converged on the set came on with shattering brilliance. After a moment, a cleverly disguised door at the front of the room opened. Two tall, statuesquely built girls entered the set. They were bare to the waist, magnificently moulded. They took up positions on the pillows.

There was a faint buzz of excitement from the audience as the door opened again. The long-haired girl who had met them at the door walked in. She had changed her jeans and sweater for a flowing white robe that was held together only by a sash drawn around her waist. As she walked, her breasts traced designs on the flimsy fabric of the robe, making it apparent that she wore nothing under it.



Behind the camera dolly, a dried up old Negro started to scrape a long, rough bow across the neck of a primitive fiddle. The instrument had a long neck, its body was three inches in diameter and covered with a mottled snake's skin. It gave off a weird, insidiously disturbing sound.

Another man was astride a cylinder made of thin cypress staves hooped with brass and headed by a sheepskin. With two sticks he beat away at it with a monotonous beat.

The primitive orchestra was rounded out by a man twirling a long calabash made of a native gourd a foot and a half long and filled with pebbles. The combined effect of the three instruments made the small hairs on Liddell's neck stand up. Helena at his side made no effort to wipe the boredom out of her eyes.

The man on the camera dolly motioned with his hands for the musicians to decrease their volume. He turned his back to the set, addressed the audience.

“Tonight, we are filming a harem scene. The favorite of the harem has just returned from a forbidden visit to the outside world. She tells the other members of the harem what she has seen and what she has experienced. She does not know that the Sultan and his guards are listening.” He returned to his post behind the camera, shouted some instructions to the girls on the set.

The musicians upped their volume again. The girl with the long hair started to chant in a throaty voice. As she sang, she seemed to grow in stature and her eyes began to roll in frenzy.

The beat of the drums and the screech of the fiddle reached a new feverish pitch and the girls on the cushions picked up the beat, kept time by pounding their clenched fists against the floor.

As the singer increased the tempo, the girls, uttering screams, got to their feet and started to gyrate wildly. One of them, her body undulating and throbbing in time to the music, let out a wild scream. Her motions became more and more abandoned until suddenly she collapsed in a heap on a pile of cushions. The other dancer stopped for a moment, then threw herself on her.

The singer began to twist and squirm in frenzy. She raked her fingers through her hair, piled it onto her head, let it cascade back down over her shoulders. Without moving her feet, she started to undulate from head to foot, first slowly, then with wild abandon.

The music hit a wild barbaric note and broke off with a rimshot against the side of the cylinder.

Three men strode into the room. The biggest of the three wore a loose Oriental blouse, satin trousers. He carried a whip in his hand. The others, tired-looking men similarly dressed, headed for where the two girls were bucking for an Oscar in a scene that would certainly never get off the cutting room floor.

In the background, the dull whirr of the camera provided a counterpoint.

The man with the whip grabbed the girl in the white gown. He tore it away, it slid back off her shoulders, the sash at the waist became undone.

Her legs were long, sensuously shaped. Full, rounded thighs swelled into high-set hips, converged in a narrow waist. Her stomach was flat, her breasts full and round.

The man with the whip raised it and swung. There was a gasp as it cut into the whiteness of her skin. He swung it again, added another red stripe across the curved fullness of her hips.

The women on the couch, wildly agitated by the whipping of the long-haired girl, leaped to their feet. The tired-looking men tried to wrestle them back to the pillows. They tore at each other's clothes, ripped them from their bodies. The pillows were filled with four naked, gleaming bodies wriggling, twisting, undulating sensuously.

The man with the whip paused to watch the action in the background. When he turned back to the naked girl in front of him, she slipped to her knees, locked her arms around his legs. He buried his fingers in her hair, pulled her to her feet and pushed her away. The whip whistled through the air, bit into her flesh. The girl screamed and sank back to her knees. She crawled to where he stood, reached down and kissed the leather of his shoe.

“The dialogue is brilliant,” Liddell said mildly. “But I don't think it will ever play the Easter Show at Radio City.”

# Chapter 13

It was almost three when Johnny Liddell walked into his room at the hotel. He snapped on the wall switch. He stood in the open doorway for a moment, looking around.

Then, he closed the door, walked to the door to the bedroom, switched on the light, satisfied himself that it was empty. He walked to the open door of the lavatory.

There was no one in the apartment, but he was reasonably sure there had been. When he left, he had stretched a piece of thread across the door in a position where it would be broken if the door was opened. The thread had been broken.

He walked to the dresser, reached under his shirts and brought up the cellophane jacket that contained his license and his credentials. He couldn't tell if it had been examined, but if it had been, the question of who he was had ceased to be a secret.

He felt for his .45, brought it out and took it under the light. He breathed on its polished surface, examined it closely. He couldn't detect any fingerprints on it—his or anybody else's.

He snapped the magazine out examined the bullets one by one. The lead noses of the first three bullets in the magazine had been removed. Liddell swore silently and extracted the shell in the gun's chamber. This, too, had been rendered useless.

It meant that whoever had prowled the room had considered the possibility that Liddell would have to be dealt with. He had copped his bet by seeing to it that, in a showdown, Liddell would be spotting his opponent four free shots. The odds said that he wouldn't be able to squeeze the trigger for the fifth time.

He dropped the doctored slugs into his jacket pocket, rummaged through the drawer, and came up with a fresh box of shells. He replaced the blanks with live ammunition. Anybody counting on getting a four-shot headstart was in for a shock.

The telephone in the outer room pealed. Liddell walked out, gun in hand, and lifted the receiver to his ear. “Yeah?”

“Liddell?” It was Andrea Moreau’s voice. “Where have you been all night? I have been calling since just before midnight.”

“Attending a sex orgy with a dyke. And I want to tell you there’s no future in it.”

“I thought we were going to work together on that matter,” Andrea said complainingly.

“How was I supposed to reach you? By ouija board? You didn’t give me an address or a telephone number. It takes longer that way.” He glanced at his gun. “Did you happen to drop by to check whether I wasn’t answering my phone?”

“No. Why?”

Liddell shrugged. “I had visitors while I was gone. Whoever they were, they know I’m no writer looking for local color. My license and gun were in my dresser drawer.”

“You are sure?”

“I sealed the door with a thread. It was broken when I got back.”

“It might have been the maid coming in to turn down your bed.”

“If it was, she also removed the lead from the bullets in my gun. And that’s carrying service too far.”

The sound of the girl’s indrawn breath came across the wire. “Johnny, that could mean big trouble. The comparison showed both pictures were of the same man. That means he is alive. When you come this close to them, they are doubly dangerous. If they are trying to pull your teeth, they must be worried about you.”

“They’ve made me, all right,” he said. “But in doing it, they laid themselves open.”

“How do you mean?”

“They used the dyke to keep me out of here tonight long enough for them to get a make on me. That means she must know who they are.”

“Gregory, you mean?”

Liddell nodded. "Somebody ordered her to get me out of the way. She's going to tell me who that somebody is and he and I are going to have a long talk."

"And if she won't?"

Liddell chuckled drily. "It's against my principles to hit a woman. But in her case, I'm just likely to make an exception."

"You're going after her tonight?"

"Why not? It's harder to hit a moving target. And from here in, I keep moving." He glanced at his wristwatch. "I'll give you a blow-by-blow description in the morning. Where can I reach you?"

There was a faint pause. "My number here is Valdor 661-111."

Liddell scribbled the number on the pad next to the phone. "I'll be in touch." He dropped the receiver on its hook.

At the other end of the line, Andrea Moreau sat staring at the mouthpiece. Slowly, deliberately, she hung up.

"He has a real lead this time," she told Henri. "They used a girl to keep him out of his apartment so they could search it. He intends to force the girl to tell him who gave her the orders."

Henri smoothed the long hair over his ears with the flat of his hand. "That is sensible of him."

Andrea nodded. "Very. Except for one thing. He is not going to reach her." She got up and walked to a desk against the wall. She opened the top drawer, brought out Barry Lee's address book, flipped through the pages, stopped at the page tabbed G. "Île Saint-Louis," she murmured. "It will take him much longer to go there than it will us."

Henri smiled, showing a full set of carefully capped teeth.

"We shan't be needing him after this?"

Andrea shook her head. "We shan't be needing him."

In the apartment on Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the man who called himself André Leroux sat in his living room, nibbling the stem of his cigarette holder. He watched DuClos, the former Resistance leader, help himself to a drink from the silver pitcher.

“There can be no mistake?” Leroux asked.

DuClos shook his head. “He told the woman he is a writer. He is a detective from the United States.” He admired the whiteness of his drink. “His gun is a .45. Only a professional would use such a cannon.”

Leroux clicked the stem of the holder against his teeth. “He must be handled.”

The squat man nodded. “There could be an accident.” He shrugged. “Everybody knows that Americans cannot cope with Paris traffic. Or—”

The thin man cut him off with an impatient gesture. “I do not want to know the details. The man knows too much, so he must be handled. How you do it is your concern.”

DuClos nodded, sipping at his glass. “And the woman?”

“Also dangerous. This is the second one to link her to us. She must become less conspicuous and accessible.”

“It can be arranged,” the squat man said. “And you?”

“It may be necessary for me to take a trip,” Leroux admitted ruefully. “I had hoped my wandering was over. In Paris, one lives. Anywhere else one only exists.” He drew a lungful of smoke, then ejected it with an audible hiss. “This time there must be no loose strings. This time Fritz Mendl Stein must be buried forever, so that when André Leroux returns to Paris there will be no more danger.”

DuClos grunted. “The woman, Gregory. Do you want to talk to her?”

Leroux shook his head. “I will leave it entirely in your hands.”

The squat man nodded his satisfaction. He emptied his glass and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. He peered nearsightedly at the clock on the table next to the couch. “It is almost two. The woman will be back at her apartment very soon. I will deal with her first.”

The limousine dropped Helena Gregory in front of the Chat Vert at three-fifteen. She crossed the sidewalk to the entrance and walked into the smoke-filled basement. At that hour, most of the tables were empty. A few couples were dancing cheek to cheek in the center of the floor to the music of a jukebox. In the dimly lit corners of the big room, a lot of mauling was going on at the tables. A half dozen, in drag, wedged against the bar gave Helena a calculating glance as she walked over.

The night bartender was heavy, flashy. His eyes were almost hidden behind discolored pouches, his lips were a thick, wet smear. He bared discolored teeth in what passed for a smile as he waddled over to where Helena stood.

“Anything happening, Les?” she asked.

“Got a couple of spooks in here tonight looking for thrills. Some of the members got a little rough.” The bartender’s eyes receded behind their discolored pouches, a muscle flicked in the side of his throat. The fat, wet lips puffed in and out in indignation. “Why can’t they stick to their own kind and leave us alone? Anyway, the way they ran out of here, you’d think someone was trying to crawl up their leg.” He filled a glass with ice, poured some liquor over it as he talked. “Outside of that, it’s been quiet.” He snapped sausage-shaped fingers. “I almost forgot. There have been a couple of calls asking for you, but whoever called wouldn’t leave a number. Said they’d call back.” He pasted a lascivious smile on his wet lips. “A real sexy voice, I understand. Real low.” He sniffed his indignation at a call from the other end of the bar, turned and flounced down to refill two glasses.

Helena took her glass, picked her way through the tables toward the rear. The baby-faced blonde she had walked out on eyed her defiantly from a rear table. The butch sharing the table with her looked apprehensive as Helena approached. Nervously, she raked clenched fingers through the pompadour she affected. The tenseness drained out of her when Helena continued past the table with no show of interest.

Helena had almost finished the drink when the telephone rang. She got up, walked back and lifted the receiver.

“Has Gregory gotten back?” a heavy voice demanded.

“This is Gregory.”

“I’ve been trying your house and here for the past half hour. You know who this is?”

“I know.”

“We found some things about your escort this evening. I want to discuss them with you. I can be at your apartment in ten minutes.”

Helena Gregory moistened her dry lips. “I’ll be there,” she said.

# Chapter 14

JOHNNY LIDDELL dropped the cab on Rue Boutarel, in front of the building housing Helena Gregory's apartment. He paid the sleepy-eyed cab driver, waited until he roared away from the curb, then headed for the nearest corner.

It was still drizzling. A Citroën sedan was parked without lights a few houses down. For the entire length of the block, four street lamps spilled yellow light into the gutter, light that spread like a puddle from the curbs to the houses, leaving the doorways in deep shadow.

He crossed, walked up the short flight of steps to the vestibule. There was no light in the vestibule and the hall beyond was in total darkness. Liddell stepped in, closed the street door behind him and pushed through the hall door.

He felt his way cautiously toward where he knew the stairs to be. Catching a faint scuffling noise behind him, he threw himself to the side. He heard the whish as the sap cut through the air where his head should have been and the grunt of a man wielding it.

Liddell threw a hard right from his crouched position and had the satisfaction of hearing the other man groan as it sank into his midsection. There was another swish as the man with the sap swung again. This time it caught Liddell on the left shoulder. His arm went numb. He kicked out with his heel at where he estimated the sapper to be, brought a yelp of pain as it connected with the other man's shin.

Liddell ducked under a roundhouse swing of the sap and plowed into the other man's midsection with his shoulder. They hit the floor with a thud, thrashing and wrestling in the dark, rolling over each other the length of the hall.

The man with the sap was trying to get into position to use it, but Liddell caught his wrist. They rolled over again, with Liddell on top. Perspiration was running into his eyes. The man under him was using his free hand to claw at Liddell's throat.



Liddell reared back and slashed the side of his hand against the other man's Adam's apple. There was a strangled gasp as the other man's fingers released their grip on Liddell's throat. The sap fell out of his nerveless fingers.

The only sound in the dark hallway was the heavy, labored breathing of Liddell and the gargled snores of the other man. Liddell pulled himself to his feet, stood for a moment determining whether or not the brief struggle had awakened any of the residents. When he was satisfied that the whole house continued to sleep peacefully, he brought out a lighter and snapped it on.

In a weak light he recognized Pretty Boy, the Shinbet girl's stooge.

He swore long and colorfully.

The man on the floor was gasping for breath painfully, his mouth open, his eyes rolled back in his head.

Liddell snapped off the lighter, felt his way to the stairs. He tugged the .45 from its hammock, climbed noiselessly to the second floor. On the landing, he stood perfectly still, strained his eyes against the darkness.

Then, slowly, he felt his way down the hall to the door to Helena's apartment. He stopped outside the door, reached down for the knob. To his surprise, it turned easily in his hand.

He pushed the door open, jumped to the side out of the line of possible fire. The light from the room spilled out to form a yellow triangle in the dark hallway. Liddell covered the open door with the .45. Then, he stepped into the opening, fanned the room with the muzzle of the gun.

Andrea Moreau was standing beside an old-fashioned escritoire, going through the top drawer. She turned an incurious glance on Liddell, and then her eyes widened slightly.

"I thought you were Henri," she said.

"So I gather."

"How did you sneak past him?"

"I didn't. I stepped over him."

The girl sighed. "It doesn't matter. We are both late. Too late."

"I would have been here sooner, but your welcoming committee just knocked himself out greeting me," Liddell growled. "Where's Gregory?"

“Waiting for you,” Andrea told him. She pushed the drawer shut, and walked over to the closed bedroom door. She twisted the knob, shoved the door open, and gestured toward the interior of the room. “Look at this.”

Liddell frowned, walked over to where she stood.

Helena Gregory lay sprawled across the bed, her face turned to the wall. She wore one shoe, the other had been kicked into a corner. There was ample evidence around the room that the girl had tried to fight off her attacker.

Liddell walked over to the bed, caught Helena’s wrist, and felt for a pulse. He shook his head and stared down at her. Her throat had been cut from ear to ear, spilling a viscid red stain on the sheet under her.

He walked back to where Andrea Moreau stood watching him. There was a greenish tinge to her complexion, some of the color had drained from her face, leaving her makeup a garish blot against the pallor.

“She was that way when I arrived,” Andrea said in a low voice.

“Tried to beat me to her, that it?” he growled. “You stationed Pretty Boy in the hall so I couldn’t interfere while you put the snatch on her.”

Andrea shrugged hopelessly. “What difference did it make? I beat you to her—so what does it get me?”

“Plenty of grief if you don’t get out of here.”

“While you stay here and search the place?”

“Andrea, can you get it through your skull that there’s a murdered woman in there?”

“I did not kill her.”

Liddell snorted. “You know you didn’t kill her. Maybe I know you didn’t kill her. But you’d still have to convince the police that you didn’t kill her.” He inclined his head toward the hall door. “Any minute somebody’s liable to find what’s left of Pretty Boy in the hallway and send for the police.”

Andrea caught her full lower lip between her teeth. She nibbled at it indecisively. “And you?”

“Kind of late to start worrying about me, isn’t it? Especially when you almost succeeded in having my hair parted with a sap.”

“I’m sorry, Johnny.” She waved off responsibility. “It means a lot to me to bring Stein to Tel Aviv for trial. A lot more than it can mean to you to

hand him over to the police for a murder they refused to admit ever happened.”

“We can talk about that later. Right now, you’ve got to get Pretty Boy out of here.” He broke off. “You wouldn’t happen to have a Citroën parked up the street?”

“I do,” Andrea said. “We were going to use it to take her back with us where we could question her.”

“Back it up to the door. I’ll help you to get him out.” He caught her by the arm. “You can’t afford to get caught here.” He propelled her to the hall door, opened it a crack, satisfied himself the hall was empty. He snapped off the light, led the way across the landing to the stairs.

Pretty Boy lay where Liddell had left him, his face cyanosed in the pale gleam of the lighter, his breath rattling in his throat. Liddell doused the lighter, reached down and caught the unconscious man under the arms, and dragged him to his feet.

“Get the car,” he snapped at Andrea.

He stood behind the door in the dark vestibule and waited until the Citroën was parked across from the steps. With his arm around Henri’s waist, he half-dragged, half-carried him down the steps. Andrea held open the door to the front seat Liddell dumped him in and slammed the door after him.

“You’d better get out of here,” Liddell told her.

“Very well. Shall I be hearing from you?”

Liddell grinned at her. “I’ll say one thing for you. You don’t give up easily.” He nodded. “I’ll call you in the morning.”

She ran around to the driver’s side, slipped in behind the wheel. The car sprang into life, headed west toward Pont Louis-Philippe and the right bank.

Liddell turned and reentered the building. He was halfway up the stairs when he heard the familiar *Hoo-Haw!* of a police van growing louder. He debated the advisability of heading out the front door, but realized that it was already too late. He climbed the steps two at a time, rapped on the door of the rear apartment.

The *Hoo-Haw!* was coming closer. He knocked again. This time, he heard the sound of movement behind the door. It opened.

The blonde he had seen the day before stood in the doorway. She was wearing a filmy Baby Doll nightgown. The light from the room behind her silhouetted her perfectly.

She squinted at Liddell. “What do you want?”

He nodded his head toward the street where the sound of the police van could be heard skidding to a stop at the curb.

“Police. Can I come in?”

The blonde hesitated for a second, made a sudden decision, stood aside. He stepped in, closed the door behind him. He snapped off the light, pressed his ear against the door panel.

From the hallway came sounds of a slamming hall door, heavy feet stamping up the stairs. When they stamped past the apartment door to the front of the building, Liddell caught the girl by the hand. “The bedroom. Quick,” he whispered.

Without asking questions, the girl led him to a door that showed a ribbon of light under it. She pushed the door open.

It was a large, ornately decorated room. The top of the dresser was filled with stuffed toys and the wall above it with pennants. A bed lamp was burning, throwing an amber light over the king-sized bed.

When Liddell closed the bedroom door, she swung on him. “What’s this all about?”

Liddell pointed to the wall of the adjoining apartment. “Helena Gregory. She’s been murdered.” He interpreted the sudden fear that clouded the blonde’s eyes. “Not me. I came to see her. When I got there she was dead. I started to leave and the police came.” He shrugged, grinned crookedly. “You said to drop by any time I was in the neighborhood.”

“You sure take a girl up at a funny time,” she said.

Liddell pulled the roll of bills from his pocket, peeled off five twenties. “I was hoping you’d keep a red light burning for me in the window.” He laid the bills on the bureau. “That enough?”

“What do I have to do for it?” she asked. “I mean besides.”

“The police may check to see if you heard anything tonight. You didn’t. You’ve been entertaining a friend.”

“That’s all?” The blonde picked up the bills, smoothed them out lovingly, folded them across and dropped them into her drawer. “How long have you been here?”

“As long as you can make it stick. What’s the latest anyone saw you tonight?”

The girl pursed her lips, thinking. “Midnight.”

“You sure? They may check it out.”

“I’m sure,” she said. “I was at the Café Valentin until about then. A lot of us girls get our phone calls there. They close at midnight.”

“After that?”

She shrugged. “I usually get in my car and cruise. Tonight, with the rain, there was no one out so I came home early. No one saw me come in.”

“Good. Then I’ve been here since midnight.”

“If we’ve spent the night together, shouldn’t I know your name?”

“Johnny will do.”

She snickered. “All the men I meet are named Johnny. My name’s Yola.” Her smile faded when Liddell opened his coat, exposing the holstered .45. “Wait a minute. You said you didn’t—”

Liddell shook his head. “Her throat was cut. They’re not making these with a cutting edge this year.” He took off the jacket, tossed it on a chair, shrugged out of the holster harness. He looked around the room. “I’ll stick this in one of your drawers.”

The girl’s eyes followed him across the room and watched him bury the holster under some clothes.

“I guess I’d better get into my working clothes in case they do knock,” she muttered.

She slid the top of the Baby Dolls over her head, dropped it on the foot of her bed. Then, she tucked her thumbs in the waistband of the panties, peeled them down to her ankles and stepped out of them. She ran the flat of her hand up her rounded thighs, across the flatness of her belly, up to cup her full breasts.

“There’s no way to tell how soon they’ll be coming, is there?” she asked.

Liddell eyed the merchandise, shook his head. “It could be hours,” he told her.

“We’ll find some way to pass the time,” she said.

They did.

# Chapter 15

A NARROW sliver of weak light was showing under the drawn shade when the knock came.

Liddell opened his eyes, reached over, shook the shoulder of the blonde. “There they are,” he told her.

The knock was repeated, this time with greater authority. The panels of the door shook under the pounding. The girl sat up, rubbed the sleep out of her eyes. She hopped out of bed, crossed to the living room. “Who is it?” she called.

“Police. Open up!”

“Let me get some clothes on,” she called back. She ran back into the bedroom, pulled a silk robe from a hanger in the closet, stuffed her arms into it. She tied it around her waist as she crossed the living room. She unlocked the door and pulled it open.

Two men were standing in the hallway. One was in plain clothes, a discolored stub of a cigarette drooping from the corner of his mouth. A faint stubble of beard darkened the line of his jaw.

“What is this?” the blonde demanded indignantly. “I’ve paid my dues—”

“I am Inspector Murat of Homicide,” the plainclothesman cut her off. He nodded for the uniformed man to precede him into the room, followed him in and closed the door.

“Homicide?” The blonde widened her eyes.

“The woman in the next apartment has been murdered.” The inspector pushed his fedora to the back of his head, rubbed his forehead with the side of his hand. “Did you hear anything unusual last night?”

Yola shook her head dumbly.

“You were in all evening?”

“Since midnight. I was entertaining a friend.” She tugged the sash of the robe tighter around her waist.

“This friend has been with you all that time?”

The girl nodded. “I left the Café Valentin at about eleven-forty-five. I picked him up. We came directly here.”

“Neither of you heard anything?”

“We were occupied.” Yola licked at her lips. “How was she killed?”

“Her throat was cut.” He nodded toward the bedroom door. “Your friend is still here?”

“Yes, but—”

The plainclothesman started toward the bedroom.

She grabbed his sleeve. “Wait a minute. You can’t go in there. My friend is an American—”

“They always are.” The inspector removed her hand from his sleeve. “Keep her here,” he instructed the gendarme.

Johnny Liddell was sitting on the side of the bed, tying his shoe laces when the inspector walked in.

“Going somewhere?” the plainclothesman asked.

Liddell shrugged. “If the place is raided, I might just as well get dressed. I get self-conscious being arrested with my pants off.”

“This is no raid.” The inspector snapped on the bureau light, walked over to where Liddell’s shirt and jacket lay on the chair. He picked them up, examined them under the light. “What time did you get here?”

“A little after midnight.” Liddell watched the plainclothesman go over his things. “If this isn’t a raid, don’t you pick a funny time for health inspections?”

The plainclothesman grunted, tossed the shirt and jacket back on the chair. “There’s been a murder in the next apartment. A woman named Helena Gregory. Did you know her?”

“No. I’m an American. I’ve only been over here a week or so. I hardly even know my way around.”

“You’re doing all right.” The inspector tugged his notebook from his pocket. “What’s your name and where are you staying in Paris?”

“Look, inspector, I don’t know a thing that could help you. Putting my name on the record wouldn’t do either of us any good. Back home, the vice



squad just refers to the man as John Doe. Let's leave it at that."

"This is not the vice squad. A murder has been committed."

"You already said that. I'm sorry for whoever got killed. If I could help in any way, I would. But I can't. A lot of tourists have families. But when they get to Paris they like a night on the town to have something to tell the boys back home about. It's not going to be too reassuring to them to know that the Paris police want their names when they bust in on a party."

The inspector closed his notebook and stuck it in his pocket. "The girl's story will be checked. If she has not lied, we will not need you. If she has, we will find you." He turned, walked out, slammed the door behind him.

Liddell picked up his shirt and shrugged into it. He waited until he heard the hall door slam. He walked out into the living room.

The girl eyed him curiously. "You made out all right?"

"Yes. But it's a good thing I didn't have a nosebleed. He gave my coat and shirt a pretty good going over for bloodstains. It was a messy job. Whoever did it was bound to get plenty of blood on his clothes."

"Good. Then there's nothing to worry about. They know Helena was at the Chat Vert as late as two. She got a couple of telephone calls, all from the same man, before she got there. The bartender took the calls. He said the man was French, with a heavy voice. She left as soon as she got the call."

Liddell stared at her. "How do you know all this?"

"The flic. He is stationed here on the Île. He's been saving his pennies to pay me a visit." She reached up, dabbed at her hair with the tips of her fingers. "He was pretty proud of himself. He was the one who thought of the Chat Vert. Almost everyone knew that Helena always dropped by the place for a nightcap before coming home. He told the inspector about it, the inspector sent him down and the bartender told him what time she left." She shrugged. "Elementary, no?"

"That ought to rate him a due bill, at least," Liddell agreed. "It's a good thing she was a creature of habit, even if you didn't approve of her habits." He checked his watch. "I'd better be getting back to the hotel."

"Your little gift hasn't been worn out yet," she told him.

"Maybe it hasn't. But I sure as hell have." He grinned. "Put whatever's left to the credit of the flic."

“I’d rather put it to your account. For you, the little red light will always be burning in the window.”

“Not for the poor guys who get lonesome around midnight?”

Yola shrugged elaborately. “A girl must live,” she said.

The Métro in Paris is one of the most efficient subways in the world. It has a frustrating device called the *portillon automatique*, which consists of a heavy metal door that swings shut as the train approaches the platform. It remains closed until the train pulls out.

Johnny Liddell was reasonably sure that he was not being tailed, but he used the *portillon automatique* to make sure of it. As soon as the heavy door started to close, he slipped through, watched it clank shut behind him.

He rode from Pont-Marie to Palais Royal, where he transferred to the Pont de Neuilly line. He got off at the Franklin D. Roosevelt station, just west of Étoile, and walked to his hotel.

A bored desk clerk watched with no show of recognition as Johnny crossed the lobby to the bank of elevators.

Liddell rode the cage to his floor, walked down to the door to his apartment, opened it.

The lamp next to the big armchair was burning. Andrea Moreau opened her eyes sleepily as he walked in, closed the door behind him. She was wearing a pair of his pajamas, sleeves and trouser legs rolled up. When she stood up, the blouse hung down almost to her thighs, the seat of the trousers bagged ludicrously.

Liddell groaned, covered his eyes. “Oh, no. Not you.”

“You certainly do not make a girl feel welcome,” Andrea complained.

Liddell looked down at the bulky, shapeless pajamas. “You’re a girl?”

She reached up and started to unbutton the pajamas.

“Never mind,” Liddell said. “I’ll take your word for it.”

She eyed him curiously as he crossed the room, sniffed as he walked past her. “What’s that odor?” she demanded. “It smells like a cut-rate Sadie Thompson to me.”

“Cut rate, hell. It cost me a hundred bucks to smell like this.”

Andrea sniffed angrily. “Here I sat, worrying myself sick over you for at least two hours, and all the while you were happily exercising the little ponies in some riding academy.”

“It was a lot better than having myself picked up and run through the wringer by the police. They pulled up before I could get out of the building. The girl in the next apartment let me in and bailed me out.”

“So the least you could do was be nice to her. Is that it?”

“No. We didn’t know how long we’d have to wait for the police to finish up and she was fresh out of magazines. Why should you care? If you had your way I would have been laid out in the hallway. With a blackjack!”

He walked past her to the closet, hung up his jacket and slipped off his holster. “What are you doing here anyhow?”

“I have told you. I sat here worrying about you. The police van passed us just as we were leaving. I drove around the block a few minutes later and it was parked in front of the building. I have been sitting here hoping you would appear.”

“Why? Figured out some new way to doublecross me?”

“I explained that. It was a mistake and I am sorry. You must try to understand how important it is to me to get Stein where he can be tried for the whole world to see. If you turn him over to the police here for murder, his real crimes against humanity will be forgotten.” She walked over and put her hand on Liddell’s arm. “That is the way Barry Lee would want it, Johnny. Think what it would do for his book if we can let the world know that he gave his life to bring Stein to justice.”

Liddell loosened his tie and unbuttoned the top of his shirt. “That’s all pretty hypothetical right now, isn’t it? Neither of us has Stein and the one link we had to him is gone.”

“There must be others. Someone killed her. That someone must be working for Stein if that is why she was killed.”

“The police are working on that.”

“But how *long* will they be working on it? Do you know how many open files there are in a city of this size? There are hundreds of slashings and killings. The police will go through the motions for a week, perhaps two weeks. But to investigate a known pervert like Gregory, with her record of collaboration, they must filter the lowest form of scum. They will receive no cooperation whatever. Meanwhile Gregory remains an open file on the Quai

Orfèvres. Let them handle the investigation from that end. We know where to look and sooner or later we shall come up with a loose thread.”

“We?” Liddell said. “We’re partners again?”

“We both want the same man. We should find him sooner if we work together.”

Liddell scratched his head. “Which means, when translated, that you need me for something.”

Andrea pouted ruefully. “I was wondering if you had any idea of where that orgy was staged last night. Do you think you could find your way there?”

“Why? Afraid you missed something?”

Andrea shook her head. “Just an idea.”

“Suppose you let me in on it, then I can tell whether or not I could find the place again.”

Andrea walked to the table and helped herself to a cigarette.

“An operation like this has some very interesting possibilities.” She put the cigarette between her lips, lit it, inhaled with sunken-cheeked concentration.

“You wouldn’t be thinking of blackmail, would you?” Liddell asked.

The girl’s eyes widened. “You’ve thought of it?”

Liddell grinned glumly. “You don’t really think I thought they were making a movie of what was happening on the set, do you? That camera was grinding for one purpose. To cover the sound of any other cameras that might be in use.”

Andrea managed to look crestfallen. “Then I have not contributed anything, have I?” She studied his face. “Do you think you could find the place again?”

Liddell shook his head. “He twisted and turned, doubled back over the same block, threw me completely off.” He lifted the cigarette from between her fingers, took a deep drag and returned it. “I wouldn’t know how to find the place. But I do know someone who would. The man who drove me there last night.”

“You know him?”

“No. But I know the number of his license plate.” Liddell checked his wristwatch. “As soon as it’s a decent hour, I intend to have it checked out.”

“You are going back there alone?”

“No. *We’re* going back there. You and I.”

Andrea beamed. “Then we are still working together?”

“It’s not that so much as the fact that it’ll save you the trouble of tailing me and save me the trouble of tripping over you and your playmates every time I turn around.” He untied the knot on his tie and finished unbuttoning his shirt. “That gives me a couple of hours and I’m going to spend it in bed.” He correctly interpreted the sly smile on the girl’s face. “Alone.”

# Chapter 16

THE butt of Inspector Ricot's Gauloise had burned down almost to his lips. He lifted it out between thumb and forefinger, tossed it into the oversized ashtray on his desk.

He picked up the batch of flimsies that lay on the desk in front of him. One by one, he reread them, set them aside until he came to the kickback from West Germany on his Blue Circulation. Bonn officials had identified three former Gestapo guards who had served at Fresnes. They were serving twenty-year-to-life sentences in West German prisons. None of them knew of any prisoners who had survived incarceration at Fresnes. The only one known to walk away from the castle alive was a Resistance leader who had escaped fairly early in the Occupation. They remembered this because the guards assigned to the man had been executed because of his escape.

Ricot flipped the flimsy onto the top of his desk and glowered at it. He had hoped the Circulation might provide a badly needed thread. He could find none in the kickbacks.

He lifted the telephone from its stand, told the operator to get him Johnny Liddell at the Hôtel des Étrangers. He dropped the instrument back on its hook, stared up at the framed, autographed picture of J. Edgar Hoover that occupied a prominent spot on the far wall. He was lost in thought, puffing his lips in and out when the phone jangled at his elbow. He lifted the receiver to his ear.

"Liddell? Ricot here," he told the mouthpiece.

"You must be a mind reader, Inspector. I was just about to call you," Liddell said. "Any news?"

"Nothing good. Bonn located three former Fresnes guards. They were questioned last night about survivors. There were none." Ricot could hear Liddell's grunt of disappointment across the wire. "Anyone who went in there came out feet first—" He picked up the flimsy, scowled at it. "Well, practically everyone. A Resistance leader did manage to escape early in the Occupation."

There was a pause at the other end of the wire. “I don’t see how that will help us,” Liddell said finally. “I was looking for someone whose identity Stein could assume. If it was early in the Occupation, the switch would be impossible.”

“That is how I see it. Perhaps we are wasting our time, Liddell. Stein is probably dead.”

“He’s alive. And he’s in Paris,” Liddell said.

“You can prove that?”

“I think so. The Shinbet agents here have an official picture from his dossier.”

“Where did they get that?”

“The Berlin Documents Center. The dossier was removed before the location of the Documents Center was reported to the Allies.”

“And the picture you have?”

“The same man taken maybe twenty years later.”

“How can you be so sure?” Ricot demanded.

“The Shinbet people did an anthropometric comparison. Enough checkpoints were identical.”

Ricot drew his breath whistling between his teeth. “You would have no objection to Interpol checking your friends’ findings?”

“It can be arranged,” Liddell told him. “In return, I’d like a favor.”

“Name it.”

“I have a license number. I’d like the name and address of the owner.”

“French registration?”

“Yes.”

Ricot pulled a pad to the edge of the desk, picked up his pencil. “The registration number?”

“RSD-43-565,” Liddell told him.

“I’ll have my men get to work on it right away.” The Interpol man dropped the pencil on the desk, tore the top sheet off his pad. “We should have some word for you early in the afternoon.”

“I’ll have the anthropometric comparison delivered to your office as soon as possible,” Liddell promised.

“Good.” Ricot dropped the receiver on its hook, stared at it for a moment, then rang for a messenger, gave him the registration number and his orders.

In his hotel room, Johnny Liddell hung up the phone. He glanced at Andrea Moreau, who stood at the open French doors. She had changed from the bulky, shapeless pajamas into a close-fitting sheath and a sweater that did nothing to minimize the perfection of its contents.

“You are a girl,” Liddell said.

“And you are two hours late in discovering it,” Andrea said. “Did Ricot have anything for you?”

“No survivors of Fresnes. The only one ever to get out was a Resistance leader early in the Occupation. Probably before the Gestapo had perfected its security.”

“I heard you promise him the comparison check between your picture and ours. Suppose Shinbet refuses to allow it out of their hands?”

“Then you persuade them,” Liddell told her flatly. “Your people want to be in on the kill, they’ll have to cooperate.”

“When will they have the name and address of the car’s owner for you?”

“Early this afternoon. I imagine it will depend on how early you get the comparison papers up there.”

Andrea lowered her eyes, pursed her lips. “I shall pick them up and deliver them myself.” She glanced up. “Where and when do I meet you?”

Liddell checked his watch. “It’s eleven now. I’ll pick up the name of the owner of the car and meet you at Fouquets at about one.”

The New York *Ledger* publishes a daily Paris edition with headquarters in a building on Boulevard des Capucines, within stone’s throw of the Théâtre de l’Opéra. Young Americans, wearing blue-denim jackets with the name of the paper embroidered on their backs, sell copies to tourists along the sidewalk cafés.



Three men and a girl were working in the small office when Johnny Liddell walked in. The girl lifted her horn-rimmed glasses from the bridge of her nose to her forehead, and examined him. She wore no makeup other than a slash of crimson on her lips. The dusting of freckles across the bridge of her nose testified to the authenticity of her honey-colored hair.

Liddell stopped at her desk. "I'd like to talk to the head of the bureau," he told her.

She swiveled her chair around, called over to a man whose desk was set by the window. "Company for you, Ed." She swung back to Liddell. "That'll be Ed Ryan. You can always tell the top cat. He gets to sit by the window." She dropped her glasses back onto her nose, leaned forward and peered at the last lines she had written. She resumed typing, appearing to have forgotten Liddell was there.

Johnny walked over to the desk next to the window. The man sitting behind it cocked one eyebrow.

"My name's Johnny Liddell."

The bureau chief shoved a red-knuckled hand across the desk. "Ed Ryan." He gave Liddell a firm grip, retrieved his hand. "Pull up a chair." He waited until Liddell was comfortably settled. "What can we do for you, Liddell?"

"I'm a friend of Jim Kiely's from New York," Johnny told him. "You probably know Jim?"

Ed Ryan had a disconcerting habit of cracking his knuckles. He cracked the one on the middle finger. "Sorry. Never heard of him."

"Jim's the managing editor of the *Dispatch*," Liddell said. "I thought every newspaperman in New York knew him."

"I've never been in New York in my life."

Liddell looked even more surprised. "I figured this being the Paris office of the New York *Ledger*—"

The newsman laughed. "It's like the ad says. You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy rye bread. So you don't have to be a New Yorker to work in the Paris office of a New York paper. Matter of fact, they lifted me off the *Chronicle* in San Francisco for this assignment. Hell, we didn't even set down in New York. We flew directly over the Pole."

Liddell drew a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, held them across the desk.

Ryan shook his head. "I'm a pipe smoker myself. You go right ahead." The newspaperman was broad-shouldered, rawboned. His hair was beginning to show a sprinkling of white. A faint smudge of premature five-o'clock shadow darkened the line of his jaw.

Liddell lit his cigarette, settled back. "I'm a private detective in New York. I work pretty closely with Jim Kiely of the *Dispatch*. I was hoping I could get the same kind of cooperation here."

Ryan bent the index finger of his right hand in the palm of his left, cracked it. "Such as?"

"I read about the murder of this Gregory woman. I was wondering if you'd have a file on her activities during the Occupation."

"Our files don't go back that far. Every legit sheet suspended the day the Heinies marched in." He glanced out the window for a moment. Across the street, a line of taxis queued up in front of the Hôtel Scribe, a sluggish tide of promenaders ebbed and flowed the length of the boulevard. He looked back to Liddell. "The only sheets that published then were collaborationist rags like *Paris Soir* and *Le Petit Parisien*. They're not likely to be of any help. The mobs busted hell out of their offices the minute the Nazis walked out."

"Figures," Liddell said gloomily.

"What'd you want to know about Gregory?" The man behind the desk brought a pipe and pouch out of his upper drawer. "I might be able to help. She was a fixture over on the Île Saint-Louis. There are a lot of Americans on the Île and I spend quite a bit of time over there." He dug the bowl of the pipe into the pouch, started loading it with the ball of his thumb.

"I understand she was a collaborationist."

The newsman stuck the stem of the pipe between his lips, rattled the juice in the stem. "She wasn't one of our sterling citizens," he said. He scratched a wooden match on the sole of his shoe, held the flame over the bowl, sucked it down into it. "Rumor is that she was mixed up in a lot of things—pornography, exhibitions, stuff like that. She ran a lesbian joint called the Chat Vert and the straight ones got a thrill out of dropping by." He surrounded himself with a fog of blue-gray smoke. "The only surprising thing about last night was that it took so long for someone to get around to cutting her throat."

“Then the police have a long list of suspects.”

Ryan chewed on his pipestem, grinned crookedly around it. “It could have been almost anybody. Gregory was proud of her ability to bring out spooks—”

“Spooks?”

“Latent lesbians. Some had been married and the underlying problem broke up their marriage. It could have been any one of the dozens of lovers she’s had over the years. She’d toss them aside as soon as something new and interesting showed up. It could have been someone she was leaning on for blackmail—” He shrugged. “Almost anybody.”

“Someone from her past? During the Occupation?” Liddell asked.

“After twenty years?” Ryan grunted. He eyed Liddell curiously. “You got something on your mind, Liddell?” he asked finally.

“I’m working for Barry Lee’s publishers,” Liddell told him. “You knew Barry?”

“Seen him around. That’s all.”

“Barry told his publishers he was working on an exposé that reached back to the Occupation. Alex Ramey came over, went through his papers. Nothing. Ramey had to fly back with the body and asked me to see what I could come up with.” Liddell hollow-cheeked a mouthful of smoke. “Going through his belongings, I came across an address book. It didn’t mean anything to me at the time. This morning when I read about the murder, something rang a bell. I checked the address book. Helena Gregory’s name was in it.”

“I’ve seen Gregory and Lee together at parties on the Île. It did strike me as a funny combination.” He squinted across the desk at Liddell. “You think there’s some connection between this research Lee was supposed to be doing and what happened to Gregory last night?”

“I’m curious to know what her name was doing in his book.”

Ryan smoked silently for a moment. “Gregory was a minor celebrity. Maybe he collected them.” He rattled the juice in the stem of the pipe. “Maybe that’s why he cultivated her. Maybe not. Have you talked to the police about this?”

“About what?” Liddell said. “That her name was in Lee’s address book? You think they’re about to dig him up as a possible suspect?”

“What did you expect to find in the files?” Ryan asked.

“Gregory was here during the Occupation. From what I gather, she played house with a lot of important Nazis.”

Ryan nodded.

“I was hoping to come up with some of those names in the files.”

“Why?”

“The only conceivable reason Barry Lee would spend time with her was to get some background or a line to somebody. Buy that?”

Ed Ryan blew a stream of blue-gray smoke at the ceiling, thought it over. Finally he nodded. “I could. But what would it get you? They all moved out. The ones who aren’t dead are in jail. And they wouldn’t be important enough for Lee to spend his time running down.”

“Suppose it wasn’t a Nazi,” Liddell said.

“You’re forgetting that Gregory was a collaborationist.”

“Germany and Japan were our enemies twenty-five years ago. Today they’re our strongest supporters,” Liddell pointed out. “Twenty years makes a lot of difference in friends and enemies. Especially if the price is right.”

“So what you’re interested in is some figure who goes back to the Occupation that Gregory might have known.” Ryan studied Liddell’s face briefly. “Suppose by some chance we could help you out. Where do we fit in?”

“As soon as it has been turned over to Lee’s publisher, the Paris edition of the *Ledger* breaks it on the front page as a worldwide exclusive.”

Ryan pulled the pipe from between his teeth and used the stem as a pointer. “You just made yourself a deal. Where do we locate you if we get something?”

“The Hôtel des Étrangers.”

The newsman knocked the dottle out of his pipe into an oversized ashtray. He pulled a piece of copy paper over, scribbled the name of the hotel on it, then stood up. “Everybody on the Île will be talking about the murder today. I’ll circulate, see what I can dig up.” He shoved his big-knuckled hand across the desk and gave Liddell a firm handshake.

He remained standing until Johnny closed the hall door behind him. Then he walked over to the girl’s desk.

“Get the home office on the wire. Have them check on a Johnny Liddell, a private detective in New York. Check him out with Jim Kiely of the *Dispatch*. I want a kickback by this afternoon.”

André Leroux, né Fritz Mendl Stein, stood at the bar in the living room of his apartment. He swirled a stirrer around the sides of the martini pitcher, brought out a film of cool beads on the side of it.

He was wearing a dapper three-button Continental suit, its slim lines making him look as if he had been dipped to the waist in black ink.

He poured the martini into two glasses. It was blue white.

Auguste DuClos squirmed into a more comfortable position on the couch, accepted one of the martinis. He held it up to the light, approved its icy whiteness. “Your hand has not lost its touch,” he told Leroux.

Leroux tilted his head in a short bow. “Nor has yours.” He picked up a crumpled copy of the morning paper. “The police seem satisfied it was a crime of passion committed by a jealous lover.”

“The police are easily satisfied,” DuClos said. He sipped at the martini. It tasted as good as its color promised. “That is more than I can say for the New York detective.”

Leroux waved a languid hand. “With the American writer dead and the woman dead, what is left for him to find?”

“You are alive,” DuClos pointed out. “So am I.”

The thin man smiled. The smile did not warm his eyes. “But then, we are bound together, is it not so? Nothing must happen to Stein because then the story of the renegade Colonel Duc would come out. If Colonel Duc were exposed, the freedom of Stein would be in danger.” He lifted his glass to his lips, savoring the astringent sting. “The passions of war cool after twenty years. I would be tried as a war criminal. You?” He raised one shoulder negligently. “You would meet Madame Guillotine.”

DuClos took another swallow from his glass. He looked to the open bedroom door, where he could see the valises and trunks being packed in preparation for Leroux’ trip. “How long will you be gone?”

“A year. Perhaps more. Long enough for all this to blow over.” He scanned the expensively furnished room. “I shall close the apartment, put much of my things in storage.”

The man on the couch held up what remained of his drink. “To a long and successful journey.”

Leroux stared at him quizzically for a moment, then lifted his glass to his lips.

# Chapter 17

ANDREA MOREAU was toying with a Pernod at a sidewalk table on the boulevard side of Fouquets. She eyed Johnny Liddell eagerly as he slid into a chair alongside her.

“Did you get the name of the owner of the car?” she asked.

“Yes. It’s an address in Montmartre, a few blocks away from Sacré-Coeur.”

“When do we go?”

Liddell indicated the half-finished glass in her hand. “As soon as you finish that.” He checked his watch. “He was out pretty late last night, so we might just nail him before he goes out for the day.”

“What about the comparison charts? Is Interpol satisfied?”

“They just had time for a preliminary,” Liddell said. “But it looks like there’s no question it’s the same man in both pictures.”

Andrea finished her Pernod, stood up, smoothed nonexistent wrinkles out of her skirt with the flat of her hand. “I am ready.”

Liddell dug into his pocket, spilled some silver on the table. He got up and followed Andrea to the curb. As she swivel-hipped through the tables, she gave no sign of being aware that the male occupants of every table she passed were taking wide-eyed inventory of her obvious assets. Liddell, following her, found the effect from the rear equally interesting.

At the curb, they flagged down a cab. Liddell read the address to the driver from the back of an envelope.

The address turned out to be a house on one of the twisting narrow streets topping a hill on the north side of the city overlooking the Boulevard Clichy. At the top of the hill, the gleaming white Sacré-Coeur presided over the peak of the hill, squatting cheek to jowl with the Place du Tertre.

The cab banged its tires against the curb in a screeching stop, the driver indicated an old stone house that seemed to be leaning against the hill.

Liddell checked the number on the house against the scribbled address on the back of his envelope. He pushed a note through the opening to the driver, got back a handful of change. Some of it changed hands again. Liddell pushed open the door, waited on the sidewalk while Andrea got out.

The cabby roared off, disappeared around one of the hairpin turns leading to Boulevard Clichy.

Liddell led the way into the building. The mailboxes were old, the names in them indecipherable. He pushed through into the hallway and found the door marked "Concierge." He knocked and waited.

When he knocked again, a tall, angular woman with thinning hair that seemed to stand at right angles from her skull opened the door. She stood in the doorway, fists on her hips, demanding in rapid-fire French what they meant knocking on her door at this hour.

Liddell produced the envelope. "We're looking for Fernand Bonneau."

The angular woman looked them both over with distaste. She turned and spat. "The second floor rear." She looked Andrea over again, expressed an uncomplimentary opinion. She turned, slamming the door in their faces.

"I'd say we have the right man," Liddell said. He grinned evilly at Andrea. "She didn't think much of you as talent, baby."

"From the look she gave you, I should say that talent scouts are not her favorite people either."

Liddell led the way up the uncarpeted steps, which creaked at every step. He felt his way through the dimness of the upper hall to the rear door. He rapped his knuckles against it.

After a pause, the door opened a crack. Before the man inside could close it, Liddell hit it with his shoulder, slammed it open, and sent the man staggering back into the room. The man stopped with his back against the table. His jaw dropped. "You?"

"You seem surprised, Fernand." Liddell waited until Andrea joined him inside the room, then closed the door behind her.

The driver, taking advantage of Liddell's apparent inattention, ran to a bureau and tugged open the top drawer.

"You'd never make it," Liddell told him.

Fernand Bonneau glanced up from the open drawer into the mirror above it. He could see Liddell standing with a .45 aimed at a spot an inch



above his belt.

“But you’re welcome to try,” Johnny added.

The driver took his hand out of the drawer empty and turned around. “What do you want here?” he asked in a quavering voice.

“Gregory was murdered last night,” Liddell told him. “You were the last one with her. The police don’t know that yet.”

“You were with her, too,” the driver said. “When I tell them that you and she—”

“You left me off at my hotel,” Liddell reminded him. “She was alive then. The doorman saw her. The room clerk saw me come in. The bellboy brought me some whisky.” He clucked sadly. “You have a lot of explaining to do, Bonneau.”

“I didn’t kill her,” the driver protested. “I dropped her off at the dyke joint and came right home.”

Liddell holstered the .45, walked over and leaned one hip on the edge of a table. “I don’t think you did, either. But you’ll have a tough time persuading the police. They need a patsy for this one and you’re made to order.” He shrugged. “On the other hand, the police don’t have to know about you driving her home last night. It could save you a lot of grief.”

The man looked from Liddell to the girl and back. “Who are you?”

“Last night they took pictures of me at that place, didn’t they?”

“I didn’t even go in,” Fernand said. “I just drove you there and back.”

Liddell sighed. “Suit yourself. If the police find those pictures and I’m in them with Gregory, I have no choice but to throw you to them.” He raised his hands, palms upward, disclaiming any responsibility. “I’ll have to tell them you fought with her all the way back to the hotel and even threatened to kill her.”

“That’s a lie!” the driver screamed. “I never threatened her.”

Liddell smiled sweetly. “You know that and I know that. But it may be a bit of a job to persuade the police. It’s your word against mine. The word of an American tourist with the American Embassy behind him against a member of a pornography ring.”

Fernand’s shoulders sagged. “What do you want from me?” he asked in a low voice.

“Take me back to where we were last night. If there are any pictures of me, I’ll destroy them. Then we’ll forget that we ever met.”

The driver licked at his lips. “Let me find out if there are any pictures of you and—”

Liddell shook his head. “I pick them up.”

Fernand chewed his lips.

“I’ll be right with you,” he said finally. He went into the bedroom.

Andrea Moreau clucked admiringly. “Liddell, you are a fourteen-carat bastard. That was rank blackmail if I ever heard it.”

“Call it the gentle art of persuasion,” Liddell said. “Although I must admit that Dale Carnegie probably wouldn’t approve of it.”

The night before, the warehouse street had been deserted, lined on either side by dark, hulking warehouses. Now, during the day, it was clogged with heavy trucks lumbering toward the river.

Fernand Bonneau expertly guided the big car through the traffic, swung off into the ramp of a large warehouse whose doors were plastered with “For Sale or Rent” signs. He drove to the back of the building where the parking space was overgrown with leaves and uncut grass.

He cut the motor, swung around on his seat. “This is the place.”

Liddell bent over and peered around. “You couldn’t prove it by me.” He got out of the car and helped Andrea out. “You, too, old buddy. You’re coming in with us.”

The driver started to argue, then shrugged. He got out of the car and stood glaring at Liddell sulkily. “You know your way from here.” He tossed his head in the direction of the warehouse. “I’ve never been on the inside. I just bring the trade to and from.”

“Then it’s time you got to see how the other half loves,” Liddell told him. “I’d imagine the picture file should be an education in itself.” He stroked his left lapel suggestively.

Fernand glared at him, then turned and headed for the back door to the building. Liddell examined the lock, grunted his satisfaction. “Let me have your license,” he told the girl. “I’m fresh out of cellophane.”

Andrea opened her bag without a word, passed over her cellophane-encased license. Liddell fitted it to the door, fumbled for a few moments. Then there was a faint click. He put the flat of his hand against the door and pushed. It opened with a screeching sound.

Inside was the empty ground floor of an unused warehouse, a pulley at one end, a trolley running the length of the building to move heavy equipment. In the light that spilled in from the open door, the place was dusty and had the air of being long unoccupied.

Liddell nodded his head in the direction of the flight of stairs leading to the upper story. "Up those stairs." He waited until the driver headed across the floor, then followed with Andrea.

Slowly, carefully they climbed to the upper story. At the top of the stairs, they stopped at the closed door. Liddell reached for it and pushed it open.

The room looked much the same as it had the night before. Cushions were scattered over the floor, glasses lay on their sides, ashtrays had been spilled, their contents scattered by the thrashing bodies of the participants. Liddell climbed onto the dolly containing the movie camera, snapped open the film case. There was no film in it.

He jumped back down to the floor and looked around. A large mirror on the back wall attracted his attention. He examined it. Then, he brought out his .45 and smashed the glass with the muzzle of the gun. The unblinking eye of a 35 millimeter camera stared into the room.

"Bingo!" he said.

Andrea joined him in contemplation of the camera. "They certainly should have gotten some hot footage with that," she murmured. "One camera shooting without film, the other with infrared. Very clever."

Liddell turned to the driver. "How do we get into that room?"

Bonneau shook his head. "I keep telling you—"

"That you've never been in here. And I'm not going to keep asking you how we get in there. I'm asking just one more time." Liddell's voice had gone cold.

The driver licked at his lips, walked over, pulled some of the sound-proofing draperies aside. Behind it was a door. He turned the knob and pushed it open.

The camera was set on a small stand, its turret aimed through the smashed mirror at the room beyond. A closed door was off to the left of the entrance.

Liddell opened it and found a complete dark room. Strips of negatives were hanging from clothes pins attached to cords that ran from wall to wall. He felt them, grunted his satisfaction to find them still damp.

“Last night’s batch,” he told Andrea.

He detached one strip of negatives, held it up to the light, squinted at it. “A lot of these characters probably woke up with what they thought was the world’s worst headache this morning. They ain’t seen nothing yet.”

He pulled all the hanging negatives down, rolled them in a ball, dropped them into the washbowl.

“What are you going to do?” the driver wanted to know.

Liddell scratched a match, touched it to the film, stepped back as they roared up in flame. “Giving the suckers an even break.”

“You said all you wanted was any pictures of you and Gregory,” Fernand protested. “You just ruined a whole week’s take.”

“Just insurance. I might have been in the background of some of the other shots.” He pushed past the driver into the room with the camera. There was an old acid-stained desk set against the far wall. Liddell walked over, pulled open the drawers, glanced through the papers in them, and tossed them back. Most of them were old bills of lading, obvious hangovers from the days when the building served as a bona fide warehouse.

Two filing cabinets, leaning crazily against each other for support, were the next to catch his attention. He tugged at the top drawer, found it locked. He bent over to examine the lock.

“Looking for something?” a harsh voice said.

Liddell straightened up and turned around.

A heavy-shouldered man with cold, slate-colored eyes set close to the splattered bridge of his nose stood in the doorway. His lips were puffy as if his teeth had been bashed against them once too often; his hair line seemed to melt into the bushy eyebrows that joined over the bridge of his nose. A .38 seemed dwarfed by the size of the fist that held it.

“Be careful, Louis. He has a gun,” Fernand warned.

“Get it,” the man with the splattered nose ordered.

The driver sidled around behind Liddell, reached around him and tugged the .45 from its holster. He circled him cautiously, handed the gun to the newcomer, who stuck it into his waistband.

“I was hoping that phone call you made from your place would bring somebody more important than just muscle,” Liddell said.

Bonneau’s jaw dropped. “You knew I made a phone call?”

“You weren’t very subtle about it.”

“If you knew, why didn’t you stop me?”

The man who had been sitting on the camera dolly at the exhibition the night before walked into the room. “He just told you, Fernand. He used you to get to me.” He turned large, liquid eyes on Liddell. “Not that I see what good it’s going to do. Especially if he never walks out of here.”

“You’re scaring me to death.” Liddell grinned nastily. “Blackmailers don’t kill. Leaving bodies around town creates too much heat.” He indicated the room with a sweep of his hand. “This is too good a setup to risk losing. Any tourist would pay through the nose for a souvenir picture of this part of his trip to Paris. Especially if he’s sitting dead center and the girl sitting with him isn’t his wife.”

# Chapter 18

THE cameraman was tall and thin. A lock of hair had fallen across his forehead. He pushed it back with the side of his hand. His sport jacket had leather patches at the elbows, and he wore it draped over his shoulders. He affected contrasting shirt and slacks.

“He burned all of last night’s negatives, Jean,” the driver told him.

The man in the sports jacket looked stricken, ran to the open door of the darkroom with mincing steps. He left a wave of Canoe in his wake. In the doorway he stared with horrified eyes at the charred remains of the negatives. He whirled on the driver. “Why didn’t you stop him?” he shrilled.

Fernand spread his hands. “That .45 he was carrying gave him a free pass to do anything he wanted to do.”

The cameraman turned on Liddell. “Why?”

“For your sake as well as mine. I was here last night with Helena Gregory. Later that same night she gets herself killed. If those prints got into the wrong hands, the police might ask me questions. I would have to tell them that Gregory dropped me off at the hotel. The doorman could testify to it. The last one to be seen with her would be your friend, Fernand. You’d be brought into it and the police would do you more damage than to burn one strip of film.”

The man in the doorway of the dark room sputtered indignantly, stamped an expensively shod foot. He stalked back into the room and stopped in front of Liddell.

“You and Fernand wait in the outer room, Louis,” he snapped over his shoulder. “I’ll call if I need you. And take the woman with you.”

Andrea started to protest, but subsided at a signal from Liddell.

The man in the sports coat waited until the two men had ushered the girl out the door and had closed it behind them. “You went to great lengths to set up this meeting,” he pointed out to Liddell. “Obviously you are not working

with the police. Therefore you are not interested in who killed Gregory. Then what do you have in mind?"

"A deal."

The cameraman brought a handkerchief from his sleeve, dabbed delicately at his nose. "The deal?"

"Gregory steered me to last night's party. I'm guessing that she steered lots of others."

The man in the sports jacket reached up, flattened the hair over his ear with the palm of his hand. It was fluffed, carefully casual, on top. He considered for a moment. "Let us say that Gregory did refer some pleasure seekers to us on occasion. We have a number of such steerers working on a commission basis."

"Did she ever accompany them?"

"Rarely." The other man smirked. "We have the facility to provide companions in such cases."

"She accompanied me last night. I'm sure it must have happened before."

"And if it did?"

"I'm trying to trace someone out of her past. Someone she might have known during the war."

"How could I help with that? I was only twelve when the war ended."

"From what I know of this man, he would be a patron of your branch of the arts. I'm sure she would have recommended an evening with your troupe."

The other man's liquid eyes clouded slightly. "We don't send for our customers. They look us up."

"I'm not criticizing. Every man to his own taste. Anyone sucker enough to stick his head into a noose like this deserves what he gets. What kind of games you play here and how you get paid for the entertainment doesn't concern me. All I want is a list of Gregory's referrals."

"What makes you think we would keep that kind of a list?"

"Because the steerers would want an accounting," Liddell said. "They'd provide you with the name and address of the customer, your salesman would sell the prints and they'd expect their commissions."

“If there were such a list, you don’t think I’d show it to you, do you?”

“It might be in your own best interest if you did.”

“How?”

“Because then I’d forget that your boy drove me home from here and was the last one to see Gregory alive.”

Jean tossed his head petulantly. “Haven’t you done us enough damage?” He indicated the door to the darkroom with a sweep of his hand. “There was no reason for you to burn all those negatives. There were no pictures of you. Whenever Gregory came with a guest no pictures were taken of them.”

Liddell pursed his lips, thinking. “Maybe not directly. But when the camera was focused on a couple near us, we might be recognizable in the background.”

“The people who buy those pictures,” the cameraman said, “aren’t likely to be showing them around.”

“That’s not what I’m thinking. If I did show up in the background of some of these pictures, so might Gregory’s other special guests.”

Jean shrugged. “They would be out of focus, most likely.”

“That’s a risk I’m willing to take.”

Jean frowned at him. “A risk you’re willing to take? What does that mean?”

“I cost you some money when I burned those negatives. Suppose I’m willing to make it up to you by buying other pictures?”

“What other pictures?”

“You said when Gregory showed up with a guest there were no pictures taken of them. I’m gambling that you’ll be able to find her and her guests in the backgrounds of other pictures. I’m willing to buy as many of those background shots as you can dig up.”

The cameraman flattened his hair against the side of his skull. “And if you are wrong?”

Liddell brought a roll of bills from his pocket, peeled off two fifties. “Then this will pay for your trouble.” He extended the bills.

The other man hesitated for a second, then lifted the bills from between Liddell’s fingers. He folded them; they disappeared into his pocket. “My



files are not here, naturally.”

“I trust you,” Liddell told him. “And you’ll have to trust me.” He pulled out his notebook and scrawled his telephone number on the top sheet, tore it off and passed it over. “Call me here and I’ll meet you anywhere you say.”

Jean glanced at the scribbled number negligently, stowed the paper away. “You will buy any pictures with Gregory and a friend in the background. That is our understanding?”

“The best picture of her with each man,” Liddell amended.

“Very well,” Jean said. “There will be a record of the dates she dropped by. I will examine all pictures taken on those nights.” He nodded. He turned to the door.

“Louis!” he bellowed.

The metal door slammed open. The man with the splattered nose stood framed in the doorway, .38 in hand.

“For goodness sake, put that thing away. It makes me nervous,” the cameraman complained petulantly. “Tell Fernand he is to take this man and his friend back to their hotel.”

The bar at the Hôtel des Étrangers had a separate entrance a few doors down from the entrance to the hotel. It was marked by a neon that spit and buzzed over the entrance, staining the canopy that ran to the gutter and the area around the entrance.

Known as the Blue Room, it was dim, intimate; the only lighting came from hidden fixtures in the corners. A number of leather chairs and low tables were scattered around the room; the bar ran the length of the far wall. Its stools were invariably filled from 6 P.M. until 8 P.M. by young men with carefully oiled hair, closely shaven jowls, narrow laped suits and narrow pointed shoes. They might have been cast from a single mold.

Dimness is a great convenience for men in their profession. It is easier and less obvious for the folded bills to pass from the elderly women who have bought their services for the night than in more brightly lighted rooms.

The procession of the carefully coiffed and overly décolleté matrons usually starts around seven. Some of the escorts are on hand at six, not in deference to their companion for the night, but because several drinks before helps to prepare them for the labors of the evening.

Johnny Liddell and Andrea sat at a table against the wall, watching the assembly line of instant romance hop off their stools to hustle to the entrance to greet their employers for the night. There would be a big production of hand kissing of the simpering, over-age Juliet, then the couple would retire to a table in the dimness where the important rite of money changing would take place.

Liddell sucked on his cigarette and stared around glumly. "There must be an easier way to make a living," he growled.

"The way we do it, for instance?" Andrea sipped at her drink. "You really think this Jean fellow is going to work with you?"

Liddell shrugged. "What's he got to lose? Gregory's dead. Her referrals aren't likely to come back for a second hosing. If he doesn't play, he's afraid I'll blow the whistle." He took another drag on his cigarette, then crushed it out. "What he doesn't know is that I'm the one on the spot. If that homicide man recognized me in a picture with Gregory the night she got it and I turn up in the next apartment when the body was found—" He frowned. "It could get pretty sticky."

"You play a good game of poker, Johnny," Andrea said. "But you take fearful risks. Some day someone will call your bluff. That could prove costly in a game in which there are no limits on the table stakes."

"You shouldn't play if you can't afford to lose."

"It is your skin," Andrea said. "Perhaps you like to wear it with holes in it. When that goon showed up with the .38 this afternoon, I really thought we'd had it."

"Well, if you're scared, why not sit on the sidelines for a while and let me handle this alone."

The girl shook her head firmly. "I am afraid. But not that afraid."

The assembly line of Romeos was thinning out at the bar. Most of the tables were filling up with oddly assorted couples, sitting with their heads together over their drinks.

Liddell raised his hand to catch the attention of the waiter, dropped it when a bellboy appeared in the entrance, looked around, started to where he sat.

"A telephone call for you, Mr. Liddell," he panted. "I have had it transferred to the bar. You can take it there."

Liddell brought out a silver five-franc coin and crossed the bellboy's palm with it. The boy grinned his satisfaction as he headed for the exit.

"This may be it," Liddell told Andrea. "Cross your fingers."

"My grandmother told me to cross my legs," Andrea said. She did.

Liddell threaded his way through the tables, picked up a phone at the end of the bar. "This is Liddell."

"This is Jean. We met this afternoon."

Liddell nodded. "I remember. Have you anything for me?"

"I think so. Would you like to join me for a drink at the Deux Magots? You know the place?"

"What time?"

"I will be there in half an hour. It will take me at least another half hour to have my drink."

"I'll be there," Liddell told him. He replaced the receiver on its hook and walked slowly back to his table.

"Jean?" Andrea said.

Liddell nodded. "I'm meeting him in a half hour."

"What about me?"

Liddell shook his head. "I get the impression our dainty little friend likes women kept in their places. In front of a camera preferably."

# Chapter 19

THE CAFÉ DEUX MAGOTS, which squats across from the ancient Saint-Germain-des-Prés, was made famous by Jean-Paul Sartre, one of its regulars, and existentialism, the most popular subject of discussion at its tables.

Day and night the tables are peopled with writers, who sit staring into space; would-be writers who scribble into notebooks hoping to be mistaken for writers; New Wave motion picture producers and directors; and a scattering of painters. It is a place to see and be seen.

Would-be actors pass in review on the sidewalk in front of the café hoping to be seen and discovered. Would-be actresses sit alone at tables sipping aperitifs hoping to be invited to audition. Bearded men, wearing sandals without socks, sitting tugging on their beards solving the problems of the world.

The cameraman was sitting with one of them at a center table. The bearded man got up as Johnny Liddell walked up to the table. He eyed Liddell with no show of enthusiasm, turned and headed for the street. His hips were as full and rounded as a woman's.

Liddell slid into the chair the man had vacated, pushed aside an empty glass he left behind and ordered a Scotch with some ice.

“You made good time,” Jean said, checking his watch. “At this hour traffic is sometimes a problem.”

Liddell glanced around casually. “You did say you had something for me?” he cut short the small talk.

Jean waited until the waiter had deposited a glass half-filled with Scotch, with shards of ice floating around in it.

He reached down, brought up a slim black attaché case. He unlocked it with a key from a gold chain attached to his belt.

Liddell looked around to see if they were being observed.

“You need not concern yourself,” Jean assured him. “It is customary at Deux Magots for a producer to study types for casting.” He brought out an envelope. “I am known as a producer. I have produced several pictures for the general public. Outstanding artistic successes.”

“Which means they didn’t make any money.”

“Money!” Jean snorted. “Is money the criterion of art?” He held up the slim attaché case. “These pictures make money. Much money. Does that make them art?”

“From some of the things I saw last night I’d call it pop art,” Liddell said. “You said you had something for me. We can do the philosophy bit later.”

“You were right,” the cameraman told him. “There were prints in which our friend was recognizable in the background. So was her guest.” He rolled his eyes up to Liddell’s face. “In five instances.” He smiled suggestively.

“That’s five hundred,” Liddell agreed. “If I’m satisfied.”

The smile on Jean’s face dimmed. “You said—”

“I said I’d buy one of every picture Gregory was in with a guest. I still intend to. But I’m not buying just an unrelated set of men’s faces. I have to be satisfied that Gregory was with him and that the picture was shot at one of your filmings.”

The smile returned to Jean’s lips. He brought a large envelope from the attaché case. From it, he brought an eight-by-ten sheet to which several portions of pictures had been pasted. Much of the foreground had been cut away, the figure of Helena Gregory and a man were to be seen in varying degrees of clarity. Some were out of focus, in others the couple almost receded into the blurry background.

Liddell flicked on his lighter, studied the pictures. The man with Helena was tall and thin. He was smoking a cigarette in a holder. “You know this man?”

The cameraman shook his head. “She arranged a few private shows for him. He dropped by whenever we changed the cast to look over the new talent. Whatever he liked, she arranged for him.” He handed over another sheet of portions of pictures showing a readily recognizable picture. “This one you know, of course?”

The picture was of poor quality, but it was obviously Barry Lee leaning against the pillows.

“Not very good,” the cameraman conceded. “But you must remember that the camera was focused on someone else. This was cut out of the background.”

Liddell set the sheet aside.

Jean selected another sheet. The man in this set of pictures was heavysset, balding. “This one I know. He runs a bistro on the Left Bank. His name is Auguste DuClos.” He stared at the pictures over Liddell’s shoulder. “He came once with Gregory, a few times after that with his own little friend. As a friend of Gregory’s, no action shots were taken of him.”

Liddell added the sheet to the others.

“Who else?”

“A pair of spooks she was trying to bring out. Married women from the Île out for thrills.” He passed the remaining two sheets to Liddell, who dismissed them with a glance.

“These are the only times Gregory showed up?”

“The only times she showed up with guests. She used to drop by to watch the action from the camera room.” He raised his eyebrows. “You do know that Gregory had a piece of the action?”

Liddell stared at Jean.

Jean slapped the flat of his hand to his forehead. “Me and my big mouth!” He started to gather the pictures up. Liddell put his hand on those of the three men. The cameraman looked from the pictures to Liddell and back again.

“We made a deal,” Johnny told him. He reached into his pocket, counted five hundred in bills under the table, and passed them over.

Jean hesitated, then shrugged. He stuck the bills in his pocket.

“When did Gregory get in?” Liddell asked.

“From the beginning. She bankrolled the operation from the start.”

“Where did she get that kind of money? That equipment doesn’t come in Crackerjack boxes.”

“I never asked,” Jean said. “She opened the Chat Vert around the same time, so she couldn’t have been hurting for money.” His eyes wandered among the tables. Since the money changed hands, his interest in the subject had evaporated.

In his mind's eye, Liddell could see the squalid surroundings in which the dead woman had lived. In an area where many luxurious apartments were available, her scale of living did not jibe with what she must have been taking in from the combined operations of the Chat Vert and the blackmail ring. That could only mean that she was fronting for someone, someone who had a predilection for perversion and voyeurism. He could feel the small hairs on the back of his neck standing up when he realized that all of this fitted the description of Fritz Mendl Stein.

“When did all this take place?” he asked.

“Four or five years ago,” Jean told him. He had caught the eye of the bearded man with whom he had been sitting. The man stood waiting, reading the headlines on the papers on the corner newsstand. He nodded in response to a signal from Jean and started up the avenue.

The cameraman glanced at his watch. “It was agreed that my drink would take a half hour—” He got to his feet.

Liddell nodded absently, watched him wiggle his way through the tables. Jean joined the bearded man, tucked his hand under the man's arm. They walked off arm in arm.

Liddell sat staring across at the craggy steeples of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Helena Gregory suddenly came into enough money to set up both operations “four or five years ago.” That would be around 1961 or 1962. In 1960, Fritz Mendl Stein had showed up at Alt Aussee, where he had buried treasure. The next year he would be in Paris setting Gregory up in business.

Liddell felt very close to him.

It was dark when Ed Ryan walked into the office of the Paris *Ledger*. The rest of the staff had already left to make up the next day's first edition.

He walked over to his desk and snapped on his light. A wad of copy paper was wedged into the carriage of the typewriter. He tugged it loose, squinted at it. It was a note from the girl with the freckles:

Home office okays Liddell. Well-known New York private eye, good standing with Police Department. Kiely of *Dispatch* personally guarantees trustworthiness and full cooperation. Office suggests complete trust and please tell them what, if anything, you're working on together.

It was signed with a scrawled “L. J.”

Ryan rolled the copy paper into a ball and threw it, inaccurately, at a metal waste basket. It bounced off the rim and rolled under his desk.

He reached for the telephone and pulled it over. As soon as he had comfortably hoisted one hip to the corner of the desk, he brought out the telephone number of the Hôtel des Étrangers. He dialed with a flick of a spatulate index finger, listened while it rang on the other end.

When the operator at the hotel finally answered, he gave her Liddell’s name. It was picked up on the other end on the third ring.

“Yes?” a husky female voice asked.

“Is Liddell there? This is Ed Ryan of the *Ledger*.”

There was a perceptible pause. “He is not here at present, Mr. Ryan. I am his associate. He asked me to take a message if you called.”

“Do you know when he’ll be back?” Ryan asked.

“Perhaps minutes. Perhaps hours. He may call in. Then I can give him your message.”

Ryan hesitated. But what the hell. The girl was working with Liddell. She was waiting for him in his apartment. He probably had no secrets from her. “Tell Liddell he might be interested in having dinner at a place on the Left Bank called the Auberge de la Résistance,” he said. “It’s owned by Auguste DuClos, a former Resistance leader. The girl we were discussing has been dining there fairly often in the last few years. Liddell may be able to make something out of it.”

“I shall give him the message.” Andrea’s voice gave no sign of the surge of excitement she felt. Her hand trembled as she returned the receiver to its hook.

She waited for a moment, then she lifted the receiver. She dialed the telephone number of the Paris office of Shinbet.

Henri answered.

“This is Moreau,” she told him. “I have a splendid new lead.”

“With the American?”

“No. He is not here. I have just received a message which he has been waiting for. I want you to meet me at a place called Auberge de la Résistance. It is run by a man named DuClos, a former Resistance leader.”



“You think he can help us?”

“That is what I plan to find out when you meet me there.” She checked her watch. “I shall be on my way shortly. Do not waste time.”

# Chapter 20

ED RYAN had just finished cleaning off the top of his desk when Johnny Liddell walked in.

“Liddell!” he said. “I just called you a few minutes ago.”

“I was in the neighborhood,” Johnny told him. “I thought I’d drop by and show you some pictures. You may know some of the people in them.”

Ryan dropped into his desk chair. He snapped on his desk lamp, spilling a flood of yellow light over the desk top. He held his hand out and took the pictures that Liddell pushed across at him.

He studied the top sheet, frowned, looked up. “Pretty lousy photographer you have, pal.” He glanced back at the pictures pasted to the sheet. “Even so, I can make out the late Helena Gregory. The guy with her looks like Barry Lee.”

“Right. How about the next one?”

Ryan tossed the top sheet onto the desk, squinted at the next group of pictures. “I recognize Gregory all right, but the thing’s too far out of focus to make out the guy with her.” He held the pictures closer to the light, studied them again. Finally, he shook his head. “I don’t know him.”

“And the next?”

The newsman flipped the second sheet on his desk, held the third one under the light. “Gregory again. The guy looks like the guy I called you about. DuClos.”

“Who is he?”

“I explained to the girl—”

“You spoke to someone in my room?”

“Yeah. A girl. She said you worked together.”

Liddell swore under his breath. “When you said you called, you didn’t tell me you reached anyone.” He leaned over, lifted the sheet of pictures

from Ryan's hand. "What about this guy? Who is he and what's his connection with Gregory?"

"His name is DuClos. He was one of the Resistance leaders during the war. He called himself Colonel Duc. He's some kind of a local hero. Cashes in on it by operating a bistro he calls Auberge de la Résistance."

"Okay to use your phone? I want to see if the girl is still at my place."

Ryan indicated the instrument with a wave of his hand. "Be my guest."

Liddell dialed with quick flicks of his index finger, then waited. The hotel operator finally got on.

"Ring Mr. Liddell's room, please," Johnny told her.

There was a pause, then he could hear the phone ringing on the other end. He let it ring ten times, then slammed the instrument back on its cradle. "She's taken off," he said.

"I shouldn't have given her the message?" Ryan asked. "I figured as long as she was close enough to be in your room, she was close enough to trust."

Liddell checked his watch. "How long ago did you call?"

Ryan pursed his lips, rolled his eyes ceilingward, estimating. "Fifteen, twenty minutes ago."

"A fifteen-minute start," Liddell growled. "How far away is this joint?"

"Twenty minutes, maybe a half hour away this time of night." Ryan frowned. "You think she's going to see DuClos? What's her angle?"

"She's just a dizzy broad. She knows I've been trying to link Gregory up with someone from the days of the Occupation. You gave her the link, and she probably figures it would be a real charge to get to him first." He shook his head. "It could be the last thing she ever did."

"DuClos? You don't think DuClos killed Gregory?"

"What was the favorite weapon the Resistance workers used? An edge! Cutting a throat to a guy like that would mean less than shaking hands."

Andrea sat at a table with a red-checked tablecloth in the Auberge de la Résistance and glanced curiously around the room. Most of the tables were full. A heavyset man wandered from table to table, exchanging small talk

with the customers. He wore a butcher's apron, and a Gauloise drooped from the corner of his mouth.

Across Andrea's table, Henri was giving undivided attention to a plate of *coq au vin*, washing it down with deep swallows of Beaujolais.

The heavyset man shuffled over to them. He eyed the job Henri had done on his dish with approval, frowned to note that Andrea had barely touched hers. "You do not like the *coq au vin*?" he inquired.

"It is delicious," Andrea said. "I am simply too excited to eat."

"Excited?" the proprietor raised his eyebrows.

"I have heard so much about this place." She indicated the framed wanted notices on the far wall. "Those must have been such exciting times."

"Exciting," DuClos said. "But seldom pleasant."

"Those are real death warrants, are they not?"

The heavyset man turned and stared at the warrants. "All too real. There was a heavy price on my head in those days. I was not worth so much money."

"And this building. This was really your headquarters?"

DuClos bobbed his head. "It was a garage in those days. Many nights the Nazis smashed in the doors—"

"They caught you once, did they not?" Andrea asked. "And you escaped from them once?"

Heavily veined lids half-masked the heavyset man's eyes. "I was lucky." He looked around the room at the other customers. "If you are so interested, would you like to see our escape hatch below?" He cleared his throat. "I do not show it often. It would take up too much of my time. But with your interest—"

"I'd *love* to see it. And you, Henri?"

Henri troweled the last of the *coq au vin* into his mouth, wiped his greasy lips with the red-checked napkin. "I guess so," he said.

"The entrance to the lower part of the building is in the back, next to the kitchen. I will meet you there in a few minutes." DuClos bowed and moved to another table.

After a second, Andrea arose from her chair and walked to the back of the room. She could see into the kitchen. A fat woman stood at a wood-burning stove in the rear. She was fishing in the steaming depths of an old-fashioned iron pot, transferring some of its contents to three plates.

Henri walked over and slid into the shadows beside her.

“What is the program?”

“We play it by ear,” Andrea told him in a low voice. “We have a better chance of talking to him where there are not so many witnesses. If they used it as an escape hatch, we may be able to take him back to headquarters for a real heart-to-heart talk.”

Henri glanced out into the main portion of the room. “Here he comes,” he warned.

DuClos joined them in the rear. In the kitchen, the fat woman was waddling around. She wasted an incurious glance on them and went back to filling plates.

DuClos fumbled along the molding on the rear wall. There was a soft screech as a section of the wall slid back. Beyond, a flight of stairs led into the darkness below.

“Be careful going down the stairs,” DuClos warned. “There is no light until we get into the hatch itself. I will leave the door open so it will not be total darkness.”

DuClos led the way. Andrea followed, with Henri bringing up the rear. Carefully, slowly, they descended the staircase, Andrea’s hand on DuClos’ shoulder for guidance, Henri’s hand on her shoulder. Finally they reached the bottom of the stairs.

DuClos put his shoulder against the wall facing them and pushed. The door creaked open. He fumbled along the inside wall, found the switch, snapped on the light in the room beyond.

Andrea walked in and stood staring. She saw a film of dust on the table under the light and on the seats of the wooden chairs. Her shoes left footprints on the floor.

DuClos pushed the door to the staircase shut, followed Henri into the room.

“This was where the council met,” DuClos said. “Many a sentence of death was passed at that table. The members of the council would present

the charges against the Boches, the rest of the council would pass sentence, and a member of the unit would be assigned to carry it out.”

Andrea looked around the room with undisguised interest. “How did you escape from here?” she asked.

“You have heard of the sewers of Paris?” He pointed a stubby finger at the far wall. “This basement is built with access to the sewers. It was a simple matter to step out into the sewer, follow it for a mile or so, and come out far from where the Nazis were searching for us.”

“How exciting,” Andrea murmured.

“You have never seen the sewers?” DuClos walked across the room and slid back a panel.

Andrea crossed to where he stood and glanced through the open door. Beyond was the high-vaulted circular walls of the sewer. The ceiling stood almost eight feet above the slow stream of water that flowed sluggishly along its bottom. A few feet above the water, a catwalk disappeared into the darkness.

Andrea turned, motioned for Henri to take a look. He was performing an involved operation on his teeth with the nail of this thumb. He walked over, glanced over her shoulder with no show of enthusiasm.

“You can see better from the catwalk,” DuClos told them.

He stepped back, allowing Andrea to step through the door. Henri followed.

Andrea heard a sharp click, then a grunt. She turned in time to see Henri collapse. His knees folded under him, and he pitched head first off the catwalk into the sewer stream.

She swung on the heavysset man who was drying the blade of a knife on the butcher’s apron. It left a long, crimson streak.

“Are you mad?” she managed to croak.

“No. But you are, coming here trying to trap Colonel Duc.” DuClos reached out, sank his fingers in her hair, tugged her through the door and sent her staggering across the room. She landed in a heap against the table, her dress hiked halfway up her thigh.

DuClos leered at the exposed white flesh. “You and I are going to have a little talk before you join your friend out there.” He held the blade of the

knife up suggestively. “You are a pretty piece of meat. I hope I don’t have to make hash out of you before you talk.”

Andrea stared up at him, eyes wide.

“Why are you doing this? You do not even know me—”

“But you know me. You know me too well.” DuClos leaned down, put the point of the blade against the soft flesh of her neck, and nicked her. “How did you know that I escaped from Fresnes?” When she hesitated, he nicked her again, drawing a slight bead of blood. “How?”

Andrea drew back from the blade, flattened against the leg of the table. “I—I heard about it. Everybody knew that—”

DuClos bared his teeth in a grin. “The only ones who knew are long dead. When they began to wonder how the Gestapo knew so much of our plans, when they realized that only Colonel Duc had escaped from the fortress, they had to go. No one is now alive who remembers that Colonel Duc once was a prisoner of the Gestapo. How did you know?”

Andrea tried to speak. No sound came out.

DuClos’ grin grew broader. “There is time, lots of time, *chérie*. No one will disturb us here. No one can hear you when you scream. These walls are a foot thick.” He held the knife low, cutting edge down. “In the end, you will tell me what I want to know.”

# Chapter 21

JOHNNY LIDDELL paid the cab off in front of the Auberge de la Résistance and checked his watch. It had taken almost a half hour from the *Ledger* office through the evening traffic. He hustled across the sidewalk and into the bistro.

A heavysset man was heading toward the rear of the room as he entered.

Liddell stood in the doorway and looked around. He noted with relief that Andrea was not seated at any of the tables. It was just possible that he had misjudged her, that she was not attempting to doublecross him again. He settled down at a table and brought out a cigarette.

A fat woman waddled out from the rear with two plates of steaming *coq au vin*. She brought them over to a table against the wall, set them in front of two elderly, overdressed and too brightly made-up women. She headed back toward the rear.

The heavysset man did not reappear.

When Liddell finished his cigarette and there was still no sign of the man, Johnny got up, wandered toward the rear where the man had disappeared. The fat woman was alone in the kitchen, filling plates from the huge pot. The man was nowhere in sight.

Liddell frowned slightly. An opening in the rear wall caught his attention. He walked over to it, looked down into a well of darkness. Inside the kitchen, the fat woman's back was turned to him. Liddell stepped through the opening, found a steep flight of stairs beyond. Slowly, cautiously he descended the steps until he came to a closed door.

He debated the advisability of continuing farther. Then, as if from a great distance, he heard a scream. He placed his ear against the door and listened. The scream came again, reaching for a high note of terror mixed with pain.

Liddell tugged the .45 from its hammock. He threw his weight against the door. It opened with a screech.

Liddell stood in the doorway, .45 in hand.



Andrea Moreau had been stripped, her clothes thrown into a pile on the floor alongside the table. She lay on the table-top, spread-eagled, her ankles and wrists lashed to the table legs. Several thin red slashes crisscrossed her abdomen.

DuClos stood frozen, knife in hand.

Liddell stepped into the room, pushed the heavy soundproofed door shut.

The girl on the table closed her eyes. “I didn’t think you were ever coming, Johnny.”

“Sorry, baby. You didn’t leave a forwarding address.” He used the muzzle of the .45 as a pointer. “Cut her loose, Tubby.”

“So you are Liddell,” DuClos said. He held his knife up, point toward the ceiling in the style of an experienced knife fighter. “The sewers will be filled tonight.” He shuffled toward Liddell, his knife thrust out in front of him.

“One more step,” Liddell said, “and I’ll blow a hole in you big enough to drive a truck through.”

DuClos kept on coming. “Why don’t you shoot?” he taunted.

“Anything to oblige,” Liddell said.

The .45 boomed like a cannon in the soundproofed room. The heavy slug caught DuClos in the right shoulder, spun him around and slammed him back against the wall. The knife clattered to the floor. He slid to a sitting position. He clapped his left hand to the rapidly spreading stain on his shoulder, brought it away stained crimson. He looked from his hand to the muzzle of the .45.

“The gun,” he said. “It shouldn’t have—”

“Any bullets in it? So you’re the one who tried to give himself a five-shot headstart by turning bullets into blanks?”

“I am bleeding to death,” DuClos said. “Get me a doctor!”

Liddell ignored him. He walked over, picked up the knife, used it to cut the cords binding Andrea to the table. She sat up, rubbing her wrists.

“Give me the knife,” she said. “Let me kill him.”

“Get your clothes on first,” Liddell told her. “There’s no hurry. He’s not going any place.” He looked over at the wounded man, who was rocking back and forth on the floor, trying fruitlessly to stem the flow of blood with

the palm of his hand, the crimson seeping through his fingers. “There are a lot of things we have to talk over with DuClos.”

“He killed Henri, Johnny. Knifed him in the back and threw him into the sewer—”

“Get dressed,” Liddell snapped. “If DuClos gets too stubborn, I’ll let you have him.” He smiled viciously at the man on the floor. “You hear that, DuClos? You consider yourself an expert at torture. So you know how long it can take to die when an expert is at work. She’s an expert. You know what she is, DuClos? She’s an Israeli Nazi killer.”

“I am no Nazi—”

“You are worse!” Andrea spat as she pulled on her panties. “You are a traitor to France, to mankind. You remember the one Resistance leader that escaped from Fresnes, Johnny? It was he. DuClos. He saved his own hide by turning informer for the Gestapo.”

“I came to the same conclusion when Ryan told me that Gregory was buddying up with a former Resistance leader. It made a lot of sense for the Nazis to trade him his life for an inside line into the Resistance councils.” Liddell eyed the man on the floor with clinical distaste. “DuClos thinks pretty highly of his own skin. He made a deal to keep it in one piece with the Gestapo. Now he’s going to make a deal with us.”

“I am bleeding to death,” DuClos moaned. “It will be on your head if you don’t get me a doctor first.”

“How many are on your head, DuClos?” Liddell said harshly. “Barry Lee, Helena Gregory, Henri. How many before that? How many of your own comrades?”

DuClos slumped forward, unconscious.

Andrea ran around the table and stared down at him.

“He isn’t going to die, is he?” she asked anxiously.

“Not from a slug in the shoulder he isn’t. He’s going to live long enough to neck with Madame Guillotine.” Liddell reached down, caught DuClos by the good shoulder, and turned him over. The red stain was darkening. “Just the same, we’d better stop the bleeding. He’s going to need all his strength.” He unbuttoned DuClos’ shirt and pulled it back off his shoulder. The .45 slug had ripped a jagged hole the size of a quarter going in, and left a larger exit wound in the back. Apparently no bones had been hit.

“Just a scratch,” Andrea murmured.

“How do you feel?” Liddell asked.

“Dreadful. He was in seventh heaven carving me, inch by inch. He knew his business. He scarcely drew blood most of the time. He could have kept me alive for days.”

“We’ll have you looked after as soon as we get what we want from him.” Liddell eyed the brassiere and panties she was wearing. “We’ll need something for a bandage.”

“I have a half slip. Will that do?”

Liddell nodded. Andrea extricated a white half slip from the little pile of clothes and brought it to him. He tore it into strips, made a pad for the wound, bound it tightly into place. Then he caught DuClos under the arms and dragged him to the table. Andrea helped to lift him onto it.

The first sign of returning consciousness was a slight flicker of DuClos’ eyelids. A moment later his eyes opened.

“A doctor,” he pleaded. “Get me a doctor.”

Liddell smiled gently, in the manner of a tiger loving its kill. “Too late, DuClos. You drew Big Casino. We couldn’t get a doctor here in time.”

“I am dying? Help me. Can’t anybody help me?”

“You’re the only one who can help you now,” Liddell told him. “You’re the only one who can help you die with a clear conscience. It’s still not too late to make it up to all the people you’ve betrayed or killed.”

“No, no!”

“It’s up to you,” Liddell said. “I know I wouldn’t want to go out with all that on my conscience. And how about Stein? He walks away from the whole thing, scot free. You take the whole rap.”

The man on the table kept shaking his head. “I know nothing.” He winced. “It is beginning to burn. My chest is beginning to burn—”

“Was he so good to you that you should care what happens to him?” Liddell persisted. “Do you want him to keep on living while you die?”

DuClos licked his lips. “He deserves to die as much as I do.”

“Didn’t he order you to kill Gregory?” Liddell asked. “And Barry Lee? And anyone else who knew him?”

DuClos closed his eyes. He didn't answer.

"You did kill them, DuClos. Just as you killed Henri tonight. It was on his orders, wasn't it?"

After a moment, DuClos opened his eyes. "I had no choice. If I didn't follow orders, he would get the proof into the hands of the authorities that Colonel Duc was a traitor to the Resistance."

"But you could unmask him as a Gestapo torturer."

"A doctor. Please get me a doctor. I don't want to die. I—"

"Where is Stein right now, DuClos?" Liddell persisted. "What's the name he's using? Where does he live?"

The man on the table shook his head. "Colonel Duc dies a hero, not a traitor."

"And Fritz Mendl Stein, who turned you into one, is allowed to stay alive."

DuClos struggled up on his elbow. "He would anyway. You think twenty years has not dulled the people's memory? They would give him a trial, perhaps a prison sentence, then set him free. And people would be spitting at the memory of Colonel Duc." He sank back onto the table, wheezing.

"Stein will suffer more than a slap on the wrist if he is taken to Israel to stand trial," Andrea told him. "There they keep the memory green. You will be able to ask Eichmann in a few minutes. He found out that we have never forgotten. So will Fritz Mendl Stein."

"What name is he using?" Liddell asked again.

"You are too late," DuClos said. "He was ready to leave Paris."

"What name?" Liddell repeated.

DuClos clenched his teeth. "You are killing me in cold blood," he moaned. "My whole chest is on fire. I need a doctor. I need—"

"What name? It can't do any harm if he's already left. He probably has another identity all set someplace else."

"You will get me a doctor?"

Liddell nodded. "As soon as I know you've told me the truth, I'll get you a doctor."

"I may not last that long," DuClos said. "I tell you, I am on fire."

“The name?”

DuClos licked at his lips. “André Leroux.”

Liddell grunted. “That’s almost as good as John Smith.”

“It is true. The real André Leroux was a Vichy supporter. One night, his whole family was slaughtered and he disappeared.”

“The Resistance?”

“That is what it was supposed to look like. It was the Gestapo, dressed as Frenchmen. They wiped out his family, took Leroux to Fresnes. Stein kept him alive until he knew as much about the Leroux family as André did. Then, when Stein escaped into Egypt, he assumed Leroux’ identity. He returned to Paris in 1960. He has been living here as André Leroux ever since.”

Andrea’s lips were peeled back from her sharp little teeth. “Where do we find him?”

DuClos shook his head. “He did not tell me where he was going.”

“Where has he been living in Paris?” Liddell asked.

After a moment, the man on the table sighed deeply. He gave them the address of the apartment on Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

Andrea let out a triumphant yelp. “We have him, Liddell! We have Stein!” Some of the exultation drained out of her voice. “At least you have him. If you had not arrived in time, he would have escaped and I would be in the sewer with Henri.”

Liddell grinned at the note of disappointment in her voice. “We can’t win them all,” he consoled her. “I’ll drop by and pick him up in the morning.”

Andrea stared at him. “In the morning? He may be gone.”

“Fortunes of war, Andrea. Like I said, we can’t win them all.” Liddell indicated the hairline slashes on her abdomen. “You better run along and have something done for them. Send a doc back to take care of DuClos. I’ll baby-sit him until the doc gets here.”

“You mean it, Johnny?”

“Mean what? Somebody has to stay with this character or he’ll take off through the sewers. We may need his testimony.”

Andrea stepped closer, reached up and kissed Liddell on the lips. Then she ran around the table and started getting into her dress.

“If Stein is really going on a trip, it might be neighborly to help him pack,” she said.

# Chapter 22

ANDREA MOREAU stood in front of the third-floor apartment in the house on Faubourg Saint-Honoré. She pushed the bell button. She could feel the perspiration prickling along her hair line. She made an all-out effort to show no signs of the discomfort the slashes on her body were causing.

The door opened slightly.

She saw a thin man, his hair pasted down carefully on his head, his lips a thin slash in an otherwise handsome face.

“What is it?” he said. “I am very busy.”

Andrea smiled at him. “I know. You are about to take a trip.” She smoothed the fabric of the tight dress over the roundness of her thighs. “A friend, Auguste DuClos, sent me here.” She looked up and down the hallway. “As a bon-voyage present, so to speak.”

The man in the doorway inspected her from head to foot, and back, with appropriate stops on the way. “It was thoughtful of Auguste, but—”

“He said that, where you are going, they might not have some of the specialties of Paris.” She sighed. “However, if you are too busy—”

The thin man pulled the door open. He glanced up and down the hall. “I am never that busy,” he told her. He stood in the doorway as she walked past him, admiring the play of her bottom against the tight fabric of her skirt. “DuClos’ taste seems to be improving,” he observed, and closed the door behind him.

Andrea stood in the center of the room. She saw several valises and a trunk in the entrance to the bedroom.

“A drink first, perhaps?” Stein suggested. He headed for the portable bar, dropped some ice into the martini pitcher, began loading it with a dash of Cinzano and a heavy splash of Beefeater. He began stirring it. He watched Andrea as he stirred.

“One of the things I shall miss most away from Paris are the women. They are the most beautiful in the world.” Ice rattled busily in the pitcher.

“They make such an art of satisfying their men.”

Andrea shrugged. “That is our function.”

“That is your function,” Stein agreed. He brought out two glasses, poured two blue-white martinis, and handed one to Andrea.

“And this specialty of yours that DuClos thinks I might find amusing? Tell me about it.”

Andrea sipped delicately. “I am a Nazi hunter, Herr Stein.”

The man’s hand, holding his glass, froze halfway up to his lips. For a moment, he was stunned.

It only took a moment.

Andrea threw the contents of her glass into his face. Before he could recover, she was on him.

Stein made an effort to fight back, but the alcohol continued to blind him, he could not contain the two hands full of raging, struggling female. She was fighting with feet, teeth and nails, slashing at his face.

Suddenly, she caught his arm in a lock, planted her feet and twisted. Stein’s feet left the ground. He sailed through space. He smashed into the wall, head down, and crashed to the floor. Andrea reached him before he regained his feet. She chopped the side of her hand against the side of his neck. She repeated the blow on the other side of his neck. He slumped into a heap on the floor.

Andrea walked over, poured herself a drink, and swallowed it in one gulp. It made her eyes water and she coughed. But it had the effect of lessening the discomfort and stinging of the cuts.

She picked up her handbag, rummaged through it, brought out a hypodermic with a cork on the point. She held it up to the light, removed the cork, squeezed a drop of colorless fluid from the needle.

Satisfied, she walked back to Stein’s inert form. She rolled his sleeve up, mainlined the needle and pressed the plunger. Stein’s snores gradually grew louder and more regular. She wiped the needle off and stuck the cork on it and returned it to her purse.

Then she walked over to the telephone and dialed the number of the Shinbet office.



“I am about to pack the trunk,” she told the man on the other end. “You will pick it up in half an hour.”

“Will there be difficulties with the concierge?” the man on the other end asked.

“She knows he is leaving on a trip. You have been sent to pick up the things he is storing.”

“Good.”

“All arrangements have been made at the airfield?”

“They are standing by. The flight has been cleared. It is known that a member of the Embassy must make a hasty trip to Tel Aviv. All that remains is for him and his baggage to be put on board.”

Andrea chuckled richly. “In half an hour.” She dropped the receiver back on its hook.

She opened the trunk, gathered up its contents and dumped them on the bed. The trunk would provide cramped quarters for a few hours, but by morning Stein would have all the room he deserved. Adolf Eichmann had never complained that his large glass cell was too confining. And the cell would be ready and waiting for Stein when he arrived.

Johnny Liddell sat at the bar in the Blue Room of the Hôtel des Étrangers, fingering the flimsy of the cablegram that had arrived shortly after noon. It read:

“Announcement of arrest due in 36 hours. I arrive on six-o’clock flight. Don’t make any other plans.”

It was signed simply “A”.

Liddell signaled to the bartender to refill his glass, checked his watch. It was almost one-thirty. Only a few hours to wait.

He recognized the angular figure of the newspaperman in the entrance. The girl with the freckled nose was with him.

Ryan saw Liddell and headed toward him. “I came on horseback,” Ryan said. “I hope you don’t mind my bringing Laurie with me. She takes shorthand, and from your message, I have the feeling I don’t want to miss a word of this.”

“Glad to have you, Laurie.” He pointed to a table in the corner, out of earshot of any of the other occupants of the room. “Let’s sit over there.” He told the bartender to bring his drink to the table, ordered for the newsman and his assistant, then led the way to the table.

When the drinks were in front of them and Laurie had her notebook opened and pencil poised, Liddell settled back.

“The police have the murderer of Helena Gregory,” he told them with no preface. “He’s Auguste DuClos, who used the name Colonel Duc during the war. He also murdered a man known as Henri, an Israeli intelligence agent. It will be announced this afternoon.”

Ryan scowled at him. “Then everybody gets it at once. Where’s the scoop in that?”

“There is none,” Liddell admitted.

“Thanks. For nothing.” Ryan started to get up from his chair.

“The murders are the least of it. Your scoop is that Israeli Intelligence has arrested Fritz Mendl Stein, wartime head of the Gestapo in Paris. He will be tried publicly, like Eichmann.”

Ryan snapped his head toward the girl. “You got that?”

She bobbed her head, and continued to scribble pothooks in her notebook.

“Stein murdered a Vichy Frenchman during the Occupation and assumed his identity,” Liddell said. “He had been living in Paris since 1960 under the name of André Leroux. Colonel Duc was a traitor and a Gestapo spy during the Occupation. When Stein returned to Paris, he held this over Duc’s head to make him follow orders. Gregory also worked with Stein. When Stein thought she was getting dangerous, he had Duc cut her throat.”

“What a break!” Ryan exulted. “We have it exclusive?”

Liddell produced the cablegram. “You’ve got thirty-six hours to make hay with it.”

Ryan’s eyes skimmed over the message. “Looks like you’re planning to do some reaping yourself,” he said.

“One more thing,” Liddell told him. “Barry Lee gets the credit for uncovering Stein. When he was researching his book, he found some evidence that Stein was alive. Barry Lee alerted Israeli Intelligence and put this whole operation into motion.”

“You weren’t exactly sitting on the sidelines,” Ryan told him. “Too bad you couldn’t have nailed Stein yourself and—” He broke off and grinned. “I get it. As ye sow, so shall ye reap. You sowed pretty good and you stand to reap pretty good.”

“Is that any way to talk in front of an innocent young thing like Laurie?” Liddell protested. “What will she think of me?”

“Exactly what I thought of you the first time I laid eyes on you,” the girl said. “They don’t grow them like you in this part of the world.”

## THE END

### TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Maid in Paris* by Frank Kane]