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The Mano Nera Specter

by Jake Lynne

The second Harry Devon story

Tenth Draught

80,568 words

This story is a fiction – a ‘what-if’ history, if you like.

It is built upon a series of actual events that may

or may not have been related.

The characters, likewise, are fictional, even

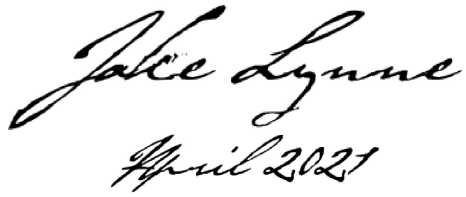
when they are built upon people who actually existed.

New York City is real, as are some of

the corporations and agencies mentioned herein,

although some names have been changed

to protect the innocent (me) from being sued.



PROLOG

April 14, 1903

Kids is kids, right? Sure. And dames is dames, and punks is punks. And when you get punks and dames together, what do you get? Right. Kids. It's a vicious circle.

Benedetto Madonia was caught in a vicious circle and he didn't know how he was going to get out of it.

'Benny' had done a stupid thing. He let himself fall for a twist named Nan Patterson. Now, that wasn't the stupid thing. Punks fall for twists all the time, don't they? No harm done, usually, if the punk can get shut of her before the claws sink in.

No, the stupid thing Benny did was not know that Nan Patterson was a twist whose daddy was a big shot in the Treasury Department.

How could he possibly have known that? She was a Florodora girl, for god's sake. And,

she was hot to trot from the get-go. Benny met her backstage at the Casino Theatre a year after the show opened there – he clocked her; she clocked him; and the bells began to chime. He barely got the door to his apartment closed before she was on her back.

Now, this had gone on for more than two years and it was all lots of fun. Benny surprised himself by not getting tired of her – mostly because she constantly surprised him, too; there was always something new.

But, there comes a time in everything and Benny decided that it was time he had to end this. After all, she was nearly twenty-two, now. That's getting up there, so he said to himself he'd tell her to pack her bag and move out.

So, she surprised him one more time: when he told her to get out, she told him she was pregnant.

Then she told him that, while he'd been out whoring, drinking and committing crimes all day, she'd been copying letters and notes, keeping a diary of what he'd been doing and who he'd been doing it with, and he'd better not lay a finger on her or her daddy in the Treasury Department would have him strung up by his thumbs.

Then Benny did his second stupid thing. Instead of taking care of his own problems, he went and cried on his boss, Guiseppe Morello – and Guiseppe Morello had a very short fuse when it came to things like that.

Morello sent out Ignazio 'The Wolf' Lupo, and that should have been that. The problem was that Ignazio 'The Wolf' Lupo got his nickname as much because of his success with women as his bloodthirsty way of conducting business (and his last name, of course) – so he was even more susceptible to the charms of former Florodora girls than was Benedetto Madonia.

So, long story short, a month later, when Morello made inquiry into what Lupo had done about Nan Patterson, he found that Nan wasn't pregnant, after all, and that she and Lupo were shacked up in the Bronx doing the horizontal tango day and night.

That was not what Morello had in mind when he sent Lupo to fix the problem. It was time to end this, once and for all.

Tomasso 'The Ox' Petto was not what anyone would consider a ladies' man. There were those who wondered whether he was a man at all and not a ravening beast. He had left a wide trail of blood behind him whenever his special services were needed. He left Sicily fifteen years before, not because the *polizia* were hot on his trail, but because, when he impaled a bride the night before her wedding and left her in front of her groom's home as a warning over certain debts owed, even the Family bosses on the island had finally decided he was too ... extreme in his methods. Yet, when he finally arrived in New York, he fit right into Guiseppe Morello's way of operating.

So, when Morello sent Petto with instructions to deal with both the former chorus girl and his wayward *tenente* Lupo, that should have been case closed but, again, the gang hadn't counted on the resources of little Nan.

While Petto was preparing to castrate Lupo and continue upward until his knife met jawbone, little Nan, who once sang *Pretty Maiden* and *I was a Florodora Baby* nightly to adoring crowds, sent three .38 caliber bullets in one side of the Ox's skull and out the other. That's going to attract your attention – briefly.

Now, the law might have considered that self-defence, certainly defence of a third party, but the lovebirds forgot to mention it to anyone and tried to skip the country. Nan's landlord had

a nasty shock when he went in to find what was causing the smell. New York police pulled Patterson and Lupo off the trans-Atlantic bound steamer *SS La Lorraine* before it sailed and, eventually, they found a large sealed barrel among effects the pair had stored, more or less permanently, in a New Jersey warehouse. The barrel's contents were listed as 'china and statuary'. The barrel's contents were actually Benedetto Madonia. His condition was such that suicide was ruled out almost immediately – very few people take their own lives by cutting themselves up into more than twenty pieces and sealing themselves in a barrel.

Because the corpses in question both began life in far-off Sicily, the case was dropped onto the desk of the head of NYPD's Italian Squad, Joseph Petrosino, and Petrosino was not a man you wanted looking at your case file. Little Joe (as nobody called him) was born in Italy himself, in beautiful Padua where Shakespeare set *The Taming of the Shrew*. However, he was no brawling Petruchio – he was just three inches over five feet and had to ask for a special dispensation of the height rule to join NYPD. Luckily, he was friends with Police Commissioner Teddy Roosevelt. Petrosino had, already in his career, saved tenor Enrico Caruso from kidnap and probable murder, and had tipped off the Treasury Department about a plot to kill President McKinley – which the Treasury Department ignored and the world knows how that went.

Now, it was almost certain that Nan and Ignazio had not done the deed on Benny Madonia. It was pretty clear from the start that this was punishment from on high for Benedetto's foolishness in letting a dame get the best of him and involving people who had better things to do in his domestic life. This was professional murder. By the time he was looking down into the stinking stew that was all that was left of Benedetto Madonia, Joseph Petrosino hated the crime families of Italy and, mostly, he hated the crime they'd imported into His City. He was going to

put a stop to it, if it cost him his life.

"Is this another barrel murder?" he asked no one in particular, but the cop standing by the discovery said, "Well, it's a barrel and he's been murdered, so ..."

"How long have you been on the force?" Petrosino stared at the young cop until he answered, "Just three years ... sir."

"Twenty years ago, when they wanted to get rid of somebody who was ... bothersome, he ended up in a barrel, shipped half-way across the country to some one-horse town in Kansas and there he'd sit until the barrel started to leak. No way to trace the barrel or where it came from or who sent it to where it ended up." He kicked at the barrel and it sloshed a little. "But that was twenty years ago. Things are different, now."

"How so, Lieutenant?"

"You ever hear of fingerprints, boy?"

"Sure, but who knows how many people have handled this thing? How will that help?"

"Well, we don't just have a finger here. We've got the whole set of them."

On the inside of the barrel lid, painted in heavy black enamel so that even the noxious contents of the container couldn't dissolve it, was a life-sized stencil of a hand.

CHAPTER ONE

April 6, 1904

Harry was watching the kid ahead of him. It was obvious he was going to try to steal the loaf of bread. Harry could see it plainly – and so could the grocer, who had his hand on the broom.

The kid put his hand on the bread; the grocer lifted the broom. Harry took two quick steps over to the kid's side and grabbed his hand. "Charlie, what the hell's the matter with you? You practicing to be a punk, is that it?"

He pulled the seven year old away from the front of the grocery, slapped a nickel down on the lip of the display wagon and took the loaf, as the grocer stared in surprise.

"Sorry, Mister Tassinari. He's just a kid, you know – and he's hungry."

Signor Tassinari didn't know whether to be relieved, affronted or angry, so he chose the latter, grabbed Harry's nickel, and stomped back into his store.

Harry shook the boy's arm. "Hey, Charlie, you tryin' to get in trouble? Mister Tassinari's a good guy, but he'll wallop you something fierce you try that again. You're lucky I was there."

"Yeah, I'm lucky." The kid didn't look at all grateful. "I can outrun old man Tassinari."

"Yeah, but can you outrun me?"

"Ah, Tony. Lea'me alone, will ya?"

"Look, you hungry or something, Charlie? You need something to eat?"

"Yeah, I'm hungry. What's it to ya?" The boy didn't look particularly hungry, at least, not long-term hungry, but Harry gave him the benefit of the doubt. He held out the loaf he'd bought from Tassinari.

"Here. Take that home to mama. You tell her, she needs anything, she should talk to Tony Bonfuzzi. I'll make sure she's okay. You got that?"

"Yeah, I got it, Tony." The kid took the bread.

"And, it's Mister Bonfuzzi to you, Charlie."

"Yeah, and one day, it'll be Mister Luciano to you!" The boy ran off down the street, and Harry wondered whether his mama would ever see the loaf.

"So, Mister Bonfuzzi, you the neighborhood charity boss or something?"

Roxie Vanilli dropped his cigarette on the sidewalk, ground his heel on it and looked both ways before he talked again.

"You trying to set yourself up with the young widows, are you? Charlie Luciano's mom, maybe? She's a little old for you, sonny-boy."

"I'm just trying to help the kid, Roxie."

Vanilli slapped the side of Harry's head. "Mister Vanilli to you, snot-nose."

Harry was taller than Vanilli, and he'd probably killed as many men. "I wouldn't Mister you, if you was holding a gun on me."

And got slapped again for his mouth. Vanilli wasn't holding a gun, but he was holding Harry's jacket and proceeded to hit him three or four times. Harry took it without a word. "You watch your mouth, punk." He looked at a family who had stopped to stare. "What are you looking at? Scram!" And, they moved on. Vanilli lifted his hand, again.

"Leave him alone, Roxie."

Vanilli paused with his hand in the air and looked over his shoulder. Guiseppe Masseria stood behind him, powerful arms crossed over a massive chest.

"Yeah, okay, Guiseppe. He's a punk, though. He needs slappin'."

"Just tell him."

Vanilli kept hold of Harry's lapel. "Mister Zwerbach says for you to come."

"Who's that?" Harry knew very well who Mister Zwerbach was, but he wasn't taking orders from Roxie Vanilli.

"What do you mean? You know who! You saved his life last week, ya punk!" He raised his hand again.

"Oh, yeah! That Mister Zwerbach! So, if I saved his life, maybe he don't want you hitting me, eh, Roxie? What do you think?"

He pulled Vanilli's hand off his lapel, but Vanilli grabbed him by the arm again and started tugging.

"Hey! Leggo!" He tried pulling away, but the man was a professional, a paid thug, and held on tightly. "Leggo, I said!"

"He wants to see ya." And Vanilli kept pulling.

A roundhouse left connected with Vanilli's jaw and the hood toppled like a pine tree, stiff and hard. He lay on the pavement, a pile of wet rags in the April puddles.

"I told ya to get yer hands off me!" Harry shouted, fists up, waiting for Vanilli to get to his feet so that he and Masseria could beat him to a pulp, but the man wasn't moving. Had he really done that with one punch?

A cold piece of steel pressed hard against his right ear and he felt the vibrations of the clicks as the hammer was cocked. From the corner of his right eye, he saw Giuseppe Masseria at the other end of the piece.

"He wants to see you."

Masseria grabbed him by the ear and began to pull.

"Now."

Now, being dragged by the ear down the street that you trying to build a reputation on is not the best deal, but it wasn't bad, considering. One of the very distinct outcomes of this situation was Harry lying on the concrete like a wet rag bundle – the same way Roxie Vanilli still was. There were other, less desirable outcomes, as well, so Harry went along peaceably enough, while Masseria manhandled his ear. When Joe Masseria tells you to do something, you do it.

The last time he'd been dragged like this had been on the dock at the Port of Seattle, more than two years back, now.

"What's this?" The customs man waved his brown walrus mustache over Harry's luggage, such as it was. He was suspicious from the get-go. A young kid like Harry shouldn't be traveling alone.

"It's my poke."

"Your what?"

"Poke. It holds what I dug up in . . . Alaska. That's the sum total of four years of back-breaking work that killed my parents to acquire." Always make your story as close to the truth as you can.

"Where in Alaska did you get this?" Kids don't arrive at the border with thousands of dollars worth of gold.

"Circle City." Eighty miles from the border with Canada, miners by their thousands passed through there every year. It was still hundreds of miles from Nome, where the gold rush actually was.

Suspicion is hard to allay, however, especially in a customs man. "I thought the Gold Rush was in Nome. I didn't know there was gold anywhere else up there."

"Neither does anybody else – and I'm not going to tell them. Are you?"

The man was still trying to figure some way to transfer at least a portion of what was in Harry's poke to his own pocket, and he wasn't about to wave Harry through. His under-nasal brush twitched again.

"You can't just bring gold into the country, like that." He started to pull the poke toward himself, but Harry didn't let go.

"I'm not bringing it into the country. It was dug up in one part of the country and I'm bringing it to another part of the country. Nothing wrong with that, is there?"

The customs man wasn't the brightest candle in the federal service. "You're bringing this from a foreign country into the USA! That ain't legal! Don't think you can get around me. Now,

hand it over."

Now, there's no point in arguing with a customs agent, so Harry was considering giving up his poke. Not seriously, but he was thinking about it. If he had to, he'd get back on the boat and continue down to San Francisco.

"Alaska is part of the USA – has been for nearly forty years."

That stopped the man. He looked at Harry in shock, then down at the poke of gold. Harry could see him seeing the gold slip through his fingers. Then he saw the cunning come to the fore.

"Prove it."

"You what?"

"Prove it. Prove that Alaska is part of the United States."

This was a puzzler. How could he possibly prove to this obviously crooked guy, with the materials at hand, that Alaska was part of America? Oh! He knew.

"Look over your shoulder." The man stared at him. "Go ahead. Look over your shoulder."

The map was about six feet across, in full color, and clearly showed all 45 states, plus the ten territories. The biggest of those territories was labeled, in bold print, ALASKA. The man turned back to Harry.

"A territory isn't part of the United States of America. Most of them aren't even in America."

"Alaska sure is. I've been there."

There was a long line of tired people behind him and they were growing restless. The grumblings had started some time ago, and were now outright mutterings.

"What is he doing up there?", "What's taking so long?", "How can it be so hard to clear

somebody through?", "Is he a criminal or something?"

Finally, in view of the growing storm behind Harry, the customs man finally gave up his quest for gold. "All right. Just show me your passport."

"I don't have one."

"No passport." A howl such as he'd heard in the deep, dark Yukon night went up from the line behind him.

"My parents took me up there when I was ten. I didn't need one then; I didn't think I needed one now." Took him up there from St. Catharines, Ontario but that's wasn't important.

"Entry denied. Next!"

"But, I'm already in the country! I never left it! I got on that boat, right there, that *American* boat, at Skagway, Alaska, and I got off it right there at Seattle, Washington."

"You claim to be an American. How do I know that? No passport; no entry. Next!"

"So, what am I supposed to do?" Harry had several ideas, but they all involved the application of pedal force to posterior openings.

"Go back where you came from. Is that hard to figure out?"

"This is where I came from!" Not really true, but in the broad scheme of things, it was close and Harry didn't see the need to complicate, right now.

"How can I let you into this country with no way of knowing who you are?" The man was infinitely patient. He was probably thinking he might still get some of that gold. "Now, if only there was someone who could vouch for you . . ."

"I'll vouch for him."

From three places back in the line, it was a woman's voice – now, what woman would

vouch for him? Every eye in the hut went to her, Harry's included. She was medium height, medium slim, medium blond, and medium good-looking. She was also medium 20s-ish.

She stepped out of line and made her way to Harry's side. "I have known this young man since he was a pup. I vouch for his character and veracity."

The customs man didn't look convinced. "And, who are you?" She produced some documents and handed them to the man. He looked them over six ways from Sunday. "All right. Where did you meet him?"

"Oh, up on the creeks. North of the Circle." She waved her hand vaguely in the direction of the North Pole, that is to say, north.

"Really? What's his name, then?" A look of smug triumph on the man's face needed to be wiped clean, but how? Harry couldn't place her face for the life of him.

She had a solution, though. She looked straight at him and asked, "Oh, it's right on the tip of my tongue. What was your name, again?"

He had grabbed one from the past for his entry application. "Nelson. Nelson McGee."

"There you go. Nelson McGee, just like I said." She hadn't said anything of the sort. "Now, where do I sign to vouch for him?"

From behind the mutters had become shouts: "What's going on up there?", "What's the holdup?", "Let him in, already!", "What's taking so long?" The customs man was getting nervous.

"All right, fine! What was your name: McGee? You sign here, McGee. Lady, you sign here. You realize that you are responsible for his good behavior, do you?"

"I don't think that will be a problem, my man. I've always approved of Nelson's

behavior. Let's go, Nelson; my baggage is on the dockside. Load it up in that carriage, there: the phaeton."

"Now, hold on, just a minute!" Harry began, but she grabbed his ear and tugged him toward the door.

"That's my baggage, there. That's my carriage." She pointed at both and left him.

Her baggage seemed like more than Harry's family had carried over the Chilkoot pass when they first went to the Yukon, but he got it all in or on. Meanwhile, she was organizing everything around her with ruthless efficiency. Even people who had nothing to do with helping her get arranged found themselves double-stepping it. Finally, she climbed into the carriage herself and sat with the door open. He peered into the depths at her shadowed figure.

"So, are you getting in or not?"

What the hell, you're only young once. He tossed his own grip on top, and mounted the step. There were two seats inside, allowing four to sit facing each other. He chose the forward seat, meaning he was facing the back, and got to look her over in the dim light of the conveyance. There was something familiar about her, and it wasn't just her face.

"You're not going to sit over there, are you? Come on over here." And she patted the empty spot beside her, so he moved across to fill it. The door was closed from the outside.

"All right, Jimmy. Let's go," she ordered the coachman and the carriage moved away at a smart trot, across the crowded streets of Seattle. Harry looked out the window for a minute, then turned to her when he realized the silence. She was staring at him.

"Oh god, Harry! It's good to see you, again!" And, she placed a hand on each side of his face to kiss him hard. It was only when she let him go that he recognized her. She paused to look

Harry over. “You’ve grown, hon, and, in a good way!”

They say you never forget your first kiss and this woman had been the one who had first given him a real adult kiss, back in 1901. There had been others since – more than one others since – but the first is the first.

He leaned back to look at her. “I’m pretty sure they don’t call you Gypsy anymore.”

She looked shocked for a moment, then rolled her head back in peels of laughter. “Oh, goodness, Harry. I haven’t been Gypsy Troele since I left Dawson! I’ve been Mrs. Elay Britton for three years.” She stopped and looked thoughtful. “I’ve been the Widow Britton for most of a year, now.” She looked at him, again, and lifted her hand to brush his hair from his face. “Most of a long year.”

“I’m sorry,” he said, not knowing what else to say, then, “I lost someone, too. Lots of people: the girl who was carrying my baby; my mother; my father. Too many, really.”

“You’re mother’s gone? Oh, Harry, that’s awful.” She laid her hand on his cheek. “I remember you sitting in that dressing room, looking as many places as you could, surrounded by legs and bosoms and backsides, when your mother came in. I was watching you and thinking, ‘Stop it, Gypsy. He’s ’way too young.’” Harry was startled at that bit of news. She put her other hand back on his cheek. “You’re not too young, now, are you?” And, she kissed him again.

The carriage had pulled into a high-fenced property before she’d finished, the stone wall enclosing a gabled red-brick house and treed lawn. It was a nice place for a woman who’d been making a living as a high-kicker and a dollar-a-dance girl just three years ago. Now, she was a rich widow – all at about 26 years of age. Funny how life turns out.

Gypsy – no, the Widow Britton – was good for him, and good to him. She helped him get

over the events in Dawson, just three months past, when he'd lost his past. She helped him get over the events at the Chilkoot Pass, just two months back, when he'd lost his future. She helped him regain some of the veneer of civilization that the Klondike had worn off him and she slowly turned him from a shaggy, bearded, buckskinned mountain of a man into something a Seattle mama might be happy to invite into her parlor.

And, after six months of it all, she helped him onto a train at the Seattle station and kissed him one last time. The future lay east, and that's where he was going. She was no longer Gypsy, but he'd become one.

CHAPTER TWO
APRIL 12, 1904

Harry loved New York.

He'd been in the Big Smoke more than a year and he never tired of the noise, the bustle, the busyness, the crowds. He could count on the clang and bang of a street-car, the chug of the El, the roar of the subway to start and end his day. He could count on food on just about every corner, for free if you were careful, for a nickel if you had to pay. He could count on good-looking girls on the streets, at least a portion of whom didn't minding sharing their good looks with him for a while. For free – because Harry never paid.

Yeah, he loved New York.

Sure, there were people here who might want to rob him, or beat him up, or maybe even kill him, but, unlike the Yukon, nothing in New York actually wanted to eat him. Well, nothing

he'd run in to, yet.

He made a decision, on the long and difficult way east from Seattle: everything that happened 'way up there in the Yukon didn't happen. If he forgot about it, it would disappear. It had been six months since Frona Welse's final scream had come to haunt him in the night. His parents were dim memories and he couldn't really remember his mother's face, anymore. His fight with the wolves that night east of the Bonanza might stay with him forever, though.

But, mostly the Yukon had faded into the past. And, why not? He wasn't a kid anymore. He was seventeen, now, and he'd been on his own for a quarter of his life.

Until this moment, when Vanilli and Masseria were dragging his ass through the streets of the Lower East Side. It would have been one thing to be taken to see Mr. Zwerbach in a carriage – or even a buzz buggy! – but to be marched through the streets, each arm held by a tough and no way to escape was just humiliating.

Vanilli had regained his feet, a large red mark on the side of his face. He said not a word, but the look he gave Harry promised slow and painful death, a promise on which Harry was sure he could deliver, by force or by stealth.

That was the difference between the Yukon and New York. Anything he had faced Up North had been just that: face to face; you gave it and you took it. Man or wild animal, eventually one or the other duking it out would quit – or die. In New York, it was different. If face to face didn't work, back alleys and dark hallways would, maybe not that day but a week or a month or a year later. A guy like him with no friends to back him up had to move very carefully, which is why he let Vanilli slap him around for a while. Vanilli had friends.

Harry had ... acquaintances. Kids who tipped him a nod over a choice morsel to be picked

up with a fast hand or a quick lift. A couple of guys his age he could count on to help with the lift when it was too big for two hands. A couple of dealers who were happy to take a few things off his hands for a price. A few girls who were happy to share in the distributing of that price.

It was trying to impress one of those girls that got Harry into the trouble he was now being dragged toward.

"Gee, Tony," she said, wistfully. He was 'Tony' on the Bowery; no need to pass around his real name. "I wish I could have a ride in one of them buggies," she said as a smug-looking family chugged past in a new automobile. There were more and more of them on the streets lately, making noise and leaving smoke and stink behind them. They were loud and annoying, scaring horses and people alike but, at least, you couldn't step in what they left behind.

"You got to be rich to own one of them," he said, and saw the disappointment in her face, so he continued, "And, one day, I'm going to own one, kiddo, and I'll take you for a ride any day you want."

"Oh, that'd be so excitin', Tony." She slipped her hand around his arm. "I mean, real excitin'." And she pressed up against him very closely, just to let him know what kind of excitin' she meant.

Now, Anna (that was her name) wasn't the best looking girl Harry knew, but she'd do. She was a pretty good sport, too, but even when they were alone, she strictly put the lid on anything more than some kissing and a few touches. The problem was those kisses and those touches were enough to make a growing boy come back for more – as much more as he could get.

So, Harry put a plan in motion to enable her to get her first automobile ride. His first step

was to ... go to a library and find out how an automobile works.

There wasn't much there. One book on internal combustion engines; one book on the future of transportation that talked mostly about trains; a magazine or two.

The librarian, who wasn't a lot older than him, was keeping an eagle eye on him from the desk and wandered past once or twice, just to ensure he wasn't smudging up the books. When he had finished with the first book, she swooped in to claim it.

"Are you finished with this?"

"Sure. There's nothing new in there. The guy thinks trains are the future, but it ain't so."

"Really? What is the future?"

"Aeroplanes. Did you know some guys in New Jersey actually flew, like up in the air, an aeroplane last year – flew it and brought it back down, too. They've been doing it ever since. They take off, fly around, and land again all the time! Aeroplanes are the future."

"Then why are you looking at material about automobiles?"

"Because automobiles are now. And we live in the now, don't we? Schopenhauer suggests that we have only the now to reference our existence, doesn't he? The ... what did he call it? ... the extended plane of the now which modifies the future. Smart cookie, Schopenhauer. I don't agree with him on everything, but I do on that."

She was looking at him with wide round eyes and open mouth.

"And, anyway, I like automobiles. They're neat."

"Well, that's very commendable, but next time, wash before you come in." She picked up the book and wandered away, while Harry reflected that she was neat herself – wasted in a library, though.

So, he read, automobiles worked by using a piston to compress a volatile air-fuel mixture into a confined space, introducing a spark at a pre-determined time, causing combustion of the air-fuel mixture which expanded to drive the compressing piston downward, turning an eccentric crank which, through a series of gears, then turned the drive wheels of the automobile. Simple enough.

That was the information from the books. From the magazines, he learned of the latest models of automobile, their technical details, their differences – and how to start one. That was the crux: how to start one fast and reliably. Automobiles weren't that reliable at all, let alone when you wanted to steal one. A fellow could get in real trouble if he didn't get that part right.

It was a couple of weeks later, when he'd been boning up on automobiles daily, that he was talking to Anna once more. She was in a tight skirt and a blouse that was too light for the April weather, so her assets showed to advantage. It was enough to make a young man cry – but Harry had a plan.

He'd seen it four days in a row, pulling to the curb in front of the warehouse. Two men rode in the back and the driver would jump down to help them out. They'd go in to the warehouse and the driver would go in to the beer-joint across the street. They were gone for over an hour each time.

His plan was simple. When the driver had gone into the saloon, he'd saunter up, start up the machine, pick up Anna, take her for a ride long enough to be, in her own words, 'real excitin'', then find an out-of-the-way spot. Later, he'd ditch the auto somewhere inconspicuous.

What could go wrong?

He ensconced his prospective paramour on a stool in an ice-cream parlor on Bowery two

blocks from where his master crime would take place. He made sure there was a tall strawberry shake in front of her: the eight-cent shake, not the five-cent one. “Now, you wait here, snooks. Keep watch for me, ’cause I’ll be back soon – and I’ll have something for you that’s real excitin’.” The look in the girl’s eyes made him double his pace down the block.

Sure enough, the Cadillac was parked two blocks up from the ice-cream parlor. He walked past it twice, making sure no one was keeping an eye on it. Of course, no one was. What would be the point of stealing an automobile? You couldn’t sell it to anybody; you couldn’t take parts off it to sell; you couldn’t even drive it around after the first few hours when cops started looking.

So, nobody was watching.

The third time past it, he saw that the ignition system was a simple switch – no special lock on it. So, switch on; run to the front; spin the crank. It was still hot so it would probably catch on the first flip – he hoped.

As it happened, he’d found an article on this very model that gave him a grounding in how to operate it, so he was sure his plan would work. The crank at the front, under the cooling radiator, was to start the engine. It had a small lever near it which the article had told him was called a ‘choke’ to make the air-fuel mixture thicker, to help start the car.

He took a final look around, walked behind the machine out into the street, up the left side, leaned into the driver’s position, flipped the ignition switch on, ran to the front, pulled out the air-fuel lever, and spun the crank.

And, nearly broke his arm. The engine, with too much fuel in the mixture, spat back and spun over the wrong way, sending a god-awful *bang!* out from under the hood.

He re-set the lever, shook his aching arm and spun the crank again. This time, the engine caught and chugged to life. Air-fuel lever down, hop into the seat, look for the hand-brake, release it, push the gear lever in, release the clutch lever.

And, the engine quit.

Repeat the whole process; the engine chugging; add some gas with the throttle lever; the engine sped up; release the clutch – off, we g . . . !

Except four things happened at the same time.

One: A half-dozen auto engines began to bang and pop around him.

Two: The bona fide driver of the machine slammed open the saloon door across the street and shouted "Hey!"

Three: The door to the warehouse slammed open and the two men who'd been in the rear seat came running out, firing guns into the warehouse as they ran.

And Four: Harry realized the bangs and pops weren't coming from automobiles – there weren't that many automobiles on the street. The bangs and pops were coming from guns!

He was suddenly in the middle of a gun battle – and all the bullets seemed to be coming directly at him.

He was so surprised that he dropped the clutch lever down too fast and the engine stopped again.

The driver, too, stopped in the middle of the street to yell at him and begin to reach into his coat. Harry knew that reach and knew that a gun was coming out after it.

He leaped from the machine to run back toward the ice-cream parlor, but his foot caught on the driver's side running board and he fell face down in the street. A wagon pulled by two

draft horses passed within inches of his head.

The two men from the back seat reached their machine and began to climb in, still firing toward the warehouse.

The driver, still in the street, raised his arm to begin shooting and someone else's bullet took him in the forehead, exploding out the back of his head in a fine spray of blood and brains.

"Vai! Vai! A guidare!" shouted the first of the two men in the back.

"Accendi la macchina, idiota!" shouted the second, and Harry realized they were shouting at him, shouting at him to drive – quickly.

At the front of the auto, a bullet pierced the engine cover and went 'zumm' past his ear as he flipped the choke lever and spun the crank. The engine caught, he flipped the lever down, vaulted into the driver's position, checked the gear selector and released the clutch – slowly, this time.

The red automobile pulled smoothly away from the curb and he yanked the wheel hard over to slide into the traffic, putting a delivery wagon between him and the gunfire. All good, so far, he decided. He'd learn how to drive as he went along. How hard can it be?

"Più rapido, stolto!" of which he got 'rapid'. He assumed *'stolto'* wasn't a compliment.

He opened up the throttle lever and the car lurched up Bowery, with him pulling it in and out of the traffic, mostly carts and carriages, around him. He realized the engine was struggling to turn over as hard as he was demanding but he thought to pull up the clutch lever, pull the gear selector back and let the clutch down again. The engine slowed but the car went even faster.

He proceeded up Bowery, passing Anna's astonished and very angry face on the side of the street and motored on uptown. He'd have to apologize very carefully, there.

In a few minutes, he was growing very proud of his newly-acquired skill in piloting an automobile. It was easy. Those around him on the street may not have thought so but he was blissfully unaware of their opinions and the noise of the engine drowned out their suggestions.

One of the men in the back hit him on the shoulder, yelling and gesturing to the right, so he swerved that way and turned onto East 6th Street. After a block, he brought the machine down to a slow trundle and pulled up to the curb. Clutch lever up, hand-brake back, the machine waited patiently.

At which point, the trouble started.

"Chi diavolo sei?" yelled the first man, while the second brought his gun to bear on Harry.

"Dov'è Matteo?" asked the second man, and Harry recognized *Matteo* as a name.

"Your driver? He's dead."

"Cos'hai detto?" they yelled together.

"Sorry. I don't talk wop. Matteo. Your driver?" He mimed turning the wheel. "He's dead." He did a fair imitation of the death of the unfortunate driver.

The two men, like good Catholics, crossed themselves and looked properly pious, ignoring the fact that they'd been firing bullets indiscriminately up and down the street a few minutes before.

The engine idled; the auto vibrated; the second man held his revolver steadily on Harry, who wasn't in the least worried because he could see that all the cartridges had been fired.

"What you name-a?" asked the first man.

By now, Harry had calculated who these men were, or at least, what kind of men they

were. It was time to blend in, pretend to be one of them, and he was thankful that he'd already adopted an Italian name – it was useful to be Italian in that part of New York.

"I'm Tony, sir." He desperately hoped no one would recognize the last name. "Bonfuzzi. Tony Bonfuzzi." There'd been a kid who'd been ... kidnaped a year and a half back whose name was something like that. He'd seen it in the newspapers.

"Tony Bonfuzzi? Sei italiano?"

"Italiano? Italian? Sure, I'm Italian." His mother was German, his father was English. He was born in Canada. Close enough.

"Why ... you-a here?" The first man didn't have a lot of English, it seems.

"I was just walking by when the bullets started, so I hit the ground. Then you two started yelling at me and I saw Matteo get killed and I decided to help out." The second man translated for the first ...

... who was suddenly all smiles, pushing the second man's pistol out of the way. *"Grazi, Tony. Grazi. Ci avete salvato la vita."*

The second man, putting away the gun, said, "Mister Zwerbach says you saved our lives."

Harry looked from one of the professional criminals to the other. "That's okay. Think nothing of it."

"Mi ricordo di quelli che mi aiutano," the first man said.

"He says he remembers anybody who helps him."

"E d'ora in poi, tu sei amico di Max Zwerbach." The first man tapped his own chest and seemed to think this was an important thing. Zerback? How was that an Italian name?

"And, from now on, you are a friend of Max Zwerbach," said the second.

"Vach, gli dia un dollaro." And the second man handed Harry a silver dollar. Oh, boy, a buck. Some gratitude, he thought, but pocketed it anyway.

"Well, thank you, Mister Zerback. That's very nice of you. I better get going, now." And he started to climb out of the machine.

"Hey! Hey! Hey!" and *"Ehi! Ehi! Ehi!"* yelled the two men, together again.

"Portaci a casa, ora," ordered Zwerbach.

"What?"

The second man leaned forward. "You drive us home, now. Quick!"

So, he drove them home, the same home that Vanilli and Masseria were dragging him toward, now.

And, all of that because he wanted to get into little Anna's bloomers.

CHAPTER THREE
APRIL 12, 1904

Mr. Zwerbach's home was the top two floors of a walk-up on Avenue B at 8th Street, looking down on Tompkins Square. It was a quiet neighborhood and Harry was sure the neighbors must appreciate the extra security that Zwerbach's goons on the street corners and outside the building must provide. They were obviously armed and, in the building itself, openly carried shotguns to patrol the hall. On the way in, up on the roof, he saw one or two with rifles.

The presence of armed thugs suggested the possibility of other armed thugs making *their* presence known with violence as the result. Harry'd had enough of violence for one lifetime and was pretty sure that, whatever was waiting inside, he wanted no part of it. Vanilli and Masseria might have other opinions.

The biggest surprise was that Max Zwerbach's lair was an all-male place. He expected

that he'd find girls sitting or lying about in various places, but not one was to be found. He started to worry about that by the time he was taken into the inner sanctum.

Masseria hung back as they walked in and Vanilli waited until he got the attention of the one Zwerbach had called Vach.

"Mister Lewis, here's the punk you wanted." Vanilli cuffed Harry on the back of the head to send him toward the boss.

"You're Tony," Mister Lewis said, focusing on Harry's face.

"Yeah, that's right."

Vanilli hit him again. "Mister Lewis, to you."

"Mister Lewis." For some reason, Harry was speaking very quietly.

"Mister Zwerbach says he's very grateful to you for saving his life back there on the Bowery. With Matteo dead, things might have gone bad, if you hadn't stepped up. Thank you."

"No problem ... Mister Lewis. My pleasure. I'd do it again."

Vach Lewis looked Harry over, nodding. "That's what we thought. So, Tony." Lewis draped an arm very companionably around Harry's shoulders. "How about we give you a job?"

Harry wasn't sure he wanted one. "What kind of job?"

"What kind of job, Mister Lewis!" Vanilli had his left hand swinging for the back of Harry's head, again, but it was blocked by a strong right and Harry planted a straight left to Vanilli's nose that staggered the man back. Before he could recover, Harry was on him, 190 pounds bearing the hood to the floor, Harry's left hand beating Vanilli's right into his coat and coming out with Vanilli's revolver.

By that time, a half-dozen of the guards in the room were lifting their various guns in

Harry's direction, so he held the revolver, muzzle to the ceiling, in his left hand, flipped the cylinder out with his right and dropped the shells onto the floor.

"He comes near me again, I'll break him in two!" Harry said, tossing the empty gun onto Vanilli's chest as he lay on the floor.

There was a long pause, as the more or less one ton of muscle in the room decided what to do with this fresh punk.

"Quanti anni hai, Tony?" Zwerbach – no, Mister Zwerbach's voice came from the door behind Tony and the big boss came into the room, the others opening a path for him. He stopped in front of Harry. *"Quanti anni?"*

"I'm sorry, Mister Zwerbach. I don't talk wop."

Lewis spoke up. "You don't talk Italian, Tony. Show respect. And, he asked how old you are."

"Oh. Sorry. I don't talk Italian – and I'm seventeen."

"Diciasette, Signor Zwerbach," Lewis translated.

"Diciasette? Diciasette! Diciassette anni, e questo ragazzo ti supera con il pugni e il cervello." To Harry's surprise, it was Vanilli who was being dressed down.

"Mi scusi, Signor Zwerbach." Vanilli was dripping blood, again.

"Go, stoppa you blood," Zwerbach ordered and Vanilli vacated the room. The boss man looked Harry over, then put an arm around his shoulders and drew him to one side. "Tony, you good-a boy. You strong-a; you brave-a. *Tu sarai il mio autista."*

Harry looked desperately to Vach Lewis, who translated, "You'll be his new driver."

"Driver? Driver?" At best, he had hoped for a few bucks; at worst, he thought he might

be face down in the East River by dawn. This was a gift – and what was he going to say – no, thanks – when there were probably twenty guns in the room? "Sure, Mister Zwerbach. I'll be your driver."

Zwerbach took a moment to translate that himself. "You my ... driver? *Si?"*

"Sure, Mister Zwerbach. Uhm ... *si! Grazi!"*

"Okay. *Vach, gli dia un dollaro."* And Lewis gave Harry another silver dollar. *"Dirgli cosa fare."*

So, Lewis took him to the back to show him what to do, where the car was kept in the old coach house; where they stored gasoline and engine oil; where the tools and spare parts were. Harry realized he had a lot of study ahead of him to avoid making mistakes and letting Mister Zwerbach down. He reasoned that letting Mister Zwerbach down was likely to be unhealthy.

Lewis told him there was a room over the coach-house he could call his own and, on his way out of the coach house, paused to ask, "What kind of gun you carry?"

Harry paused for a few seconds, then said, "I don't carry a gun, Mister Lewis. Guns make it too easy to be stupid. Look at Vanilli back there: stupid. A long time ago, I used to carry a gun and it seemed like a lot of people near me got dead. Since I came to New York, I don't carry one and, so far, nobody near me's got dead." That was a big speech for an untried driver.

Lewis looked at him warily. "You think about it. One day, you'll need it. And, I don't think you're stupid." And, he left the coach house.

And that was that. Yesterday, he'd been trying to line up a way to lift fifty pounds of pork cutlets off the back of a meat wagon; now, he was the personal driver to Mister Zwerbach.

Left alone, he took a few minutes to soak his knuckles in cool water from a tap. Nothing

broken, he decided, but he needed to remember to hit softer things than noses from now on. Or find a different way to hit them. He wondered whether Vanilli's nose was broken – serves him right if it was.

There was dust and street dirt on the Cadillac, so he rolled it out of the coach-house, by hand, and used a bucket and sponge to wash it down and polish it up. The tires looked good and he saw no evidence of oil or water dripping from under it, so he rolled it back into the coach-house. He found the fuel tank and topped it off with gasoline from a can, found the oil filler on the engine and added a little, just in case. The radiator was full of water and the oil reservoirs on the headlights were full. The bullet hole in the engine cover would be harder to fix properly, but he found a hammer and peened the ruptured sheet metal flat. It would take brazing, grinding and paint to fix it right.

All he had to do now was wait until he was needed.

He straightened all the gasoline cans. He straightened all the oil cans. He straightened all the old horse harness hanging along the walls. He arranged the tools in alphabetic order, then by size. He swept off the drive outside the coach-house.

Eventually, he said "To hell with this. I'm getting some lunch." Inside, the first shotgun man he encountered blocked the way. "Knock it off! I'm Tony, the new driver!" And the man simply said 'oh' and stepped aside. Good protection Zwerbach has, Harry noted. Guns and stupid.

"Mister Zwerbach! You need me for a while?" When his question was translated, Zwerbach shook his head. "All right, I'm going to get something to eat." Zwerbach looked at him uncomprehendingly. "Eat! Something to ..." A word from the back of his memory sprang

forward. "... *mangiare!"* And the boss smiled at the fragmentary Italian use and nodded.

A nice pastrami on rye with a beer down the Bowery gave him time to reflect that life was strange. When he woke up, he was a mongrel, living more or less hand-to-mouth on the street. He had a little bit of a reputation up and down the block, and was starting to gain some respect from the local punks, those who were younger than him, at least. He had a couple of girlfriends. He had a few bucks.

Now, just past two in the afternoon, he was somebody. He was no longer some mongrel off the street – he even had a heritage. He was Italian. He was the driver for Max Zwerbach. Oh, Harry knew of Zwerbach, all right. Everybody on the street did – and they were very careful not to run foul of him.

Zwerbach was part of Monk Eastman's organization – or had been until Eastman was arrested last February. When you think of the long list of crimes everybody knew Eastman and his thugs had committed – running girls, selling protection, making book, selling drugs, and even murder for a price – it was funny that Monk had been arrested for the simple act of hitting a man in public. Hell, how many times had Harry been hit that very morning?

So, now Zwerbach had stepped into Eastman's shoes, and Zwerbach had, much earlier, earned the nickname 'Kid Twist' because of how crooked he was. How did Harry know this? Everybody who lived on the streets of the Lower East side knew it. And, stayed out of Zwerbach's way. Vach 'Cyclone' Lewis was his right hand – and added fists like a cyclone to the mix.

There were rumored to be more than a thousand hoods who owed their allegiance to the Eastman gang. They ran the streets of the Lower East Side. They 'protected' nearly every

business in the Bowery and down into Little Italy where they shared an uneasy truce with the Five Points gang. They paid off police and politicians. They even decided who got elected and who didn't – City Hall looked to Tammany Hall on the Bowery for help come election time; Tammany Hall looked to the Eastman gang for help and, in return, Tammany Hall looked the other way over a lot of things, as long as they got their cut.

He had no illusions about who he was driving for but his new position wasn't something you just turned down – and it wasn't something you just walked away from. When Harry accepted the job, it was for life.

Or until he could find a way to get the hell out of New York City.

As befitted an important man like him, he laid down a silver dollar to pay for the thirty-five cent lunch and didn't wait for change. He saw the counter-girl's jaw drop as she watched him leave – he must be important, she was clearly thinking. Important men didn't worry about things like change. Maybe he could make that his trademark: Tony 'Silver Dollar' Bonfuzzi. Sounded good.

Feeling good about himself, he strutted up Bowery, taking in some April sun and the sights and smells of New York. Bagels and lox on one corner; pizza pies and salami across from it; goulash and pirozhki beside that. And a dog stand smack in the middle.

Horses pulled carts packed with ... everything: beer, furniture, clothing, food of every kind. A few automobiles chugged and snorted in between the horses, carrying rich folk on rich folk business. Heavy wagons with four horse teams, laden with all of the things needed to keep a city of three and a half million alive, moved every which way.

And, the people! Every kind of person of every color and some colors Harry didn't know

existed could be met on every block. Both sexes mingled freely, each entitled to their share of the sidewalk. All ages browsed, bumped and brawled in a constant uproar around him. Old men shuffled, looking at the ground and thinking their own thoughts; young men swaggered, looking at the businessmen and wishing they were older; businessmen worried, looking at the young men and wishing they were younger. Matrons brooded their children along; young mothers fussed their babies; girls who would be young mothers and then matrons sooner than they knew skipped and laughed.

Like the four approaching him, now. A blond, two brunettes and a redhead; what more could you ask? And, Anna was the second brunette.

'Hey, baby! Where you been?" But, Anna wasn't having any of that.

"Don't you talk to me, Tony Bonfuzzi! You left me standing on the sidewalk, driving past with them two guys in the back like you owned the town. Well, I hope they kiss better'n me 'cause you ain't kissin' me, again!"

God, she was pretty when she was angry – and she was pretty angry.

"No, baby! You got it wrong. Those two guys don't mean anything to me! I mean, they just wanted me to drive their car; I couldn't stop for you. It was dangerous. It was life or death, I promise."

"Hah!" And, the four girls walked on past, noses high. He noted, however, that they gathered their skirts to one side, in a way that ensured their corseted behinds were well accentuated as they did.

"Anna! Don't be like that!" But they turned the corner and were gone.

Isn't that just like a woman? Won't even listen to a reasonable excuse. Just because a guy

goes off to steal an auto for a girl and gets involved in a gun battle in the middle of a New York afternoon and ends up being dragooned into becoming the driver for the toughest hood in the Lower East Side, she thinks he's lying to cover something up.

Oh, well, he decided, he had better things to worry about than her. Like the pair of oxen crossing the street now toward him.

And, turning back the other way, was Roxie Vanilli and another ox.

He spun around again and tried to slip around the two coming from Delancey. If he could get down to Broome, he might be able to vanish down an alley. Instead, the second one caught him by the coattail and the first got hands on him when he was pulled up short. Before he could slide out of his coat, they'd pushed him up Delancey and down the alley behind the hotel. In the garbage lane, they stopped and pushed him up against the wall until Vanilli and his personal ox caught up. He could see Delancey Street from where he was, but that wasn't going to help him. It was him against three thugs and Roxie Vanilli, who was sporting two shiny new shiners and a nose swollen three times its usual size. At a guess, Harry figured he wasn't happy.

"Hey, Roxie! I like what you've done with your face. On you, it looks good."

"Funny guy. Real funny." Vanilli hit him with a backhand across the face that hurt them both equally, but he followed up with a gut punch that left Harry trying to pull in breath. Between gasps, he had to admit it was a good one.

When he could talk, he got out, "I suppose it's too late to call you Mister Vanilli", and got another fist to the solar plexus. That won't kill you, he thought, but it did make a guy anxious about air for a minute or two. Not that he had that minute or two to concentrate on it.

He could take Vanilli, one on one, any day. He might even take on one of the three

teppisti Vanilli brought with him, but four on one was a lost cause and the blows rained in from every direction. He managed to keep his knees tight to cover his groin, and his elbows in to cover his face, but every place else got hit. After a couple of minutes, he thought he was going to black out, but, as a last act of defiance, he managed to raise the toe of one boot with a very satisfying mush into a groin. It just happened to be Vanilli's. The beating ceased for almost two minutes as Vanilli went to his knees and vomited.

After that, however, his four captors got very quiet. Vanilli finally got to his feet and wiped puke from his shirt front. "All right, you little shit, I've had enough from you. Now, it gets nasty." And Roxie drew a blade from his pocket.

Harry spat blood and tried to think. In a few minutes, they wouldn't find him until they took out next week's garbage. "Think about it, Roxie. Who else has got a beef with me, already? These guys never even saw me before. You're the only one the boss is going to look at when he says 'Hey, where's Tony?' or whatever that is in wop. And you think these guys'll back you up when the boss gets pissed? They'll rat you in a second."

There were more fists for that, but they all knew it was true.

"Okay," said Vanilli. "Okay, I don't kill you, now. No, I let you live, smart boy. But I'll leave you something to think about."

"You going to scar me, Vanilli? I've got scars." Harry talked bigger than he felt, sometimes.

"Naw, I ain't going to scar you, pussycat." He lifted the blade to let it glint in front of Harry's eyes. "I'm going to cut your cock off." And, he grabbed Harry's pants waist to start cutting.

"Tony!" It was a female voice. "Tony! Hey, what are you doing to Tony? You leave him alone, you hear me!" And he heard running feet and he knew Anna was running up the alley toward them. Christ! They'd kill him, rape and then kill her.

"Anna, no!" was as far as he got before he got punched again. Vanilli was watching Anna with one eye and eyeing Harry with the other.

"You leave my boyfriend alone!"

And the four men, who weighed (figuring in Vanilli's one-hundred and fifty pounds) nine hundred pounds between them, who'd probably killed ten men apiece, who were soldiers in the thousand man army run by Max 'Kid Twist' Zwerbach, turned and ran the other way.

By the time she'd helped him to Avenue B at 8th Street, he could walk. By the time he'd washed off the blood and she'd bathed his bruises at the coach-house, he had explained what happened. By the time he showed her the car, with its deep red lacquer, its tufted leather seats and its polished brass, and told her he was the driver, she was getting excited. By the time he'd driven her a dozen times around the block, pulled into the coach-house and closed the big doors, she was real excited.

Sometimes it's nice when your girlfriend yells 'Oh, Tony!' even when it's not your name.

CHAPTER FOUR
SEPTEMBER 13, 1904

In just a few months, it turned into a daily milk run. Down 2nd Ave, around to Chrystie and Eldridge, then down Bowery. They made visits to almost every shop and business up and down each street. Then they ran into Little Italy as far west as Lafayette, which was largely the territory of Paul Kelly's Five Points Gang, and even into Chinatown, down as far as Center Street, where the Chinese tongs (gangs, not implements, he learned) held sway. If it touched the Bowery, even as far north as 6th Street, Max Zwerbach got a cut from it.

It wasn't Zwerbach every day, but he often did the run, and it wasn't a pick-up every day – just a little visit to make sure their clients were happy and to remind them of who kept them happy. Sometimes, it was Zwerbach and Lewis; sometimes Lewis and somebody else. Sometimes, it was two *teppisti*, armpits bulging, and, on those days, Harry knew there'd be

trouble. Head down, back turned to what was happening, he kept his eyes on the road and his nose clean.

The one constant, though, was that the driver was always Harry. Over the course of the next month, Harry had to go for a little walk three times in order not to see things he didn't want to see, but nobody ever said anything about it to him. He knew why, in the enforcer's minds, it had to be done. After all, business is business. On the other hand, bones is bones and blood is blood and if one gets broken or the other gets spilled, it makes you question what you're doing, especially if the victim is a sixty-five year old grandfather.

Apart from that, he sometimes had to run Mister Zwerbach uptown to Tammany Hall. The Hall wasn't in the Bowery, but the Bowery had a lot to do with the Hall. He'd drop the boss off, circle around for an hour, then be out front to pick him up again. A couple of times, he was able to pick Anna up and find a quiet spot. It made for a break.

Who the boss was talking to at Tammany Hall, he never asked, but everybody knew the Mayor owed his office to the Eastman Gang. A thousand large and menacing men covering every doorstep in the lower East Side, encouraging votes – encouraging the right votes – meant a lot of votes – a lot of the right votes – so it was a safe assumption that Harry's big boss was meeting with Tammany's Big Boss – 'Big Tim' Sullivan, himself. If it happened in the Lower East Side, 'Big Tim' Sullivan got a cut of it. The pie was cut in many, many directions.

Then, there were runs into Chinatown and, frankly, they scared the crap out of him. The place was utterly foreign. There was nothing familiar he could hang onto. The buildings seemed strange; the writing was strange; the people were strange. The sounds, even the smells, were strange.

Unlike most of New York's streets, Mott Street and Pell Street and their connectors were narrow, with overhanging structures and twisted corners. It was as if Chinatown had been built, decades before the Chinese came, with Chinese strangeness in mind, or else they had changed it to fit their own view of life.

And, everyone was so damned polite! Waiting in the car outside 13 Pell Street, anyone he nodded to *bowed* back at him! He was an impressive guy, he knew, but bowing wasn't needed. A simple 'Hey, how you doin'?' would have sufficed.

It was a warm, late summer afternoon when Richie Fitzpatrick came back to the car after a run into 13 Pell Street. He was nervous and pale. "Let's get the hell outta here," he said, jumping into the back seat, and Harry didn't argue.

"What was in there, boss?" he called back and Fitzpatrick shook his head. "Fuckin' opium den! Makes me sick. They all lay around like they're dead and the fuckin' smoke makes your head spin. Meanwhile, anybody not doped up is playin' some fuckin' Chinese game with buttons and things – it's weird." He went on in some detail, enumerating the hygienic, sexual and personal habits of the inmates of an opium den and those of their relatives going back many generations. "Christ," he concluded. "I hate comin' here. Zwerbach can shove it next time he tries to send me."

Harry laughed. "Yeah, you know you'll go just the same as every time." Fitzpatrick looked at him sideways but said nothing in reply.

They both breathed easier a few blocks away, when they reached Little Italy. That neighborhood had begun to feel like home to Harry. The sight of coils of clean, dry, neatly bound sausage and wheels of clean cheese was infinitely more reassuring than Chinatown's orange-

glazed ducks hanging in the windows, their broken necks twisted grotesquely and their eyes staring back at the viewer. Yeah, he thought, we Italians prefer our own ways. Except ...

He'd caught glimpses of her three times while stopped on Mott Street. She was tiny – less than five feet, he thought. She couldn't have weighed ninety pounds. Twice her hair had been loose, her clothing relaxed, although not Western. Once, her hair had been braided, lifted up and adorned with sticks and fans and her clothing had been shining embroidered silk.

She was the most perfectly beautiful tiny picture he'd ever seen. The first time, looking down into the street from the second floor of the building where the meeting was happening, she had seen Harry staring at her and turned dark soulfully sad eyes upon him.

Harry fell in love from afar.

When he dropped Fitzpatrick at the front of Zwerbach's building, he stopped him to ask, "Hey, Richie, do you know who that girl is?"

"What girl?"

"The one in the window above the door you go in. I keep seeing her."

"What door?"

"On Mott Street. There's a window over the door you go in and I keep seeing a girl in it."

It took Fitzpatrick a moment. "Holy shit! You're looking in windows in Chinatown? What, are you stupid?" Maybe. The jury was still out on that. "Look, you sit in the motor. You keep your hands and your feet inside the motor. You keep your eyes on the floor of the motor. You don't touch nothing and, most of all, *you don't be looking at the girls in the windows!* The men on the other side of those windows don't like that – and they'll kill you. Slow. Real slow."

"Oh. Point taken." He parked in front of the coach house, washed the machine and

thought about the little girl in the upstairs window. Okay, he thought, he'd probably never meet her, but it was a tantalizing thought. She was ... exotic was the word, he decided.

Meanwhile, he saw Anna occasionally, but not often enough for his liking. Even less occasionally was he able to persuade her to come back to the coach house. She was willing, but cautious. He was beginning to feel like a monk, stuck in his little cell.

Apart from daily runs, he had a lot of time to think, because Zwerbach didn't go out much. He stayed inside his fortified apartment building, surrounded by his soldiers. Harry wasn't quite sure why everyone was on guard all the time, but he figured there had to be a reason. Was there some group outside the Eastside gang that was going to come after them? Was there someone inside the Eastsiders who was going to attack them? Was the mayor of NYC going to send the bulls in to round them up?

And, in the case of any of the three, what should Harry do? These are the things you think of when you've got a lot of time alone with a motor car in a coach house.

When he got deep into one of these philosophic arguments with himself, he had a cure. He'd tell the boss he was taking the motor out for a test, run way north past the end of civilization, find a field and practice tearing the dirt up, spinning the machine, doing quick turns and fast starts. He figured it might save the boss's life someday – and maybe his own along with it.

"Bonfuzzi!" Harry nearly cracked his head on the engine cover as he jumped up. It was Joe Masseria, who'd been brought back in to be one of the shotguns inside. "Boss wants you."

"Out front?"

"Yeah."

"With the car?"

"Yeah." A virtual font of knowledge Masseria was. The massive man grunted something at Harry and strode back toward the house.

Around the front of the building in two minutes, he jumped out and ran upstairs. "You need me, boss?" But the boss wasn't there. It was Roxie Vanilli.

He hadn't seen Vanilli since the incident in the alley. Frankly, he'd been hoping the man was dead.

"Hey, Tony!" Vanilli beamed. *"Farai un viaggio speciale per Signore Zwerbach."*

"*Speciale?* For Mister Zwerbach?"

Vanilli rose, a small cardboard box in his hand. "You go down the Bowery to East 3rd, okay? You go to Great Jones Street, to the New Brighton Athletic Club. You deliver a package to Mister Kelly there, okay?"

"New Brighton Athletic Club, Great Jones Street, East 3rd. Deliver a package to Mister Kelly. Mister Zwerbach couldn't tell me himself?"

Vanilli smiled with all the warmth of a hyena. "You think he's got nothing else to do than chase around after you? New Brighton Athletic Club, Great Jones Street, Mister Kelly."

"Yeah, okay." He took the package.

Vanilli looked at one of the other men in the room. "Louie, *gli dia un dollaro.*" And, the man tossed a silver dollar at Harry, who let it fall to the floor, turned on his heel and walked out.

It wasn't a long trip, just down the Bowery to East 3rd and turn right; Vanilli could have done the job himself. He'd been into Little Italy before, but never on his own. You had to wonder why they'd send a kid on his own into Five Points territory. The Five Points Gang had nearly as

many soldiers as Zwerbach's Eastsiders did (people were calling it the Eastside Gang, now – Monk Eastman wouldn't be getting outside of prison for a long time). He'd heard people talking, around the apartments and on the street. Paul Kelly, the Five Points leader, was small, neat, dapper, gentlemanly – and one of the most vicious killers on Manhattan Island, nearly as bad as Monk Eastman.

He looked down at the package beside him on the seat. It wasn't big, a few inches long, a couple of inches wide and deep. It was cardboard, addressed to Kelly. It might have been a tie-clip or a set of cuff-links. It might have been a nice pen. Harry doubted that it was any of those.

It suddenly hit him that Vanilli might be lying.

Sweeping along Great Jones, he kept going onto Lafayette and brought the vehicle to a shugging halt at the curb. Even though the package was sealed all around, he had to open it and look inside. He thought hard while he used his jackknife to open the box. If he didn't deliver it and it was legitimate, Mister Zwerbach would probably kill him. If he did deliver it and it wasn't legitimate, would the Five Pointers kill him? He lifted the lid on the box.

Yes, they would. They definitely would.

It was someone's cock and balls.

He laid his head down on the steering wheel and held on to it to keep from screaming. What had he done to make this happen? He honestly couldn't think of anything. What made Vanilli think he could get away with it? He began to bump his head on the wooden rim of the steering wheel. What to do? He had the car, he had a few bucks. He could get the hell out of the city as fast as he could, sell the car and run. He could disappear into Ohio or Pennsylvania. Except he was probably being watched right now.

That thought made him jerk upright and look around. Sure enough, he was being watched. Two women in their forties were stopped beside the car and looking at him and down at the open package. He slammed his hand down on it, shutting it off from their view, dropped the motor into gear, let the clutch lever up. One block and he went left onto Bond, then left again at Bowery and up one block to Great Jones. The New Brighton Athletic Club was near the Bowery corner on the south side of the street. He parked, shut off the ignition, double secured it with a hidden switch he'd installed himself, picked up the package and crossed the street.

The way he figured it he had five minutes to live if he took the package in or ten minutes to live if he didn't. So, he'd rather get it over with. He pushed the door to the Athletic Club open.

It wasn't just an athletic club – there was a bar, signs pointed upstairs to where a dance hall was promised and ... well, there were a lot of girls in various states of dress lounging about.

Unlike Mister Zwerbach, Paul Kelly liked to keep his business where he could see it. Nobody paid much attention to him when he came in, but, eventually, eyes began to turn in his direction and the noise level dropped. Oh, crap.

"I need to see Mister Kelly," he called, with as much confidence as he could muster.

Now, there was a deep silence. Large men, many with crooked noses and cauliflower ears, began to drift away from the bar toward him and others came into the room from the back.

One of the men, who looked like he'd spent a lot of time in his youth getting his face hit, stepped forward. "Why does Mister Kelly want to see you?"

"I've got a package for him." He held it up and everybody in the room backed away. "No, no! It's not a bomb. Believe me, it's far from being a bomb."

"What is it, then?"

"It's a surprise. Big surprise." If he dropped it now and ran, could he make it to the door before he got shot?

"Who the hell are you?" These people were a suspicious lot.

"I'm Tony. Tony Bonfuzzi, Mister Zwerbach's driver."

If possible the silence got louder.

One of the girls rose and calmly walked over to Harry. She was pretty; she was blond; she was leggy and lithe. She looked Harry up and down, walked around him, slid an arm around his waist and put a hand on his chest.

"So, Tony, why don't we take you to Mister Kelly?"

"Mister Kelly's here," said a voice from the back room. Harry saw a short man wearing patent leather shoes, spats, sharply creased pants, a fashionably-striped coat, high collar and square tie. His hair was pomaded down, partly covering a balding brow. He had small eyes and thick lips.

"What have you got there, kid?"

"Uh – before I give this to you, sir, can I just say that I'm only the messenger? I had no idea what was in it until I opened it outside."

"So, what's in it?" Kelly was holding a hand out, so Harry put the box in the hand.

Kelly opened the box and looked down. After a few seconds, he dropped the box and looked away. When the box hit the floor, the tidbits of flesh rolled out of it and there was a collective gasp. The girl with her arm around Harry did an actual double take.

"Is that what I think it is?" she gasped.

"Yep." Harry was watching the ring of thugs, mugs, and pugs on the other side of the

room.

She looked up at him. “It ain’t yours, is it, hon?” He just stared at her. “Well, that’s good.”

Kelly looked from the floor to Harry. “You got some nerve, kid. You knew what this was and you brought it in, anyway?” Kelly was wiping his hands on a silk handkerchief, which he dropped when he was done. “You think you’re going to walk out of here with yours intact?”

“I sure hope so, Mister Kelly. I’m just the messenger.”

“I think maybe you’ll be the message we send back.”

The girl wrapped her arms tighter around him and said, “Oh, come on, Kelly. He’s a kid – he’s probably never even had a chance to use his!” She looked up again. “You ever have a chance to use yours, yet, kid?”

“What? Yeah. Sure.” She looked at him with appraising eyes.

Kelly looked down at the mess on the floor. “Who’s missing?” but none of his cronies could provide an answer. Finally, somebody said, “I ain’t seen Luca ‘D’ around for a few days.”

The small gangster sized Harry up and nudged the box out of his way with his immaculately shining toe as he crossed the floor.

“Why the hell did Zwerbach send this? Is this a warning? A threat? What?”

Harry could only shrug. “You know something, Mister Kelly, Mister Zwerbach didn’t send it personally. They told me it was from Mister Zwerbach, but maybe it wasn’t.”

“They told you? Who’s they?”

“Well, I don’t like to tell tales out of school . . .”

The girl shook his arm. “Tell tales, idiot.”

He smiled down at her and continued. “You didn’t let me finish! BUT! It was Roxie Vanilli that gave me the box.”

“Vanilli? Anybody know him?” But all of the faces around him came up blank.

“Well, Mister Kelly, that sort of thing –” He pointed to the mess. “– that’s kind of Roxie’s specialty. He wanted to do it to me a few weeks back, but my girlfriend scared him off.”

“So, why send this to me?”

There were at least twenty men in the room by then, mostly ex-boxers by the look of them, along with a dozen women, at least one of whom was on Harry’s side. He surveyed the crowd. “Think about it, Mister Kelly. He didn’t send that to you. He sent me to you. He figured you’d do his dirty business for him.”

“Did he?”

“And, maybe take the blame if there was any to go around. Mr. Zwerbach wouldn’t be too happy if Vanilli roughed me up. Vanilli and his punks picked up your Luca ‘D’ and did him just for this. Probably at random.” Harry didn’t know that for sure, but it made sense.

Kelly eyed Harry too long for comfort. “Chick, Biff, Leo – rough him up.”

Three experts spent a good three minutes reducing Harry’s state of well-being. Finally, Kelly said, “Okay. That’s good enough” and the pummeling stopped.

Harry was on the floor, pulled into as small a ball as he could. He bled from several places, his kidneys were on fire, his shins and elbows had been kicked and pounded. He managed to get as far as his knees, but decided to stay there for a while. Kelly looked down at him.

“You tell Zwerbach that we’ll meet him man for man if he wants war.”

Oh, he was going to live? That was good news. He managed to pull enough air into his

lungs to get out a sentence. “Mister Zwerbach don’t know nothing about it, Mister Kelly. It’s Roxie Vanilli did it.”

Another long stare from Kelly. “Okay, kid. Pick that up.” Kelly indicated the mess on the floor and Harry, still on hands and knees, used Kelly’s silk handkerchief to scrape it all into the box. “Help him up.”

Chick, Biff and Leo bent down to help, but Harry’s new girlfriend beat them to it. She steadied him on his feet and used her own handkerchief to wipe some of the blood off his face.

“Somebody give me some paper and a pen. What’s that mug’s name, kid?” Kelly wrote a short note, indicated that Harry should open the box and dropped it inside. Harry saw what it was as he closed the box. It read “Roxie: next time, these will be yours. P.K.” The box got retied.

“You know how lucky you are, kid?”

Harry, not meeting Kelly’s gaze, kept his head down and said, “I do, Mr. Kelly. I sure do.”

Then the *capo* leaned in to Harry’s ear. “You owe me a life, kid. When I call you, you come running. When you hear something will affect me, you come running. If anybody – anybody! – is thinking about a hit on us, you come running. You understand?” And Harry could only nod.

The girl helped him outside and across the street to the motor. She was soft and smelled good, if he had energy and health for that sort of thing right now, which he didn’t. Engine started, he climbed in. “You coming with me?” but she shook her head. “What’d you help me for?”

“Oh, baby boy, you’re far too pretty for something bad to happen to. Don’t forget me, now.” And, with a quick kiss, she was gone.

He didn’t even know her name.

CHAPTER FIVE

SEPTEMBER 13, 1904

If Harry hadn't felt like he'd been pulled backward through a fire-grate, he'd have enjoyed the look on Vanilli's face when he read the little note in the box.

"Now, ask yourself how I got out of there, Vanilli. Then ask yourself whether you should be messing with me, anymore." And, he turned around and walked out the door, leaving Vanilli, literally, holding the mess he'd created.

Outside the door, Harry grabbed the wall for support and made his way slowly to the first floor, out the back of the building and up to his room in the coach house. He cleaned up his cuts, washed off the blood and the grit, soaked his bruises and laid down for a little rest –

– for exactly fifteen minutes. Richie Fitzpatrick's voice came from below. "Bonfuzzi! Where the hell are you? Boss wants you!"

Oh, god. Not twice in one day. He dragged himself up, wiped some more blood off his face, admired the swellings that were redrawing his physiognomy, and limped back to the main building. Eight flights up is a long haul when you've got at least two cracked ribs, but he did it.

Zwerbach was in his office with the entire set of thugs around him, Vach Lewis standing behind him, as always. When the boss saw Harry enter, he was on his feet in a second, around the desk and across the floor in three strides. The backhand swipe he threw at Harry connected with his already swollen eye and knocked him back against the door.

"Tu maledetto piccolo teppista!" Zwerbach was angry about something. He hit Harry again, an open handed smack across the mouth. Harry backed up and covered his face. *"Iniziate una guerra in casa mia!"*

"I don't know what you're saying, Mister Zwerbach!" Zwerbach pushed him against the wall.

"Se inizi una guerra, muori per primo!"

"*Per favore, Signor Zwerbach!* I don't know what you're saying!"

Zwerbach's eyes looked fury at him, spittle dribbling from his mouth. He was so angry that he actually dredged up some English words. "I kill you, you-a punk-a!"

He grabbed the front of Harry's shirt and shoved him over to a trio of thugs who were standing to one side. In a moment, they had Harry well secured, arms and head.

"Tony, what for you start a war with Five-a Points? Eh? What-a for?" Harry would have loved to answer, but someone was holding a hand over his mouth. *"Cosa devo fare con te?"* The harder Harry tried to shake off the hands holding him, the harder he was held. *"Quindi. Immagino che dovremo ucciderti."* Harry had no idea what Zwerbach was saying, but it couldn't

be good. *"Vach, portalo al fiume. Sai cosa fare."*

Lewis nodded to the three holding Harry and they began to drag him out of the room. As they did, the hand over his mouth slipped. *"Aspetti!"* Thank god, that word started with A, because that's as far as Harry had gotten in the Italian dictionary at the library.

"Aspetti!" They nearly had him to the door, now, so he chomped down hard on the hand that was trying to cut off his voice. The man yelled and punched him in the back of the head. *"Signor Zwerbach! Aspetti, per favore!"*

Zwerbach held up a hand. *"Aspetti."* Progress toward the door stopped. *"Lascialo andare."* And the hands dropped him.

It took a while and the support of the door frame to get to his feet and Zwerbach watched every moment of the process.

"Why I don't rub-a you out, Tony?" the boss said at last.

He chose his words carefully because he only had a few available. "Boss, all I did was deliver the box they said you wanted me to deliver." He heard Vach Lewis translate into Zwerbach's ear.

"La scatola con le palle dentro?" and Lewis said "The box with the balls in it?"

"Si, Signore. Con le palle." He guessed those words meant 'the balls'.

"E di chi erano?"

He didn't wait for a translation. "They didn't tell me what it was, boss. *Non lo so*." He was surprising himself with how much Italian he'd picked up, just listening, but then, when your life is on the line, it's amazing what you can remember.

He was waiting while Zwerbach digested new information. "Who give-a this-a you?"

Harry considered. Now was the perfect chance to get rid of Vanilli. A word from him and Roxie would end up floating down the East River. He opened his mouth, then closed it.

The other side of the coin was that it was Roxie who almost certainly had been whispering in Zwerbach's ear and, maybe, a word from Roxie could still send him down the river. No, Vanilli was his problem. He'd deal with him – in his own time – in his own way.

"I don't know his name, boss. *Non lo so*." He looked around the room and said, truthfully, "He's not here."

Zwerbach looked around the room. There were at least two faces there that Harry remembered looking on when Vanilli gave him the box but he wasn't going to mention it.

"Che ha detto Kelly?" Again, no need to translate, there.

"He said 'Next time.' Next time, there'll be trouble."

Zwerbach nodded at Harry, glowered at the room in general and proceeded out. *"Vach, glia di un dollaro,"* he said as he left and Lewis tossed Harry a silver dollar, who took it gratefully and made his shaky way back to the coach-house.

For the second time in an hour, he'd come within an inch of being found in pieces up and down the banks of the East River. The chances of him coming out of a third episode like it with all of his parts were slim.

It was time to get out of there. He didn't even have to pack a bag, because he didn't have one. He had some money and even some gold hidden in the coach house. He could grab it and go. He hated to leave the car behind – he'd grown to love the sense of importance driving it gave him – but you do what you have to. He also hated walking away from the money he was making. There was no set salary, but Zwerbach was generous. Along with silver dollars, he would stuff

fifty bucks or even a hundred into Harry's pocket every week or so. It was damn good money. But, yeah, he'd have to make some plans. Soon.

"Bonfuzzi!" Whoever it was, he was standing over Harry and shaking him hard. "Bonfuzzi! Wake up! Let's go!"

It was Vach Lewis. "Yeah, I'm awake, Mister Lewis. I'm awake." He nearly was.

"Okay. Mister Zwerbach says he's sorry you got caught in the middle of things."

"What things?" He tried to figure out what time it was, but his watch had stopped.

"Well, some things we'll go fix, right away. You good to drive?"

Harry swung his feet off the narrow bed and sat up, holding his ribs in place as he did. "Sure, I'm good, boss. Where're we going?"

"Not far. Is the motor ready?"

"Sure, boss. I never leave it until it's ready to go for next time." He hoped that was the case because, the last time he got out, he hadn't been very coherent.

But, it was. Around the front of the building, Vach and a half-dozen *teppisti* escorted Zwerbach into the car and they set out – back to Mott Street. It was interesting to see so many burly men practically sitting on one another.

What constantly amazed – and scared – Harry was that Zwerbach's turf on the Bowery, Kelly's kingdom in Little Italy, and the territory controlled by the tongs in Chinatown were just a few blocks apart. Twenty minutes walk from the heart of any one of them would put you in the heart of any of the others. It took careful management to keep them apart and, it seemed, that was what this little trip was about.

He brought the motor to a stop where he'd previously dropped Richie Fitzpatrick. His two

bosses climbed out and looked at Harry. Lewis motioned to him. “Come on. Out! You’re coming with us.”

“Uh, okay. Why?”

“You’re evidence. Keep your mouth shut.”

Harry had no difficulty with that. The strangeness of this place scared him. There wasn’t anything familiar he could hang on to. Even the lights in the buildings were different. It was like the people in Chinatown were from some weird ancient civilization.

Inside the door, they were stopped. Mister Zwerbach let them search him: nothing was found. Lewis simply handed over a revolver. They came to Harry who didn’t mind being searched until one of the *tong* bullies squeezed his cracked ribs. The man ended up on the floor and a dozen revolvers were leveled.

Zwerbach snapped. “Tony! You-a gun! *Subito*!”

Harry was busy trying to watch all around. “I don’t carry a gun, Mister Zwerbach.” He opened his coat wide to show he was unarmed and held out a hand to the downed tongster, who looked Harry over and took it. Harry pulled him up and they were staring face-to-face.

“Sorry, pal. You hit my bad rib. Kinda hurt. You understand Eng-lee?”

“Of course, I understand Eng-lee. And French, German, Italian and Cantonese.”

“Well, *bon jour, auf Wiedersehen, ciao* and ... whatever that is in Chinese.”

“Zài jiàn.”

“If you say so.” And, he followed his bosses into the inner rooms.

It was an odd thing – the further into the *tong* stronghold they got, the more Asiatic the atmosphere. The guards outside and at the door were dressed in western suits. Now, they were

gradually becoming more and more Chinese in attire. He expected the top *tong* leaders to be in full Chinese Emperor robes with long fingernails and peacock feathers in their hats and, when the final door opened, he wasn't disappointed, except one was wearing a fedora and neither had long fingernails.

Lewis sized up the two Asiatics. "Mister Lee," he said.

"Mister Lewis," was the reply.

"Mister Zwerbach wishes to talk."

And talk Zwerbach did, in detail, with passion, in Italian. Lewis kept up with the translation to English as best he could and the English got translated to Chinese by a tongster. In a nutshell, Zwerbach thought there was going to be war, very soon, and it would be a tragedy if his people and Lee's people were to take to the streets against each other. Everything must be done to prevent it.

Lee agreed with him, eventually, through two translators, so goodness knows what differences were inserted before the original became the final. The old Chinese asked what it would be that might bring his men and Zwerbach's men to a fight.

Lewis reached back and grabbed Harry's shoulder, pulling him forward.

Through the interpreter, Lewis showed the mess that Kelly's men had made of Harry. No mention was made of Vanilli's gift to Kelly, just of the roughing up the Five Pointers had given Harry. To be honest, he thought, the Five Pointers could have given him a lot worse: they were pros, all, and had placed their blows carefully. He was sure Vanilli hadn't been so careful with Luca 'D' – who, by the way, never did surface. Then again, nobody went looking for him.

Nevertheless, Harry's bruises and cuts were the work of the Five Points and, it turned out,

Lee's crew had suffered similar depredations.

So, Zwerbach concluded, can they agree that they will keep out of each other's way, not disturb the status quo, and not get involved in any wars in the Lower East Side, but save their anger for the Five Points soldiers?

Lee agreed and Lewis quietly told Harry he could go. Wait for them outside but don't get lost. Truce or not, Chinatown was a dangerous place.

Most of the *tong* guards, now that peace was agreed, had disappeared and he had no trouble wandering the halls. The two times he ran into someone, they bowed to him, so he bowed back. He decided to look into a few doors, found nothing in particular, then realized he had turned himself around so much, unlike the fun-house, he couldn't tell where the exit to the egress was.

He tried the first door he came to; it was locked. He tried the second; there was nothing but a closet behind it. He tried the third.

His beautiful lady of the window stood inside the room, apparently doing nothing in particular but waiting. She turned at his entrance, obviously expecting someone – she was disappointed and frightened to see Harry. More so when she got a good look at his battered face.

"Hi," he said. "How are you?" No answer; she just continued to be frightened. "I'm Harry. I mean, Tony. Tony. You understand? Tony."

She stared at him, said "Toh Nee", then pointed to herself. "Bow Kum."

Her voice was light, hesitant. Her face was oval, with delicate features and those almond shaped eyes that the Chinese seemed to have. She held her hands partially clasped in front of her and her head tilted a little to one side. Her clothing was everything he'd come to expect from

stories he'd read about Chinese princesses: silk, painted with scenes and dragons, tiny shoes just visible under the hem of the dress, hair coiled on top, again with sticks and things in it. He thought she might be a little older than him, but not much.

"Bow Kum," he said. "So, hello, Bow Kum. Because you are Bow, I guess I'll bow to you." So, he did and, rather than returning it, she looked away and covered her face.

"Hey, what's the matter, baby? You shy?" He grinned his most girl-melting grin, but she didn't respond. This was puzzling. Usually he was half-way to meeting their mother by this time, but this girl just shrank away. It struck him that she wasn't just shy with him – she was frightened of men, period.

"Bow Kum?" He waited until she appeared from behind her hand. "Listen. Bow Kum ..." He pointed to her. "Tony ..." He pointed to himself. "Friends." He clasped his hands together. "Okay?"

It took a while, but she finally whispered, "Okay." And dared to look directly at him.

And, a ton of bricks hit him in the back of the head.

He fell forward, fireworks going off in front of his eyes, every ache from his previous beatings exploding into action again. On the floor, he rolled onto his back and saw a Chinese man aiming a kick at him. He got his legs pulled together and the kick hit his shins, already bruised from the treatment the Five Pointers gave him.

He rolled and the man continued after him, putting in short sharp kicks from an odd stilted pose that limited his arc but kept him balanced. Most of them landed until Harry got a hand on a chair leg and hurled the chair toward the man, giving Harry a chance to regain his feet.

It was the tongster who had spoken to him when they searched him at the door. As Harry

looked, the man suddenly spun backward and, when he came around, his heel was coming toward Harry's temple. Had it connected, the fireworks in Harry's head might have gone out permanently, however he avoided it by a very simple expedient. Harry wasn't there.

From the other side of a small table, he yelled, "Hey! What the hell's going on?" but the man leapt onto the table and spun on his heel again, aiming another kick. Like the others, it would have been devastating had it landed but Harry had his hands on the table legs and flipped them up hard as the man spun. The table landed on the floor on top of him and Harry pushed a heavy boot down on it, crushing the edge of the piece into the man's larynx.

Not one to give up, the tongster tried to squirm out from under the tabletop but Harry's boot put more pressure down and the man stopped.

"The hell's the matter with you?" Harry demanded and the man looked toward Bow Kum.

"That's my wife, you ass," he said, with difficulty. Once again, he looked to the woman. *"Tā dă niˇ le?"* She shook her head.

Harry looked to the woman, back to the man, back to the woman, and back again. "Well, why the hell didn't you just say so?"

"You going to let me up?" Bow Kum's husband asked and Harry looked him over.

"You going to kick me, again?"

"No."

Harry removed his foot and the table and, for the second time that day, helped the man up. "What are you doing in here?" the Chinese asked, still ready to be furious.

"I was looking for the way out and I opened the door. She was in here and I thought

maybe I could ask her how to get out. Then you came in and started kicking. What the hell was with the kicking? That's bad sportsmanship. We fight with our fists around here."

"It is *choy li fut*, part of the *gōngfū.* It helps a smaller man fight a bigger man."

"Yeah, I can see that. Maybe I can get you to teach me some of that."

"You cannot learn 'some' of it – you must study with mind and body."

"I'll think about that." He held out a hand. "I'm Tony. Tony Bonfuzzi." The man shook the offered hand.

"I am Tchin Len." He bowed to Harry, then held out a hand to Bow Kum, who came into his arm. "This is my wife, Bow Kum."

"Yeah, we met." He smiled at Bow Kum, who ducked her head into her husband's shoulder. "Shy, isn't she?"

"She is a proper Chinese wife. She does not speak to strange men."

"Oh. I get it, now. Sorry. Okay, Chin. How do I get out of this building?"

Forty seconds later, they were standing on Mott Street. The motor was across the street, with a gaggle of curious but respectful gawkers around it.

"Look, Chin ..."

"Len is my first name."

"You what?"

"In China, the first name is the last name and the last name is the first name. I am Tchin Len. I am called Len by my friends."

"Okay – Len. Look, I, uh, I get the feeling you're trying to keep ... your wife out of sight. Is that right?"

There was a long look of suspicion cast toward him. “I helped Bow Kum escape from a man who had bought her in San Francisco.”

“Bought her! I didn’t think you could do that any more.”

“It is a custom with my people. I got her away, brought her to New York; married her.”

“Good for you. Keep her out of the windows.” Tchin looked with puzzlement to Harry, who pointed upward. “Three times, I’ve seen her in that window from outside. If I have, others have. Look after her.”

And, with that, Harry crossed to the motor, shooed away the gawkers, planted himself in the driver’s seat and waited for his bosses to come out of the lair of the *On Leong Tong*.

CHAPTER SIX

December 25, 1904

By the time Harry had healed from his bruises and his cuts, Thanksgiving had come and gone. He paused, briefly, to consider what he had to be thankful for, then moved ahead with what he had to do.

See, here's the funny thing. Back in September, he was determined that he was going to get shut of Zwerbach and Lewis and Vanilli and the whole Eastman organization. Maybe go to Florida, where he'd heard it was warm year round. Maybe go to Cuba, where the nights were hot and the women (if he could believe the stories of old soldiers who'd returned from the war of '98) were just as hot. Yeah, some torrid love in the Cuban jungle – did Cuba have jungle? He didn't know.

What he did know was that it was not safe to stay where he was. Sooner or later, someone

would put a bullet into him – or cut off his prized possessions – or beat him to death in an alley – or blow him up – or cut him up – or ... the possibilities were endless. At the very least, he'd wind up in the bull pen for an all-day. Or all-day-and-a-night.

And yet, here it was December and he was still driving Zwerbach and friends, still sleeping above the carriage house, still jumping when Vach Lewis said 'jump'. And, by now, he was pretty sure he wouldn't be trying to move on and, if you asked him why, the only answer he could give you was 'why not?'

Why not? Why not just let life slip by without doing a thing about it? Why not just keep your head down and your eyes closed and not see what was happening around you? Why not just take the easy road?

After all, the hard road led to the same place. And the easy way is so ... easy.

That's what he was thinking on this Christmas morning as he rolled over and opened his eyes. What he saw was brown curls and a sleepy face. What he felt was flesh pressing against him. What he realized was that this could get to be a habit – could get to be serious, but was that a good thing, he had to ask.

If he wanted to be honest with himself, and honest with her, the answer was clearly 'no'. If he didn't want to be honest with himself, or honest with her, the answer was still 'no'. That's because he couldn't help but be honest with himself. It was a weakness he had.

He felt her wake, felt her realize she was awake, felt her realize she wasn't alone, felt her realize her nakedness, felt her press closer in response to his own nakedness. It was a very narrow bed, barely more than a cot, so it was hard to press closer than they already were. His response was predictable, which was what she had predicted it would be. It was some time before either of

them thought of the significance of the day.

"Merry Christmas," she said, first.

"Merry Christmas." His hand went under the edge of the bed and came up with a small package, wrapped in bright cloth and neatly ribboned.

"You got me a present? Oh, thank you, Tony!" She took it and began to pull on the ends of the bow. "I didn't get you anything."

"I thought I just got it."

She stopped unwrapping and looked up at him. "There's plenty more where that came from." The ribbon fell away and the cloth was soon discarded. A small cardboard box, about three inches square, was revealed.

"What is it?"

"Open it."

In the box was a curiously-shaped lump suspended from a delicate chain. A hole had been drilled in the lump for that purpose and the lump itself was highly polished so that it gleamed.

It gleamed gold.

"Tony? Is that gold?" She lifted the pendant from the box and held it up in the morning light. It didn't just gleam. It shone.

He flicked the lump with his finger, causing it to swing and circle as she held the necklace up. "That, sweetheart, is three ounces of pure gold nugget."

"Three ounces?" She caught her breath. "Why is it all squishy and ... well, lumpy?"

"Because that's exactly how I dug it out of a hill up in the Yukon – all lumpy and misshapen, as God intended it to be. Nobody melted that down and recast it; they just drilled that

little hole through it for the chain. It's the second biggest nugget I ever found up there."

"The second biggest? What about the biggest?" She didn't realize the mercantile flavor of that question.

"The biggest got sold off in Skagway, Alaska for a boat trip down the coast to Seattle. And, paid for a couple of years of wandering out west before I got here ... and met you." He kissed her while he said it and she responded.

This time, out of excitement over the Christmas gift, there were a few extra fillips that surprised him – and maybe even her. When finished, she collapsed, heaving and sweating, on his chest; he, heaving and sweating himself, was content that she could remain there for the rest of her life.

"Anna, sweetheart."

"Hmm?" She was still catching her breath.

"I like this," he said and she stopped panting to stare quizzically. "I like it a lot."

"Well, so do I, silly."

"I like it enough to keep doing it ... forever."

"Gotta stop sometime, hon. Gotta pee and stuff."

He gave her a little shove. "I meant you and me – forever."

She was quiet for a long time; at least, it seemed like a long time to him. So, her next question was appropriate.

"How long is forever?"

He was quiet for a while, now. "Oh, boy, that's a loaded question."

"What looks like forever right now might not be forever later, Tony. I've just turned

seventeen now – you're just eighteen. We've got a lot of forever ahead of us. Let's not make a mess of it by doing something we can't undo later – something that *is* forever."

He lay quietly again, staring toward the ceiling. He could argue; he could plead; he could accuse. He could get angry at being refused. Finally, he pulled her face up toward his. "How come you got so smart in just seventeen years?"

She laughed aloud and reached down. "Because I don't have one of these to do my thinking for me. Maybe your thinking will clear up in ten or fifteen years, when you're old. Meanwhile, it's Christmas morning, I'm hungry and I've got to pee."

Do you know how hard it is to find a meal on Christmas morning in New York? – a Christmas morning that is also a Sunday? Not a Greek or Italian joint was open; not a French or Spanish one. There wasn't even a good old Yankee diner open. The Salvation Army kitchen was serving, but Harry wasn't about to take food from those who needed it more than him. They ended up down in the section called Judea, at a delicatessen on Hester Street that was serving up a breakfast feast that began with *bagel* and *lox* and proceeded through *latkes* and *cholent*, with fried tomatoes, and *challah* toast with a *schmeer.* And, of course, good, strong, hot coffee.

It is delightful to walk on a nearly empty New York City sidewalk, with a crunch of new snow underfoot, a full stomach, money in your pocket, and a pretty girl on your arm. Even the beat cops were pleasant and simply gave them a 'Merry Christmas' as they passed.

God, if every day could be like this one.

They ended up walking in the Dutch Reformed Church cemetery, which might seem a morbid thing to do for a Christmas morning, but they weren't paying much attention to where they were, anyway. They found graves of married couples, some of them going all the way back

to when New York was New Amsterdam, and speculated on what kind of people they were and what their married life was like. It's a glorious thing to be young and in love and to be independent enough to do as you please about it.

Anna had moved out of her parents' home and they had done nothing to stop her. She had been a disappointment to them from the moment she was born, simply because she was born. They weren't interested in what she did or what happened to her. That she made it to the wisdom of seventeen years was entirely on her own good graces. She shared a walk-up with four other girls and made enough money sewing shirts to keep body and soul together – provided she had a boyfriend who could pick up some of the tab.

And, she did have one, in Harry, who was, on the face of it, free as a bird. He owed no money, had no ties. He took orders only from the *capo* and the *consigliaro*. The problem was those orders were meant to be obeyed and failure to do so would lead to unfortunate events, most of which meant that the Devon line would end with him – very suddenly and abruptly.

The alternatives were: 1) continue to obey orders, keep his mouth shut and his head down; 2) stop obeying orders and land in the Hudson, face down; or 3) find a way to gather his things, what money he had, and get the hell out of New York to somewhere far away, preferably somewhere no sane Italian would ever go. And take Anna with him, because Zwerbach's wrath would certainly extend to her, if Harry couldn't be found.

The problem was, while Harry should have been thinking about these things, he was actually thinking about the girl beside him, the smell of her hair and the view down her cleavage – and when he could get her back to the coach house for a long and lazy Christmas afternoon.

"Tony, I should go home." She introduced a change in direction from his own thoughts.

"You need a change of clothes?" He wasn't totally heartless.

"I mean home – home to mom and dad home."

That was a big jump in direction. "Why is that?"

"It's Christmas. It's a long time since I left." She took a wobbly breath. "I miss them."

Despite being right out in public for everyone to see, he put his arm around her shoulders and squeezed. "All right, let's go." She stared, eyes wide, mouth open. "I mean it. Let's go." She still stared. "Where are we going, by the way?"

In a small voice, she said, "Bowne Street in Flushing." It was his turn to stare. "In Queens." He continued to stare. "That way." She pointed east.

"I know where Queens is. I've never been there." He thought for a minute. "We can take the new bridge, what do they call it?, the Queensboro Bridge."

"No, we need to take the Long Island Railroad." But he smiled at that.

"We're going to get the Cadillac from the coach house, baby. Mr. Zwerbach don't need me today. If we're going to your mom and dad's, we're going in style."

Which is how, an hour later, they were rattling over the new bridge from Manhattan to Long Island. Harry had even produced a street map of Queens, thanks to his foresight in collecting maps of all the New York boroughs, just in case. Zwerbach's needs had not yet taken him out of Lower Manhattan, but Harry wanted to be ready.

He took a ruler and measured the distance on the map carefully – more than fourteen miles! Topped up with gasoline and oil, the Cadillac was good for the distance, and back, but he double checked that the radiator was full and that both spare tires held air. There wouldn't be any help in Flushing on Christmas Day, if they had flats or a boiling radiator.

Wrapped in a traveling blanket, she chose to sit up in the chauffeur's compartment, rather than in the comfort of the enclosed rear. He admired her for that, but it was chilly in the extreme out front. Ten miles into the journey, near a place called Corona, he had to pull over and they climbed in the back to warm themselves up. It was near two o'clock before he felt warm enough to continue and he made her stay in the back while he drove. It wasn't much further, he reasoned, he wouldn't catch pneumonia in that time.

He nearly did, but at last he turned off Main Street in Flushing to Franklin Ave and traveled the two long blocks to Bowne Street, stopping at the intersection to look back quizzically. She indicated a right turn and knocked on the glass partition two blocks later. He stopped and let the car idle at the curb, while she slowly slid the glass open and said, "That's it. Two houses up."

It was a very nice neighborhood, not ostentatious or rich, but nice homes built for nice people – and Anna's parents were just two doors away.

"I suppose I should get out," she said and began to close the partition, but he caught her hand and kissed it.

"You stay put, right there. Sit back and look like a princess. Your chauffeur is taking you right to the door." And, he closed the glass, put the car in gear and slowly trundled up in front of their destination. Car in neutral, hand-brake on, he hopped out, ran around and handed his passenger down from the machine, not quite bowing as he did.

"Shall I ring the bell, ma'am?" But, she shook her head and lifted her chin imperiously.

"There is no bell. You may knock, instead, Tony."

"Yes, ma'am." And, he strode up the sidewalk, up the five steps to the front door and

knocked loudly, while she followed at her own pace, more timidly.

"Coming," said a female voice from inside. Harry looked back to Anna, who was climbing the stairs, more slowly than he had, a little fear on her face.

"Come on, don't let them scare you. You're a big girl, now."

The doorknob was rattled; the latch clicked; the heavy wooden panels swung inward; a woman in her forties, well preserved and well maintained, filled the gap. Suspicion filled her eyes.

"What do you want?" she asked, looking him over from bottom to top.

"And a Merry Christmas to you, ma'am. I've brought someone to see you."

He stepped aside to reveal Anna, half hiding behind him.

"Hello," she whispered, barely able to lift her eyes to meet the woman's. "Merry Christmas, momma."

The woman was silent then turned sharply toward the inside. "Cecil!" She only waited a second before yelling again. "CECIL!"

Harry snuck a look at Anna, whose face was a study in conflicting emotions: happy to be home; frightened at what she would encounter; eager to see her family; puzzled at momma's reaction.

Heavy footsteps were approaching from inside and momma yelled over her shoulder, "She's brought a man with her!"

Cecil – Harry assumed it was him – appeared behind momma and joined the suspicious-stare gallery. "That the man? He's no more than a kid. Big fella, though. Probably thinks he's tough."

"I don't think anything, sir. I just drove your daughter home to see you for Christmas. Isn't that nice?" Harry could be very quiet when he needed to be.

The mother had something louder to say, though. "She's not my daughter!" There was a gasp from behind him and he reached back to take her hand.

"You heard," Cecil continued. "We don't need her or you here, so go back to whatever gutter you found her in."

Another gasp from Anna. Her mother re-entered the conversation.

"She's probably got a pea in the pod, too." A small shriek from Anna. "Is that it? You knocked her up and now the pair of you want to live off us to raise your brats?"

Anna broke down in tears and Harry put his arm around her shoulders. With effort, he kept his voice quiet.

"That's not it, at all. Anna's not expecting." Well, he didn't think she was. "She's not looking for a handout and she doesn't want to live off you. Frankly, I don't see why she even wanted to come here today."

"You keep a civil tongue in your head or I'll have the police on you, you hooligan! You've ruined her!" Cecil was a bit of a hot-head, Harry thought.

"If she's not your daughter, what's it to you what I do to her?" Harry had to admit his voice was getting a little less quiet. Anna's hand gripped his more tightly and he knew her tears were running down her cheeks. "Look what you've done to her."

Momma took up the assault. "Just get away from here! How dare you come here, spoiling our Christmas Day, trying to dump some little tramp on us?"

That was enough for Harry and ... "That's enough from you! I don't care if you are a

woman, I'll knock you flat on your ass!"

From behind the door, Cecil raised the shotgun Harry knew he must have. "Don't you threaten my wife! Now, get out of here and take your whore with you!" He leveled the double muzzle of the gun and Harry was staring down both barrels.

It was simple enough. Harry was used to dealing with men who were harder, faster, and much more ruthless. Both hands, together, one on the muzzle end of the gun, one at the lock to hold back the hammers, twist and push at the same time. The butt end of the stock caught Cecil in the jaw and another twist removed the weapon from his hands.

Cecil had pulled the triggers as Harry grabbed the gun, but the hammers never fell – Harry's hand was trapped between hammers and firing pins. He pushed back, ignored the pain and the blood from the palm of his hand, thumbed the lever to break the action, dumped the shells on the floor of the porch and continued levering until the barrels broke away from the stock. Barrels he threw over a hedge into the neighbor's yard, where they'd be found in the spring melt. The stock and lock he threw at Cecil, knocking him down again. Anna's mother he accidentally hit with his elbow as he withdrew his arm.

"Come on, baby, let's get back to civilization." He grabbed Anna's hand and pulled her back to the Cadillac, bundled her into the back and covered her carefully with blankets.

"I thought they'd be like that, but I had to find out," the girl whispered to him, so he kissed her hard. Looking up, Anna's parents had closed the door and pulled down the shades.

She cried half-way back to Manhattan, but, by the time they reached the Queensboro Bridge, had climbed into the front seat with him and was cuddled tightly into his arm.

CHAPTER SEVEN

January 28, 1905

Rivington Street was as safe as it comes, when illegal activity is what it comes to. Well within Eastsider territory, the stuss game running out of the back of the hardware store was not a big enough target to interest anybody looking to expand territory, say, from Little Italy to the west or the Lower East Side to the south. Dropping in to pick up the weeklies was a piece of cake. Caesar didn't even bother to case the joint, first; it was a pickup they made every Monday. There was nobody going to argue about it.

Caesar Young was one of the more disagreeable of the Eastside crew. He was a small(ish) man and seemed to resent anyone with more than a couple of inches of height on him. That resulted in arguments and often fights, which Young always won because not only was he a small(ish) son of a bitch, he was a tough son of a bitch.

So, when Harry pulled the Cadillac up to the curb at the southwest corner of Rivington and Young went in, it was just another pickup. Harry put his feet up on the dash and enjoyed the last of the warm sun. Days were getting shorter pretty fast. He spent a few minutes admiring the pulchritude going about their business on the crowded sidewalks and, to be truthful, some of the pulchritude admired him back.

Young came out of the hardware store and took two steps toward the auto, while Harry dropped his feet from the dash and prepared to drive. The first shots came from the corner, then two more from the tobacco store at number 127.

Young was limping now, trying to get to the auto. A pedestrian had fallen and others were running, screaming, shouting and generally panicking. Harry's job was to drive, but there was no sense driving if there was no one for him to drive. Another pedestrian got hit, while Young finally got his revolver out and began to return fire.

Harry saw a man on the Norfolk side of the hardware store, revolver pointed upward, emptying spent shells. He was five steps away and Harry was sprinting those five steps, left arm raised. The man got one shell into the piece and tried to level it when the eighteen inches of lead pipe in Harry's left hand caught him across the face. The revolver dropped to the pavement, the man's knees buckled, and Harry grabbed his shirtfront to hold him up.

Gunfire was continuing. Young, collapsed on the sidewalk, was trying to exchange shots with the remaining gunman from the tobacconist's shop. That individual was firing blindly from the cover of the entranceway. Two more civilians were on the ground. Young's aim was off, because his right hand was losing blood – and fingers. He'd been hit in the hand as well as the leg.

Arm around his victim's throat, Harry half-dragged, half-carried the man to where Young was struggling to stay up. Bullets continued coming their way as though the hidden gunman had a half-dozen weapons. Harry felt bullets strike his shield twice before he reached Young, dropped the dead man, and grabbed his brother hoodlum, dragging him, swearing and yelling, across to the car.

The remaining gunman seemed to have run out of bullets, or was reloading, as Harry lifted the small(ish) Italian into the vehicle, dumping him without ceremony into the back, reaching the driver's seat in two steps. Clutch in, give it gas, and they were away, leaving powder smoke and carnage behind them.

Young was clutching his leg and hollering out his pain. From the corner of his eye, Harry saw blood.

"Don't you fucking bleed on my upholstery, Caesar! Hang on, we'll be there in a couple minutes."

"Aahh!" was the only reply and Harry began to wonder whether the man would bleed to death. That would be a lot of blood to get out of the leatherwork.

It wasn't far to Avenue B and 8th but Harry had cranked the throttle to full and roared past the walk-up, while Young alternately moaned and swore at him from the back. He hauled the wheel left at East 13th and bounced up over the curb in front of the Gotham Hospital there.

Dragging Young up the walkway, he banged the front door open and half-carried the man to the front desk, leaving a trickle of blood behind, roaring for help.

A nurse in white came running out, saw the blood and banged on an office door in the hallway. In a few moments, the nurse, a doctor and two orderlies had converged on Caesar and,

by the time the nurse remembered to look around for Harry, he was gone. Harry had stayed around just long enough to see that Caesar would live – but he'd never play the violin, again.

The question became: who?

When Zwerbach sent out his soldiers to find whoever had set up the hit, they kept coming back minus one or two of their number, and they kept coming up with nonsense answers that led straight back to Avenue B and East 8th. Somebody had declared war. After a week of losing men, some to the hospital, some to the morgue, they'd figured it out.

Richie Fitzpatrick didn't seem like the kind of guy who wanted to start trouble. He'd always been civil to Harry, never seemed to be violent (when violence was not needed), never even raised his voice, really.

So, how had he been able to recruit more than a hundred of the Eastman hoods and declare that they were now the ones in charge of the Lower East Side? It was hard for everybody: the man running the newsstand on the corner had to pay his protection twice; the girl working her corner behind the newsstand lost another big chunk of her income; the soldier sent to collect the payments from those people had to have two sets of muscle to back him up in case the opposition arrived – and poor Mister Zwerbach was losing more and more of his hard-earned income. It really was unfair, all around. Something had to change.

So, the daily rounds resumed, with the same mix of people in the back: Zwerbach and Lewis; Lewis, alone; a couple of gunmen; but now he also had a gunman in the passenger seat beside him, keeping watch all around, with a revolver in his pocket and a shotgun under the seat. Harry still refused to carry a gun –it wouldn't make much difference in the case of an ambush and, anyway, everybody in the motor would be better off with him driving like hell with both

hands on the wheel, rather than stopping to shoot back.

Not that he wasn't working on defending himself. Whenever he could, he went north out of the city and practised his fast driving skills. Twice a week, when he wasn't needed by Mister Zwerbach, he drove into Chinatown to meet Tchin Len, who proceeded to pummel, kick and throw him around for a couple of hours, all in the name of learning the *gōngfū*.

There was more to it than just the kicks that Tchin had decided to use to overcome his size deficit with Harry. It was more than just throwing punches and hoping some hit. It was a whole thought process that focussed mind and body onto the task at hand. There was nothing magical about it; it was just that it was the first time he'd come across a way of fighting that somebody had sat down (or stood up) and thought through; a way of fighting that might give him an advantage one day, when he really needed it.

He did something else, too, in the way of protection. In the middle of the night, he walked, making damn sure he wasn't followed, down to Little Italy and the New Brighton Athletic Club. He told Kelly about Zwerbach's deal with the *On Leong Tong*. Maybe that wasn't quite loyal of him, but he'd rather be alive than a hero.

He took Zwerbach up to Madison and East 37th, to Tammany Hall to meet with whoever he met with there. He even took him to City Hall once. It may have been to buy a dog license, but Harry doubted it – nobody who worked for Zwerbach was the kind of person who owned a dog.

The big moment came in June when Harry drove his bosses all the way to Atlantic City, there to board a private yacht and sail away for three days. It was a big yacht and had the Governor's Seal on the transom.

Whatever the reasons, whatever the background, Harry felt the tension on the Bowery rise

every day. Something was going to happen, he knew that. When it did, people would die.

Then came the morning he took 'Cyclone' Lewis to a place where the streets seemed narrow and the buildings dark. Sitting in the front with Harry was Carmine "The Muscle" Gussi.

"Pull it up here, Tony," Lewis ordered and the car came to a chugging halt at the curb. They were 'way out of the Bowery, at Grand and Ludlow, and Harry was watching the second floor of the surrounding buildings with a nervous eye.

"Tony, you keep the motor running. Carmine and me'll go in. We'll just be a minute. Be ready to roll when we come out."

That didn't sound good. When Carmine stepped out of the motor, he already had his hand inside his jacket. Cyclone didn't, but it wasn't far away.

It was an ordinary bakery the pair went into, but Harry knew that ordinary bakeries (and barbershops, and news outlets) sometimes had backrooms or basements. The door had hardly closed when he saw two men step out of a doorway half a block down. He looked behind and saw two more at the end of the block.

Damn it! Should he warn the boss? Should he get the hell out of there, now? If there were four outside the building, there were four more inside. The Cadillac was powerful and reasonably fast, but he was sitting in the open on the driver's seat without even a leather top for cover, and you could be sure the men had noticed him.

He slid the gear select lever forward, ready to drop the clutch and release the handbrake. He eased the throttle lever open a few notches and brought the spark lever back down a bit.

Where the hell were they?

Four firecrackers sounded inside the building and the door slammed open. Lewis and

Gussi came banging through, spraying bullets behind them.

The two men up the block and the ones on the corner began to sprint toward the car, pulling revolvers. From inside the shop, bullets started to whiz by his head.

“Come on! Move your ass ... boss!” he yelled, fumbling under the seat.

Lewis was at the car, leaping forward and up. The Muscle, just a step behind, suddenly spun around, falling against the side of the motorcar.

Harry stood in the front seat, pulling the shotgun under it free as he did. It was a Browning pump, a new design he’d never used. It seemed a good time to try it. He lifted it to his shoulder, took aim and squeezed the trigger.

As he thought, Gussi had solid slugs loaded in the piece. The heavy round hit the fruit stand he was aiming at and knocked a front leg from under it. Fruit, shelving and stand spilled across the sidewalk in front of the two men from up the block.

Harry twisted as he pumped another round in, and sent that one into the newsstand behind him. This time it was the latest headlines that filled the sidewalk.

Lewis was in and Harry dropped the long gun to drag Gussi onto the seat before sitting himself, dropping the clutch lever and opening the throttle full as he did.

Lurching into traffic, the car left the curb so hard the back wheels actually spun against the tarmac. There was a sound that could only be rubber squealing against the pavement, and the smell of smoke in the air. He pulled the Cad in between a furniture wagon and an oncoming tram, then yanked it back in front of the wagon. A few bullets from the men on the sidewalk followed them, but went nowhere near. Where they did go wasn’t his worry, but he did wonder. There were a lot of people on that street.

He was hitting nearly thirty miles an hour, heading south, when a police truck careened around the corner ahead of him, coming his way. He yanked the wheel hard left and they slammed up onto the sidewalk, knocking displays sideways and sending pedestrians and vendors scattering. The cops, seeing him come at them so quickly, had stopped the truck and took time to get turned around and rolling again, so they ended up well behind.

"Tony, what the hell you doing?" yelled Lewis, to which Harry replied, "You pay me to drive! Now, shut up and hang on!"

By that time, Harry had the auto back in the middle of the street. Carriages, carts and even another motorcar were scattered to the curb and he had a straight run north for at least a block. They were home free ...

... until one of the gunmen from the corner stepped into the street and raised his revolver.

"Hang on!" Harry yelled back to Lewis.

It was too late to stop. As the man levelled the gun, Harry twisted the wheel again, hard, and yanked the clutch lever upward and the brake lever backward.

The back wheels locked up, rubber squealing in protest, and the auto slewed around, swapping ends while still travelling north. As the sliding back end came across the pavement, the rear bumper of the machine caught the revolver-aiming *teppisto* and sent him flying toward the shattered newsstand to land in a heap.

The cop truck skidded sideways as well and came to a stop blocking the street, cops piling out of it, but a little thing like fifteen cops and a truck wasn't going to slow Harry down. He pulled the Cadillac up onto the west side of the street and tore down the sidewalk, once again sending pedestrians screaming into doorways and the street, scattering goods and sidewalk

furniture, driving past the cops, leaving them with nothing but astonished faces.

It was four blocks before he turned off, pulling in and out of traffic to make his way back to Avenue B and East 8th. By the time they arrived there, they were moving at a sedate pace, attracting no attention.

Gussi died in the motor on the way home.

Zwerbach was screaming in Italian so loudly and so long that foam was coming from his mouth. Harry had no idea what most of the words coming at him were, but got the general impression that the boss wasn't happy. Zwerbach even slapped his best friend Lewis.

He then turned his Italian attention to Harry and tore a strip off him – or would have, if Harry understood Italian.

"Hai sparato con un fucile a caccia in fondo a una strada?" Something about shooting down the street.

"I what?" Lewis translated. "Oh, no, boss. I just fired it at a news stand and a fruit stand. Nobody near, at all."

"*Stai cercando di screditarmi?"* and Lewis said, "You trying to give the boss a bad name?"

"Oh, no, boss. Never. I just wanted to keep everybody alive." Give Max 'Kid Twist' Zwerbach a bad name – where would he possibly start?

After Lewis translated back, Zwerbach growled, *"Non ha funzionato, vero?"*

"No, boss, it didn't work. *Scusi, capo.*"

Zwerbach looked narrowly into Harry's eyes and pinched his cheek, before slapping him twice. "No more. *Capito?*"

"Lo capisco, capo."

Zwerbach tapped his cheek once more before moving away. And nobody got capped for bringing the Eastside gang civil war out into the open.

Nobody in that room, at least. Over the next month, the body count grew, on both sides. Twice more, Harry got caught up in running fights in the street and had to drive his way out. In neither case did he touch a gun. Fitzpatrick made up for his losses by bringing soldiers over from Zwerbach's side and even bringing in Five Pointers. It looked like there would be no end to the fighting. Eventually, even the police began to take notice.

The poor automobile was looking the worse for wear. From banged-in fenders to a crumpled rear bumper to scrapes and gouges in the paint, along with more than one bullet hole through the sheet metal, it was no longer the kind of machine that a self-respecting gangster should be seen in. Harry did his best to keep it in shape, but there's only so much you can do in a coach-house.

"Boss, we've got a problem."

"Cos'hai detto?"

"Uhm ... *un problema con la macchina*."

"Quale problema?"

"It's shot to pieces. Boom! Boom! Boom! *Non funziona* no more. It don't work."

Zwerbach stepped close and tapped Harry's chest. "You ... make ... *funziona.*"

"Non è possibile. I want ... *voglio ... una macchina nuova, capo.* A new car.*"*

"Vuoi una macchina nuova?" Zwerbach was now poking Harry's chest with a finger. Maybe he hadn't put that the best way.

"I mean *you* need a new car, boss. *Ti serve ... una macchina nuova, capo.*"

"I am ... made ... money, eh, you think?" One last poke. "You ... make ... *funziona.*"

And Harry had little choice.

He was trying to pound flat a bullet hole in a door. He heard her come down the stair from the tiny bedroom and guessed that he had woken her up. Anna stayed over more and more after the big break with her parents.

"Sorry." he said and went back to pounding.

"Tony," and she waited until he stopped. "Tony, what the hell are you doing?"

"Fixing this," he said, looking for a pry bar.

"Tony, stop it and look at me."

When he did, she was on the stair leaning on the bannister, dressed as God intended. Even as angry at the world as he was, he had to admit it looked good.

"What are you doing down here, banging at that, when you could be upstairs?" The implication was clear, so he cleaned his hands, walked over to the stair, lifted her over the bannister, and carried her to the car. "Oh, that leather is cold," she complained.

"Anna, sweetheart, you don't know what cold is." He looked out at the summer evening, thought of blizzards in the Yukon. "The only thing you're risking is a mosquito bite on your sweet little behind. Nothing's going to eat you alive in New York – well, nothing but me."

But, try to stop them as he might, she'd stirred up memories and he couldn't put them away. Frigid nights, ice-bound trails, bone-freezing winds – he and Frona, snugly asleep in their snow burrow while the wind howled outside. Frona ...

She'd asked the right question. What the hell was he doing? Nothing good was all he

could honestly answer. Over and over, he told himself that he wasn't hurting anyone, but that was hard to reconcile. Even in shooting the leg out from under the fruit stand that day, he'd wrecked someone's business. And how many people had he seen shot and killed on the streets? Even if he didn't shoot anyone himself, he was helping others do it. How do you justify yourself to yourself when it's all unjustifiable?

A bunch of hours later, he shook Anna awake. She rolled over into his arms and smiled.

"Round three?" she said, sleepily but happily.

"Get out."

Her eyes finally opened. "What?"

"Get out, now. Get out before it's too late. Get away from me and don't ever see me again. Please, honey."

She sat up and twisted around to look at him. "What are you talking about?"

He sat up with her and they stared at each other in the glow of the street lights outside. "Anna, baby, are you in love with me?"

The question was a shock for her – they'd not spoken about that. It took her half a minute to decide. "No."

"Good."

"What's that supposed to mean? You don't want me to be in love with you? Thank you, very much."

But he shook his head as gently as he could. "*You* don't want you to be in love with me."

"Is that even English?" She was working her way up to being angry with him.

"I want you to get as far away from me as you can."

"Tony!" She looked around her on the narrow cot they were sharing. "There's only so much room on the bed, you know."

He put his arms around her and kissed the top of her head. "Anna, do you know what the ... the men I'm working with do? Do you know what they are?"

Again, she took a long time to answer. "I don't think they're very nice men, are they?"

"No, they're not. And, honey, I'm not a nice man, either. I'm helping them do the things they're doing and ... well, people are getting killed."

"Killed? Really? I thought maybe you were stealing things or something."

"That's not even a sideshow for these guys. There isn't anything these guys don't do."

"Like what?" She seemed eager for gory details, but he wasn't about to go into that.

"Off the top of my head: they sell drugs; they push protection; they fence stolen goods; they run numbers and other kinds of gambling; they kidnap people and hold them for ransom; they get young girls and force them to be ... you know."

"I know." It suddenly seemed colder and she shivered.

"They threaten people to make sure they vote the right way – vote for the Tammany Hall machine." He hadn't realized that was a thing that happened. It made no difference to him – he wasn't old enough to vote, or American enough – but apparently, it was important to some. "They kill people for hire." That one had been a shock to Harry when he found out – they hadn't even been particularly worried about who knew. Pay Zwerbach enough, one or more of his boys'll kill whoever you want. "Honey, it's as bad as can possibly be." He kissed the top of her head, again. "And, I'm pretty sure they'll kill me one day."

She jumped in his arms, twisted again to look at him. "Then, why are you here, Tony?"

She was looking toward the stairs as if expecting them to storm the loft and commit an outrage.

"Because ..." Again he had to be honest with her, and himself. "Because it was easy, at first, and it was what I thought I wanted. To get off the street; to get some respect."

Her question, when it came, was soft and a little frightened."Have you killed anybody?"

"Not here. Not in New York."

This time, she was frightened of him. "But, you've killed people before? Tony?" She was getting more frightened. "You've killed people before?"

He thought of the first man he killed; he'd been ten. The second had been when he was fifteen. Then the third. Had there been any others? He really couldn't remember.

"I've killed some men."

She was shrinking back from him now. "Have you killed any women?"

It was the first time he'd admitted it to himself and it was hard. "I killed my mother – and I killed ... the mother of my child."

When she'd gone into the night, he knew that was best. He knew there'd be blood at some point to come. Maybe his. God willing, not hers.

In the meantime, the war continued.

CHAPTER EIGHT

April 1, 1905

Fitzpatrick was holed up in a three storey warehouse on Dover Street, right at Water, practically under the Brooklyn Bridge. The gang that had been called the Eastside Gang was permanently split now. Fitzpatrick had pulled at least two hundred of them with him. Casualties in the war had taken another fifty or so from Zwerbach's backers. It was beginning to look as though Fitzpatrick might win.

But, with close to a hundred soldiers from both sides dead in the streets, the bulls were taking a dim view of Eastsider activities. Even their usual cut wasn't satisfying them any more – some Eastside *teppisti* were being arrested, even charged, for shootouts and shootings. Caught in a police ambush one fine morning, Harry only got the boss out by driving like a madman – a madman who had practised driving like a madman.

The problem was that Zwerbach's auto was too well known. There weren't that many autos in New York to start with; a bright red one with bullet holes in it was a bit of a giveaway. Harry decided he had two jobs, now: take care of the Cadillac and its precious metal skin; and take care of himself and his own precious skin. Of the two, the latter was both more important and more complicated. To start with, his own skin was definitely not metal.

It was too late to simply grab a New York Central express and head for Canada. He'd be nabbed by one faction of the Eastside fight or the other before he had time to buy a ticket. Fitzpatrick's crew knew he was Zwerbach's driver. They would probably shoot him on sight. Zwerbach's crew would take longer and it would involve more screaming – they took a dim view of deserters. No, stay put and see it through was the best way.

There were adventures to be found, ones that didn't necessarily threaten life and limb, but which were memorable, nonetheless. He had one more night with Anna. She showed up at the coach house late and wouldn't take no for an answer and Harry found out that he wasn't man enough to say no, at least, not at that moment. It was a great night, a final farewell, and he drove her back to her walk-up having finally, he hoped, persuaded her of the danger she'd be in if she stayed around. She was a sweet kid, they were really fond of each other – and he hoped he'd never see her again.

There were adventures of other kinds, too. Two weeks after his maniacal escape with Zwerbach in the Cadillac, Harry felt a hand on his shoulder as he picked up a bagel at Schatz's.

"You're coming with us."

He shrugged the hand off, turning under it, stepping back, fully prepared to fling a warm toasted bagel with a *schmeer* at his assailant. Another hand fell onto his shoulder from the other

direction, which left him in a quandary. If he flang the bagel at the second man, he wouldn't have any bagel to fling at the first, so he took a bite, instead.

"Where are we going, boys?" These men weren't boys; they were plain clothes dicks and, between them, they would make short work of Harry.

"Let's go see Petrosino."

Harry started walking immediately. "By all means, let's go see Petrosino." The cops caught up and grabbed an elbow each, one grabbing his bagel and throwing it away. "By the way, who's Petrosino?"

That was the cause of much amusement. "Oh, you'll find out."

Precinct Five was as nondescript as a police station can be. A four storey walk-up, painted white to make it stand out from the rest of the four storey walk-ups around it, with the ubiquitous green lights on either side of the door and the legend '1881' over it, making it one of the younger precinct houses on Manhattan, although it looked like it had gone through a hard childhood. On the top floor, a door said 'Italian Squad' and the detectives pushed Harry ahead of them into the room. A miniature cop sat at a regular desk and swivelled his chair toward him.

"Is that the punk?"

"Yeah, that's him. We grabbed him while he was having a bagel."

"A bagel, huh? What's an Italian punk like you eating a Jewish bagel for?"

When Harry didn't volunteer the information, a cop smacked the back of his head. "Answer him!"

To the man behind the desk, he said "I'm not Italian and I like bagels." To the cop who'd smacked him, he said "Go ahead, hit me again and see what happens." To the man behind the

desk, he said, "Who the hell are you?"

The man behind the desk said "I'm the cop who's going to drop you in the cooler for about thirty years if you don't watch your smart mouth."

Harry had dealt with cops from Mounties in the Klondike to local bulls in the Midwest. Looking at Petrocino's eyes was the first time he'd ever been frightened by one of them.

"My real name's Harry Devon and I'm a Canadian. And, I still like bagels."

Petrocino didn't move for all of five seconds, then he shifted his attention to the man holding Harry's left elbow. "Get the man a bagel – and a coffee." Harry's arm was instantly released. "You get him a chair," Petrosino said to the other.

"Make sure I get a *schmeer*," Harry hollered after the first cop.

When Harry was bagel'ed, coffee'ed and seated, Petrosino leaned forward with his fingers steepled in front of his face. "What's a nice Canadian kid doing driving for Max Zwerbach? You got a death-wish?" Harry didn't say anything. "Look, you've been seen driving away from three different shootouts. At least six stiffs in those shootouts."

"I never fired a gun. I don't even carry a gun."

"You ever hear of accessory? You can get stretched just as far for being an accessory as for being a trigger-man. So far, they've got enough to hang you six times over – and then throw you in the black hole for the rest of your life. That what you're looking for?"

He took a bite before he reluctantly admitted "No." The bagel wasn't a patch on Schatz's.

"Then what are you driving for scum like Zwerbach? The man's poison – who do you think put the screws on Monk Eastman? He ratted him out for a measly thousand bucks, then turned around and took over the gang."

"That's what pisses you off most, isn't it? He used you to tap Eastman and out-foxed you on leadership. Eastman was stupid; Zwerbach is smart." He looked around for something to wipe his fingers on, failed to find it.

Petrosino came around the desk and perched on the edge – no mean feat for a man his height. He took off his wire-rimmed glasses and pinched his nose, "Harry, we don't have to do this. One word to the judge and you're in Sing Sing for the rest of your life – starting tomorrow. So, what's it going to be? Us or them?"

Harry put down his *schmeered* bagel and held out a hand to Petrosino. "Why, you, of course, boss. I'm just a poor misled country boy who had no idea what was going on around me."

If anything, Petrosino's face grew even bleaker. Ignoring Harry's proffered hand, he said "Don't kid a kidder, son. They're talking about changing over from hanging to the electric chair in New York. You know what that is?"

As it happened, Harry didn't but the words 'electric' and 'chair' put together didn't augur well in his imagination. He put down the coffee.

"All right, then, Inspector, what do you want me to do?"

"Who says I want you to do anything?"

"If you didn't, your boys would have beat the hell out of me and left me floating in the river, because I'm too small a fry to bother dragging into court." He took a sip of coffee. "Or do you really think I'm the big man on the Bowery?"

"Here's what I think: from this day forward, every day, you're going to find a phone and call in to me every damn thing that Max Zwerbach or Vach Lewis are planning to do that day."

"Are you crazy? I don't know any of that. All I know is where they tell me to drive and

what place I sit outside of until they come back. And, these days, as often as not, there's bullets flying when they do come back. And, then I get my head down, spin some rubber and get the hell out as fast as I can. I could phone you later and tell you where I've been, but I'm sure you'll know by then." What did he think Harry could do: hang from window ledges by his fingertips to find out Zwerbach's secrets? Harry had visions of long years in a cell ahead of him. Or short moments in one of those new 'electric chairs'.

"Well, you'd better come up with something or we'll throw you in the tombs and forget where we put you."

"Now, that's a little harsh. Let's not be hasty. What say we put our heads together and see what we can come up with? You want some bagel?"

When Harry got summoned to bring the auto around front that afternoon, the car gleamed as best it could, given the damage it had taken, and Harry jumped down to help the boss into the back seat. For once, there was nobody riding shotgun in the front.

"We waiting, boss?" but Zwerbach shook his head. "Okay. *Dove?*" and Zwerbach replied "Dover."

He took the back way out of the Bowery, to avoid Little Italy and the Five Points gang, finally ending up under the Brooklyn Bridge at Dover Street. Fitzpatrick's three storey was open for business – if your business involved shotguns and rifles sticking out of every window.

"You wait-a, Tony. I come-a back." And Max Zwerbach walked across the street and into the headquarters of the man who'd been trying to kill him for three months.

And vice-versa.

When the door closed behind Zwerbach, Harry was on his feet, taking a big stretch and a

stroll up the street, nodding to the guards and inspecting each building. The whole neighborhood was butted up with each other, no alleys or even squeeze spaces between them. If he wanted to follow his boss, he had to use either the front or back door. The front was more than secure, with about four shotguns guarding it, so he decided to make for the back of the building. If it was left unguarded – but it wasn't. Two shotgun men lounged against the wall, cigarettes in their hands, and were instantly alert when Harry approached.

"What're you doing?" The challenge was issued with a raised shotgun to back it up. Harry stepped wide and passed the men with his hands held out. "Just going in there," he said, pointing and hoping against hope that the back door of the next building was unlocked.

Son of a bitch, it was! Now, was it patrolled?

Not the first floor. Not the second. This one had five storeys to Fitzpatrick's three so, from the fourth floor, he could look out over the fire escape to the empty roof of the next building. Could it really be that easy – and were Fitzpatrick's men that careless?

He stepped out onto the fire escape, then swung across to the roof next door, just a couple of feet beyond. On the gravel roof, he could look down to street level and see two men patrolling each side – except between the buildings. The roof access door was ahead of him, locked, of course, as he found out. Locked, but made of wood and a poor fit.

Fingers worked into the crack near the bottom of the door – foot against the doorpost and heave. Sit on the roof, both feet on the doorposts and heave. Before it gave way, he felt it actually bending. It had never been made to withstand that kind of pressure. The lock held, but the jamb screws pulled out of the wood and the door swung free.

Petrosino expected him to find out Zwerbach's plans, so all he had to do was sneak down

the stairs, find what room the meeting was being held in, avoid whatever guards were patrolling the halls, listen in on the conversation, make his way back to the street and into the auto before Zwerbach finished and came out looking for him. Sounds simple enough but there had to be forty rooms in that building. Knocking on each door didn't seem to be the best way to go about it.

Cautiously treading his way down, the top two floors were deserted. The bottom floor seemed to be but something had to be going on in the back rooms or else Zwerbach wouldn't be there.

And, literally, the back rooms were where he found them. Outside the final door at the rear, he heard voices and stopped to listen.

Now, if you're going to become a police informant, it's probably a good idea to know the language the people you're informing on are going to speak. For a man named Fitzpatrick, Ritchie Fitzpatrick's Italian was pretty good. Harry's wasn't, so a lot passed him by. What he got was:

"So, Ritchie, we agree-a. *La pace*. Okay?"

"Sono d'accordo." Harry knew that: I agree. "We have peace."

Harry could hear the men shaking hands, then Ritchie Fitzpatrick said "So, you stay north of Worth Street and east of China Town. I stay south of the bridge and south of Hell's Kitchen."

"Si, si, d'accordo. Bene, bene."

The door to the room suddenly opened and Harry was caught flat-footed outside it – if either Fitzpatrick or Zwerbach had been looking toward him. Without noticing Harry, Zwerbach stopped at the door and turned to Fitzpatrick.

"*Ah – un'altra cosa.*"

"What?" From Fitzpatrick.

"Just-a this," said Zwerbach and fired his revolver three times into Fitzpatrick's stomach.

"Aw, crap!" Harry yelled and turned to see shotgun men appearing at the end of the corridor and one coming up the back stair. He grabbed Zwerbach's elbow. "Come on, boss!"

He got two steps toward the back door when the man coming up reached the hallway, shotgun levelled. He yelled, "Back, boss!" and hurled Zwerbach sideways against the wall, just as the lead man at the other end fired. The load of buckshot took the back-door man in the chest. Harry grabbed Zwerbach and yanked him through the doorway, snagging the fallen shotgun as he did.

Down the short flight of stairs to the back door and out, firing wide to make the other back-door man duck, then around the corner to where the two Dover street guys were running for the front entrance, not realizing Harry and Zwerbach were at the back. Meanwhile the two from the hallway were making up ground behind him.

It was a forty yard sprint to the Cadillac. A shot toward the two behind him, deliberately wide, then one to the gunmen at the front of the building, a fast crank of the engine, left primed and choked, toss the shotgun to Zwerbach, into the front seat and away.

Son of a bitch! Could he not have one normal day? Well, normal is relative; maybe this was normal. Zwerbach emptied the pump gun over the rear of the car. Unlike his driver, the boss was aiming to kill; it's just that his aim was poor – Harry didn't think he hit anyone. When the shotgun was empty, he used up the remaining three bullets in his revolver. By which time, Harry was careening left off of Dover and into the warren of alleys under the bridge. He didn't really care where, as long as he kept going more or less north.

Was there anybody following? He kept turning to look behind but there was too much traffic to be sure and it was unsafe to keep turning back to look. Somebody should put mirrors on the dash of autos, so the driver can see what's behind.

He had his hands full avoiding what was ahead, as he raced along at better than twenty-five miles per hour. Pulling in and out of traffic, around carts, between carriages, even up on the sidewalk once or twice, he finally slowed and pulled the auto over to the curb far up Pearl Street.

He leaned over the wheel and caught his breath, the auto chugging beneath him. His hands were shaking every bit as much as his breath and he balled them into tight fists as he turned to Zwerbach, who seemed quite pleased with himself.

"Va bene, Tony."

"Don't you condescend to me, you stupid wop! What the hell was that? Were you trying to get us both killed? This is the second time I've dragged your sorry ass out of something like that! You don't just go around shooting people – it gets to be a bad habit. Pretty soon, you don't even know you're doing it. Knock it off!"

It was the first time Harry had ever seen Zwerbach at a loss for words. To maintain that, Harry turned back to his controls and set the machine in motion, tooling slowly along the boulevards looking for all the world like a businessman without a care being driven home for supper by his chauffeur. And, he was except that the business was murdering people in cold blood.

At the front of the building on Avenue B, he stopped the vehicle, but didn't get out to help Zwerbach to the ground. The guards out front watched while Zwerbach waited, then ran forward to do Harry's job. Zwerbach looked at Harry, who sat sullenly in the driver's seat, then

went into the building. For his part, Harry drove to the coach house, closed the doors, grabbed the few belongings he had and walked out ... forever.

Or, at least until Vach Lewis stopped him before he got to the door.

"Where you going, kid?"

"Out of here. Get out of my way."

'Cyclone' put a hand on Harry's chest and shoved him backward. "You better stop and think about that, punk." Harry found his footing and stepped forward, ready to take Lewis on. "What, are you nuts? You think I came back here alone?" Two soldiers stepped inside the door. "Sit down!"

By that time, he'd been backed to the work bench, so he sat on it. Lewis jerked his head to tell the *teppisti* to leave, then turned back.

"You got your feelings hurt, did you? You think the boss should have asked your opinion first? You think you're anything but a dumb-ass kid who's lucky to be here?"

That phrase brought Harry standing and to a stand-still. "Dumb-ass kid? What day is it?"

"How should I know? November ten, I think."

"So, I ain't a kid anymore. I'm eighteen, now."

"Happy freakin' birthday. Now sit down, shut up and listen." Harry regained his perch on the workbench. "You disrespected Mister Zwerbach. He says you raised your voice to him. Either one of those things gets you snuffed, so why are you still alive?"

"I'm alive because I've saved his life twice now and he knows it." Harry wasn't nearly as confident as he sounded, not when he was surrounded by casual killers like 'Cyclone' Lewis and the two standing outside the coach house.

Lewis rose from the chair he'd taken. "Okay, so you saved the boss's life twice. Now, you've disrespected him twice. Next time, those boys out there take *you* for a ride. *Capisci*?"

"Capisco."

Lewis tapped Harry's chest. "Put the suitcase away, dumb-ass. You think you can just walk out of here and nothing happens? You don't get to quit – you started, you keep going no matter what and whether you like it or not. This ain't working in the library. You don't get to quit. You're a *teppisto* – until the day you die." He gave Harry a shove that rocked him backward on the bench. "You idiot. Mister Zwerbach was going bring you – make you a made man. Now, it'll take years before he trusts you again. Go apologize to Mister Zwerbach and make it good."

Harry jumped down off the work bench and Lewis's fist, glinting metallic in the sunset, met his face square on. The lights went out.

Two hours later, Harry, his face bruised and swollen and with stitches in his cheek, having apologized in full to Mister Zwerbach, was making a phone call.

CHAPTER NINE

July 6, 1905

Ritchie Fitzpatrick was dead, and it was clear that Max Zwerbach had, personally, walked into Fitzpatrick's lair alone and taken him out. Everybody on the street knew that. Whatever else you might say about Zwerbach, he was not a coward. Stupid, maybe, but not a coward.

What he launched was open warfare on the streets of the Lower East Side – warfare that no longer cared who was in the cross-fire. In the last two weeks, forty people had been gunned down – this time, six of them had been civilians.

After the first week of scraping bodies off the pavement, Harry had hands on his shoulders again, this time when he was eating soup, which is a more viable weapon than a bagel but which he had no opportunity to deploy, and he found himself hauled in front of Petrosino once again.

"Your job is to tell me when the hell these things are going to happen!" Petrosino was leaning across his desk and screaming at the top of his lungs. It's a wonder people on the El train passing by his window didn't react, so Harry decided to match the little man's level.

"What am I: God? How the hell can I tell you when the hell these things are going to happen when I don't know when the hell these things are going to happen!"

"Why don't you know?" The tempest hadn't mitigated itself, yet.

"Two *teppisti* see each other on the street, realize they're on opposite sides, and bullets start flying. I'm supposed to know about that ahead of time? Use your brain."

Petrosino slammed his hand on the desk. "Don't you get smart with me, you little punk. You want to spend the rest of your life looking at the backside of bars?"

"I've spent quite a bit of time in bars, already, thanks." Why is it that some people just made him want to mouth off, Harry asked himself.

Petrosino sat back in his chair and linked his fingers in front of his chest. "All right, you don't scare easily." His voice was much more conversational, this time. "How about we grab your girlfriend and haul her up for ten years for prostitution and delinquency? Think she'll be scared? Or maybe that changes your tune."

"What are you raving about? I haven't got a girlfriend." But, he knew.

Petrosino picked up a file and read the name at the top. "Walsh, Anna, aged seventeen, no fixed address, seen coming and going at Eastside Gang building on Avenue B on multiple occasions, often late at night. Reasons for visits: prostitution, drug use, reception of stolen goods." He slid the file across the table to Harry and Harry saw the not-very flattering photo clipped to it.

"She didn't do anything like that and you know it. She doesn't touch drugs, she doesn't even smoke cigarettes, and she ain't a working girl and she sure as hell ain't fencing stolen goods. Every time she was at the building, she was with me – every time."

"Delinquency, then. Immoral conduct. Sex under the age of consent. Ten years. Same thing."

Harry threw the file back and its papers scattered. "You'd destroy an innocent girl's life just to get what you want?" Even as he said it, he thought of at least two women he'd destroyed to get what he wanted. It's hard when you're only just eighteen and your past catches up with you.

Petrosino shuffled the pages back into the file. "I'd wreck a hundred innocent girls' lives to get these shootings off the streets." Harry had to admit his heart was in the right place – just from the wrong angle.

"Your sense of values is a little warped, Petrosino. Where've you got her, now?"

"We haven't got her anywhere. She's out wandering the streets, not even knowing that she could be picked up by one of Fitzpatrick's crews."

"Fitzpatrick's dead ... so I hear."

"His crews aren't. You've got to take better care of your women, Bonfuzzi."

Harry suppressed his desire to beat Petrosino to a pulp. If he had tried, it wouldn't have been a contest – he was nearly a foot taller than the diminutive Italian and probably fifty pounds heavier. He could do it easily. The interesting part would have been when Petrosino's squad came in to see what the fuss was about.

So, he contented himself with "You're a bastard, Petrosino. She's a nice kid. If she gets

hurt, I'm coming after you."

"I'll lie awake worrying about that. Now, tell me how you're going to give me advance warning of when these shootouts are going to happen."

Harry wracked his brains but could conceive of nothing other than having a telephone installed in the auto that he could plug into a nearby telephone line. Or maybe he could send up smoke signals.

"How about I call you before we leave? There's a burger joint up the way and they've got a telephone. I'll run like hell, call you, and get back before they miss me."

"Okay," said the cop. "That's when. How about where?"

"They don't always tell me, but I'll try to get whoever they send for me to tell me where we're going so you can have cops there when we get there. Not beat cops sashaying around in boots and helmets. Undercover who aren't a giveaway, kept back out of sight but ready and willing to jump in to stop things before they start. That sound good?"

It seemed to. At least, Petrosino grunted what might have been assent.

"But you've got to keep them back until both sides are out into the street or one side will just disappear, ready to start trouble again later. *Caspisci?*"

The NYPD man didn't have much of a sense of humor. His reply was "Don't you dare jerk me around, punk."

"And you have a nice day, too, officer." Harry walked to the door. "I assume we're finished. Are we?" And he left before Petrosino could answer.

There followed three days without any need for him but, at last, Angelo 'The Angel' Balbo yelled up the stairs of the coach house. "Hey, Bonfuzzi! The boss wants you out front in

fifteen minutes."

"Where we going, Angel?"

"How the hell do I know? He said Chinatown. Just do whatever you have to do and get the thing running!" And The Angel was gone.

Three minutes out to the street and around the corner. Into the little restaurant, flip a half-dollar to the girl behind the counter, call Petrosino, tell him Mott and Pell Streets in half an hour, run back and have the machine out front with a couple of minutes to spare.

It wasn't a long drive into Chinatown, but it was still scary. Even though Harry was now friends with Tchin Len, was learning fighting from him, it was still an alien place. His anxiety was compounded by the presence of Vach Lewis but not of Max Zwerbach. If the Cyclone was on his own, there was bad news for somebody up ahead. And there were two other soldiers in the auto along with The Angel. This was no peace negotiation.

He saw the *tong* guards around the building as he pulled up across the street and the three crew men and the boss climbed down. Traffic was normal around him, but he knew – or he hoped – somewhere up and down the street, Petrosino's squad was ready.

"What are we doing, *capo?*" he asked, with as much nonchalance as he could muster.

"We're making a delivery," was all Lewis had to offer. "Keep the machine running."

In the second storey window above the *tong* building, a figure stepped out of shadow and revealed itself – Tchin Len. The young man, hands folded in front of him, looked cautiously up and down the street, then at Harry, and his hand flicked twice. 'Get away.'

Harry looked to where Len had glanced, saw nothing, which was odd because there should have been pedestrians and street traffic. Who was holding it back?

In a doorway at the corner, he saw the muzzle of a long gun.

"Boss!" he began, but the door to the *tong* building swung open and a dozen men came out, laughing, looking around with not a care in the world – until they looked across the street.

"Cyclone!" came from across the street and the men all began to reach into pockets and coats. It was coming in seconds and Harry slid across the front seat of the auto to the passenger side.

"Hit 'em!" was Lewis's order and he got off the first shot himself.

Harry, unarmed, dove out of the seat onto the sidewalk and crouched behind the car. As he did, he realized the men from the building were not tongsters but part of Fitzpatrick's renegade Eastsiders. He even knew a few of the faces. The one Lewis had fired at had fallen immediately, then twenty or more guns opened up.

The hidden men on each side were running forward and Harry saw they were Lewis's gunmen and, between them, Lewis, and the three soldiers who'd come in the car, they were pouring lead toward the building. Bullets thumped into brick, howled off the concrete, found flesh. Two more went down, then one of Lewis's men.

A bullet spung-ed into the sheet metal of the Cadillac near Harry's head and he got mad – he'd just finished filling and painting that spot. Then he forgot his mad as more bullets hit the machine. He started to worry whether the machine would keep running.

The firing went on. It was sheer madness – twenty men (down to about a dozen now, he realized) standing fifty feet apart in a street in New York City pouring hot lead toward each other as fast as they could. One more on each side went down, then four Fitzpatrick gunmen fell at the same moment. It was suddenly Lewis and five of his men against four of the Fitzpatricks.

The firing suddenly slackened as the remaining gunmen all stopped at almost the same time to reload – except Lewis, who threw his revolver into the back seat, reached into a pocket, and pulled out another. In two seconds, there were only two Fitzpatricks standing. Of the men who'd fallen, only one was moving.

The whole fight hadn't yet taken thirty seconds but twelve men lay bleeding on the wet street. Suddenly and finally, he heard a bell begin to clang and whistles to shrill. The cops had arrived.

"Go!" ordered Lewis and the soldiers ran for the auto, piling in. The men at the corners suddenly disappeared, heading for their own transport. The two remaining Fitzpatricks turned for the *tong* door, but found it locked against them. They pounded and kicked on the door, then desperately turned back, one trying to reload, the other without a weapon.

Lewis grabbed a shotgun from The Angel and fired twice, then, as Harry watched, tossed the smooth-bore back to The Angel, walked over to the one man still moving and put a pistol bullet into his head.

Harry was back in the idling Cadillac, dropping it into gear with one hand while he let off the brake with other. Lewis, showing no particular urgency, climbed into the back and nodded to Harry. Drop the clutch lever, pour on the throttle and they were spinning the rear wheels as they headed off down Mott Street.

No shots followed them. Harry kept glancing back and, when the police arrived, he saw they simply stopped at the scene instead of following. Incredibly, Lewis and his men had gotten away with it, leaving two of their number and a dozen Fitzpatricks dead. Harry wanted to be sick.

The Angel had taken a round in the side and was not doing well, but Lewis 'knew a

doctor'. None of the others had been hit. If you discounted the deaths of the two Zwerbach soldiers (and who among the Eastsiders didn't?), the worst casualty was the auto, which had been shot nearly twenty times, yet somehow still continued to run.

Lewis's comment was "God, those sons of bitches are bad shots." When asked what to do with the machine, he shrugged. "Who cares? It'll go faster with a few holes in it, right?"

"A few more days like today and you're going to be without an auto, boss, because cars don't keep running with twenty bullet-holes in them – and probably without a driver, because I won't keep running with twenty bullet-holes in me."

"Your job is to drive. Let us worry about what else is going on." He seemed very pleased with himself, so Harry had to ask. "Well, Tony," was the answer. "I'll tell you. Those bastards at the *tong* shop were the last of Fitzpatrick's crew. They went to the *On Leong* for an alliance against us. The *tong* set up a meet, then called us to take care of it." He actually chuckled at the thought of a dozen men dead. "So, we took care of it. Problem solved."

So the Eastsiders were united once more. They were a hundred or so soldiers fewer than they had been, but nobody ever challenged Kid Twist and Cyclone again – at least, not for a few years.

He got picked up again the next day (getting a dog at a stand on 2nd Ave.) and dragged away to see Petrosino. He was going to start getting a reputation as an easy pickup if they didn't leave him alone. Petrosino was in a closed carriage over at Tompkins Square Park. Harry didn't wait for the cop to mince words before he began slicing a few himself.

"Where the fuck were you! What the fuck were you doing? And why the fuck didn't you do what you were supposed to? I could have been killed out there, asshole!"

The best defense being a good offense, Harry made sure he was being as offensive as possible and Petrosino had almost nothing to come back with.

"We got there as soon as we could. You only gave us half an hour warning."

"I only got fifteen minutes warning, but I kept my part of the bargain. And now you've got two morgues full of dead people. Aren't you proud of yourself?"

Petrosino hit the top of the carriage and the driver moved on, reducing the number of people who might hear him getting a dressing down from a street kid.

"We did everything we could. The truth is we were outnumbered and outgunned."

"You weren't outgunned. Everybody but Lewis was out of ammunition and he only had a few rounds. If you'd even *tried* to chase us, I'd have made sure we got caught. I can make that car sing or I can make it fart, but I need to know you're going to be there." He banged on the roof and the carriage stopped.

"It's not going to get that much attention." Petrosino was grasping at straws. "After all, it was in Chinatown."

"And ain't that one hell of a statement? You know what? Nice talking to you." He opened the door but the cop banged on the roof again and Harry fell back into the seat as the carriage moved forward. "Now what?"

"Just remember who's the law here! I'm the law! I'll drag you through the court and drop you in a hole!" The diminutive inspector was working up to another of his shrieking fits.

"No, you're not the law, you're a cop! The law comes in big, thick volumes and it's in all the libraries. I've read the law! Have you?" He banged the roof. "You want to drag me in front of a judge? I'll tell him how you and your squad stood by until more than a dozen people were dead

– hundreds of bullets flying around and god knows how many people in danger. The judge might not care, but I guarantee the papers will! They'll hang you out to dry. Now, until you and your blunder squad show me you can do better than what you did in Chinatown, don't even think about dragging me back in. And if you think those two goofs you've been sending can bring me in against my will, there's a grizzly bear and a pack of timber-wolves in the Yukon you'd better talk to first. Now, get out of my way!"

And with that, he got out and walked away, stopping to bang on the wall of the carriage first, with the satisfaction of seeing it carry the inspector off toward East 12th.

Whether the reason was his masterful manhandling of Petrosino or the end of dissension in the Bowery, nobody bothered him for a long time after that. Things settled back into their normal routine with runs (in a painstakingly repaired Cadillac) just about every day: pickups, collections, and inspections. Yeah, business was back to normal in the Bowery and it stayed that way for a long time.

For an equally long time, he didn't even witness anything violent happening, beyond the usual cases of domestic disputes and fist fights you see on the streets of any big city, on any given day. He began to quit shaking at night and start wondering about finding another girl as nice as Anna to spend some time with. After all, a man can't live on bagels and *schmeer* alone.

It's odd how danger can become normal. When you live with your heart in your mouth, somehow your mind accepts it, eventually. You still have your heart in your mouth, but you forget that there is another way to live. So, Harry moved from day to day, watching the Eastsiders consolidate their grip on the Bowery and the Lower East Side. With no internal resistance, they ended up with more businesses paying protection, more gambling houses, more drugs in back

rooms – more girls in front rooms. And Harry helped collect and enforce it all with every trip around the streets.

It's comfortable, really. It's predictable. It can even be enjoyable.

Until you walk in to see the boss and Roxie Vanilli, heads down, laughing.

CHAPTER TEN

November 6, 1905

Zwerbach and Vanilli's heads rose together to gaze at Harry down the length of the room. Any way you looked at it, this wasn't good. He could turn and run; he could cross the room and throw Vanilli out the window – or he could pretend that nothing had ever happened.

"Roxie! Good to see you back. I thought you'd been sent upstate for a hundred years for diddling little girls – or maybe it was boys."

The smile didn't leave Vanilli's face, but the hatred didn't leave his eyes, either. "Hey, Bonfuzzi, you still got your balls?"

Zwerbach frowned at Harry. "Okay ... this is-a over." He grabbed Vanilli's chin and turned his face toward himself. "He you-a part-en-er. You make-a money." He looked back at Harry. *"Diglielo, Roxie."*

And the smile of Vanilli's face grew wider. "You and me, Bonfuzzi. We gonna be partners. We gonna work real tight together and make each other lots of money. What do you think of that?"

"Ha cercato di tagliare il mio palle, capo!" Harry wasn't sure how he came up with that sentence, but it was true: Vanilli loved cutting balls off, and Harry's above all. What was Harry supposed to do next time Vanilli decided to get out his knife?

"Ai ragazzi piace giocare." was the reply. Boys ... what? Harry missed it.

Vanilli laughed outright at that. "Boys love to play, right, Tony?"

"What are we going to be playing at?" Harry asked, trying to focus on the threat ahead.

Vanilli laughed again. "Oh, it's right up your alley. We're going to be taking care of some nice young ladies. Doesn't that sound like fun?"

Oh, shit. Roxie had persuaded the boss to hook Harry up with him – hook him up to run a string of girls. Or several strings of girls. He already felt dirty.

"Boss! Mister Zwerbach! I just want to drive. *Voglio solo guidare. Per favore!*" No way was he getting into that filth. Roxie, the bastard, had set this up to pry him away from Zwerbach. *"Ti prego, lasciami guidare per te!"* It's amazing how desperation can dig words out of your memory.

"You drive-a for-a me ... an'-a you work-a with Roxie." Zwerbach's index finger laid down the law as much as his voice, stabbing in Harry's direction, then Vanilli's.

"And if he tries to cut my balls off again?"

Zwerbach grabbed Vanilli. *"Ehi! Non provare a tagliargli di nuovo le palle."*

Vanilli just grinned back as if it were a joke. "Sure, boss. I wouldn't think of it."

"Tony, questa è solo la prima cosa per te. Un giorno sarai un consigliere. Forse, un giorno, il capo."

Vanilli turned his evil eyes on Harry. "The boss says this is just the first step for you, Tony. One day, you'll be a big shot – maybe even, one day, the boss." Vanilli smiled. "Don't count on it, deadmeat."

"I just want to drive." There was no way Harry was going to let himself get dragged further into the cess pool.

Vanilli walked forward, holding out a hand. "Here's what you do, Bonfuzzi. You shake my hand; you smile; and you go back to driving your car. I'll run the girls and the business, too. And, I'll take the money. And, you'll shut your god damn mouth."

So Harry smiled, looked at Zwerbach, shook Vanilli's hand and turned away. This wasn't going to end well. This just couldn't end well. Tony wondered about finding a gun.

And suddenly he had twice as much to do. He still drove Zwerbach and Lewis where they were going, but now he also drove Vanilli where he was going.

Winter was setting in and the winds were biting across the Lower East Side. It took a heavy coat, heavy gloves, a good hat and a face mask to keep any warmth in him as he waited patiently while Vanilli made his rounds. Those rounds included collecting money from the crew under him, which they'd collected from the girls under them. He did a little enforcing if needed, but there was very little of that – nobody was misbehaving after the street war of the fall. Roxie also collected a few favors here and there from the girls. Whenever that happened, Harry simply drove away and left Roxie to find his own way home. He didn't dare interfere outright, but little things like that kept it interesting for him.

"To-nyyy!" was the call he got used to hearing as he sat and waited for Roxie. The girls weren't really doing anything more than teasing, but it was getting to be a long time for him – the teasing didn't make it any easier.

Trying to keep his feet from freezing one cold afternoon, one of the girls broke from the group (all equally as cold as he) and climbed into the seat beside him.

"Hey, To-nyyy," she started. "Roxie said I was supposed to take care of you. He said you'd take care of me if I did. He said you'd give me ten."

"Roxie said I'd give you ten? Meaning Roxie said I'd give you five. Isn't he the optimist? I haven't got ten. I've got twenty cents." It happened to be true. Harry hadn't picked up any cash that morning. "What do I get for that?"

She laughed in his face. "For that, you get a warm handshake."

"I'd like something to warm me up! It's freezing out here." Short of running the engine and holding his hands over the manifold, there was no heat in the Cadillac.

"Aw!" the girl said. "Are you cold? Let me warm you up." And she slid up tightly beside him on the seat and put her arms around his neck, nuzzling his ear with her lips.

"I've truly only got twenty cents," he said and she put a finger over his lips.

"Petrosino," she whispered while still nuzzling his ear. "Nine tomorrow at the precinct."

Then her hand went into his pants pocket, rummaging around until she found what she was looking for, and lingering a little longer than she needed to. When she pulled her hand out, she held it up to show a dime and two nickels.

"Did you get your money's worth, To-nyyy?" she teased with a smile.

"I have to say I did. Now, I've got no lunch money, though."

"Uh-uh. I earned this. You'll have to go without lunch." She kissed him, slid out of the car, said "Bye, To-nyyy!" and was gone.

Harry was still staring after her when Vanilli climbed into the seat she'd just vacated. He placed a canvas bag, stuffed full with something, under the seat and looked around to see who was watching.

"So, did you enjoy my little surprise? I thought you deserved some fun, too. Then maybe you won't act so god damn smug whenever I get a little action. She's quite a girl, isn't she?"

"I can honestly say she surprised me. What made you pick her?"

"I asked for a volunteer to go take care of the little punk out front and she put up her hand. No explaining people's tastes is there?"

God damn, Petrosino had planted her deep – what was he looking for that he needed real working girls to get whatever it was? And, they must be watching closely to know what day Vanilli and Harry would be around to pick up the week's take and have her set to take advantage. He casually looked around as he set the machine in motion, but saw no one with a plain-clothes cop look.

Vanilli sat back. "So, maybe you could show a little gratitude that I'm sending a little your way. I didn't have to you know."

"Sorry, Roxie. I'm real grateful. I'll try to show you how much, some day." And the Cadillac moved on. The next store front with a string of Eastside girls secreted behind it was a dozen blocks away.

He was at the precinct the next morning, taking time to circle the block twice to make sure he wasn't being followed. Inside, the desk sergeant wasn't letting him past.

"I don't know who you're talking about. Now, get out of here, before I toss you in the drunk tank."

"Petrosino wants to see me." He'd had a good night's sleep, so he was unusually calm.

"There's no Petrosino at this precinct. Beat it."

"He's on the fourth floor; the door says 'Italian Squad'. Joseph Petrosino. You know, about a foot and a half high with a squeaky little voice."

The sergeant leaned slightly forward and slid his glasses down. "There ain't no Petrosino here. Scram."

Harry shrugged; he'd tried. He turned around and started for the door he'd come in.

"Hey! Not that way. Out the back." The sergeant was pointing to the rear of the building so, with another shrug, Harry went that way. He got the door to the back stairway about halfway open when hands grabbed him, spun him around and pushed him against the wall.

He only had time to get out a surprised "Hey!" when his wrists were grabbed and a set of cuffs were clamped over them, behind his back. The hands then grabbed him and tossed him face down onto the staircase.

It was 'way too early in the morning for this nonsense.

They frisked him quickly and efficiently and without being nearly as much fun as the frisking he'd got from the girl who'd told him to come here in the first place. He must remember to look her up and thank her.

Satisfied he wasn't carrying bombs or cleavers, they hauled him to his feet and half-dragged, half-carried him up the eight flights of stairs to the top floor.

"I can walk, you know," he said at about half-way past the second floor. "I walked all the

way here by myself and everything."

"Shut up," was the only answer.

So he shut up and enjoyed the ride. At the top, they banged through the doorway and made their way to Petrosino's office.

"I knew he was here!" Harry yelled in triumph on seeing the gold leaf lettering on the door. "See? J. Petrosino, Italian Squad. I knew it!"

"Shut up!" was all he got back.

Petrosino sat behind his desk once again as the two cops dragging Harry put him on his feet in front of their boss.

"Well, well," the head of New York's 'Italian Squad' greeted him. "Look at this! New York City's newest pimp! I bet your mother's real proud of you, pimp."

"My mother's dead. Can you take these cuffs off me?"

"No. Shut up." Petrosino made a show of reading a report. "So, you're running more than thirty girls with Roxie Vanilli."

"I had no idea it was that many. I just drive the car. Roxie does the rest."

Petrosino shoved the folder to one side. "And, again, I've got to remind you about being accessory to a crime. You drive a car; you open a door; you collect a penny – you're an accessory."

Harry laughed at that. "So, now you're going to threaten me with twenty years in Sing Sing, are you? Listen, friend, when Max Zwerbach tells you you've been promoted, you don't say 'thanks, but no thanks' – not if you want to live. Anything you can threaten me with is a holiday compared to that."

Harry hadn't realized that someone's eyebrow could arch as high as Petrosino's did. "If you think twenty years in Sing Sing will be a holiday, I'll be interested in talking to you in twenty years."

Harry looked around the office, where closed blinds, sealed up windows, and guards patrolling the halls showed clear nervousness. "You're pretty much locked in yourself, aren't you? What are you hiding from, Joe? The place looks like you're expecting a war."

"We're not hiding; we're taking precautions." Petrosino lifted up a sheet of paper that showed a map of lower Manhattan, from 14th Street to the Battery. It was marked off into a half-dozen areas, each with notes written in. "So, based on what you know, how would you re-draw this?"

Harry stared at the man until he rose, walked behind and uncuffed Harry's hands. Studying the map, Harry picked up a pencil and drew in new boundaries.

"Zwerbach's back in charge of everything east of Bowery, all the way up to 11th Street. He's got fingers in the rest of the Lower East Side down as far as East Broadway. Paul Kelly's trapped west of Bowery and north of Chinatown, so he's expanding west: south of Houston down to Canal Street, maybe, then up into Greenwich Village as far as West 8th, maybe. Chinatown? Who knows who's in charge there? I know some people with the *On Leong Tong*– they're mostly on Pell Street – here. There's the *Hip Sing Tong*; they're here on Mott Street. I don't know much about them but they're in there, too, along with a couple of smaller tongs. The tongs are too close. One block from each other."

Petrosino ran his finger west. "Who's running Hell's Kitchen?" The square mile of mid-town Manhattan from the Hudson to 8th Ave was notorious for crime.

Harry shrugged. “Never been there. The Irish, mostly: the Gopher Gang and the Parlor Mob, but they’re working with the Italians, now, too, I think.”

The cop slid a finger along the edges of the map. “Who’s in charge on the waterfront?”

“The stevedores are a pretty tough bunch and they’re not afraid of much. It’d be hard to strong-arm them. If there’s anybody in charge on the docks, I don’t know about it – and I don’t know about what’s going on outside of lower Manhattan – I’m sure there’s others.”

“Well, that’s why you’re here.” Petrosino put the map into a folder.

Harry looked around for a chair. “Oh, good. I’m here for a reason. It makes being dragged up the stairs much better.”

“Zwerbach’s your boss.” That wasn’t a question. “You don’t have any sub-boss below him, do you?”

“Well, Vach Lewis, but he’s more of an assistant to Mister Zwerbach. What they call a *consigliari*.” There didn’t seem to be a chair available for him. Should he just sit down in Petrocini’s? It was tempting, but then Petrosino sat down in it.

“So, who is Zwerbach reporting to?”

That took Harry by surprise. He searched for some answer but came up with nothing. “Nobody. He’s the top. *Il capo*.”

“Nobody’s the top. It just goes on and on. Somewhere – maybe back in Italy – is the top.”

Harry felt like he was losing the thread of this. “I’m supposed to be running a string of girls in the Lower East Side. What has got to do with Italy?”

“Who gave Zwerbach the help he needed to deal with Richie Fitzpatrick?” Petrosino was swivelling his chair nervously.

"Nobody. We outnumbered Fitzpatrick's boys five to one. The *On Leong* helped a bit, but not with any killings that I know of."

"So, who was backing Fitzpatrick?"

"Now, that bothered me." Harry had thought of that very question a number of times. "How did Fitzpatrick get the balls to face down the Eastsiders? Somebody must have promised him something." He held up a cautionary finger. "Promised – but never delivered."

Petrosino went to a window and carefully pulled the blind open a tiny crack, as if afraid someone might see him at the window. After a few glances up and down the street, he came back and opened yet another folder, sliding a photograph out and passing it to Harry.

"What do you think of that?"

"What do I think of it? I don't know. It's a bowl of stew. Chunks of – holy Christ!" Harry threw the photo at the cop and stepped back three or four steps. "That's a head, for god's sake!"

"It sure is."

"Well, you might warn a guy. Christ! Now, I'll have that picture in *my* head forever." Harry suddenly felt sticky all over. "Who the hell was that?" And he did mean *was*.

"You ever hear of Benedetto Madonia?"

"Should I have?" Harry was shaking his head to clear out the picture.

"No reason you should have – he was dead before you ever arrived in New York. But I thought you might have heard of him because the guy that killed him also killed you."

Harry took a moment to test his pulse. No, it was still pulsing, maybe a little faster than usual. "When did he do that and why didn't I notice?"

"A couple of months before he killed Madonia. He kidnaped you and eventually killed

you. You were only twelve at the time and your name was Tony Bonzuffi."

Aw, crap. Who'd have thought that would come back to bite him? It was just a name on a piece of newspaper stuck in a garbage can on a fall day two years ago, but it had stuck with him. He'd decided Tony Bonfuzzi sounded better to him than Bonzuffi. And, now a cop was asking about it. "Look, Joe, I didn't have anything to do ..."

"Of course you didn't. You're not nearly smart enough for that. But Bonzuffi was killed by Louis 'The Wolf' Luppo and Louis 'The Wolf' works for somebody – unless he's been shanked in prison – and whoever that guy is owns, or thinks he owns the underworld of New York. And most of your buddies in crime are suddenly bowing down to him. Now the thing is, that guy isn't on his own over here. He's got bosses – bosses who are meaner than even he is. And that's where you'll come back in."

It was a long way around, but Harry knew he'd come back into the tale sooner or later.

He had to ask. "Who are this guy's bosses?" He was still spinning from the photo. "Or do I want to know?"

" The worst collection of murderers, kidnapers, drug dealers, pimps and more in America – and they owe their allegiance to their bosses in Sicily. *Il Mano Nera*, Tony – the Black Hand." Oh, what was he being dragged into, now?

"And, what do you want me to do?" Infiltrate and bring down the worst collection of murderers, kidnapers, drug dealers, pimps and more in America, he thought, and laughed silently.

"I want you to infiltrate and bring down the Black Hand in America." Petrosino leaned back in his chair with a self-satisfied grin on his face.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

January 4, 1906

The man in the black suit hit him in the chest with the heel of his hand and Harry fell backward, grunting as the wind was knocked out of him, but when the man came after him, swinging a leg around in a high kick aimed at his head, Harry wasn't there. He'd sidestepped to place a vertical fist punch into the man's midriff, followed by a forearm across the throat, while the other hand held the back of his victim's head in place. They went down together.

If either had been actually trying to connect their blows, the fight would have been over twenty minutes ago, shortly after the first strike was thrown. Instead, both were winded, sweating and grinning.

"Where did that last one come from?" asked the man in black, as Harry helped him back up.

"From a bar fight in Dawson a million years ago. Didn't work quite as well then," and Harry pulled back his hair to show a scar on his scalp. "The barkeep took him down a few seconds later."

"A million years ago? How old were you?"

Harry had to think. "Fourteen or fifteen. Fourteen, I guess."

"You have led a very interesting life, Tony," said the man dressed in traditional *gōngfū* garb, who had crossed the Pacific in search of his woman, had stolen her from sex slavery, and spirited her across a continent to hide her in the middle of New York City.

Tchin Len threw Harry a towel and they wiped off the sweat. "You stay and have a meal with us, okay?"

"Thank you, no. I have to get back – the boss'll want me soon. Besides, I still can't figure out how to use those sticks."

"Bow Kum got you a fork."

They both had to laugh. "That was very nice of her. How is she doing?" Harry felt sorry for the girl, stuck inside day and night, not able to show her face in case someone recognized her.

"She misses her family. She would like to go back home." Harry could see that Len was upset Bow Kum might want to leave him.

"Well, maybe we can scrape up enough to get you both back to China."

"No." He was remarkably emphatic. "She cannot go back. Her family would turn her out, disown her, because of what she has been. If they turn her out, she will have no choice but to become what they disowned her for being."

"Well, she couldn't help it. That's not fair." And hadn't life always been fair to Harry?

"My country is not fair. It is merely ancient and filled with custom. In my country, I would have to divorce her. There would be no choice."

He gripped his friend's hand. "I don't know what to say."

"There is nothing to say. Same time next week?"

"Sure. See you."

Harry and Len had been sparring for over a year, now, and Harry had acquired a lot of knowledge – and some wisdom – through it. While he was big and strong, Len was fast and strong, so it balanced out. They both were learning.

He had parked the Cadillac across Pell Street from the *On Leong* stronghold. It was safe there – no one would dare to mess with it when it was outside the *tong* house.

Someone had messed with it. The two rear tires were flat – slashed. Fortunately, swearing and changing tires were both things he was good at.

Block the front wheels with a convenient chunk of wood from the curb, jack under the rear end, lift it, five nuts on the wheel lugs removed with the long-handled wrench. Unbolt a spare, slide it on, five nuts tightened with the wrench, then on to the other side. Buttoned back up, it hadn't taken twenty minutes. The boss would be mad about the slashed tires.

Just like Harry was mad about the Chinese man who had occupied the passenger side while Harry was working on the tires.

"You looking for a ride somewhere, bub?" Ignoring the man's presence, Harry prepared to start the machine. He had once considered stealing this very machine but, as soon as he was in charge of it, he made sure nobody would steal it from him; he'd installed not one but two hidden switches in the ignition circuit.

"You don't come here no more," was the answer, with a smug little grin on his face.

"Says who?"

"You don't come here no more." The man had a limited vocabulary, apparently.

"You're pushing your luck, buddy. Get out of my machine." Harry slid the gear lever into first gear while advancing the spark a little. The guy didn't even react; he knew nothing about automobiles.

"Last chance."

"You don't come here no more!" As a conversationalist, this guy would never make a splash in the parlors of New York.

His passenger reached for his gun, so Harry's hands closed on the man's right wrist, brought it down and around, pushed the hand inward until he felt bones crack. He left that to put an elbow across the man's face which broke more bones before grasping his collar and waist to throw him overhead out of the machine.

The man landed in front of traffic. A horse pulling a cart reared and nearly dumped the cart before the driver got it under control. There was swearing as the man got to his feet and tried awkwardly to pull his gun with his left hand. He was just a foot from the car when Harry opened the door and sent him staggering back.

Revolver lost in traffic, Harry left him his other wrist, but put a boot-heel into his midriff which sent the man reeling to the sidewalk, trying to breath. Harry collected the revolver, emptied the shells onto his dancing partner and threw the piece toward a garbage can. It missed, but clattered to the ground at a by-standing boy's feet, who bent to pick it up.

"Hey!" Harry yelled and scared the kid enough that he backed away. "Throw that in the

storm sewer – right there at the curb. Throw it in!" And the youngster dropped the new piece into the sewer, while Harry was hauling the man to his feet. He shook the man, while applying pressure to his right eye with a thumb.

"Who sent you?" Silence. Harry thought the man didn't think he meant business, so he pressed down on the eye until the guy screamed. "Who sent you?"

"*Hip Sing Tong*. You don't come here no more."

Did the guy speak any other phrases? Harry began to increase pressure on the eye again, then suddenly stopped.

"You tell the *Hip Sing Tong* if they want to talk to me, don't send a fool to do it." He spun the guy around and helped him on his way with a solid kick to the butt. "If I see you again, you won't walk away!"

Watching him scurry away, clutching an arm, Harry went to the front of the Cadillac, chuckling with smug self-satisfaction. That one had been fun.

We all know, of course, what goeth before a fall.

Switches up, ignition on, gas and throttle set, handbrake on, he pulled out the choke and spun the starter crank.

Nothing.

Not to worry. It had been a little fussy the past week or so.

A little more gas, a little more choke. Spin the crank.

Nothing.

A little more of everything that needed more. Another spin. Another nothing.

He asked himself if this was finally the day that the three-year old auto gave up the ghost.

Or ...

Unbuckle the straps on the engine cover and have a look at what's happening in there.

It was a short look. The distributor cap was missing.

This was not good. Only someone with knowledge of automobiles would know to do that. It couldn't have been the *On Leong* men – none of them knew anything about cars, as far as he could tell.

Who else? He was in Chinatown. If it wasn't *On Leong*, it had to be –

– one of the four men converging on him from the corner, three carrying small, vicious-looking hatchets and an older man in the center, carrying a distributor cap. The Cadillac's distributor cap. His distributor cap.

The older man held the black object up and said "*Nǐ qīng yì diǎn xíng ma?*" One of the hatchet men spoke up. "Mister Mock Duck ask you want this?"

He wasn't sure he had heard that right. "Mister who?"

"*Sai Wing Mock*. Mister Mock Duck, the master."

"Mock Duck? Okay. Mister Mock Duck, I'll take it, please! Thank you!" He held out a hand which caused much laughter.

"Nǐ lái ná a!" and Mister Mock Duck beckoned with the other hand.

The hatchet man spoke up, again. "Mister Mock Duck says ..."

"Yeah, I got that. Good afternoon, gentlemen." And he bowed deeply and began to walk away. As always, it wasn't going to be that easy.

A glitter in the air caught his eye and he pulled his head to one side. The hatchet, thrown by one of the men, hit the fender of the car.

"Hey! You scratched my boss's car. Is he going to be pissed at you!" Whoever had thrown the hatchet had already replaced it with another, so he had no idea which one it was.

Harry bent to recover the thrown ax and looked up to see all three of the younger tongsters coming down on him. Why not one at a time? Now, he'd have to deal with all three at once. He used his right foot to snap the knee of the first one as the man planted his weight on it for a kick. Meanwhile, ducking under the first man's hatchet, he drew the edge of the ax he'd picked up across the face of the second while not quite ducking under that one's ax. Number One was down with a broken kneecap, Number Two would take seconds to recover the shock of having his cheek laid open, but Harry wasn't sure if Number Two had managed to cut flesh along with coat. Either way, he didn't have time to worry about that. He'd fallen against the open driver's side door of the car and scrabbled for footing and something to hold. The way that Number Three squared up to face Harry showed that he was as much a master of the *gōngfū* as Tchin Len. Plus he had a weapon. Harry came upright to face the last one with the thrown hatchet in one hand and the eighteen inch length of water pipe he kept under the front seat of the Cadillac in the other.

Twenty feet back, the older man had replaced the distributor cap with a revolver – and suddenly, Harry had brought a pipe to a gunfight.

Number Three was rushing Harry with a scream that frankly startled him enough that he missed with the first swing of the pipe and had to bring it backhanded across the man's face as he lifted the hatchet overhead. A quick recovery and the pipe came down on top of the third man's skull.

Number Two, blood now streaming down from a cheek that was almost cut through, had

come to his feet and lifted his hatchet overhead while Number One was on the pavement, shrieking in pain from a shattered knee when, in a heartbeat, the situation changed.

A half-dozen men came charging from the *On Leong Tong* building. At the same time, another three of Harry's attackers ran around the corner to join the fray. He thought, at first, it was going to be a grand melee of fists and feet, instead, the revolvers came out and the shots began.

Two *On Leong* went down at once, then the shooting became general. By that time, Harry had decided it was time for those without guns to hide. He was under the car, sliding to the gutter. With his back against the wheel he decided to wait for the firing to die down, but a pair of legs came sliding under the car after him and Number Three, whom he'd hit with the pipe, joined him on the sidewalk behind the car.

"Hi!" he hollered over the noise and the man's startled face turned toward him, just in time to receive the full benefit of the water pipe on the cranium once again. This was getting to be a bad habit, he thought, propping the man up and relieving him of hatchets and a revolver. What was the guy doing hiding behind the car when he had a gun with bullets in it? Cowardice, perhaps? By that time, the shooting had stopped and he stuck his head over the fender for a quick peek.

There were three down on each side and *Sai Wing Mock* – Mister Mock Duck – alive, but with at least three holes in him, was being dragged away by his surviving henchmen. Harry leapt to his feet and took off after them, shouting "Hey! Hey!"

When he reached the tongsters, one let go of his boss and assumed an intimidating fighting stance, all the while making fierce fighting sounds. It was truly terrifying, so Harry

kicked the man in the balls on the way past, bending over Mock Duck to retrieve his distributor cap while the other two stood back. Mock Duck just watched Harry do it.

"Thank you, Mister Mock Duck," he said, bowing to *Sai Wing Mock* and pausing to pat his groaning, groin-kicked, erstwhile opponent on the head. "Dip them in a big bowl of ice, chum. That's the ticket. Your wife will never know it happened in a week or two."

Harry made sure to thank his rescuers, one of whom was Tchin Len, most profusely before putting the cap back on his distributor, cranking the car to life and motoring away. He was two blocks away when the police, once again johnny-come-latelies on the scene, arrived.

Petrosino had the idea that he'd take on international crime, when he couldn't even keep up with homegrown slaughter in the streets. If the best he had was to show up late for a tong fight in Chinatown, he had better buckle down hard if he was going to beat the Black Hand.

In the end, that particular band of sweethearts was the least of NYPD's troubles for the next few months. Just when the Eastside/Five Points war seemed to have settled down, Chinatown exploded. Beginning with the fight around Harry's Cadillac, Chinatown was soon the most dangerous place in New York – and Pell and Mott Streets were the bloodiest.

The tongs, of course, had always hated each other, and they had the added bonus of bringing that hatred across the Pacific and the full width of the continent. It was a deep-seated hate.

The new rule for the Italian, Irish and other gangs of New York had become 'stay the hell out of Chinatown'. That wasn't too much of a hardship, as the first thing that the *Hip Sing Tong* had done was squeeze the Eastsiders out of the *fan tan* games and the opium trade in Chinatown. Opium was legal, but there was good money to be made in avoiding the taxes on it and supplying

it ‘cut’ to the den-masters. Losing that trade hurt some, but they learned to live with it. As for girls, the Eastsiders had never run any girls there; the Chinese men were looking for Chinese women – they’d barely seen one since leaving China – and it was far too dangerous to get between the tongs and the Chinese girls – best to concentrate elsewhere.

His only regret was losing his weekly sparring match with Tchin Len – and seeing Bow Kum. Harry had to admit to himself that he was quietly in love with that particular porcelain beauty. He would never do anything about it, or let on, of course, but you can’t stop the heart from wanting what it wants.

The knives, the guns, and the fists and feet flew in Chinatown. Mostly, it was the whirling fury of the *tong* men wielding their silver axes that was becoming notorious. ‘Hatchetman’ was the word the papers coined and it stuck – soon, the good citizens of New York were seeing hatchetmen in every shadow. They’d forgotten all about the Black Hand, if they knew about them at all. One evil menace at a time.

Between the tongs, *On Leong* on Mott Street, *Hip Sing* on Pell Street, there was only one block – and the crazy, tiny connecting one-lane Doyers Street. The two twists on that little laneway became known as Bloody Angle. The papers said there were more murders at Bloody Angle than anywhere else in America.

For months, Harry managed to avoid it, until . . . one day . . .

CHAPTER TWELVE

February 9, 1906

It was a slow-motion nightmare of running in molasses or quicksand or mud of some kind. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't make headway against the midday traffic. A short twenty blocks but it might as well have been twenty miles.

A beer wagon had overturned on Bowery and taken others with it – dead horses, smashed hogsheads, and a thousand gallons of spilled beer blocked traffic in both directions.

Construction cut off the flow on Lafayette and everything was at a standstill on Broadway. He tried to turn back on East 8th and cut back to St. Marks Place to go down 3rd or 2nd Ave. but the traffic blockage on Bowery had now backed up to 3rd Ave. There was no getting through.

Twenty minutes before, he was polishing the Cad on a fine spring day, thinking that,

sometimes, it's nice just to be a normal guy. As the days got warmer, he was able to wash it every morning, so, by noon, he was polishing it with care, using a good floor wax to give it a shine.

"I sent for you, punk." Always a good way to start a conversation. Harry kept polishing.

"You don't get to send for me, Roxie," he said, rubbing hard at a tough spot. "I didn't come running 'cause I don't work for you. Ask Mister Zwerbach." There was no reply. "So, what do you want?"

And for once, Vanilli seemed content to leave it at that. "I want not to be sent to run after you." He seemed put out about that; Harry couldn't think why. "Your chink friend on Mott Street's looking for you. He sent a message, so Zwerbach told me to tell you. So, I'm telling you." And he stared at Harry after he said it. "So, you going to do something about it?"

"What? I'm going into Chinatown just because you tell me? Are you nuts? Or do you think I am? A little man told me, last time I went down to Mott Street, 'You don't come here no more', and him and his hatchet-wielding friends seemed to be very adamant about it. No, thanks. Go yourself." And he went back to polishing the car.

He was a little curious why Vanilli wasn't threatening and blustering. Usually, by this time, he would be spitting and cursing and threatening to cut off Harry's balls, which, while he hadn't had much use for them lately, Harry still would have objected to strenuously.

After another few seconds of quietly observing, Vanilli shrugged. "Yeah, okay. No skin off my teeth. Please yourself." And, he left.

Well, not quite. On the way out, he muttered something that Harry barely caught and had to piece together before he realized the import. Instantly, he was firing up the auto and slamming

the big coach-house doors back.

Vanilli had said "Your buddy says they've found her."

On Houston, he pushed east until he was past Bowery, then yanked the machine into the garbage lane behind the row of walk-ups on Forsyth. He'd follow that all the way down to Hester or maybe Canal Street, then go west again and try to get onto Mott.

That was a mistake. Very quickly, he saw that he had a choice of stopping every forty feet to drag piles of garbage and garbage cans aside or driving over them. After the first half dozen stops, he chose driving over them, which was bad for the vehicle and for the tempers of those who lived there. Too bad for both, he decided. He averaged maybe ten miles an hour, bashing aside old crates and boxes and squashing down garbage cans. Twice he went over old mattresses and, once, a three-wheeled baby carriage. He hoped it was unoccupied.

At Grand, he couldn't stand it, anymore, and pulled out of the laneway, heading west. It was only three blocks, Chrystie, Bowery and Elizabeth, over to Mott Street. Even if traffic was still snarled, he could make it quickly from there.

He forgot Grand Street was one way – east.

He used the hooter a hundred times in three blocks. While he could scare other autos and smaller carriages out of the way easily enough, big drays and heavy carts couldn't just disappear at will – there just wasn't room on the street for that.

That's where the sidewalk came in handy, and he scattered pedestrians – old and young alike, mamas with babies and patriarchs with canes – as he swerved in and out. He never (he hoped) endangered anyone's life, but it was amazing how spry an old codger with a cane could be when he put his mind to it. And he was shocked at the language bestowed on him by some of

the young mamas.

Chrystie was packed, Bowery was jammed, and Elizabeth was another wrong-way. Mott, when he finally reached it, was the least crowded and, cutting through traffic without being particular about which lane he used, he actually began to make some time.

It was four and a half short, long blocks down to where Tchin Len and Bow Kum had their hideaway and Harry realized later that the simple fact he (and everyone around him) had survived the trip was sort of miraculous.

When he pulled the Cad up to the curb at Number 18, the first thing he saw were twenty tongsters, most armed with long guns, standing openly on the street, backs to the restaurant, faces, and guns, out. The ones at the door knew his face and didn't question him when he went inside, but Tchin Len was nowhere to be found.

He searched Tchin's usual apartment, he searched the room where they exercised, he searched the various nooks and crannies where he might find him – or her.

Finally, one of the old men sitting on a bench in the corner of the lobby took pity on him. "Wo Hop", he said and pointed back up Mott Street.

"Wo Hop?" Harry asked and the man made motions of eating, then pointed back up the street.

"Sān jiāng yuán," Harry said. "Thank you," and remembered to bow.

The Wo Hop restaurant was just a half-block back. He legged it, rather than try to get the auto turned and back up the street. Everything in the dining room stopped as he opened the door and a dozen pairs of Asian eyes watched him suspiciously. He didn't blame them; they had good reason to be suspicious of round eyes kicking in their doors.

"Tchin Len," he said and eventually one of the men, noodles halfway to his lips, pointed upward with his *kuàizi* before finishing his bite. As Harry went past, the man said "Four floor."

It had to be the top floor, of course. He'd been up and down many stairs like it and the smells of humanity in close quarters were much the same. The only real difference was the cooking smells, which Harry had not yet learned to identify. As such, they were arresting to his nostrils – not necessarily bad, just intensely strange.

But babies' bottoms made the same smells no matter where you were from.

At the top, he knocked on the first door but got no answer. Whether anyone was home, he couldn't tell. It was at the third door that someone finally opened, a round Asian face with a not-too friendly look.

"Tchin Len," he said and the man tried to slam the door. Harry shoved it open, hard, and waited while the man cursed him in Cantonese. When he ran out of breath, Harry said, "Tchin Len. Where?", and this time the man simply shrugged and said, "End."

A bang on the end door. "Len, it's Tony." The door opened quickly and he was pulled inside; the door closed as quickly and a chair was shoved in front of it.

Bow Kum was huddled in a corner, her arms around her body, her knees pulled up to make as small a ball of herself as she could. Tchin Len looked like he hadn't slept in days, which he hadn't.

"They found her, Tony. I don't know how, but they found her." He was making sure the chair was shoved hard against the door.

"Who found her?"

"Low Hee. Four Brothers *Tong*. *Hip Sing Tong*. Your people – Black Hand."

Holy crap. *Hip Sing Tong*, he knew. Black Hand, he sure as hell knew. Four Brothers *Tong*?

"Someone in *Hip Sing Tong* found Bow Kum, sent a message to Four Brothers *tong* in San Francisco. Low He come and find Bow Kum and me here." Len was losing his command of English in his agitation. "*Hip Sing Tong* helped him out – and Black Hand worked it all out for them. And now he owes them and better pay up."

This was not going to end well. "How does he pay up?"

"With Bow Kum or with money she makes for him. Low Hee bought her from Four Brothers *Tong* in San Francisco. He says I have to pay him $3,000 or he'll take her from me – or kill her. Or kill me. Or . . ." And, here he looked at Harry. ". . . anyone who gets in the way."

A whimper from the corner reminded him of the presence of the girl – for she was nothing but a girl and she must be frightened to death, right now.

"What do you need me to do?"

Len looked desperately over to his wife, then back to Harry. "We have to sleep – we've been awake for days. Then, I need someone to watch Kum while *On Leong* look for Low Hee."

"And, if you find him?" Harry knew the answer.

"No one will ever know."

So, Harry put his back into a corner and watched the door and windows while the Tchins finally got some sleep. Len offered him a revolver, but Harry put it on a table – within reach but not in his hand. He'd had enough of revolvers and shotguns and rifles to last him a long time.

The first three hours were easy; he made some coffee; he had a sandwich. The next three were simply boring – there wasn't even an old magazine in the apartment; no wonder Bow Kum

wanted out. The last three were a fight to keep his eyes open, and he may have failed for a few minutes at a time, here and there.

At last, the bedroom door opened and he was wide awake in an instant, hand reaching for the revolver. Bow Kum made her timid way to the bathroom, while Harry stretched and pulled a window blind open a crack.

The street was mostly empty, just a few people moving about their business. Even the horses and carts had thinned out as the day began to stretch toward evening. Peaceful enough.

The crackle of gunfire broke the peace from around the corner. Or wait – gunfire? Maybe not.

More crackling explosions. What the hell?

Now drums, all kinds of drums, each pounding out their own rhythm. Now horns of some kind, squealing, shrilling, trilling.

What the hell was that!

That was a dragon – thirty feet long, jumping and shaking and – hell, it was paper and men were dancing under it.

The guns were fireworks; the dragon was some kind of puppet. The drums and horns were ... well, drums and horns.

The music, such as it was, got louder and the whole procession began to dance its way down Mott Street. What were these people celebrating?

As they came even with the door at the Wo Hop, four men darted out from under the dragon and ran to the front of the restaurant, carrying small packages.

“Len!” He dropped the edge of the blind and ran to bang on the bedroom door. “Len! Get

out here!"

Outside, the fireworks changed to real gunfire.

The bathroom door opened. Beside it, a thud shivered the front door. Bow Kum came out of the bathroom.

Then it all happened too fast to follow.

The building was shaken by a double pair of explosions that lit up the street and shattered the glass in the front window. Tchin Len stepped through the bedroom door, as the apartment door splintered and flew back hard against him. Len staggered backwards into the bedroom, his nose shattered by the front door. A massive tongster filled the doorway, saw Bow Kum as she turned toward the door with a shriek of alarm, and reached long strong fingers for her.

Harry got a hand on the tongster's wrist as he held Bow Kum's. Harry twisted; the man twisted back, then Harry leaned back as hard as he could to let one of the tongster's silver hatchets whish past his face. The blade caught the seam at his shoulder and ripped his coat.

Harry got his other hand on the man's wrist, his back to the tongster and pulled hard on a middle finger. It cracked and the man let go of Bow Kum, to bring the pommel of the hatchet, sharpened to a wicked point, down onto Harry's chest from behind. It went through top coat and suit coat, but stopped only a half-inch or so into flesh.

It was Harry's turn to yell as the point went in, but he kept hold of Bow Kum and twisted, throwing her across his body and into the room. Then he freed an elbow and cracked backward into the man's jaw, making him stumble back toward the door then, as Harry began to close the distance, pivot on his left heel and bring the sole of his right foot up into Harry's face.

Harry's vision went from foot to red to white to black.

The blackness began to clear with a rush of noise and blur of light. How long? He found he was on his back on the floor. The ceiling was above him, the broken front door was beyond his feet and, between him and the door, Tchin Len, his face a mass of blood, was holding Bow Kum to his heart. Her chest and throat were blood; her hand, trailing onto the floor, ended at knuckles.

She was beyond help. And, whoever the tongster was, he had mutilated her and cut off her fingers. Why? For god's sake, why? The man had to die.

"Where is he?" Tchin looked at Harry, then to the ceiling. "Up?" Tchin nodded once and slumped over the body of his wife. He had the tongster's silver hatchet buried in his back.

Harry splashed cold water on his head, which was whirling and juddering like the Cadillac trying to start in winter. He touched Tchin on the shoulder, took a revolver from the dead man's hand as he passed, then headed for the stairway. The door to the roof was locked or blocked, but Harry didn't care. He kicked at it until it grudgingly opened.

Outside, the last of the summer sun lit the rooftops across the city. Wo Hop restaurant was five storeys, a half-storey taller than its neighbor to the north, a half-storey shorter than to the south. To the south, down toward Mosco Street, there were only two buildings but a half-dozen or more to the north and Pell Street, where he'd find the *Hip Sing Tong*, and probably the Four Brothers *Tong*. He didn't want to meet any of them. He wanted the bastard who'd kicked in the door of Tchin's apartment.

And, there he went, his head just disappearing from the top of the building to the south. Half a storey; shouldn't be hard at all. That bastard had just done it.

A leap for the fifth storey window, toes kicking in the glass, fingers gripping the top of

the window frame. Kick in the glass of the upper pane and trust that the sash would hold. Push up, gripping the bricks until he could stretch up and grasp the top of the cornice. Trust your fingers – it's not nearly as far down as the east summit of the Chilkoot Pass. On tip toes; one foot up onto the top of the window frame. Ignore the Chinese person screaming at him. Kick him in the face when he won't let go of his other foot. Stretch and pull and he was up onto the top of the next building.

The bastard had a rope ladder that he'd pulled up behind him – that's how he'd done it. Harry stood up, then ducked immediately as the bastard, on top of the next building, fired once and the bullet sliced the back of Harry's coat. That was two more holes in it – he'd have to replace it, one day.

The bastard was running again, but the next building wasn't as high, so Harry made it in one impressive leap and a bunch of desperate scrambles. He was on his feet again in time to see the man jump off the roof, six storeys up now, onto Mosco Street.

That stunned Harry for a moment. It was a good trick but he decided if that bastard could do it, he could.

At the edge of the building, he leaped over the edge – to hit eight feet down on the top landing of the fire escape. The bastard was dropping off the bottom of the ladder onto the sidewalk. Harry began to take the stairs three at a time to the bottom. Dropping off the final ladder from a greater than advisable height, he hit the ground running, ignoring the shooting pain in his knees from heels meeting concrete.

The man was two buildings up on the other side of Mott Street**,** just reaching up to pull down another fire escape ladder. Harry pounded as hard as he could, ignoring traffic, catching the

bottom of the ladder as the guy was trying to pull it up. The bastard gave up at that moment, pulled out his revolver and fired down once more, the bullet ricocheting off a rung, then began to climb the stairs. Harry followed hard, beginning to breath as hard as he was running.

At the top, he was, once again, just in time to see the man disappear, this time down the inside stairs into the heart of whatever building they were on. Harry thought it was a restaurant (another one!) and the smells of cooking began to confirm that. At the bottom, he banged open a door into a storeroom of sorts, suddenly pummeled on all sides. He tried to defend himself and pulled back sticky hands and fingers. As the assault continued, he threw his arms over his head before he could focus on what was in the room.

He was being attacked by dozens of orange-glazed ducks, hanging from hooks. It was disgusting and he pushed his way through to the kitchen proper, where the man was still shoving his way through.

None of the staff paid his target any attention, just moving aside as the man ran. Harry was a different story and was soon pelted with food of all kinds. A cook picked up a cauldron of soup with lethal intent, so Harry threw a convenient duck at him, knocking him backward, but when another lifted a large cleaver and advanced, Harry decided that was enough.

He pulled Tchin Len's revolver, glad he'd been smart enough to pick it up on his way out of the apartment, and leveled it at the cleaver man. "You want to play? Let's play!" and the cleaver hit the floor, as his quarry disappeared through a trap door on the far side.

"Just back off! I'm leaving!" Harry shouted, doubtful that anyone understood, but it let him get to the trap door and make his way down into some of the darkest depths he'd been in for a long time.

He was, frankly, pooped. His breathing was ragged, his knees ached, his head pounded and his vision swam. Even if he caught the guy, he wasn't sure he could beat him – he'd been thoroughly flattened back in the apartment and his head pounded like he'd been mule-kicked.

And, where the hell were they going? He could hear footsteps ahead of him that sounded much more confident than his. They must have passed the basement walls of the duck restaurant, so how far did this tunnel go? He kept one hand out in front of him to catch any low hanging beams, the other on one wall to follow the twists and turns, and the two continued their subterranean pursuit in near silence. It was eery; it was baffling; it was frightening.

At last, he began to hear rumbles and clumps from overhead. They were under a street! Was this a tunnel that ran all the way out of the neighborhood? An escape tunnel – built by the tongs perhaps? As he thought that, he saw a blink of light and the shadow of a man's back, maybe a hundred yards ahead.

When he got there, he ran into a door – literally, ran into a door. Scrabbling for a handle, he yanked on it and light spilled into his dark little tunnel. Up the subway steps onto the sidewalk, he blinked in the light and realized he'd come two blocks underground and was standing on Chatham Square.

The bastard, who seemed to have thought he'd escaped Harry, looked at him with surprise from ten feet away. They leveled their weapons at the same time, fired at the same time and missed at the same time. Harry saw his bullet hit a post on the other side of Chatham Square, then the man ran straight out into traffic. A furniture cart and the feet of a Clydesdale put an end to the chase – a bloody, screaming end that Harry couldn't have planned if he had tried.

And that was the beginning and end of little Bow Kum, from the streets of Kowloon to

the tong dens of San Francisco to a moment of happiness in New York's Chinatown. And of Tchin Len, who did all he could for her. And of how Harry wished he could have done more but, in the end, could do nothing but exact a tiny sliver of revenge.

Still, life went on. The days grew shorter, the nights grew longer, the streets of New York grew ever more deadly. *Tong* fought *tong*; gang fought gang; cops mostly – and wisely – looked the other way. And, Harry sank into the midst of it all, day in, day out, month in, month out, and finally, year after year. He grew older, but he wondered if he was growing wiser.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

March 25, 1906

The nightstick was banging on the door of the auto, probably chipping the paint. “Hey! Knock it off! It ain’t my machine. You want to get my boss pissed at us both?”

“You can’t park here, bub.” An Irishman, of course.

“Yes, I can. Your boss says I can.” He hadn’t opened his eyes, yet.

“My boss is the police commissioner. He’s the one that put that No Parking sign there.”

“Oh, sorry. His boss, then.”

“And who is his boss?”

“Your boss’s boss is the guy my boss is meeting. They’re having a bosses meeting. So, my boss is meeting your boss’s boss, who’s going to boss your boss to come down here and boss you for trying to boss me. And your boss’s not going to be happy. Probably better if you don’t try

to boss me, hoss." That should make it clear.

"Just move this thing." And, he began tapping on the paint again.

Harry grabbed the end of the baton. "Look, please don't tap the paintwork. It was practically impossible to match that color. I worked on it for weeks." Harry had restored the battered Cadillac to shiny new condition – almost.

"You know something, you smart-mouth punk? I was just going to ticket you, but I think I'll run you in – for being a smart-mouth punk."

"Annoying as smart-mouth punks are, officer, it's not illegal to be one." Harry had opened his eyes, by now. "On the other hand, you're being a real ..." He broke off. "There you go. In the nick of time. Do you see the guy on the left, coming out the door? That's my boss. The guy on the right is your boss's boss – the one all the payoff money comes from. You'd miss that every week, wouldn't you? Or your wife would. Or are you the only honest cop on the East Side?" Harry saw the look in the cop's eye. "Didn't think so. 'Bye, officer. Have a good day."

After a short argument, the two men who'd come out of the building went back in, leaving Harry without even the company of the good flat-foot. He watched the building, instead.

Tammany Hall is a beautiful building. Classic lines, strong symmetry. It made you think solidity and history. That it was the home of a political party and that his criminal boss was inside talking to someone there was only disturbing if you thought deeply about it. Or at all.

Harry was determined not too think deeply. It was easy to just sit and listen to the Cadillac's V6 rumble at idle. As long as the boss was in a meeting with his boss, Harry had nothing to do. He wondered where Anna was, thought about looking her up, decided it was better for her to be as far away from him as possible.

He snuggled down a little more and pulled his collar over his ears. The car had an enclosed rear cabin but, damn, it got cold in the open front seat. Still, he nearly fell asleep. And didn't quite miss Zwerbach and his guest coming out of the building again.

Harry hopped out to help Max Zwerbach into his auto. To his surprise, the other man climbed in, too. There was no mistaking that profile. It was Tammany Boss 'Big Tim' Sullivan, himself. He was riding with the big bosses, today.

"Where we going, boss?" he asked, settling behind the wheel, but it was Sullivan who leaned forward.

"City Hall."

That caught Harry off-guard. "Sure thing. City Hall, it is."

These guys don't even care who they're seen with anymore. There was a time when it was all under the table, nobody the wiser; now, it's like they were daring somebody to speak up.

The trip down Bowery to Park Row was as unexciting as you could hope for. Passing all the newspaper skyscrapers, Harry was thinking of the irony: every one of those papers would give big money to know that 'Kid Twist' Zwerbach and 'Big Tim' Sullivan were calmly driving up to City Hall, there, no doubt, to pay jay-walking fines – or maybe to meet with the mayor. Harry had his money on the latter.

Zwerbach tapped him on the shoulder. "Tony, go ronna."

Go ronna? Ronna? Go ronna back! "Okay, boss. Go round the back."

That was easier said than done, as the pathways through City Hall Park were meant for horse traffic, not autos as big as the Cadillac, but eventually he pulled up to the back of the impressive building. Heck, even the back was impressive.

"We meeting someone, boss?"

That was ignored, but they weren't there to pick up the garbage. It was five minutes, sitting idling in the chill air, before someone came out a small door behind the garbage bins. Harry gasped in shock because ... well, because it wasn't the mayor.

All three men climbed in, Sullivan growled "Circle the park", then he slammed the glass partition shut and an argument began.

The glass was thick; the engine and transmission were loud; the traffic was louder. The highlights of the argument coming through were muffled and dulled. What Sullivan didn't realize was that the Cadillac had a speaking tube running between the compartments, and Harry could open it from the front.

"Non faccio quel genere di cose!" That was Zwerbach. He was mad about something.

Sullivan yelled, "Talk English, for god's sake!"

"Io parlo inglese. Tu parli americano."

"Have you got your boys out threatening people?" That was the man from the City Hall.

"Che cosa 'threatening people'?" The boss was much better at English than he was two years ago, but still couldn't carry on much of a conversation.

"This! This is what threatening people means!" And the City Hall man pushed a page toward Zwerbach's face, who pushed it aside.

"Non so cosa significhi!"

"Well, read it!"

"I no read-a *inglese*."

"Well, I no speak-a wop." Sullivan really needed to watch his mouth; Mr. Zwerbach was

heavily armed.

Harry suddenly pulled the auto to the curb and slid the glass panel back. *"Ehi, capo, posso aiutarti?"* There was obviously *something* the matter.

The other two looked surprised at Harry's brazen interference, but Zwerbach grabbed the paper and passed it to him. Harry spread it flat and held it up for some light.

"This is the second time I've warned you. *È la ... seconda volta che ti ... avverto.* Sunday, at ten o'clock in the morning, uhm, *Domenica, alle ... dieci del mattino*, take three thousand dollars without fail – *portare ... tremili dollare* – on the corner of Second Street and Third Avenue – *all'angolo tra la Seconda Strada e la terza* ... uhm, uhm ... avenue."

Zwerbach nodded his head. *"Si, si. Tremili dollare, la Seconda Strada e* Third Ave."

Harry held up a hand. *"C'è di più, capo."* He found the next phrase. "Otherwise, we will burn you ... uhm ... *In caso contrario, vi ... bruceremo* – and detonate you with a bomb – who the hell are these people? – *e farti* ... uhm, explode?" And Zwerbach nodded and said, *"Esplodare"*, then Harry continued, "... *con una bomba.* This is the last warning. I sign the Black Hand. *Questo è l'ultimo ... avvertimento. Firmo la Mano Nera.*" And there was a penciled picture of a hand with a dagger through it. Harry's hands shook as he passed it to Zwerbach.

He'd been sent to find the Black Hand and, suddenly, it's in front of his face.

The man from the City Hall leaned in. "That came to the Mayor's office this morning. It's the third one like it. Each one worse than the ones before."

"Why didn't you go to the police?" Harry asked.

"Because the police are in the gang's pockets ... who the hell are you?" the City Hall man suddenly demanded of Harry.

"I'm the guy who can translate what you're talking about to the guy who has to do something about it." He turned to Zwerbach. *"Crede che la polizia ... sia stata ... pagata."*

"Pagato da chi?" If Zwerbach didn't know who paid off the police, who did?

Harry looked at the City Hall man, who may or may not have been sincere in his protestations, then at 'Big Tim' Sullivan, who had bought half a county upstate with the money he got from the Eastsiders (and the Five Pointers and the tongs) and, finally, at Zwerbach, who expected his politicians to stay bought when he bought them, and spread his hands wide.

"Paid off by you, boss."

Zwerbach went from shocked to angry to amused in the space of three seconds. He laughed until he cried and finally stopped, wiping tears.

"Tony, you tell-a ... you-a say ..."

Harry turned to the City Hall man. "Hey, numb-nuts! Why the hell do you think you have a job? Because the Mayor's good at what he does? No! It's because people worked really hard to get the vote to come out right. People who work for Mr. Zwerbach. People like me. Those people deserve respect. Right, Mr. Sullivan?"

"Sure." Like the guy had any real respect for Zwerbach or any of them.

The City Hall man turned to the Tammany Hall man. "Are you going to let him talk to me like that?"

"Yep." And he sat back and crossed his arms.

Conversation came to an uncomfortable halt until, finally, Harry broke the silence. "What do you want Mr. Zwerbach to do about it? Better yet, what do you *think* he can do about it?"

The man snatched the paper from Zwerbach and held it up, shaking it. "I want him to talk

to his Italian friends and put a stop to this! I *think* he's the one who's in charge of it. Who the hell are these people to threaten the Mayor of New York?"

"Chi sono queste persone?" Zwerbach spoke calmly. "Who do they-a think they are? *Quando Roma era giovane, queste persone avevano rispetto."* Zwerbach's index finger made his points for him.

Harry translated. "Who are these people? When Rome was ... little ... young?, these people were given respect."

"Quando il Papa ha chiesto le crociate, avevano rispetto."

"When the Pope *ha chiesto* – uhm – wanted – *le crociate, capo?"*

"Crusade-a," Zwerbach supplied.

"When the Pope wanted the Crusades, they were respected."

"Ora, gli darai rispetto."

"Now, *you* give them respect." And he took the extortion note from the man's hand to read it over. "Boss, he says 'East Second Street and Third Avenue. At Second Street, Third Avenue is Bowery." Harry paused to translate that as best he could for Zwerbach, then made his point. "They're trying to do this in your territory, boss. *Lo sta facendo nel ... tuo territorio.*"

Zwerbach snatched the note and tried to read it. *"Mio territorio? Sulla Bowery?"*

"Si, capo. Tuo territorio." *That* was disrespect.

"Tony, take-a these men back." Zwerbach gestured to the two men. "You and-a me, we got-a work to do." If there was one thing Zwerbach demanded, it was respect.

Sunday, 9:45 a.m., the corner of East Second and Bowery. He was on foot, which he hated, and he was armed with a revolver, which he disliked. So far, he'd gotten away with not

needing a gun, but Zwerbach had insisted – today, he wasn't dealing with any ordinary, run-of-the-neighborhood hood punk. These people meant business, and had learned that business in the old country, where the business was two thousand years old.

So, here he was, on the edge of the Bowery, with Little Italy and the Five Pointers just two blocks away and no one to back him up. He touched the cold steel in his right pocket and decided that six bullets probably wouldn't make enough difference to get him out of trouble if things went wrong. Now, if he had a Maxim gun, that'd be a different story. He'd seen the Mounties firing one in practice up in Dawson; they were impressive. Hard to fit in a pocket, though. Unlike what was in his left pocket: brass knuckles he'd picked up from another hood who had two sets.

While he was thinking these thoughts, he was watching all the passing faces. It was Sunday, of course, so there weren't as many as there would have been any other day, but it was still a substantial number of faces going by. The note had been vague: bring money to this corner at this time, but it didn't say what happened after that. Was he going to meet people? Was he supposed to drop the money somewhere hidden? Was he supposed to stand on one leg, hold the money over his head and sing? For a group that's been in the business for two millennia, they seemed a little slipshod with details.

Zwerbach had been clear: these people were intruding on Eastside territory. They were to be discouraged from doing so. Discouragement can take many forms from a stern look to blowing someone's head off in the middle of the Bowery on a sunny Sunday morning. The moment would decide the action and Harry adjusted the gun again. He had to stop doing that or whoever was watching would twig that he was armed.

As if they would assume he wasn't.

There was a very Greek-looking building, five storeys high, on the northwest angle of the corner, a brownstone with a (surprise) Italian restaurant on the northeast, nondescript apartments on the south angles. He might have stopped into the restaurant if it weren't Sunday and everybody was at Mass. Instead, he'd stand on the corner until somebody took notice of him.

Somebody did. A bloody great cop. He stood back on the southwest corner and watched Harry for five minutes. Harry watched him for just a few seconds less, then the flatfoot crossed in front of traffic to confront this obviously dangerous malefactor.

"Are you lost, then, son?" Even the New York cops who weren't Irish sounded Irish.

"Nope, just waiting." He could be taciturn, he could be friendly; it made no difference. When they cross the corner to single you out, they intend that there'll be trouble.

"Ah, I see. Just waiting on your best girl and then the two of you will be off to church, is that it?" Oh, a cop with a sense of humor.

"Something like that. Good morning, officer." And, he tried to walk away, but that wasn't going to happen.

"Now, I've been watching you here for ten minutes and you're not waiting for a young lady. You're after trouble, you are."

Harry tried to add up how serious this was going to get. "Well, no. You've been watching me for five minutes because I saw you come down Bond to the corner over there. And that doesn't mean I'm looking for trouble."

Trouble: carrying a concealed firearm – four years under the Sullivan Act. Carrying the proceeds of crime (the three thousand bucks in his breast pocket which wasn't gotten from

selling ice cream) – three to five years, depending on the judge. Carrying the brass knuckles in his other pocket – another three, maybe. Actually using those brass knucks on this cop – ten to fifteen. So, being generous, twenty-seven years, maybe, all for just standing on a corner on a Sunday morning.

"No need for trouble, officer. I think my person isn't going to show up, after all, so I'll be on my way home to get ready for church." Again, he started to walk away, but this time the cop grabbed his arm.

"No, I think I'd better run you across to the precinct to have a look at you."

"5th Precinct?"

"Of course."

"Good! Maybe we can say hello to Lieutenant Petrosino while you're there. I was just talking to him a couple of days ago – which is why I'm standing here, now."

Harry had to admit, for a beat cop, the guy was dumb as a post.

"What are you saying? Lieutenant Petrosino only deals with the worst kind of punk off the streets. So, that makes you the worst kind of punk off the streets. Let's go." And, he grabbed Harry's arm, again.

Without laying a hand – or a knee or an elbow or a foot – on the cop, Harry was suddenly standing six feet on the other side of him, while the cop looked with surprise at his empty hands.

"So, I'm just standing here waiting for somebody, officer. No need for this."

And, the cop started reaching for his revolver. Harry could run like hell and he might not get hit with the bullets, or he could wallop the cop with his brass knuckles. Harry put his left hand into his coat pocket when a small, gloved right hand slid into the crook of his elbow.

"There you are, Tony! I thought we were meeting a block over. Did you miss me, hon? Hi, officer!"

"Anna!" What the hell?

"That's my name! Come on, Tony, we'll be late for church." And she dragged him away from the sputtering, confused and helpless arm of the law.

Pulling him up Bowery, she crossed over to the west side and around the corner onto East Fourth before she dropped his arm and stopped.

"What the hell was that, Tony? Were you really going to put that cop down or were you going to let him arrest you?"

He laughed. "I hadn't really decided." He stuck his head back around the corner, but the cop had continued on his patrol. "Anna, I love seeing you, but you've got to get out of here, real fast. There's things happening here ..."

"... that you don't know about." She looked around the corner. "I have to get back there."

"Why?" He stopped in shock. "Anna, are you working that corner?"

"Am I what?" He'd never seen her so angry so quickly. "You think I'd work the streets?"

"Sorry, hon. I've got to go." He kissed her quickly and started to leave.

"Tony, no! You stay here. I've got to go. Don't get into trouble." She started to walk around the corner.

"Anna! Don't!" He caught her hand. "Look, hon, there's things going to happen down there. And people could get hurt. So just stay ..." They looked at each other in shock.

"You?" they both said at practically the same time, then they both nodded.

"Really, Tony? How is it you?" She was holding on to him, by now.

"How is it me? How is it you? I thought I got you away from it." He was holding her.

"Oh, Tony, baby, it's not that easy." She pulled back and held out her hand. "Hand it over; quick before they come looking."

"Before they come looking? Are they watching, now?"

"Yes, of course. Come on, Tony. They'll shoot you before they talk. Three thousand."

So, he handed over three thousand bucks in extortion money to his ex-girlfriend, who was now working as a pickup girl – and maybe other kinds of girl – for the Black Hand.

Life's funny, isn't it?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

March 26, 1906

The things he had to report and the people he had to report them to.

To Mr. Zwerbach, he had to report nothing. That is, nothing but abject failure. Empty pockets and nothing else. “They sent a girl, boss. Just a girl from one of their stables. I watched her go down Bowery until she turned off on Houston and nobody came out to meet her. When I got to Houston, she was gone. They maybe had somebody to meet her or maybe she went into a building. I don’t know.”

“So, you lose the boss three grand!” Vach Lewis shouted.

“Sorry, boss. I didn’t know what else to do. I was supposed to hand it over to the person they sent to meet me; she was the person they sent to meet me.”

“You owe the boss three grand, Bonfuzzi!” Lewis wasn’t finished yelling but Zwerbach

held up a hand.

"Va bene, Tony. Hai fatto un buon lavoro."

"Grazie, Signore." If that meant what he thought it, Zwerbach wasn't displeased, much.

Lewis dismissed him with a wave of a hand – a little too imperious for Harry's liking – and he went back to the coach house and sat in the Cadillac for a while. It helped him to think. He'd gotten very fond of that machine, after all they had been through together. Although she had seen better days, she was still a game girl: powerful, nimble, more than willing to try anything he asked her to do. And, yes, he knew that was crazy talk.

So, he didn't talk to her when anyone was around to hear it.

What he talked to her about now was another lady. He had to get Anna out. However the circumstances of her getting in, Harry knew the chances of her surviving more than a year or two were slim. He'd seen what happens. The chances of getting her out diminished with each day that passed and who knows how long she'd been pulled in by now.

But, he didn't even know how to find her, just like he didn't know how to find the people behind the extortion threats he was supposed to deal with – which brought him to the next step.

The step in question was the front step to the 5th Precinct building. He used the front step because he'd gotten very good and very cagey about slipping away from anyone who might be following him. Trains and trams in different directions; suddenly getting off one, only to get back on as it pulled away. Going uptown, then crossing the street and heading straight back downtown. Circling a block four times before heading to his destination. Stuff like that.

The 5th Precinct building was shut down more than ever, with two uniformed cops standing guard at the front door. "Where you going?" challenged the one on the right, while the

one on the left had his hand at his hip.

"Going to see Petrosino." And, as the cops started to stiffen up, "And, I've been through all this before. So tell the desk sergeant to send Petrosino's goons out here to beat me up, then we can get on with them dragging me upstairs and me filling him in on what the Black Hand has been doing under his nose, because I'm sure nobody in this precinct house has the faintest idea."

The guy on the left opened the door and shouted, "Sarge! Come on out here!" and in a half-minute or so, the desk sergeant appeared, took one look at Harry and swore.

"Okay, come on in. Let's not keep the door open. Who knows what might get in?" Harry saw damage to the lobby that hinted at what might get in – something small and explosive.

To the back of the building and up the stairs, past the guards placed there to stop riff-raff like him and bombers like whoever-it-was from getting past. They didn't even feel that he needed roughing up this time. Finally, to the seventh floor and into the office of Petrosino and the Italian Squad.

"Now, what?" Petrosino offered, as an opener. The man seemed to be in a perpetual state of pique.

"I didn't have to come in, you know. I can go back to my digs and put my feet up." For some reason, Petrosino always put Harry into similar state of pique. An interesting psychological conundrum. Psychological – that was a word he'd read in a book at the library. Good word.

The lieutenant picked up a file – he always seemed to have somebody's file handy – and looked at Harry. "And, we could look into the story of the man seen driving away from Mott and Pell streets after the fight between the *Hip Sing* and the *On Leong*. I was told you started it. How long do you think that'll put you in for?"

"Boy, you have this idea that I do nothing but run around starting trouble, don't you?"

"Maybe not, but you're always nearby when trouble does start. A trouble magnet, you are."

"That's what Inspector Steele of the North West Mounted Police called me. I was ten at the time."

"Perspicacious man, isn't he? What were you doing where he was in charge?"

"Digging for gold, shooting bears and wolves, killing a few men – but I was only ten, remember. Just getting started."

"I see. Boys will be boys. How did you miss the noose up there?"

"I didn't do anything wrong. I defended myself – just like I'm doing right now."

Petrosino picked up a pencil. "Why did the *tong* shootout happen? Five dead there, by the way."

"Mock Duck and the *Hip Sing* were sending a warning to Zwerbach and the Eastsiders to stay out of Chinatown. They thought they could make the *On Leong* take the fall for it. Actually, they probably thought they could take out the whole *tong*. Instead, they nearly lost Mock Duck." Why does the honest truth sound like bullshit?

"And, why were you there?"

"It was my weekly dancing lesson with Tchin Len."

"And, why are you here, now?"

Harry laid the extortion threat, which had somehow gone into Harry's pocket, in front of the small man, who read it slowly, the blood draining from his face as he went.

"Who was this sent to?" he wanted to know.

"The Mayor – or at least the Mayor's office."

And the man went off, demanding to know why he wasn't informed; why the police force wasn't informed; why the police commissioner wasn't informed; what City Hall thought they paid the police for, anyway? To all of which, Harry could only answer, 'I don't know.' When, at length, the policeman calmed down, he pulled a thick file populated with random sheets of paper, all decorated with various hand-drawn pictures of knives, bombs, skeletons, guns – and hands. Black hands.

Harry leafed through the file and saw that they were all extortion demands, from five hundred dollars up to many thousands of dollars. All were in poorly constructed English, with spelling as haphazard as the grammar. All threatened grievous harm and death if the demands were not met.

"What else do you see about them? What do they have in common?"

It didn't take a lot of searching. "They're all demanding money from Italians. Is this limited to Little Italy?"

"Pretty much. A few places outside but mostly Italians and Italian businesses. And, it works because these people are connected to the old country, where the families of the victims still live, where some savage revenge can be taken for failure to pay. But, now ..."

"Now, suddenly, it's the Mayor," Harry finished for him. "– who's not Italian and not an immigrant. And, now, the City is going to start to take notice of such things."

Petrosino scoffed. "Bit of an immigrant yourself, aren't you? Not quite an impartial judge of these matters."

Harry told him about the attempt to pay off the demand, leaving out Anna's part in it.

That set off another rant from Petrosino.

"Idiots! Bloody, stupid, Italian idiots! Don't they know paying them off only eggs them on? The first payment will satisfy them for a few months, then there'll be another demand, and then another! You don't get rid of these people by paying them off. After the straight up extortions stop, then it's threats of kidnaping, of mutilation – even murder." Petrosini extracted a set of papers. "Here, read this. It's a letter to the New York Times from a man named Spinelli – published last week."

It was a newspaper clipping, labeled 'NYT' and a date. Harry read: "I came here eighteen years ago and went to work as a house painter, like my father. I started a family and I have been an American citizen for thirteen years. I had a house and another one which I rented out. The 'Black Hand' asked me for seven thousand dollars. When I couldn't pay, the bandits tried to blow up my house. I asked the police for help and they could do nothing. The 'Black Hand' set off one, two, three, four, five bombs in my houses. Things went to pieces. I cannot pay. I am a ruined man. My family have not left the house for weeks. How long can this go on?"

Harry shook his head. How do you fight something you can't see? Petrosino held out another set of sheets.

"You know the Pati Bank on Elizabeth Street, south of Houston? No? Well, a half million in assets; he receives a threat; he ignores it. His windows get shot out. In three weeks, he loses four-fifths of his assets. He refuses to pay; three men break into the bank to rob it; Pati kills one. They burn down his home. He goes into hiding and hasn't been seen since. Either he's very good at hiding or he's been murdered."

That didn't surprise Harry, at all. "That's terrible."

"What if they do that to the Mayor's office?"

Harry saw the point. It might put a serious damper on selling municipal bonds – and on collecting taxes. He got to his feet.

"Well, you've got a real problem ahead of you, lieutenant. Good luck."

"Not so fast." He knew that wouldn't work. He sat, again.

Petrosino put the file folder away, carefully. "You're the one who's been closest to them. We're going to put you in harm's way again, so you can find out who we're dealing with. Is it really some new faction in town – or are Zwerbach or Kelly or any of the others in it, too? Together, maybe."

"Zwerbach and Kelly work together? They'd as soon slit each other's throats."

"Who's in charge, Bonfuzzi? That's what I need to know."

"And I find that out for you?" Petrosino nodded. Harry thought for a minute. "It's likely to be new immigrants, you know. The old gangs are already established, fighting for a block here or a block there." He thought for a bit. "Yeah, if you want to find the leadership of this, look among the new immigrants."

Petrosino just laughed. "In the last twenty years, a million Italians have come to New York city. As of last year, New York city has more Italians than any city in the world, Rome included . Where would I start? No, it has to come from the street; it's got to come from you. I'll let you know whenever we receive word of a new threat. You chase it from your end."

Oh, damn, this guy was good. He still hesitated. "There's a girl I need you to look after. She's got mixed up in it, but she's all right."

"Anna Walsh."

"If you know that, you know enough to move in ..."

"We've been keeping track of her because she's linked to your file. Roxie Vanilli got his hands on her and recruited her into one of his strings. That never ends well."

Harry fought the urge to bolt out the door and tear the Bowery apart until he found Vanilli. "How did she end up as pickup girl for the Black Hand, if Roxie Vanilli's got her? You're not talking straight." Harry knew how firmly Vanilli kept his hand on the girls.

"That's what we want you to answer."

"'Cause I've got nothing else to do."

"How tight is Vanilli to the Black Hand?"

"Vanilli's the worst of the worst. He'd stab his mother in the back for a sawbuck. He castrates people for fun. You've got to track Anna down and get her away from him."

"You know, Tony, sometimes you can't trust everybody you want to trust." Petrosino could get very smug when he tried.

"I'm finding that out. I'm not an idiot. I can trust her. What are you going to do about her?"

"We're a police force, Bonfuzzi. Our job is to protect law-abiding citizens, not criminals, hoodlums and little tramps off the streets."

This time, Harry did leave and nobody tried to stop him.

His next job was down in Little Italy.

He was trying to work something out in his head and he knew the answer, but didn't want to let it percolate to the top.

Anna had been sent to meet him by, well, not the Black Hand, but somebody in it. She as

much as admitted she'd been recruited as a street girl. Petrosino said Anna had been pulled into one of Vanilli's strings. How do those three facts fit together? He'd think about that later, he told himself, as he turned off Bowery and the New Brighton Athletic Club came into view. He'd never been there at night before and it was a hive of activity, lit up and noisy.

The ticket price was two dollars! He'd never heard of such a thing in his life. The usual cover charge for something like that was, perhaps, fifty cents. Two bucks? What was being offered in there? He kind of knew.

Once past the bar, the inner room featured a ring and crowd seating. He'd just missed a match, it seems, because the crowd were heading to bar and someone was mopping blood off the canvas. Must have been a good fight, he thought. He wondered where they would be burying the loser – and he realized that was only partially a joke. Meanwhile, music was making its way down the staircase from the second floor, so he thought he'd wander up. There'd probably be less blood up there.

The lights were low, the music was wild. The people on the dance floor were strutting to a cakewalk and he'd not seen anything like it since he left Dawson. The five-piece band were ripping up the ragtime faster and freer than anything he'd heard outside of New York. Harry was surprised to see a white guy on the drums; he didn't think whites understood that kind of music.

There was another bar up here, so he got himself a beer and slid through the crowd, not knowing what he was looking for. For every young woman in the hall, there were three men, most of them not that young. There were even some older women along with the men; he wasn't sure how that worked. Did the women wait at a table while the men picked out a girl and took her in the back, or was it a joint decision?

"You dancing, honey?" The voice at his elbow belonged to a redhead who thought she was sultry, but only ended up being brassy.

"No, thanks. You seen Anna around, tonight?"

"Don't know any Anna."

He talked to a couple of other dancers and got the same reaction. She was too new to be known or she wasn't part of the dance hall crowd. Or nobody was talking.

The beer was damn near flat when he got it and soon got warm in the heated air of the dance hall. From below, he could hear cheers and shouting even over the sound of the ragtime band, so there must be another bout happening. It wasn't likely Anna would be down there.

It was less likely he'd see anyone wandering around with a 'Kick me. I'm in the Black Hand' sign on their back. So, why was Harry here?

Call it a hunch.

For one thing, Kelly expected Harry to update him on the goings on with the Eastsiders, which Harry did, whenever it didn't seem that trouble would result, so he might as well do that while he was here – provided Kelly was here. A couple of times, he'd even managed to avoid trouble by suggesting the Five Pointers simply not be there when the Eastsiders arrived.

Every once in a while, a lady and a gentleman would go through one of the side doors, which Harry assumed led to privacy. There had to be some way to go up to the third floor from here, but it took him quite a while to find it. The level in his beer glass was getting low, not from consumption, but from being bumped and splashed by increasingly drunken denizens of the dance floor.

Behind a curtain in a far corner, the sought-for staircase led upward. No one was around;

no one was watching; he stepped his way toward the heavens – or whatever was up there.

At the top, so far as he could see, there was ... nothing. At least, not in the hallway and not in the first three doors he opened. If the first floor was the boxing ring and bar, and the second floor was the dance hall and its bar, the third must be ... something! Offices, living quarters, treasure rooms ... he opened the fourth door ...

... explosives magazine.

He looked again. Behind that simple opening lay a small arsenal. Say, enough to blow up several buildings the size of the one he was in. Or, maybe, the one he was in several times.

Perhaps two hundred pounds of black powder, along with fuses, small heavy boxes for putting the black powder and fuses into – everything you'd need to, say, blow in the front of a bank or blow up somebody's house. Blow it up when there's no one in it, of course, because otherwise that would be against the law and we don't want to risk that, do we?

What the hell are the Five Pointers doing with explosives? What the hell are they doing with explosives in a dance hall? What the hell was he doing standing and staring at it, instead of running away as fast as his feet could carry him. It really was an unhealthy place to tarry. A single unguarded spark could spell sudden disaster. He was glad he'd promised his mother that he'd never smoke – more so that he'd kept that promise.

He closed the door carefully, just in case, and continued down the hall. Two more doors, two more rooms with nothing in them. He laid a hand on another and was about to open it, when it was pulled open from the inside.

Paul Kelly was holding the doorknob. Beyond him were two men Harry didn't know; one an older, greying man; the other young, muscle-bound and half-again the size of Kelly or the

other man.

"You!" Kelly shouted in surprise. "What the hell are you doing here?"

Harry looked from the young bruiser to the older man to Kelly.

"Looking for you, boss!"

He didn't reach up to feel his nose but he was sure it grew two sizes at that moment.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

March 27, 1906

Never open a door in a notorious gangland criminal front without a really good excuse close at hand. That's just common sense.

Excuses like "Hey, boss, I've got ten thousand in numbers money from the Greek on East 22nd." Or "Hey, boss, we've got a whole new string of girls for you to look over." Or even "Hey, boss, the cops are kicking in the front door." Any of those would be good.

What Harry had was "Hey, boss, I was looking for you to ... tell you ..."

And, that was as far as he got because, before he had to come up with something to say, somebody came stumbling up to say,"Hey, boss! We got trouble downstairs!"

And, Harry said, "That's what I was going to tell you."

So, the whole troupe trooped down the stairs to the first floor, where something had gone

wrong. Very wrong. The wrongest that it could be.

Somebody was dead.

He lay in the ring, face down, a pool of blood coagulating on the canvas. His cauliflower ears said he was a veteran pug, with years in the ring behind him. Oh, well. No more years in the ring ahead of him.

The first floor had emptied of spectators, the cheering crowd thinning miraculously to a few hangers-on at the bar; most of the attendees weren't interested in having the police be interested in them. Now, boxing of any kind wasn't allowed in New York, unless it was within the confines of a recognized athletic facility. So Kelly had been smart: he set up the place as a recognized athletic facility – it said so over the door, which made Kelly's boxing matches at the Athletic Club perfectly legal. Of course, Kelly had to add a little illegal twist to the spectacle – bare knuckles was the order of the day. The little Italian didn't believe in these girlie modern trends like boxing gloves; pugs at Kelly's toed the line, squared off and duked it out bare fisted for however many rounds were needed. This one, apparently, had lasted only twenty rounds before the loser bit the canvas.

That there were enough men willing to stand up and do that, when the last bare-knuckles championship fight had been nearly twenty years before, spoke of the power of nostalgia and the desperate needs of some people. Harry had been hit bare knuckled too often to even consider it.

He looked over the remains and couldn't understand why they were there. The damage to the man's face wasn't extensive, as these things go. Sure, there was blood on the canvas, but that was only from a few superficial cuts; Harry'd had worse himself after a fight. The guy's nose wasn't even broken or, maybe it had already been broken so many times before, in so many

fights, in and out of the ring, that it couldn't be broken any more. Yet here he was, dead.

"What happened to him?" Kelly asked, looking at the dead pugilist.

"Don't know, Mr. Kelly," one of the corner-men (at least, Harry assumed he was a corner-man; he had a towel around his neck and bucket in one hand) answered. "He was millin' away, doin' real good, too, and he suddenly stepped back, grimaced in pain, grabbed his chest and arm and keeled over. Never moved."

"Heart attack," Harry said, resting his arms and chin on the lower rope to look into the ring.

Kelly, standing near, looked sharply at him. "What?"

"Heart attack. A doctor named George Dock described the symptoms twenty years ago or so. Angina is the old name. Tearing of the heart muscle, brought on by exertion or poor physical condition." Long nights in the Yukon reading his mother's medical book by firelight had some use, after all.

Kelly stared at him. "What are you a doctor, now?" he sneered, and Harry shrugged.

"I just read a lot. You going to call the cops?"

Again, the Five Points leader's reaction was "What?"

"Why not, boss? Two guys were doing some friendly sparring, one suddenly drops dead. No reason not to do this legit." If he could get the cops in here, he'd find a way to direct them to the prize behind the door upstairs.

"Are you crazy? I'm not letting cops in here." He pointed at Harry. "You and ..." He pointed again. "... Tombolli, get him out of here and dump him somewhere out of sight." Tombolli was the young guy from upstairs.

"Me!" Harry hadn't figured on being picked for something like that. As far as Kelly was concerned, Harry was just a snitch.

"Do you have a problem with that, Bonfuzzi?" Kelly's voice was, as usual, soft-spoken and politely inquisitive. His eyes promised cold death.

"No, boss. No problem." Harry decided he needed fewer bosses.

"Then do it. Somebody get that blood scrubbed off the canvas before it stains." And Kelly led the older man he'd been with back upstairs, while the muscle-bound guy who'd come with them turned expectantly to Harry.

"So, where do we take the guy?" he asked and Harry suddenly realized that, however briefly it may be, he was, for the first time, somebody's boss, at least for this task.

Overhead, the music and dancing was still going on, oblivious of the scene below. Above that, two hundred pounds of explosive death waited in the dark.

What to do with an inconvenient corpse?

"Hey!" he yelled to the bartender. "Is there a wheel-barrow and a barrel around here?"

Oddly enough, there were.

It was maybe eight blocks south, it was pitch dark, and they were both big, physically fit young men. No reason they couldn't trundle it down, between the two of them.

"Where we going?" Tombolli muttered, as they skirted the edges of Chinatown. Tombolli glanced nervously about him as they passed signs with strange symbols, dragons and odd words, on them. He obviously was worried that anything could happen in that strange place, as indeed it could. Harry had felt the same on his first trips into its depths. Come to think of it, he'd felt the same on his last.

Alternately pushing the barrow and steadying the barrel, they finally crossed East Houston and Harry led them down to Elizabeth Street, stopping short of his destination to turn up a back alley. He knew where he was going – he'd been there many times.

The alley, apart from stray light from a few windows, was dark as the night itself, strewn with refuse and battered garbage cans and had a trickle of foul smelling water running down the center. It seemed an appropriate place to leave their cargo. He chose the back of a building and they wrestled the load off the barrow. Harry thanked Apollo, the god of pugilists, that the unfortunate man in the barrel was only a middleweight and not a heavyweight. Another forty pounds would have been a pain to get on and off the barrow – let alone, in the barrel in the first place.

"What are we leaving him here for?" was Tombolli's next question, and Harry's answer was, "I don't like to leave a body without sending a message. The people here will get the message and think hard about it."

They rolled the barrel up to the back step. "Get ready to run like hell."

"What about the wheel barrow?"

"Screw it." Harry stepped up to the metal-sheathed door, raised a fist and pounded hard. "Run!" Rounding the corner, Harry caught a glimpse of light as the back door to the 5th Precinct station house opened and a cop stuck his head out.

The message would get through, especially as Harry had seen that the barrel, filled with beer when it had been delivered to the Athletic Club, still had a shipping label attached. Harry remembered the photo that Petrosino had shown him of severed bits floating in a barrel. The head of the Italian Squad would get the message: the Black Hand was at the New Brighton

Athletic Club. He also might get the message that it was Harry who tipped him off, because only Harry would think to leave the body there.

Out on East Houston at Bowery, he drew a clean breath and said, “Hey, Tombolli. Get a beer?”

The man looked at him as if no one had ever asked him that question before but, once he’d got over the surprise, he said “Yeah, sure. Why not?”

Any beer joint up or down Bowery would do, so Harry wasn’t particular. They were both a little gritty, so he picked a less than classy joint, noted for its absence of any kind of ‘ladies’ entrance. It would be good and tough, he thought.

The first beer went down quickly: it had been damned hard work pushing that barrow and barrel through the streets. The second was more conducive to conversation.

“So, you working for Kelly?”

Tombolli snorted through his beer. “Naw. Kelly’s nobody.”

“You’re working for the guy Kelly was with, tonight, then?”

“Yeah, sure. He’s the big man.”

Harry took another pull at his beer. “What do you mean? Mr. Kelly’s the big man in Little Italy.”

Tombolli snorted again. “What, you think Kelly’s penny-ante operation is the big time? *Il Capo* has more men in Weehawkin than Kelly has in New York.”

Harry looked at him over the beer mug. “What, you’re working out of Weehawkin?”

“No, you chump. We’re spread so far the boss has got people in just about every town on the east coast.” Shaking his head, Tombolli drained his beer. “We even got connections overseas

– in the Old Country, you know." He was very proud of that, for some reason.

"Impressive. What kind of stuff do you do for him?"

Tombolli caught the bartender's eye and ordered another round. "Whatever he needs done. You know better'n to talk about it."

"Oh, sure! Sure! Never talk about it. I was just wondering whether you did pretty much the same kind of stuff we do, over here, or whether you've got all new kind of rackets over there in Jersey." Harry lifted his beer. "I mean I'm running two strings of girls, myself, for Mr. Zwerbach, a little further down on the East Side."

"Ain't you a little young for that?"

"Mr. Zwerbach trusts me." And it was true; Zwerbach trusted him to be number two to Roxie Vanilli. "You want a girl, I can set you up." And that, when he said it, made him feel dirtier than delivering the body had.

"Not tonight," Tombolli said. "I got a little something at home, waiting."

"Nice." There was a little pause. "So, do you know what the powder and fuses up in the back room are for?"

"Powder? Fuses?" Tombolli was staring under half-lowered eyelids.

"Oh, sure. I was looking for Mr. Kelly, you know, to tell him about our stiff friend and I opened the wrong door. I've never seen so much gunpowder in my life."

Tombolli grunted. "Kelly uses it when and where *Il Capo* tells him to. There's more to life than running a few girls, you know. If somebody needs a little scare, we send him a message. Ka-boom!" And Tombolli chuckled.

Small things fell into place. "Oh! Now, I understand. Gotcha. Kelly's just a patsy. Kelly

gets the job done. I never knew that. So, your boss is the top man?"

It was clear that Tombolli wasn't happy talking about things like who gave orders to who. He was happy just taking them. Finally, though, he said, "*Il Capo* is the top man – on the East Coast. There's others, though, big bosses, all the way back to ..." He lowered his voice to a whisper. "... to *Sicilia*." And, Harry wondered where in *Sicilia* the money extorted from hard-working people here in the U.S. ended up. In whose hands did it land? Whoever it was, Harry was determined that it was never going to be him who found out. He thought of a head floating in a barrel. These people played far too rough for his liking.

Tombolli pushed the beer back. "Better not have any more. Got things still to do, tonight. Big job. Enough said."

"Big job?" Enough said meant there was much more to say.

The Italian chuckled. "A big brave boy thinks he can just laugh at us and get away with it. Just a few blocks from here, actually. Stick around and you'll hear it. Of course, we won't be anywhere near when it happens." Tombolli laughed outright, this time. "Yeah, I pity Paddy." Then he got up and strolled out of the bar.

It was late. Harry was tired. He paid the tab, bid the bartender goodnight and strolled for home. He passed up out of Little Italy and again skirted Chinatown, ready to defend himself at any moment. By the time he got to Avenue B, he was ready for bed. He actually kicked off his boots and laid down, only to find himself staring at the ceiling, wide awake.

So, he told himself, he'd confirmed that Kelly and the Five Points were tied to the Black Hand. That the boss of the Sicilians was a man just known as *Il Capo*. The Big Boss. The Big Cheese. He'd told Petrosino about it in a fun way, so maybe the little cop would get off his back

over it. Tomorrow, he'd send a note to the 5th Precinct, explaining the dead man and giving Tombolli's name to the Italian Squad. He hadn't found any trace of Anna, so maybe Kelly didn't have her, after all. In that case, who did?

And, there was something else ... it was ... no, he couldn't quite put his finger on it. As he did so often when he couldn't sleep, he put his boots on and went down to the garage below to talk to the Cadillac. She had never let him down before. And she didn't this time.

Sitting in the soft cushioned seat, the smells of leather and oil around him, he drifted off, at last, finally falling into a deep sleep – and jarred himself awake with the sudden realization of what was keeping him awake.

Tombolli was staying sober because of the big job he had to do that night. Just a few blocks away. And, he pitied Paddy.

Not Paddy – Pati. Pati's Bank, down on Elizabeth – about a block from the 5th Precinct station, for god's sake.

He pushed the carriage-house doors open, put the Cadillac's clutch in, and let it roll silently past the building and down the drive, only bump-starting it with the clutch when he'd reached the street. A church clock was striking two as he turned onto Bowery, heading south toward Elizabeth Street, and it was only five after two when he stopped the auto on Prince Street. On foot, his back against the building on the corner, he peered northward around it.

A third of the way up the block, figures were carrying packages from the back of a cart and placing them in front of a building. Nobody delivers anything good at two in the morning.

A match was lit and, in the glare, Harry was sure he saw Tombolli before whoever was holding the flame knelt and applied it to something that began to spark and sputter, while smoke

rose from it.

The Black Hand was finished fooling around with Signor Pati. They were going to do for his bank, once and for all. And, probably a few dozen people in the upper floor apartments above and around it.

The instant the fuse was lit, the three figures climbed into the cart and headed off toward East Houston as quickly as the one horse pulling it could go. The clatter on the cobbles died away and Harry was left with a dilemma. Take off after the culprits or stay and stop the bomb from exploding? He'd be able to catch the men quickly enough in the Cadillac but, if he did, what would he do with them? And there were others to think about, too.

Ten steps back to the auto, a quick flip of the crank to start it, and he was moving.

Around the corner, the rear tires squealing for grip on the uneven paving. Five seconds up the street to the bank. Out of the seat, onto the sidewalk, find the fuse – oh, shit! It was inside a spiral casing, maybe ten feet of burning match and the flame had already disappeared into the metal spiral, which was bolted to the heavy timbers of the box.

How to stop the fuse? He couldn't pull the case off the frame with only his fingers. He couldn't pry apart the metal casting. He doubted he had time to carry the bomb somewhere safe. Bombs, actually, because, in all, there were six boxes, presumably filled with some of the gunpowder he'd seen at the Athletic Club – but only one fuse! He threw the unfused boxes as far away from the pile as he could, then picked up the fused crate. It was solid – and burning.

There was nothing else for it. He put the case back on the sidewalk, reached down and unbuttoned his flies, freeing himself from the interior. Kneeling over the bomb, taking careful aim, he released a stream into the outer end of the spiral. Most of it went into the metal tube,

some necessarily spilling out onto the box and the ground – no man's aim is that good. Thankfully, he'd had three beers earlier with Tombolli.

It took several seconds of concentrated aim but, finally, at long and fearful last, he heard the quiet hiss of an extinguishing flame. The bomb was disarmed.

Above him, he heard a window slide open and, looking up, saw a face looking down at him. "Hey! What are you doing down there? You disgusting pig! Get the hell away from here! This is a respectable neighborhood! Go on, before I call the cops!"

Harry waved upward to the offended party. "It's okay, pal. I'm leaving. You'll thank me in the morning!"

With the sense of a job well done, Harry gave himself a congratulatory shake, tucked his extinguisher away, buttoned his flies, returned to the Cadillac, and drove off into the night.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

May 6, 1907

Morning comes early when you only went to bed earlier that morning.

"Hey, Tone." She leaned into the Cadillac and laid her head on his shoulder, arms around his neck.

"You tired, babe?"

"Yeah, I'm tired! What time is it?"

He looked at the clock on the dashboard. "Just about two-thirty."

"Jesus, my feet hurt." She sat on the running board and massaged her calves.

"Roxie says three."

"Roxie don't know crap. There's been nobody down this street for an hour, not until you came. You want to turn my night around?" she asked, knowing that his answer would be –

"No. Or maybe, thanks for the offer, blondie, but I promised my old, gray-haired mother that I'd go to my wedding bed a virgin."

She laughed and put her head back into the cab, reaching down between the steering wheel and him. "And, did you keep that promise, Tonyyy?"

"Nope." He released himself from her grip. "In fact, I've only ever kept one promise to my mom."

She ceased her teasing, pulled her stockings up and smoothed them. "What promise?"

"That I would never smoke – and I never have."

She laughed at that. "Oh, Tone, if I didn't smoke, I'd lose half my customers, every day. It's hard work, you know."

"I'm sure it is," he agreed, looking off to the next block. He opened the car door and stepped out. "Get the other girls into the car, sweetie. Real quiet, now. Just get them in the car."

None of the girls were busy at that moment, so rounding them up was easy enough. Harry, meanwhile, strolled casually toward the corner of the block.

"Hi, lads, aren't you a little lost?" There were four of them, none of them Eastsiders. Three of the four were about as big as Harry, and he figured the best thing would be to talk. Talking's good.

It's deciding what to talk about that's hard, sometimes.

"Mr. Kelly and Mr. Zwerbach agreed the border's a block south of here. No need to be wandering around here, stirring up trouble, is there?"

One of them seemed to agree, while the others weren't very forward with suggestions.

The smallest of the three, a little more courageous, stepped forward with "Mr. Kelly's

decided the border is the other end of this block. What are you going to do about that?"

"Now, why would Mr. Kelly think that?" He looked ostentatiously around. "And I don't see where you're going to get enough help to enforce anything like that. Why don't you go back to Mr. Kelly and ask if he made a mistake? You know, last time I talked with him, we ended up carrying a dead man out of the Athletic Club." The four Five Pointers grinned. "And, don't make any mistake about it. I just have to yell and help's here in a minute."

The leader laughed at that. "You think you'll be alive by then?"

It was Harry's turn to grin. "Pretty sure I will be. Can you say the same?" The punk's grin faded, and Harry's matched him. "If you guys go on back to your own turf, I won't say anything to Mr. Kelly when I talk to him tomorrow."

"Yeah, bullshit." The man suddenly showed a blade. Harry hated blades; it didn't matter who won the fight, there was going to be blood on both sides.

The one who'd been wary of confrontation spoke up. "I know who you are. You're Tony Wheels." Tony Wheels: he didn't realize he was well known enough to rate a moniker, even if it was a stupid one.

"Sure, I am. I run the wheels for Mr. Zwerbach. What's that got to do with anything?"

The punk with the blade was getting cocky. "I heard about you. They say you don't even carry a piece." That much was true. "How you gonna get any respect you don't carry a gun?"

"Well, I respect you and all you've got is that little prick you carry around. Even a tiny little prick like that gets respect – in some circles." Harry was trying to sort out the group. The one who'd recognized him wouldn't fight. The other two would go with whoever was leading. It was the guy with the blade who had to be taken out of it.

"If you're going to use that little prick, you'd better use it. I'm not going to stand here forever." Push him into something stupid, as if that was necessary. "Maybe you'd better talk to one of the girls about your little prick. It's safer."

The blademan turned back to his cronies for some support. "Hey, Tony Wheels talks tough, don't he? Let's find out how tough he is!" And, quick as he thought was lightning, he turned back to Harry, beginning to raise the knife.

Which is when Harry's fist met his larynx.

After which, he fell to the ground, choking, the blade clattering to the pavement. Harry kicked the weapon away and stepped toward the rest, while their leader clutched his throat.

"Who's next? One, two or all three?" he challenged, with more coolness than he felt.

The guy on the ground was trying to rise, so Harry kicked him in the face and he went down again.

"Come on, boys! Don't stand there like you've been caught with your pricks out. Put up or shut up!"

"Hey, Tony ... !" It was the one who knew him.

"Mr. Bonfuzzi to you!"

"Yeah, sure, Mr. Bonfuzzi. We're just doing a job here; Mr. Kelly ordered it."

Harry thought hard about that. He couldn't afford to piss Kelly off, but the treaty was clear.

"Go on back and tell Mr. Kelly he has to talk to Mr. Zwerbach if he's got a beef. That way, nobody dies. Nobody wants that, right?" He kicked the man on the ground, again, without even looking down. "And that's for the best, you think?"

"Yeah, okay, Mr. Bonfuzzi. We were just following orders." He tapped the other two on the shoulder and the three started to pick up their former leader.

"No! He stays. I've got things to say to him. Scram."

The three Five Pointers backed away, then disappeared into the darkness.

The fourth was on three points, now, two knees and one hand. The other hand was still clutching his throat. He was starting to look surly, so Harry kicked him again, in the gut this time, then stood looking down at him as some of the girls came running up. The man was retching, now.

"Oh, come on! I didn't hit you that hard." He hoped that was the case, but it's hard to judge these things. He wasn't spitting blood, so nothing was seriously damaged – maybe.

A strangled sound came out of the man, followed by "Bastard!"

"Hey! Language. There are ladies present." Which brought a peal of laughter from the assemblage.

Harry hauled the man to his feet and dragged him to the Cadillac, pushing him up against the hood. Shaking his prize, he made the man look at him.

"Now, here's the thing. I'm looking for some people and some things and I need you to tell me about them."

The answer was short and colorfully obscene. It brought laughs from the girls and a short jab to the gut from Harry.

"Tell you what," Harry said. "I was going to punch every answer out of you, but I've decided I'm not going to. It's too hard on the knuckles."

"Awww!" was the response from the ringed females.

"Instead ... any of you girls got a hat pin?"

They all did. It was a basic weapon of self-defense in the trade – and it was very effective.

"Here's the deal. I need to know some things, partly to stop you girls from getting hurt; partly for other reasons. Now, every time this joker doesn't answer, or gets cute with an answer, or swears like he just did, one of you can poke him with a hat-pin. Does that sound like fun?" There was universal, instant agreement. "No more than two inches and no place where it'll be life changing." Another 'Awww'. "I mean, like no eyes or eardrums."

"Why just two inches, Tony?" asked the girl who'd been flirting with him earlier.

He chucked her under the chin. "Well, I wouldn't want you to give him more than he could give you." That got the laughs going again. He tightened his hold on his victim and bore down with his weight.

"First question. Do you know a soldier named Tombolli?" After three seconds, there was no answer. "All right. First hole." He nodded to the first girl and she leaned over to insert a pin into the man's lower lip.

He screamed because, yeah, that had to hurt.

"Same question, son. Do you know a *tepisto* named Tombolli?"

"Yes!" Blood was oozing from the pin-hole.

"Does he work for Kelly?" A pause and Harry began to wave the next girl in.

"Wait! No! Not for Kelly." His voice was still hoarse and strained. It probably would be for days.

"Who, then?" And the hat-pin was hovering an inch above his top lip.

"Il grande capo." Now, they were getting somewhere.

"And, who's *Il grande capo* when he's home?" The pin still hovered.

"He's *capo*." Harry nodded and the pin descended. "That's all I know! He's the capo! He's the head man! *Il grande capo*!" when he'd done screaming.

"What's this guy the head of?" A new pin was hovering at his temple, but Harry moved it down to the cheek. "What organization does he run?"

"If you know Tombolli, you know the answer to that." And another hole began to ooze blood.

"I'm starting to lose patience with you, friend. Maybe it's time you started to lose things."

The next pin was set, just touching the man's eyelid. He started to shake.

"Do you know what they'll do to me if I talk? It's the blood and the fire. The blood of my heart and the fire of my soul."

"Who'll do that? *Il grande capo*? Just get out of New York."

"There isn't any place I could go to get away. Not China; not Australia; not Greenland. They always find you."

"Who?"

He whispered the answer. "*Il Mano Nero*. They're everywhere – everywhere!"

Harry waved the hat-pin away from the man's eyes. What the hell did the Black Hand want?

"Is that why Kelly wants to push the border north – because *Il Mano Nera* wants it?" The man nodded. "So, they've got Kelly and the Five Pointers under their thumb, yes?"

The barest hint of a pause. "Yeah. Kelly made a deal last year. The capo says jump, Kelly jumps."

"What else do they want?"

This time the pause was from surprise, not stubbornness. "All of it. Everything. Numbers, girls, drugs, booze, protection, extortion, murder. They want every penny."

"All of the Five Point's rackets?" That was ambitious for a bunch trying to muscle in.

"Not just! Not just the Five Points. The Dead Rabbits, the Whyos, the Daybreakers – all of it. Including the Eastsiders."

That would take some doing. The Eastsiders had as many soldiers as all the other gangs together, leaving out the tongs.

"So, they get control of the gangs. Then what?"

"City Hall – the whole city. Where've you been that you don't know this?"

Harry let off the pressure on the man's chest and waved the girls away. "Sleeping, I guess." Wouldn't Petrosino be apoplectic to learn this?

"One last thing. You know a girl named Anna, working for Kelly? New girl."

The man thought for a minute. "No Anna. There's a Annie. Just a couple of months. She's not working the street; they've got her holed up under the butcher shop on Centre Market off of Grand."

"You sure?" and the man shrugged.

"She was there last time I went in to pick up," he said.

"Centre Market off Grand. Okay, get off Eastside turf and stay off. Go home and put ice on your face. Don't come out till morning. Tell Mr. Kelly, politely, that Bonfuzzi says if he wants to talk, he should set it up with Mr. Zwerbach." He grabbed the man's tie again and pulled him close. "If I run into you again, I'll take you into some back alley shithole and let the girls

loose on you. You understand me?"

"Yeah, sure thing, Mr. Bonfuzzi." And the man skittered down the street, as fast as he could, dabbing with his handkerchief at the puncture wounds in his face.

He gathered the girls around him and announced, "I'm declaring a holiday until Roxie says otherwise. Go home, get some rest. Once Roxie gets wind of it, he'll have you working harder than ever. Sorry, it's the best I can do."

Excited by the last few minutes and Harry's announcement, they went their separate ways, with the exception of the first one. Harry climbed into the car and she leaned in again.

"So, Tonyyy. You want company for the rest of the night? I'm kinda not sleepy." She was as close as she could get with the door in the way.

He tapped her nose with a finger. "I'd love to, hon. You're a sweet kid and we could have a lot of fun – but I've got another job to do tonight that's pretty important and just might be dangerous. Run on home and keep your head down, huh? You got money?"

"Yeah, I got enough for a while. Okay. See you, Tonyyy." And she sashayed away.

He'd found Anna – he hoped. All it had taken was the right questions and some torture. He'd been prepared to do a lot more.

He'd also uncovered the depth of the Black Hand's plans. To take over, not just the gangs, but the city itself. To bring the gangs together into one *organized* crime group was fantastical enough. To then take over the city was beyond belief. Oh, he knew Tammany Hall had a big hand in who ran the city and how it was run, but it seems the Black Hand were after a lot more.

In the meantime, the Cadillac was flitting the brief blocks across to Centre Market Place

and up toward Broome. There was a back alley on Broome that led partway down toward Grand and the butchery let out at the back onto that alley.

At the top of the alley, he had a brief debate. The alley didn't go through. Leave the auto here and walk up? She might not be able to walk back, or they might be in a big hurry. So, he decided to back the machine up the alley, with too much gear whine and not a little wandering toward the walls on either side. He must remember to practice high-speed reversing.

There were no guards outside the butcher shop, but he didn't expect any. This was just a safe place for them to hide new girls every so often. There could be one or two guards inside, but they were bound to be at least half asleep at this time of the morning. Damn! Nearly four o'clock.

The back door was a metal slab. No locks, bolts, no handle meant almost no way to break in silently. Almost no way to break in, period.

Then, of course, almost is not absolutely. He had a four-foot crow-bar in the rear of the car. Just in case he ever needed it.

With no lock on the outside, it probably meant it was held closed by a heavy bar on the inside. And, with no bolt heads, that meant the brackets the bar dropped into were likely held in place with wood screws. He was pretty confident there wasn't a wood screw made that could he and a four-foot crow-bar couldn't rip out.

It was close, but his confidence was not misplaced. It took five minutes and a lot of sweat to pry them loose. After the bar and brackets dropped with a clatter to the floor, he waited another five minutes to see if anyone was coming to investigate. Satisfied any guards were sleeping – or drunk – he moved in as quietly as he could.

'Holed up under the butcher shop' his buddy had said, so he looked for a cellar door.

There was a stairway leading up, but none leading down. From back to front and back again, he searched every cranny of the shop but couldn't find a way down. The smell of old blood and sawdust got into his nostrils and made him sneeze, which he tried to stifle as best he could.

He really was a lousy burglar.

All right, think. This was a butcher shop, so they had to store meat. There was no ice-box up here, which meant it had to be on another level. Up made no sense; that was apartments up there. Down had to be the answer, but how? There was no door, no stair, no – trap-door! But where would it be?

As close as possible to the meat counter – behind the meat counter! And, sure enough, there it was.

It was heavy and awkward and not counter weighted, but Harry's muscles and a four-foot crow-bar did the job. Once up, he realized he was at the wrong end; the stairs began at the other end. So, the trap went back down, he crossed over and pried it back up. A prop kept it open and, halfway down the stairs, an electric switch gave him light.

The whole thing was an ice-box and he felt the frigid air blowing at him from electrical fans. In the glare of the electric light, he saw he was surrounded by a thousand pounds of meat, on hooks, on shelves, on trays, in boxes. The smell of blood was very thick.

Somewhere down in this cold hell, Anna had to be confined. He pushed his way through the carcasses, cold but not frozen, smearing himself with blood. As each successive side of meat dangled back into place behind him, the way ahead got darker and darker. It was like some macabre dreamland.

He reached the wall at the end of the cellar and had no farther to go. Was there a room of

some kind off the main room? Had he missed it in the dark?

"Anna!" he whisper-shouted. "Anna!"

Four more times he called, before a tired, hoarse voice whispered back. "What? Who is it?"

She was under the staircase, practically walled into a three-foot wide, six-foot long space that had a cot with a blanket thrown over it. They'd at least allowed her a winter coat and gloves against the chill. There were no guards; they thought they had broken her spirit – and maybe they had.

He left the cellar open, hoping the meat would spoil, and the back door wide as he took her out. She was frightened at first by his blood-smeared appearance, but clung to him as they drove away.

By the time business started for the day, he'd taken her to the carriage-house, cleaned her up, fed her, given her three stiff shots of whiskey, given her as much money as he had available, and driven her to the 5th Precinct where, catching Lieutenant Petrosino as he entered the building, he extracted the most solemn promise the man could make that the police would get her far away where Paul Kelly, Tombolli and the Black Hand would never find her.

Then he slept until Mr. Zwerbach needed him.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

May 14, 1907

The heat of the May sun, the smell of the leather seats, the taste of the beer – the smile on the pretty girl's face. He never knew her name.

There were other memories, too. The smell of burnt gunpowder, the taste of the smoke. The tang of blood in the air.

He'd finally persuaded the boss that it was time for a new car. The old Cadillac was not going to last much longer; he had patched more bullet holes than he could count, the engine block had stopped a couple and the radiator had seen some hard action, too. Breaking down these days could mean a lot more than just inconvenience – it could mean death. Zwerbach had reluctantly replaced the five-year old Cad with a big blue Franklin limousine that had so many modern conveniences Harry could barely keep up. It had a speed-o-meter that told how fast you

were going, a foot pedal for the throttle and a clock on the dashboard. The Franklin was actually a year old, but it was one of the first all enclosed models, with windows all around, including the driver's compartment. There was even a heater available in the back compartment for cold days.

As he nosed up to the side of the curb outside the café on West 28th, he had the sense of an auspicious occasion. Today would be memorable. The rumor was that Zwerbach and Lewis were about to conclude a deal to bring the Five Points territories under Eastside control. Harry pulled on the handbrake and climbed out, to run around and open the door of the passenger compartment. He even pulled off his flat cap as he opened the door of the limo.

Harry held the door and waited. There was a time he felt very important to be holding the door for two such very important passengers as were climbing down from the high rear seat. Each wore a blank homburg, a red tie, a striped vest under a gray suit, a light-gray coat, and gray spats over their brogues. Each had a red carnation in a button-hole.

"Va bene, Tony. Stai facendo un buon lavoro." Zwerbach patted Harry's shoulder.

"Grazie, Signore." Harry smiled in response to the half-understood praise: Zwerbach liked the job he was doing.

"You-a see, Vach? He-a starting to *parlare il linguaggio*, already."

"Sure, Mr. Zwerbach. I told you he was smart."

"Gli dia un dollaro," ordered Zwerbach, and Vach Lewis handed Harry a silver dollar, to which Harry smiled more broadly. He pocketed the coin as he looked toward the door they had pulled up to.

Dan The Dude's, the sign said. It was ... neutral. It wasn't fancy; it wasn't a dive. It wasn't strictly a restaurant; it wasn't strictly a bar. Mostly it wasn't either Eastsider territory or

Five Points territory. It was ... neutral. That's why the place was used as a meet when serious discussions were needed.

Zwerbach looked toward the restaurant along with Harry, heaved a sigh and turned back to Tony.

"Listen, a-Tony, Mr. Lewis and-a me, we go in-a for a meeting. You wait-a five-a minutes, then you come-a in; you sit-a by-a the door. You have-a one-a beer – one-a beer, eh?" Zwerbach waggled a warning finger, then poked the boy playfully. "You're-a too young-a for any more." He smiled with affection. "You watch the door for us. Anybody come in you don't-a like-a, you holler out-a! Don't matter – you don't-a like-a him, you holler. Okay?"

"Okay, Mr. Zwerbach. I'll holler."

"Good-a boy. You holler –" He was waggling the finger again. "Then you get-a the hell-a out. You hear-a me? You get-a out-a fast and get-a the car ready. When we come-a out, we've got-a to be ready to go."

"Okay, Mr. Zwerbach."

"Vach, give-a him a dollar." And, Harry became the proud possessor of another silver dollar.

Zwerbach and Lewis sauntered into Dan The Dude's Café like a pair of Wall Street businessmen walking into Sardi's for a mid-week lunch. Despite the mid-May sun, the fur-collars that topped their coats were impressively heavy and the homburgs sitting on their heads were sun-catching black. They were big shots – the biggest on the Lower East Side – and they knew it, so everybody else should know it, too.

The front of the Franklin was nearly as luxurious as the rear cabin. Windows could be

raised to close off the traffic noise and stench; the front windscreen formed a full closure with the roof and the side doors; the seats were soft leather. It was a great place to lounge, letting the sun shine down on him while watching the time tick by on the dashboard clock. Even a dozen years since they were invented, not a lot of men in Mr. Zwerbach's lines of business had autos, but Mr. Zwerbach had been among the first. And what an auto it was – six cylinders, overhead valves, and it even had the clock Harry was staring at now.

If only life were as simple as this: lounging about, waiting for your boss. If only the boss wasn't in charge of gambling, prostitution, drug-running, robbery, even murder. If only you weren't caught between the police and the mobsters, trying to find a way out. If only a pretty girl would come strolling down the street ...

A pretty girl strolling down the street stopped to admire the car and Harry straightened himself up. She looked shyly up at him and he wondered where he could get in four minutes.

"'ziz yer cah?" she said. In three words, Harry knew she'd been born and bred within a few blocks of where she was standing.

"Naw, not mine, but I'm the driver. I take care of it for Mr. Zwerbach. I make sure it runs perfect."

She was running a hand over the leather. "Gee, I wish I could have a ride in it."

"Sorry, kid, I can't do it, today. The boss is counting on me. He counts on me a lot, you know."

She had climbed up onto the running board. "Kin I sit in it? I'd be ever so grateful just to sit in it for a while." She was leaning into the car, now.

"Sure, baby," Tony said. "Why not?"

She stepped back and he opened the door from inside. She lifted her skirt to step in, pulling it up over her knee. Harry 'helped' her in by putting his hand on the back of her knee and his arm around her. She slid into the seat and his hands stayed where they were and she was smiling at him.

She looked around to see whether anyone was watching them and slid closer to him, moving his hand further up her thigh as a consequence. "Kin ya make it run?" She placed her hand strategically on him.

He shook his head. "Not without letting go of you, and I don't want to do that."

"Well, I'll still be here, silly." She closed her knees, trapping his hand and squeezing. "Don't cha think it'll be woith it? I do."

"Give us a kiss, first."

"Sure, Tony."

His head jerked back at the sound of his name, but just then his eye fell on the clock and he was out of the car, around the other side, pulling her down and onto the pavement again. "Sorry, doll, but the boss needs me right now. I gotta go. Some other time, maybe."

And, he slammed the car door and left her standing on the sidewalk. "You creep! If I don't ever see you again, it'll be too soon!" A woman scorned is a thing to behold.

Five minutes on the dot and Harry stepped into the cool darkness of Dan The Dude's Café. His eyes took a few moments to adjust before he could see what was happening. Maybe forty or fifty people, male and female, were inside; one or two turned their heads to look at him as he came in, but most were busily about their business.

He could see Lewis seated in a back booth and assumed Zwerbach was there, too.

'Cyclone' Lewis looked up at him and nodded his approval, then went back to his meeting. Harry didn't know what it was all about, but he could see that it was serious. There were no raised voices or shaking fists, but the murmuring was intense.

There was one empty chair near the door, at a small table where he saw a straw boater, a striped charcoal-colored suit, a blood red tie, already drinking whiskey. When Harry saw the owner of the outfit, he stopped cold and felt sweat break out on his forehead, then, with a breath to calm himself, went over and took the empty chair. He ignored the man; the man ignored him. This went on a for a full minute.

Without moving his lips, Roxie Vanilli said "The hell you doing here?"

Harry should have known there would be other Eastside men already in the building. Zwerbach and Lewis weren't going to trust their safety to a twenty-year old who wouldn't even carry a gun. "The boss said to sit by the door. I'm sitting by the door. I sure as hell ain't walking away, now." Roxie Vanilli wasn't a man Harry was going to trust with his back turned – but. then, Vanilli was hardly going to start something here – and Mr. Zwerbach's order was clear.

"Get lost, kid. I ain't gonna tell you twice." Vanilli could talk all he wanted, but Harry wasn't going to let anything happen while Zwerbach seemed so pleased with him. Vanilli certainly knew he couldn't possibly take Harry *mano a mano*, but he wouldn't bother with that. He'd probably just shoot him in the back as soon as Harry turned it. For a man with a vanilla name, he loved causing trouble.

"You going to start something, Roxie? 'Cause, no matter how it turns out, I'm pretty sure Mr. Zwerbach wouldn't like it much – wouldn't like it at all, would he? After all, we're here to make peace, ain't we?" Harry caught the barkeep's eye and stretched out. To anyone looking

from the outside, the occupants of the table didn't know each other, weren't talking to each other, and, indeed, one was asleep.

When the barkeep came, Harry was in the midst of regretting his treatment of that very nice girl outside. He should have invited her in for a drink; she could have come in. This was a very progressive joint. There were plenty of women in the place, and not herded into a 'ladies and escorts' section, either. Maybe he could still find her and make it up to her. On the other hand, he was pretty sure she wasn't old enough to drink. And, how the hell had she known his name? He ordered a beer from the barkeep, but it hadn't arrived yet when the door opened again and a heavy-set man with a round face, slicked-down hair, and puffy lips came in. This guy did have a girl on his arm, young, pretty, leggy, clingy. Just the type he'd gotten used to seeing hanging on the arm of men like that one.

He had a vague impression of having seen her before, but just then his beer arrived, and he paid for it, and the barkeep put the foaming glass on the table. Dan The Dude's had good beer, certainly worth the seven cent price tag. He lifted the glass, enjoying the condensation on the outside and the generous head of foam. It was a hot day in NYC. He was about to raise the glass to his lips when he realized what he'd just seen.

The newcomer was standing, facing Harry, his back to Mr. Zwerbach's booth, his hand inside his jacket. Vanilli wasn't even looking toward the guy. Harry was half-way to his feet, the beer spilling recklessly as he rose.

The heavy beer glass sailed across the room to strike the round-faced man full in his round face – just as that man, beginning to turn toward Zwerbach's booth, was pulling a revolver free from his pocket.

"Pioggi! Louis Pioggi!" Harry hollered, picking up his chair and running for the man, who had staggered back from the impact of the hurled glassware but kept hold of his revolver. Pioggi was wiping beer from his eyes and blood from his nose, and hadn't seen Harry yet. In two steps, he would, and Harry still had four steps to go.

Pioggi's girl was screaming, now, and Harry risked a quick glimpse to see Max Zwerbach rising from his seat and Vach Lewis lifting a revolver toward someone else in the booth. Harry assumed Vanilli was on his way to aid his bosses. Everyone else in the room was turning, rising, or ducking, all at the same time.

It all happened very fast after that. Shots pounded the air; two men alone at the bar and two sitting with women in side booths were rising and leveling revolvers toward Zwerbach and Lewis. Damn! It was a setup – they'd been lured here to be gunned down. Well, Harry decided he'd take at least one with him.

Pioggi ('Louie The Lump' was his street name) was leveling his gun at Harry, who threw the chair. More women were screaming; more shots pounded in his ears. Men's voices were shouting in a babble. Louie The Lump must have pulled the trigger because Harry felt a streak of fire across his ribs, as he crashed into the man, hoping to take him down and use his boots on him. Pioggi was too strong for that and he put a fist full into Harry's face. Stars were exploding in his head, and he knew the Italian would fire again. More shots were cracking and he could smell burnt powder. Pioggi's snarling face went blank and he fell forward, and then to the floor. Pioggi's girl, eyes and mouth wide, still screaming, was standing behind him with the remains of another, or maybe the same, beer glass in her hand. Harry felt blood from Pioggi's face smear onto his own.

He was still alive, he realized, and then also realized he had just a second to stay that way. At the front door, he could see Vanilli with a pistol leveled in his direction, then there were more shots from elsewhere in the bar and chips flew from the woodwork around Vanilli who, straw-boater hat and all, disappeared to the sidewalk. Harry took another fast glance toward the rear booth, where 'Cyclone' Lewis had fallen into his seat, head thrown back, mouth open, his chest a mess of flowing blood that blended into the blood-red of his silken tie. 'Kid Twist' Zwerbach was nowhere to be seen, but the other men in the booth and two others from the bar were standing with smoking revolvers in their hands, looking down to the floor where Zwerbach had been sitting. There was no help coming from there – and nothing more he could do there. The two pistol men from the booths were starting to look toward Harry.

All of that took a second and then he took action. He did what Mr. Zwerbach had told him to do. He got the hell out.

At the front door, a dozen people who had been innocently sitting in the café were jammed up, trying to squeeze through the same three feet of doorway at the same time. He pushed his way through, using elbows and fists as required, on the premise that nobody was shooting at them in particular, but they sure as hell would soon be shooting at him. Once out the door, he elbowed his way through a crowd, some running out of the café, some heading toward it to see what the excitement was. At the Franklin, he ran around to the driver's side, flipped the ignition switch on, pulled down the spark advance and added some throttle. Running to the front of the auto, he cranked the engine frantically, pulling on the choke cable, and finally, with a couple of backfires, the engine sputtered to life. Apart from customers still pushing to get out of Dan The Dude's, no one had come from the restaurant yet, at least, not with the intent of killing

Harry. Vanilli was not in evidence, having the good sense to hightail as fast and as far as his legs would carry him, Harry decided.

He looked for his would-be girlfriend, too, but she was nowhere to be seen. Just as well, as she would have slowed him down. It was a good thing he hadn't taken up her invitation to fool around, or he might have still been in the car when it all happened. Then he stopped at the realization that the timing was just too damn coincidental: she had likely been sent just for that purpose. What better way to distract the young guy who drove the limo for your enemy than to send a pretty and willing female along at the right time? Damn, he was stupid sometimes!

Vaulting into the driver's seat, he released the handbrake, adjusted the spark and throttle, eased the Franklin into first gear, and started to roll forward, just as the passenger side door was pulled open and a frantic figure landed in the car beside him.

Sprawled half in and half out of the car, in white silk, lace and beads, with feathers in her hair, she lay on her back on the floor and looked upward into his face. It was the girl who'd come into the café with Louie The Lump. The girl who had maybe saved his life, if she was really the one who clobbered Louie with the beer glass.

"Well, don't just sit there, Tony. Drive! Drive!" She pulled her feet and skirts into the machine, rolled herself, feet in the air and bloomers flashing, onto the seat, and slammed the door, as he dropped the clutch lever and yanked the auto, full throttle, into traffic. Around them, there were yells and shaken fists from cartmen he had cut off. Behind him, there was pandemonium as the gunsmoke cleared and the dead were counted.

They drove for a lot of hours, well out of the city, and didn't stop until much later that night.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
MAY 15, 1907

It was black and it was overcast and he couldn't drive any farther. His eyes were bleary; his ribs hurt like blazes and he had to pee something fierce. There were no lights around them, had been none for hours, although they were passing farm laneways every quarter mile or so. He didn't even know what road they were on, or how far from the city they had come. Looking back, he couldn't see any city lights on the horizon so ... a fair way, he guessed.

When they still had light, she'd scrubbed the blood from his face with her handkerchief and some spit and looked at his ribs. The bullet had grazed him but only left a small cut – almost exactly where an older, deeper scar lay. She didn't ask where the first scar came from.

Right now, she was sleeping on his shoulder while he steered off the road and into a field. It was a May night, after a warm day, but the temperature was chilling. Neither of them was

dressed for it, but she was especially under-clad, in a silk and lace party dress that left a lot of skin exposed. Before she fell asleep, he'd taken off his coat and wrapped it around her bare arms and shoulders. Now, he was cold, but he told himself to be a man – the lady needed the coat.

The car bumped its way into the furrows of a newly-plowed field and she came awake suddenly, sitting up, eyes wide with alarm, peering into the night before she saw what he'd done.

"What time is it?" rubbing her eyes sleepily.

"Don't know." The clock on the dashboard had stopped working.

"Where are we?" with a very pretty yawn and stretch.

"Don't know."

"What do you know?" pulling Harry's coat closer around her and snuggling back into his arm.

"I know we're in deep shit. I say 'we' because I think you walloped Louie The Lump with the beer glass, didn't you?"

She laughed aloud. "Louie The Lump? I never heard that one before. Suits him." She shrugged. "Yeah, I clobbered him – I didn't want him hurting my Tony."

"Your Tony?" He took a few moments as the machine hit a few particularly deep ruts and had to be manhandled through them. He finally got it turned around and facing the road again before switching off the headlights and the engine. They were in deep darkness, now. He moved her to the far side of the seat and faced her.

"Okay – uhm, not that I'm not enjoying you being here, kiddo, I mean, it's very pleasant, you sleeping in my arm, and not that I'm not grateful to you for clobbering Pioggi but – who the hell are you?"

"Oh, Tony! I'm Carrol!" That failed to ring any bells with him and she pulled further away. "Now, I'm hurt. The very last thing I said to you was 'don't forget me, now' and you went and forgot me."

"Carrol, if I was conscious when you said that, I'd have remembered you – believe me. But ..."

She slid back close and touched his cheek. "Well, you weren't really conscious. Kelly's boys had just beaten the snot out of you."

"Kelly's boys?" He thought back. "None of them were boys, sweetheart. And, I never did get your name." If it wasn't for her help, he may never have left the Athletic Club.

With a laugh, she straightened up and held out a hand. "Carrol Terry, sir. And you're Tony – I know they call you Tony Wheels, but I never heard your last name."

He told her and they solemnly shook hands in the dark, as if their situation wasn't already absurd in every detail.

"So, Tony." She snuggled into his arm again and peered into the darkness, saw how totally alone they were. "What are we going to do?" She was suddenly much smaller in his arm.

"Well, I suggest we crawl into the back compartment and make the most of the situation." He punctuated that with waggling eyebrows, which might have been funny if she could see them.

"Oh, now, wait a minute, Tony. What makes you think I'm that kind of girl?" She'd leaned back to eye him, but stayed in his arm.

He could have replied that he'd dragged her out of a gunfight (well, she'd dragged herself out) in a bar where she'd come on the arm of one of the most notorious enforcers on the Island and, when he'd first seen her, she'd been one of a crowd of working girls in the Five Points

headquarters and not exactly a shrinking violet about it. Little clues like that.

What he did reply was 'I mean, there are some blankets in the back and that part's fully enclosed, so our body heat should warm it up. We can get comfortable and maybe get some sleep."

"Oh. All right. I suppose." In a few minutes, after much needed relief by the side of the car for both of them, they'd ensconced themselves in the rear, with scratchy woolen travel blankets around them, each on their own side of the vehicle. Just getting out of the chill in the front, with or without heat, was a help. He even took off his shoes to ease his aching feet. There was little he could do to help his aching ribs.

"Is there anything to eat in the car?" she asked and he grunted a negative. "I'm hungry."

He opened his eyes. "We'll get something in the morning, first town we come to." He spoke more confidently than he felt.

"Okay." A silence until he thought she'd gone to sleep. "Tony?" He grunted again. "Thanks for looking after me."

"Hey, you looked after me first – and there was a lot more blood involved."

He heard her giggle. "Yeah, there was, wasn't there?" Another silence, while he actually did drift off. "Tony?" He heard it in his dreams. "Tony!" Suddenly he wasn't dreaming. "Are you awake?"

"Yeah, of course."

"I'm still cold."

"Sorry." He was cold, too.

"Can I come over there and we can put both blankets on us and you can put your arms

around me and we'll keep each other warm?" Not one man in a million could say no to that.

It was, indeed, much warmer for both of them. He felt her kick her shoes off, then, a moment later, rub her stockinged toes against his feet until they tingled, before wrapping her leg over his. His arms were around her, his hands on the bare skin of her back which, a little exploration showed, went down a shockingly long way. She giggled. "Yeah, it's cut 'way low, isn't it?"

She snuggled into his arms, head on his chest, said ''night, hon,' and they slipped off to a remarkably pleasant sleep.

As he did, he swore he heard someone saying, "... and please remember mommy and daddy and keep them safe. Amen." but, by the time he had his eyes open, she was asleep, too.

The day dawned bright, warm, and the air was as filled with birdsong as Harry's bladder was filled with urine. Carrol was outside already, a blanket around her shoulders, adjusting things beneath her skirts after doing what Harry was about to. He made his way to the rear of the machine and had his flies open when she called, "Tony!"

"In a minute," he called back, but she said, "Nope! Now!"

Coming across the field with determined stride were Old MacDonald and the local police force or, at least, one paunchy middle-aged man with a badge on his coat. Old McDonald had a farm, it seemed, and it seemed he had a shotgun, too.

"Morning!" was a good way to open proceedings, but neither of the local citizens were ready for that much friendliness.

"What do you think you're doing on my land?" was the verbal salvo from the farmer, possibly to be followed by a birdshot salvo, but the sheriff held up a hand.

"Easy, Cyrus. Let's go slow."

"Look, Ben, they're trespassing, sure. I got a right ... !"

"You got a right to get locked up, if you don't settle down. Then you'll have to explain to your wife why you didn't finish with the bottom land."

The farmer grumbled something in reply but stepped back while the lawman looked over the pair.

"Cyrus is worried you might have been stealing chickens or setting fire to his crop. Either of you doing that?"

"No, sir!" Harry laughed. "We were on the road late last night and kind of got turned around back there a ways, and just chose a place to stop and sleep."

"And why were young people like you, straight from the city, out on a back road in Morris County, so late at night?"

"City?" Harry laughed again. "Do we look like city people?"

The sheriff looked them over. "Oh, yeah. You're from New York." Well, he could tell that from the license plate. "What's your business in New Jersey?"

Harry was at a loss – "We were just involved in a murderous gunfight at a bar in the city and we're on the run so neither the police nor the murdering hoodlums can catch us" probably wouldn't help – but Carrol stepped forward, wrapping both arms around one of Harry's. "You see, sir, we're on our way to see my folks in Stockertown." She laid her cheek on Harry's arm as she held it.

"Over in Pennsylvania? You're a long way off that road."

Carrol still had the floor. "I know. We were driving and it was dark and nobody was

around and, well, sir, we got distracted ... you see, we're on our honeymoon." Carrol actually blushed very prettily and pressed her embarrassed face against Harry's shoulder while she held up a hand that had a shiny gold ring on the third finger.

That took the sheriff back. "Oh! Well!" He cleared his throat and looked awkwardly at the farmer, who was still glowering in the background. "Okay, Stockertown. Well, keep going up here and turn right at Scrappy Corner; go up there until you get to Penwell Road, then left there will take you all the way to the river. Once you're over that, go north and you'll find Stockertown."

"Oh, thank you, sir." And, Harry realized that she was actually all in white – it could have been her wedding dress she was in. Where the wedding ring came from was anybody's guess.

"Going to see your parents? Don't they know you're married?" Old MacDonald was still grumpy.

"That's why we're going to see them, sir," Harry stepped back in but she overrode him again.

"See, it's not that we wanted to get married so much as ... well ..."

Both Old MacDonald and the sheriff were busy having their moral indignation risen, so Harry decided it was time to end this.

"So, we'll find her parents, face the music and take the consequences. Get in the machine, honey-bun. Goodbye, gentlemen. Sorry to be a nuisance."

And, he handed Carrol back into the car, cranked it into life, and climbed in. They waved gaily and Old MacDonald called out, "Congratulations! I hope you're as happy as my wife and me have been." Which didn't sound quite like a benediction.

And Harry let out the clutch, easing out onto the road to begin the second honeymoon of his short life. It was no more legal than his first but he hoped it would be longer and happier.

You'd be surprised how easy it is to pass yourself off as honeymooners. They found Stockertown. On his first honeymoon, there hadn't been a human being (other than the two of them) for a hundred miles in any direction – except one Mountie. Today, there were lots of people. They found a diner where they could get some much needed breakfast – and more needed coffee. They found a small hotel where they could get some sleep – in a lumpy double bed, in their underwear.

Where did the ring come from? "I always have it in my bag, in case I need to discourage somebody. Comes in handy." And, how did she know about Stockertown? "My parents live on their farm just a few miles out of town, but we are *not* going to go to see them!"

"Why not, snookums?" he teased. "We don't have to tell them you're in the pudding club."

"We're not going to see my folks because they kicked me out four years ago when they found out I wanted to be a dancer, and they won't speak to me." That shut him up. Memories of Anna flooded back. "And, besides, smarty, what are you going to do if I really am in the club? There's nobody around but you to blame."

That shut him up for an hour.

They had some money, because Harry had lately made it a point to never leave home without a few hundred in his pockets. They had the auto, which was far too expensive for a young couple to have possibly acquired legally but nobody had asked, so far. If anybody did ask, he'd just tell them they'd borrowed it from his boss, which was true, in a way. What business

was it of anybody else that his boss wasn't in any condition to ask for it back? What they didn't have were clothes, and Stockertown was too small to be able to accommodate them easily.

In the stores on his own, finding clothes for his new wife, Harry did his best from among the few off-the-shelf items Stockertown had to offer, enough, at least, to get them to a bigger town. He needed clothes, too, so there was underwear and socks, a few shirts and trousers for him, and as much as he could find on all layers for her. In all, he'd ended up spending more than thirty dollars.

Arms filled with packages, he opened the lock on the hotel room door and backed in, calling "Honey, I'm home!"

Many women, faced with being caught rinsing out your only set of frillies by a man you'd barely even kissed before, would scream – or yell – or run to cover up – or faint, even. Carrol simply smiled, said "Did you find things?" and continued to rinse. Harry didn't know where to look – he knew where he *was* looking, he just didn't know where he ought to look. Still, as long as she was comfortable with it, he ... well, he wasn't sure he could ever be.

She hung her things on the line over the tub and came toward him, drying her hands on the towel, and began to peer into his shopping bags. "What'd you get me, sweetie? Something nice?" She took some of the bags and placed them on the bed, pulling out items, still as bare as the hour she was born. "Tony? You want to close the door before the neighbors get offended?"

He got a toe hooked on the door and swung it shut, just as someone coming down the hall got to it.

"Carrol, doll. It might be more than a man can bear if we are going to have this kind of arrangement going on."

"What's the matter? Don't you like it?" There was no need to answer that. "Tony, if we're going to share a room – and a bed – we'll both have to get used to it, don't you think?"

He put down the rest of the bags. "I think my heart may explode before I get used to it."

"Aren't you sweet?", smiling, so he took a walk, the first of many in Stockertown.

It takes a lot of adjustment for a young couple first sharing their lives to get used to each other. Harry habitually tended the auto; she got used to that. She insisted on praying before every meal, holding his hands on either side of the plates; he got used to that. Harry exercised every morning, whirling around the room with kicks and punches that came close to breaking things, sparring with imaginary assailants; she got used to that.

Every night, she had two rituals to go through. First, dressed in her nightgown, she spent a half hour practicing the dances from her job at Coney Island. 'The Hootchie-koo' she called it, and Harry got used to it. Then, she got down on her knees to pray beside the bed, always remembering mommy and daddy, before climbing in to sleep beside him, still in that light little nightgown; he knew he'd never get used to that. He added cold baths to the long walks.

On the long walks, he tried to pick up the papers from New York. When there was one, he watched the shootout go from a first page "OUTRAGE!" to a page nine "Search continues for man, woman and auto in Zwerbach killing". They may have still been looking, but, he realized, they weren't looking very hard. That is, the police weren't looking very hard – the Five Pointers and, most especially, the Black Hand would be more persistent. As the man had said, "*Il Mano Nera!* They're everywhere! Everywhere!"

He needed to get back into his room over the coach house at Avenue B and 8th. He had some really good clothes there that he had bought. He had some really good books there that he

hadn't read, yet. He had over three thousand bucks stashed there that he hoped to spend, one day. He had the remains of the gold he'd brought from the Yukon up there, as well. No one could possibly find it, short of tearing down the building, but it did no one any good sitting there. They'd need it soon. The problem was who was in charge there, now? And who would be shooting at him when he showed up? Besides all that, Carrol had things at her place. Did they dare go back?

After two weeks of sharing the room, Harry knew his nerves couldn't take it any more. He broached the idea of going back to New York and he could see that she was disappointed.

"This has been so much fun! Do we have to go back?" She pouted and bounced in the flimsy nightgown.

He showed her the much diminished roll of greenbacks. "Pretty soon, sweetheart. We can't play honeymoon forever."

So, they paid their bill, had one last meal at the greasy spoon they'd frequented and turned back to New York. About four miles out of town, though, she said, 'Turn here! Right here! Turn!' Two more turns and the road was just a dirt track, without even a gravel layer. Finally, she said, "Stop!" And they idled in the roadway.

She was looking down a long lane, with fields and cattle. The farmhouse, a quarter mile up the lane, had peeling paint but a good roof. It just needed some attention.

Harry waited a full five minutes while she stared at the house, then quietly eased the machine into gear and turned in. "Tony! No!"

"You want to, hon. And, you should. All they can do is throw you out again." The auto kept moving slowly along the lane.

"I'm scared," she said, in a very small voice.

"That's why you've got a big strong husband here with you." And, she slid over to hold on to his arm.

When they reached the house, he let the car idle again, waiting. A border collie came trotting out from around the back, eyed the machine with suspicion, then caught a scent and bounded to the passenger side. Carrol greeted the dog with hugs and he greeted her with face licks, tail beating time like a prestissimo metronome. Harry switched off the engine and got the new luggage out of the back.

Carrol had gone to the porch step, the collie running circles around her, and stopped with one foot on the bottom step as a man and woman in their 40s came out, standing silently. Harry came slowly to place himself beside Carrol.

At last, she said, "Mom. Dad. This is Tony." She grabbed his hand and he could see her get ready for the whopper of her life. "Mom, dad." She held up the hand with the ring, again. "Tony's my husband." All four gulped at that.

It was three full seconds before the woman said, "Well ... we'd better have a coffee."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

June 10, 1907

The Franklin got decent fuel mileage for a big six-cylinder engine, but it had to be fed and gasoline was scarce as turtle nipples between Stockertown and Newark. He'd half-filled back in Pennsylvania, then got a few more gallons in Rockaway before arriving in East Orange at five o'clock of a Saturday evening, running on a prayer and not much else.

No one in that tiny little town had heard of gasoline – only a handful had even seen an automobile. The idea of a fuelling station was foreign to them; the very concept of distilling petroleum oil to make a volatile flammable liquid seemed insane. It looked like it might be a long walk to Jersey City.

They got a room for the night, posing as honeymooners again, and Carrol stayed behind to wash up while Harry searched for fuel. At last, beaten, he made his way back to the room,

where she was already tucked up in bed. He kissed her cheek and she turned to put her arms around his neck. “Any luck?” But he had to shake his head.

“The hardware store says they might be able to order some, but it’ll take a week.”

“Well, that’s okay. We’ll just snuggle up here and wait.” She didn’t realize what she was saying, he thought.

“We can’t wait that long. Almost out of dough.” He took off his jacket and sat on the bed to undo his boots. She sat up to massage his neck. “We need fuel. We can’t burn water. Cars burn gasoline – I’ve heard of them using benzine, but that’s dangerous stuff. Some cars even burn kerosene. Not this one, though; it’s not set up for it.”

“Is there anything else you can use? What about ...” She thought for a bit. “Doesn’t alcohol burn?”

“Sure, you’ve seen people light fancy drinks on fire. The alcohol would probably burn just fine, but it’s the rest of the stuff that’s in the booze that’s the problem. Lots of sugars. It’d gum up the engine right away.” Her fingers felt very good on his shoulders.

“Is there any kind of alcohol that doesn’t have all the sweetness in it? Can that burn?” She was kissing the back of his neck.

He hated leaving, but he had his boots and jacket back on in a second, kissed her, took one last look and was out the door.

The town had one bar. If he could find what he was looking for, it would be there. Hunched over the bar, he was nursing his second whiskey – or what passed as whiskey in that place. Honestly, the ‘distilled-that-morning’ whiskey served in Dawson was better.

“Where do you get this stuff?” and the bar-tender looked both ways before coming over.

"You a tax-man? A cop?" Harry shook his head. "Doesn't matter. I can keep a secret."

"So, this *is* bootleg?" It sure tasted like it was. "That's evil stuff. Who makes it?"

"As if I'd tell you that." The man started to walk away but Harry stopped him with a twenty.

"If you tell me who it is. Another one if you tell me where I can find him."

The first twenty disappeared. "Benny Crate makes it." The second twenty came and went and the man pointed behind Harry. "Right behind you."

Harry turned and raised his glass to the burly but spectacled man behind him. Harry dared another taste of the liquid, put the glass down, and took a moment to regain his equilibrium.

"What's the proof on your hootch?"

Nobody had ever asked Benny that before. "I don't know. One fifty, maybe."

"I'll give you twenty bucks for ten gallons." By the look on Crate's face, that was several times the going price. "But it's got to be straight out of the still – nothing mixed in with it."

"I'll take it, but what the hell are you going to do with that much moonshine?"

"I'm going to put it in my car, drive over the river, and all the way to Manhattan."

"All right, don't tell me."

Ten gallons of white lightning would fill the gas tank about halfway, while he reflected on the diminished state of the cash in his pocket. It was after midnight before he got back to the hotel room and Carrol. Still dressed for bed, she was sitting up, waiting for him. "Well?"

"Maybe. I hope. Do we head out now or wait for morning?"

Carrol moved close to him and put her arms around his waist. "Tomorrow. Let's honeymoon one more night."

So, they extended the honeymoon.

It had been the middle of the second week at Carrol's parents' farm when the honeymoon had actually started. It was a nice afternoon, and he was splitting wood, something he was good at, hoping to work off some of the excess energy that was accumulating from sharing a bed with someone like Carrol – without sharing anything else. He had painted the trim on the house the week before. Now, he heard her father coming up the drive, but kept splitting until the man's shadow fell over the block he had set up.

"Are you gettin' on, there?" was the opening shot.

"Well, it's good and dry. It splits easily."

"I meant, are you and my daughter gettin' on?" That was the second ranging shell.

"We're getting on fine, sir." Was this the conversation that ends with a shotgun and a preacher?

"You can call me Andy. Everybody does." There was a gap while Harry chopped. "Honeymooning with her parents. That can't be much fun." The first two shots had straddled him. He was hit midships with this one.

"Well, she's sorry she worried you ... Andy. She wanted to make amends." He split another block.

"What kind of trouble are you in?" And there was the broadside.

"Trouble? No trouble. Just ... on our honeymoon." Another block was split.

"You're not honeymooning." Harry shook his head, but the man pressed. "You don't kiss in the hallway; she don't sit on your lap on the porch; neither of you touches the other when you pass. Now, is that a sham honeymoon or do you two just don't like each other?"

Harry's answer was more a garbled series of syllables than a sentence.

"Listen, son. When Carrol's mother and me first shacked up, it was two weeks before she saw anything but the ceiling paper in the bedroom. It was a year before she could pass me in the hall without some grab-titty."

It took an effort for Harry to close his mouth. "You're, uhm, you're quite an observant fellow ... Andy. And very frank." Please, don't be either, anymore, he finished silently.

"No, I'd say you're hiding out as far from the city as you can. And that means you're in trouble. What kind of trouble are you in?"

That was a big decision, but finally: "We got ... mixed up in some shootings in New York. I was trying to save my boss's life; Carrol saved mine. We had to run."

"From the law?"

"No, sir. Not from the law. Neither of us did anything wrong." That was only a minor fib, depending on how you viewed it. "From the people who were doing the shooting. We didn't really know each other before the bullets started flying, but we sort of got thrown together, after. These people are ... dangerous. I thought it best to get her out of the city for as long as I could."

"I see. It's a rough crowd, is it?" Harry nodded solemnly. "And, you were part of it?" Harry nodded. "And, Carrol – she was part of it?" Harry nodded, again. "So, am I right in thinking she wasn't exactly ... innocent before you two ended up on the run?"

"How do you mean, sir?"

The older man braced himself. "I mean – she wasn't a virgin."

Harry felt much better; he could be truthful, here. "I have no idea, sir. As far as I know, she still is."

That stopped the older man. “You’re kiddin’.” Andy looked at the upper floor windows of the house. “You two have been sleepin’ up there in that bed for near two weeks, now – and before that, how long, a week?” Harry shrugged. “And you haven’t been ...?” Harry shrugged again. “Now, don’t that beat all? I believe you, but don’t it beat all?” He looked at the bedroom windows again. “Not even once?” Harry shook his head. “You’re a more patient man than I ever was. I’ll tell you a secret.”

“You don’t have to! – Andy.” Harry began chopping fast.

“If you look at the dates on Carrol’s birth certificate and our wedding certificate, you’ll see that Carrol was a honeymoon baby. It all works out but, truth is, we kind of back-dated that wedding certificate a year or so.” Harry stopped chopping, having heard more than he cared to. “Now, Carrol don’t know that, so there’s no need to let on, is there? My point is this, son: I got eyes that open up wider’n a mole’s, and I don’t think you two are really married, but her mother and me have got no cause to judge anybody on that account. We was young once too, you know.” And here the man looked Harry in the eye. “Just take good care of her.”

“I’ll do my best, sir. I really will.” And the older man walked away, leaving Harry trying to scrub unwanted pictures from his mind.

In ‘their’ bedroom that night, Harry noted that Carrol had put on the flimsy nightgown she’d distracted him with at the hotel in Stockertown. “Aw, you’re killing me, sweetheart.”

“That’s the plan. You have a good talk with my dad?” she asked, casually.

“Yup. Quite a talk. He doesn’t believe we’re married.”

“Neither does my mother.” Carrol stationed herself by the bed that Harry was already in and began her stretching exercises. “Tony, she told me that her and dad had been shacked up for

a year before I came along and they only got married after. Isn't that something to learn? And them church-going people, too!" By now, she was lifting her legs vertically to touch her cheeks.

"Shocking," was all he had to offer.

"So, she said, if we aren't really married, they can't really complain." She was dancing with her back to the window and the moonlight provided a remarkable display. "And, she said, she thinks you have the patience of Job." That was punctuated by a 180 degree leg split.

Harry, after reconstructing her sentence in his head from the few vague syllables he'd heard, couldn't really disagree with her mother, but the simile was an unfortunate one. Talk of Job made him think of plagues of boils and locusts and the deaths of firstborn males – or was that Pharaoh? At any rate, it wasn't conducive to passion.

Carrol, moonlight behind her, lithely moved from the splits up to her knees beside the bed, folded her hands and said, "Lord, thank you for taking care of Tony and me and please keep looking out for us. Thank you for mom and dad being such good people and please keep looking after them. Amen." She started to rise, then stopped and folded her hands again. "And, Lord, I ask you especially to be with Tony, tonight, and give him the strength to survive what I'm about to do to him. Amen."

And then she rose, still backlit by the moon, slid the nightgown over her head in one motion and climbed into the bed. Snuggled close, she said "Tony, you sweet silly man. Didn't you know we could have been doing this from that first night in the back of the car? I practically threw myself at you, but you're such a goddamn stubborn knight in shining armor ... !"

All that was two weeks back, and it had been a happy honeymoon, even if it was in his in-laws' home. This morning, though, was a different kettle of fish – or a different keg of whiskey,

at any rate.

It was a bright, blue-skied day, full of optimism. Nevertheless, Harry made Carrol step well back as he went to the front of the car. Three things might happen: it wouldn't start at all; it would start and run perfectly; or it would blow up and send bits of automobile and Harry skyward.

The first crank gave nothing. The second sent a backfire through the carburetor. Harry eased off the timing and opened the choke. The machine started on the third try and obediently waited for him to climb in.

"Come on, honey. Let's go while we can." And, he helped her in, then followed suit.

It took experimentation to get the spark advance where the engine ran smoothly but, when he got it, he was astonished by the power and speed he suddenly had. He was burning whiskey, for heaven's sake – then he stopped and re-thought. No, he was burning alcohol and the machine fairly flew.

They arrived in Newark in record time (if anyone kept records for that sort of thing, he thought) and motored through the city's streets. The Franklin was behaving admirably, perhaps shaking just a little as the spark needed adjustment at different speeds. Still, they were nearly home ...

... if either of them still had a home. If either of them could ever go home. If either of them dared show their face on the streets of the city again.

At the 39th Street ferry, they lined up with other traffic which was mostly carts, carriages and pedestrians. The car drew a lot of attention, which made Harry nervous; there were few enough autos at all, let alone bright green Franklins. If anyone was on the lookout, they'd be

found. Carrol held onto his arm tightly. “Tony, I’m getting scared,” she whispered.

“We’ll go straight to your place; you get your things – all of them. Then we’ll go to my place and see if I can get my stuff. Then we get the hell away.”

‘Her’ place was in an alley off Centre Street and about as run-down as you could get. She wouldn’t let him come in but made him stay and guard the machine, which made sense, in this place. It took her ten minutes and she was back with a suitcase, an armload of extras and a hat.

“Let’s go, Tony! Let’s go, now!”

They left Little Italy at a speed only a whiskey-fuelled Franklin could achieve. She clung to his arm, face pushed into his shoulder. “What happened?” he asked repeatedly, until she finally looked up, tears on her cheeks.

“I lived with four other girls. They’re all gone. They took them.”

“Who took who? You mean your friends are gone? Who took them?”

“The woman said they came and grabbed all of them and took them and they haven’t come back.” Her tears were flowing freely.

“Who took them? You mean the Five Pointers? They came and took them?”

“No, Tony. Not the Five Points. I know Kelly; he’d never hurt the girls, not that way. Tony, their clothes are still there.” She looked more frightened than she’d been when she jumped into the car to escape a gunfight. “The woman said something in Italian, I think. ‘*Mano Nera’*.”

The Franklin came bouncing to a stop in the middle of Cleveland Place, drawing angry shouts from cartmen behind him.

“How do you know about *Mano Nera?”*

She stared at him. “Just a little that I’d heard when I was ... with Kelly’s girls. Everybody

knew he paid them off every month. I know because he'd sometimes send some of the girls as a favor for the couriers and ..." She didn't elaborate.

Kelly and the Five Pointers were the Lower East Side link to the Black Hand, and, from there, to Italy. After a few breaths, he set the vehicle in motion, past the little triangular park between Kenmare and Spring Streets. "Petrosino's going to be real interested and real pissed."

They took the long way to Avenue B at St. Mark's Place and Harry drove past twice to see if there were any familiar faces. The third time, he slowed enough to look into the lane. The big doors of the coach-house were hanging open and one was off its hinges.

He stopped the machine on Avenue B about a hundred feet from East 7th, turned to Carrol and kissed her hard. "You keep an eye behind you. If I come out walking, it's all good. If you see me come out running, don't wait around, run up East 7th as hard as you can and find a cop. If I don't come out at all, do the same, but maybe you don't have to run."

"What's in there?" She was quivering, again.

"Maybe the most vicious, dangerous, evil gang of murderers, cutthroats and kidnappers in America – or maybe nothing at all."

"Well, I'll pray that it's not the first."

And, she did, right there on the front seat of the machine.

Two ways to do it: climb over fences to get into the back of the place; or walk up the drive like he belonged there. He had his best suit on, so he walked.

It all seemed deserted, which was a surprise. He thought the remaining Eastsiders would have holed up. Then he thought 'if any were remaining.' If Kelly and the Five Points had continued their rampage and surprised the Eastsiders, there may not be any. He reached the

coach-house without any encounters.

Inside, all of his careful work had been undone. Tools were strewn about, windows smashed. His clothes had been pulled out and thrown around, many soaked in motor oil. The gasoline cans had been spilled and long evaporated. Spare tires and tubes for the Franklin had been slashed.

Upstairs, his bed, where he and Anna had shared some memorable times (where was she now, he wondered for a moment), had been ripped apart, the mattress slashed, the stuffing pulled out. The rest of his clothes had been cut and ripped apart.

Whoever it was, they were looking for money. Who it was didn't really matter. The question of the moment was: had they found it?

In a corner, he lifted away a small piece of the base board, felt down into the hole behind it, found the string, and drew it up until a canvas bag, of the kind banks use, came up. Once opened, it revealed a cache of cash: more than two thousand dollars from the fifties and hundreds that Zwerbach insisted he take, two rolls of the silver dollars – $50 in each roll – that Lewis had flipped to him at Zwerbach's request. On another string was another heavy canvas bag – heavier even than the rolls of silver dollars. He opened it to peer inside.

The remains of four years digging at the face of Boulder Creek Claim No. 21, the Klondike, Yukon, Canada glinted at him. Gold was set at $20.67 per ounce; this poke he knew, because he'd weighed it often, weighed twenty-two and one-half pounds. Ten years salary for an average Joe.

"Damn, that's where it was!" Roxie Vanilli was behind him. "I knew you hid it somewhere, but that was clever, kid."

"How you been, Roxie? Was it you set up the boss, or was it just a happy coincidence?" Harry was turning and rising as he said it. "You working for Five Points now or somebody else?"

"What's it to you? You'll never live long enough to make anything out of it." Roxie had a Colt revolver in his right hand.

"I guess I'm just curious." He was eyeing the distance across the loft.

"I'm curious, too. Curious how you and Carrol Terry got connected. I'm thinking I'll help myself, there. Is she as good as they all said she is?"

"Better. And she'll pray over you, to boot – but you won't live long enough for that." He could do it, if he timed it right.

"Yeah? Well, I'm the one with the gun. Just hand me the swag and be careful."

"This?" He held up the bags of cash and gold and began walking. "Here you go."

"Far enough! Toss it."

So, he did. One quick spin by the drawstring and twenty-two pounds of gold hit Vanilli as hard as he could throw it. Two rolls of silver dollars, one in each fist, ended it. Harry picked up the fallen Colt, the bag, and Vanilli. The unconscious Italian he propped against a wall, the muzzle of the cocked revolver against the man's temple. One more dead Italian for Petrosino to deal with. He liked the idea and, slowly, began to squeeze the trigger.

"Tony ..." There was no urgency to her voice, just soothing calmness. "Don't do it, baby. He ain't worth it." She was talking from the top of the stair behind him. He kept the gun pressed against Vanilli's head.

"Tony ..." She was still soothing and calm. "You're better than that. I know you are." He wasn't convinced yet. "Besides, you told my father you'd take care of me. How are you going to

do that if they hang you?"

"They'll never hang *me*, baby." He let the hammer down slowly and turned to her. "New York changed to the electric chair, a couple of years back." He dropped the gun down into the wall where the gold had been and picked up the bags of gold and cash. "Come on, darling. We're leaving."

"Okay," she said. "Where we going?"

"We're getting the hell out of New York. We're the Bonfuzzi's from now on, that nice, happy couple who live in the white cottage with the rose trellises. We'll go upstate and find a place to live."

"Okay," she repeated.

"And I'm going to have to get a job." It was a new idea for him.

CHAPTER TWENTY

August 8, 1908

"'Morning, Mrs. Bonfuzzi." The milkman left one pint of cream and one quart of milk on the doorstep, picked up the empties and clinked his way back to the cart. Mrs. Bonfuzzi was coming in from the garden with fresh flowers in her hand. She was an awfully pretty young thing; her husband was some sort of repair man for automobiles, he thought, although he'd never heard of such a thing. Owned a nice machine, too – far nicer than a milkman would ever afford. He caught a glimpse of Mrs. Bonfuzzi's calves as she went up the front steps in her dressing gown and sighed. After five kids, his wife's legs didn't look anything like that. On the other hand, they never had. He sighed again, stepped up onto the milk cart, and the horse moved them on to the next house.

Harry was standing in the living room, at the front window. He heard the milkman's

greeting, watched him watch Carrol's legs, watched him sigh, chuckled to himself. He'd done his own share of sighing over Carrol's legs himself, not so long ago. Still did, actually.

He sipped coffee as she came through the front door. The flowers immediately filled the room with fragrance as she dropped them in a water-filled vase and opened the curtains on the side-window to let the summer sun flood in. He watched her silently.

Satisfied with the flower arrangement, she turned and saw him watching. "What?"

"Just watching you with the sun behind you." She smiled. "And I was thinking about that night at your parents' with the moon behind you." She laughed at that and came close to kiss him.

"Have you got time?" she asked, lifting her eyes to indicate the bedroom upstairs.

"I've always got time, if you do," he said, nibbling various places. "Except today. Got to go." He put the coffee down and took the time to kiss her thoroughly.

When they broke away, she pushed him. "You bastard! Starting things you're not going to finish."

"I'll be back, tonight." And he kissed her again and went out to the car.

He loved being so far out in the country, away from the noise and craziness of Manhattan. Yonkers was nearly as quiet and peaceful as the Terry farm out in Stockertown. And, yet, just a half-hour's drive away, Manhattan loomed. Not that he and Carrol ever went there. It had taken Vanilli less than two hours to be alerted they were in town, last time. They weren't going to take any more risks.

He looked in the mirror he'd installed in the auto that let him look at what's behind without twisting around in the seat. He called it a back-looking mirror. What he saw in the mirror

was the reflection of the little house he had exchanged nearly half the gold he'd brought from the Yukon to buy. It was very expensive but they'd bought it, anyway. He was happy about that – one of his father's goals was for the family to have a nice house from their labor in the Klondike. Well, he was all that was left of the family. The house was white with green trim, rose trellises up the sides and a small back yard, just big enough for a garden. It wouldn't do forever, but it did have two bedrooms – one of them empty at the moment; if no baby had come along yet, it certainly wasn't for want of trying. And Carrol had joined the nice little church up the block and insisted that Harry come with her on Sunday morning to pray for a baby. Harry thought the time might be put to more practical activity, but he had no say in the matter.

His job was at a stable on the west end of Ludlow, just by Broadway. When he'd first knocked on the door, last year, he'd had a tough time persuading the owner that fixing autos could be a real thing. A year ago, there weren't twenty autos that went past the stable in a day. He had to admit that business had been slow for the first few months, but, in time, the trade began to grow. A lot of business men were suddenly buying automobiles and using them to travel into the City and back out to their homes in places like Yonkers and New Rochelle. Eventually, those automobiles began to break down – and Harry was there when they did.

Before the end of '07, he persuaded the owner to stock up on gasoline and motor oil. Now, having large cans of flammable liquids in the back – especially with hay and horses around – was worrisome for the owner, but he soon began to see the profit margin build. It was the only place you could fill your fuel tank on the way in to the City, or on the way back.

By the spring, the stable owner had sold the horses, emptied the hayloft, mucked out the stalls, begun stocking up on tubes, tires, fan belts and spark plugs. Automobiles were the wave of

the future, there was no doubt about that. With two other men hired to service the autos, Harry was now a full-time procurer – of auto parts. It was his job to arrange for the ordering and transport of the parts – mostly because he had a car and the others didn't.

So, life settled into a kind of routine. Work six days a week with Wednesday afternoon and Saturday mornings off, along with Sunday, of course. Bring the pay packet home for the little woman to divide up into household expenses, taxes, mad money, and savings. They had no mortgage, so the savings actually began to grow. The truth is they were playing house so hard that both of them tended to forget that it was a game they weren't legally entitled to play.

Life was enchanting. No, life was beautiful. No, life was pleasant.

Face it, life was dull.

Where had all the fun of his youth gone? Here he was, twenty-one years old, and he'd settled into a monotony of routine: wake up; have sex with his gorgeous young wife; go to work doing something he loved doing; come home; spend the evening sitting curled up with his wife, reading philosophy, or history, or mathematics; make love once again; go to sleep. Then repeat it all the next day. There had to be more to life than that.

He hadn't gone toe-to-toe and fist-to-fist with someone who was trying to kill him in months. He hadn't driven a speeding auto through a hail of bullets in even longer. It was simply ages since he'd fought off carnivorous predators bent on consuming his raw flesh. As for battling nature step-by-step through mind-numbing, limb-freezing blizzards ... well, that rarely happened in Yonkers.

Is that all there was to life? There had to be more.

For the last – nearly a year – his life had been bounded by the stable, the church and his

home, spiced by occasional trips to the green grocer and the butcher, with stops at the library for new books. He needed to think further abroad, to find some excitement. After all, a man cannot live on good food, a comfortable home, an interesting occupation, a decent income, and great sex alone.

On the way home, his mind flipped through possibilities. A trip out west? Take the train to see the Great Plains? Were the Indians still a problem out there? They certainly were in popular literature. Maybe another time.

Go north? See Canada? He'd been there. There was nothing in particular to see.

You couldn't go east; there was nothing but water that way.

South, then. All the great southern states. The land of hospitality, of cotton, of Dixie, of the Civil War, of slavery, of the Ku Klux Klan ... maybe staying home would be better.

Something closer to home. See a show on what they were starting to call 'Broadway', which was really just a show at one of the downtown theaters in New York. He'd seen shows. Besides, downtown Manhattan was a good place for him to avoid for the next several decades.

Something that was just excitement and fun, with no chance of getting into a gunfight. Someplace that would put the smile back on Carrol's face. Someplace to get the blood pumping.

Coney Island!

He'd never been there but he'd heard about it. Carrol had been there – she had very frankly informed him that she'd been a hootchie-kootchie girl at one of Coney Island's several theaters. After all this time, the chances of being seen and recognized out on Coney Island were small – it was a family place, for heaven's sake, hootchie-kootchie shows aside.

A day at Coney Island! Some rides in the amusement park; a trip through Luna Park to

see the World's Wonders exhibits; some bathing on the beach; a show at one of the theaters; then dinner and a slow drive home with his sleepy wife's head on his shoulder.

Her reaction fell short of his expectations. "Oh! Well ... if you want to go ... I suppose."

"You don't want to?" That was a surprise.

"I've been there, honey. I don't need to go again." She went back to the kitchen to continue making dinner.

He followed her. "Did I say something wrong, baby? I'm sorry. I've been thinking about it all day and I guess I was just excited." He encircled her waist from behind and kissed her neck.

She leaned back and pulled his face closer. "Things weren't always fun for me there. That's where I got taken into the Five Points girls. There's a lot that goes on behind the doors that people don't see."

"I'm sorry. We won't go."

She suddenly turned around in his arms. "You know what? Let's go! I've never seen it from the front. Let's go do all the silly things and ride the elephants and whatever else people do. Let's go to Coney Island!"

Now, a trip from Yonkers all the way down to Coney Island isn't something you can just jump into your auto and do. You have to make sure you have enough fuel and oil to get there and back – or that there are sufficient refueling stations between here and there – and that they are open for business when you go past. You have to have at least six spare tires and wheels. You'll need breakfast and lunch prepared and packed, because you'll have to start before dawn. You'll need to study road maps, because there is no direct road to get you from all the way out in Yonkers down to Brighton Beach. It would be more than thirty miles if you could go straight as

the crow flies, but you can't; you have to go straight as the crow walks, which is nearer forty-five. That kind of trip can be tough on an automobile. He'd have to work hard on it to make sure they made it there and back. One of the things he did was paint it a deep, glossy black rather than its conspicuous, even garish green. Vanilli – and whoever he was working for – were looking for green.

He planned to use the Randall's Island bridges to take him across the East River to Queens. From there, Flatlands to Woodhaven, then just keep bearing south until, eventually, they'd arrive on the Island.

And, this time, he didn't have any New Jersey moonshine to speed things along.

The night before their trip, Carrol disappeared upstairs after dinner and fussed about for five minutes. Eventually, she called down "Close your eyes!" He heard quiet feet on the stairs, then, "Okay, open them!" He did. "Ta-da!"

The bathing costume was bright red with white piping and a wider white belt. The skirt was scandalously above the knee and the blouse was cut dangerously low. There were the required stockings, of course, but so thin as to be nearly transparent. It was topped with a scarlet turban binding her hair.

"You're going to get us arrested."

"Yeah, but it'll be worth it, won't it?"

He lifted the hem of the skirt and saw bare thighs above stocking tops and garters. "Are there bloomers somewhere to go with this?" and she smiled while lifting the hem higher.

"Yes, I just didn't bother putting them on, tonight."

It had been a long hard work week for Harry. He was frankly exhausted, which is why she

beat him to the bedroom by a full quarter of a second.

Coney Island was ... everything they had hoped it would be. Once they'd found a place to leave their machine, the world seemed open to them. On every hand, giant towers beckoned them to one attraction or another. Luna Park called and they spent nearly two hours on a Trip To The Moon, riding an elephant (an actual elephant!) and taking in the exotic sights of The Dragon's Gorge. They finished that part off with a trip to the top of the Electric Tower, one hundred and twenty-five feet above Surf Avenue, so far below.

At the Steeplechase Park, they swung dizzyingly and breathlessly around another tower in The Airships, declined to ride anything as mundane as the Ferris Wheel, but did ride the See-Saw, a giant rocking arm with a four-place Ferris Wheel on each end! They also plunged down the giant falls on the Shoot The Chute before daring to enter the Cave of the Winds, where gentlemen had their hats blown off and ladies obligingly and knowingly allowed their skirts to be blown in the air, all the while pretending to be flabbergasted and shocked at the liberty. Harry was delighted to discover that Carrol had left her bloomers off, once again, although she made sure no one else made the discovery.

Frankly, they were both exhausted by then, but there was more to do. The bathhouses at Dreamland allowed them to change for the beach – Carrol had thoughtfully provided a navy-blue outfit for Harry – and he saw that the bloomers had finally found their rightful place, although the sheerness of the stockings did attract glances. An hour of beach-side frolic along with a few thousand other frolickers left them breathless from laughing and gritty from sand and salt.

After a shower to clean off the grit, a few breathless minutes in the privacy of the bathhouse, and a change back to street togs, they were making their way up an avenue known as

The Bowery, on the way back to their motor, discussing dinner, when the horror was unleashed.

A drawn-out scream split the hubbub around them and brought the noise to a halt. Harry was shocked to see black smoke begin to billow from the upper stories of a nearby building. Even more, shrieking women and frightened men appeared at the upper windows, calling for help. More smoke was billowing from other windows. There were people trapped on the upper floors, maybe a dozen of them at the windows.

If you'd asked him why, he couldn't have told you, but he left Carrol in the street and ran for the building, stepped up on an apple barrel at its base, seized the frame of an awning and swung himself up, surprised to discover that the awning was metal. Balanced on the awning's frame, he grabbed the sill of a second floor window to pull himself onto the ledge. He could hear fire-reels approaching, but above him, a woman was screaming "My baby! My baby! Save my baby!" Once more, he pulled himself up to the window sill above, swung up a leg and pulled himself until he was standing, balanced three stories above the concrete, on the window ledge.

"Lady! Here! Pass me the baby! Hurry!" The woman looked down at him in shock and pulled the baby back. "Lady! Give me your baby! I'll take it down to safety! Hurry!"

And, she looked at him with gratitude in her eyes and said, "What the hell's the matter with you, bub? Get out of here!" Her husband stuck his head out beside her. "Are you nuts? Beat it! You'll ruin the whole thing."

"Pass me the baby before it's too late!" he shouted, but a ladder came up past his head and he heard footsteps thumping their way up it.

"What do you think you're doing, you stupid jackass!" was the reply from the husband and a fireman climbing the ladder gave him a shove. "Get the hell out of here, idiot!"

That was when the hoses started to spray the front of the building and Harry had to climb down to avoid being knocked down. At the bottom, two firemen grabbed him and pushed him away, saying "You trying to ruin the show, asshole? Now, screw off!"

By now, a large crowd had gathered to watch the firemen rescue the people on the third floor and extinguish the smoke – smoke, because there was no flame. Just smoke. Where there's smoke, there's supposed to be fire, unless that smoke is theatrical smudges and the whole thing is nothing but a show, probably repeated five times a day. He had barged into the middle of a mock fire, with mock victims, mock babies, and mock firemen. Of all of them, he was the only one who'd been in danger.

Now, Carrol came up to him and wrapped her arms around his neck. "My hero!" she said and kissed him. A ring of spectators gathered around them and applauded. Just when he was about to lose his temper, a man in a checked suit, wearing a derby, pushed his way through and held out a hand.

"I'm Stauch." There was a pause, as if he expected recognition. "Louis Stauch." Harry shook the hand. "Sir," the be-derbied man continued, "that was the bravest thing I've ever seen."

"What? That was the stupidest thing you've ever seen. I didn't know it was a show."

"Exactly. You didn't know – yet you climbed that building and tried to save that baby. You're a hero, my friend!" And, Carrol, saying "See, I told you!", kissed him again. There was applause again from the crowd, most of whom had quit watching the fake fire to see the new attraction.

"What's your name, sir?" and, thoughtlessly, Harry said, "Bonfuzzi. Tony Bonfuzzi."

"Well, Mr. Bonfuzzi, allow me to invite you and your lovely lady to be my guests this

evening for dinner at Stauch's on The Bowery and to take in the show at Henderson's Theater afterward." The sincerity was a little marred by a voice well-raised to assure that all heard of Stauch's and Henderson's generosity.

So, will he, nil he, Harry and Carrol were guests at Louis Stauch's famous restaurant in Dreamland and were then whisked away to a fun evening of singing and chorus girls. Carrol was having fun, singing along, until she grabbed his arm at one point and whispered, "I used to sing that song – and she's wearing my costume!" After that, she sulked. It's strange what can ruin a night.

For instance, when the show was nearly over, the M.C. of the evening came on stage and waved the audience to quiet. "Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you a genuine hero, a man who, this afternoon, risked his own life in an attempt to save a baby from a blazing inferno." Huge applause from the audience. "That the inferno was all part of the Fighting The Flames attraction here at Dreamland, on The Bowery five times every afternoon on the hours, doesn't matter – he had no way of knowing that. He heroically scaled three storeys of vertical wall to save a child. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Tony Bonfuzzi!" And he swept his arm around the theater to point at Tony and Carrol near the front. A brilliant spotlight swooped across the auditorium and blinded him. The audience came to their feet to applaud him.

Just before the spotlight blinded him, though, he saw Roxie Vanilli's face turning to stare at him, shock and hatred in every feature.

It was going to be a long night.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

August 8, 1908

Sixth row. If he pulled Carrol out and left the show, everybody would know – especially Vanilli. If they waited until the show was over and the crowd was leaving, maybe they could mingle in and disappear. Never mind that Carrol was in a dress that matched her scarlet bathing costume or that Harry was two to five inches taller than almost anyone else in the room.

Vanilli was in the crowd, somewhere, and he sure wasn't about to walk away without some kind of violence. The question of who else was with him was becoming important. If they could stay ahead, they might get to their machine in time to get out of the park intact. If Vanilli could lay a trap of some kind, the man didn't give a damn about Carrol. They'd both be dead.

The crowd was moving slowly toward the exits, shuffling and discussing the show, which had been fun for everyone until the spotlight fell on Harry. Carrol allowed herself to be led,

aware that something was wrong but unsure of what it was. Harry was hunched over, trying to reduce his height among the crowd. Carrol's red dress he could do nothing about.

The little door to the right by the stage was barely five feet high, at the bottom of a short flight of stairs. Taking Carrol's arm, he stepped down, opened the door and pulled her inside.

The smell of sweating musicians filled the air – this was the orchestra pit and the way under the stage to the dressing rooms. Carrol, getting over her surprise at being pulled in there, took his hand and led him to the back, which made sense. She used to dance here; she would certainly know her way around backstage. That might be a life-saver.

As she dragged him, she called back. "Do you mind telling me why we're sneaking around?"

"You shouldn't have stopped me from shooting him." He nearly banged his head on the bottom of the stage.

"You mean that guy you beat up?"

"Roxie Vanilli's out there. I'm sorry, we shouldn't have come. Or I shouldn't have tried to save the baby. Next time, the baby's on his own."

There were a half-dozen doors at the end of the passage and she grabbed a door knob and pulled it open – directly into the chorus's change room. There were a couple of shrieks, but no one really paid much attention, until Carrol's face was recognized.

"Carrol!", "It's Carrol!", "Where you been, honey?", "Who's that?", "Carrol. She used to dance." And more.

"Who's the tall one? You get yourself a man, kid?" and Carrol proudly brought Harry forward.

"This is my husband." Squeals and gasps and cheek kissing. "He's also the guy who saved the baby this afternoon." More squeals and gasps and cheek kissing, on Harry this time. "We've got to get out without anybody seeing us. How do we do that?"

Where there's a will and a dozen chorus-girls, anything can happen. In fifteen minutes, a miracle had occurred and the girls of the chorus began to go home or to meet their dates – or to go looking for dates.

Two of the girls, a medium-tall blonde in a tight red dress with red stockings and a very tall red-head wearing her theatrical wig and an even tighter dress that was shockingly, even illegally short, looked furtively into shadows before making their way toward the rail station. They hurried, keeping out of the lighted areas, arms around each other.

By this time of night, there were very few people left in the park; the restaurants were long closed; the rides were shut down; the beach was empty. The two women were making sure they kept as far from others as they could. The 11:00 p.m. train back to New York was the last one for the night.

About halfway to the station, they became aware of the man behind them and doubled their pace. So did the man. Even so, they'd have made it to the train if the taller one had not been having trouble with unfamiliar high-heeled shoes. At last, they had to stop while she removed the footwear, just as two men stepped out from the shadows in front of them.

That was when the man behind closed in. "Hey, Bonfuzzi! We was thinking you was dead, but here you are, being stupid again. I owe you, over and over again. Now, we're gonna finish the little job we started years ago, back in New York." And, he produced a flick knife while the men ahead closed in.

The taller woman finally got the high heeled shoes unlaced and gratefully pulled off the six-inch-heeled platform shoes and stepped down to her normal five-foot-eight height. At the same time, she took off the red wig and fluffed out her own long brown curls. The two women were actually two women.

It was five seconds before Vanilli could speak. “Where’s Bonfuzzi, bitch!” was hardly the way to open a conversation.

“Who are you talking about? Can we get to the train, please? The last train’s going to leave in a few minutes.” That was the one in the, admittedly borrowed, tight red dress.

“Where’s Bonfuzzi, bitch!” Vanilli repeated, which got the women upset.

“That’s no way to talk to ladies, bub. Didn’t your mother teach you any manners?”

“Oh, we’ll show you manners.” And the three men began to step in.

“Hey! What’s going on over there?” Two watchmen on their way up Surf Avenue now began making their way toward the group. Each was only armed with a nightstick, but they were burly men who were used to dealing with Coney Island rowdies. The trio of thugs, undoubtedly armed to the teeth, watched them until Vanilli tossed his head and the three quickly disappeared into the shadows. The two women thanked the surprised watchmen with big hugs and, just in time, made their train. Another interesting diversion from the usual events of the day.

On the other side of the theater, heading as fast as they could up The Bowery, Harry and Carrol were taking the long way to the auto park. Carrol was in a borrowed dress that was not a patch on the red one she’d loaned her friend. Harry wasn’t disguised at all – was he supposed to put on a dress and a wig from the costumes or something – pretend he was some giant female?

If they could stay unobserved for five minutes, they could be on their way home. Enough

of adventure – a plain, boring life with a beautiful wife and sex twice a day was exciting enough for him from now on.

The last train was just leaving the station when they turned off Surf Avenue to head for their auto. They had just about reached it when the inevitable happened.

"Ain't you such a smart-ass, Bonfuzzi, sending out two girls like that? We saw right through it." Vanilli had stepped into the light just a few yards away, a Colt leveled at Harry, while two others were coming from the darkness.

Now was the only time.

Two fast steps put him within reach and a hard kick went into the Italian's groin. He and Tchin Len had practiced many more sophisticated moves, but that one always worked. As Vanilli began to bend over, Harry stepped inside, grabbed Roxie's gun-hand and twisted until the chromed firearm came away – chromed, for god's sake! Of all the useless vanities. Vanilli was trying to fight back so he got an elbow into his nose – again! – the man never learned. He followed that with a hard palm to the gangster's twisted elbow.

Vanilli was down and now Harry was leveling the gun, this time toward the other two. Carrol was screaming and covering her head with her hands as the first man reached for her.

He went down with a bullet in his chest.

The other had his own piece out by then so Harry didn't take any chances. He shot that one twice, then threw the gun well clear of Vanilli.

Carrol was staring wide-eyed as he grabbed her hand and began to run to the car. They never got there.

Two police patrol cars came into sight, bells clanging. He'd never get the Franklin started

in time, so he turned and headed back to The Bowery. Somewhere there had to be safety.

The third building along was the scene of the Fighting The Flames attraction. There had to be some out of the way spot in there. There also had to be some way in – he didn't think Carrol would be happy climbing up the walls.

In the urgency of the afternoon's heroic rescue attempt, he'd missed something: the doors and windows on the bottom floor were false. With a magical touch of scenic art, they were painted on. How had he not seen that? By now, the police had discovered Vanilli and his ex-thugs; they'd be looking around for suspects shortly. Time to get off the street.

The front and east side of the building offered no entry, but somewhere the cast and staff had to get in and out; there had to be a door.

And there was. On the back, tucked under a loading dock, a short, narrow door promised a way in. And it was padlocked. Damn, damn, damn, damn, damn. He heard the police cars beginning to prowl in their direction.

"How many hat pins you got, honey?"

"Hat pins? Three."

"Gimme!" They were probably too long and too flimsy for what he had in mind.

He'd read about it in a couple of books from libraries. He'd thought about it. Now, he was going to try it. He bent two of the pins and left the other straight. The straight pin went into the keyhole until it met resistance. One of the bent ones joined it and he carefully twisted until he felt the plunger push aside. The second bent pin joined the first two and was twisted the other way. The straight pin came out and was bent as well, then was applied to the plate, twisting until it went down. The lock snapped open and he pulled Carrol into the dark interior. There was no

way of closing the lock on the outside to disguise their entry point; in fact, he brought it with them so no one could lock them in. He handed the pins back to her.

"How do I keep my hat on with bent pins?"

"I'll get you some glue. Are there any lights in here?" There weren't, at least, none that he could find.

Outside, through the surprisingly thin walls, he heard vehicles go by slowly. The whole bottom floor appeared to be a single room. Somewhere, though, there had to be stairs – and a light switch. For some reason, he would feel safer upstairs.

He found the stairs and the lights at the same time; the first by tripping over them and the second by landing a hand on the switch while trying to prevent falling because he had tripped.

Sure enough, the first floor was only one room, empty except for a stack of boxes in a corner filled with ten-year old flyers featuring long-gone attractions. There was plenty of dust, as well.

From the outside door to the stairway was a track that had been swept clear of dust by the passage of many feet. The cast and crew of Fighting The Flames must habitually follow the same path every day. Carrol went up first and found lights at the top; Harry flipped off the switch below and followed.

The second floor must be the preparation area. Racks of costumes stood along one wall and tables with makeup and other items along another. Smaller cubicles were probably dressing rooms. The windows were covered with sheet metal and probably had painted scenery on the outside.

Up again, and this was the stage. The entire floor reeked of oil and a row of electrically-

fired smudge pots were placed below the windows. It must not be fun acting while the smudges under your nose threw smoke.

Various bundles and bags were placed on tables; among them the blanket-wrapped collection of rags that was the baby he'd tried to rescue. Having been part of the show, but not actually having seen it, he had no idea what the other items were supposed to represent. What he did see was that the windows here were real and he rushed to snap the lights off – probably too late.

By the moonlight coming through the windows, he saw that the entire floor was lined with sheet metal, probably as a fire precaution. The door was not just covered with metal, but actually built from it – it was practically a bank vault door. When he shut it, the bang was solidly satisfying.

"What do we do, now, Tony?" she asked, breathless from exertion and fear.

He was cautiously looking out windows but could see no people or vehicles below. "We'll wait until morning and mingle with the crowds."

"It's Saturday, Tony. They're not open tomorrow." He hadn't thought about that.

"Then we'll slide out as soon as we can and head for home." With the three safety cutoff switches he'd installed, he was confident the Franklin would still be there, provided they didn't hook a wagon up to it and drag it away. Getting to it would be the problem.

Then, with nothing else to do, he sat with his back to the front wall and closed his eyes. She joined him in a few minutes and they sat with their arms around each other, pretending to sleep.

"Where are we going to pee?" she whispered after a long quiet, which brought him alert

once more.

"There's a dozen people doing the show up here. There has to be a toilet." He started to get up, but she held him down.

"Mm-mm. I'll look for it when I need it."

It was going to be a long night with only themselves for diversion. Thinking along those lines, he found that he began react accordingly.

"Really? Here? With murderers outside the door?" But she wasn't pushing him away.

"You got something better to do, cowboy?"

"Cowboy?"

"It's an old joke. Well?"

That was one way, or several ways, to pass part of the night, but eventually, you're back to cuddling. With her head on his shoulder, again, he let himself think.

"Carrol."

"Mmm?" She had turned her brain off.

"Sweetheart, should we get married?"

"Mmm?"

"Should we get married?"

That woke her up. "Now? You want to talk about that, now?"

"Yep. Seems a good time."

A quiet moment while she considered. "Did we need to be married this morning?"

"Uhm ... no."

"Did we need to be married in the bathhouse, this afternoon?"

"Probably should have been, but ... no."

She turned and put her face close to his in the dark. "Then why do we need to get married now?"

It was hard to put a finger on it. "Because ... because ... I love you."

"I know."

"And you love me."

"I do."

"Well ... !" He hated it when people were more logical than him. "It's kind of usual, you know!"

"Oh, Tony, lover – what about you and me has ever been usual?"

"Oh, boy. You are ... unusual."

There was more of the usual after that, broken suddenly by bright light coming through the windows.

She squealed and scuttled away from the window, each of them buttoning and closing and tucking. The lights were from three directions, now.

Harry looked out carefully and a bullet bounced off the window ledge just by his head. "What the hell! That's not Vanilli and his friends – that's cops." He forgot for the moment that none of the three gangsters were in any condition to be outside the building.

"Well, let's surrender, then. They won't kill us. Vanilli will." She started to stand, but he yanked her down, hard.

"Honey, they shot at me. No talk – just shoot. They aren't going to play nice."

For the first time, she was really afraid. "I don't want to get killed, Tony! I didn't do

anything!"

"Neither did I, sweetie." Well, he did shoot two men and beat up another in the last three hours, but he also nearly saved a fake baby from a fake fire earlier in the day. That's got to count for something. "All right, here's what we do. You stay tight up against this wall, keep your head below the window. I'm going down. There'll be some shouting; there might be some shooting. Don't worry about that – I've been shot at by better men than the Brighton Beach police. When it all gets quiet again, yell down that you're coming out. Crawl – don't walk, they'll see your head – to that door and go down. Keep your hands up."

"That's the best plan you've got? You go out and get killed? How does that help?" She hit his chest hard. "If you get killed, who's going to be the father of my babies?"

"You're having a baby?" It seemed it happened every time he was on the run.

"No, I'm not, but I certainly intend to, some day. You're not getting killed and that's final – nobody is!"

Hiking her borrowed dress up, she crawled across the floor to the exit, shoved the props free and pried open the steel door. At the doorway, she looked back. "Well, prop it shut again, dummy!" And she started down the stair.

Out of sight of the guns below, he wedged the door as tightly as he could. He was still flabbergasted at her words and her actions. So much so, that it was only now that he realized he hadn't tried to stop her.

"Bonfuzzi! Tony Bonfuzzi!"

That's my name, he thought. It was in danger of being worn out. A rock came hurtling through the glass of one of the front windows and the words came through more clearly.

"Tony Bonfuzzi!"

"What are you doing, breaking windows? What's so important you've got to vandalize private property?" Boy, the Coney Island people are going to be pissed, he told himself.

"It's murder, Bonfuzzi! Two murders – and you're going to fry for it!"

"Doesn't give me much incentive to come down, does it?" He also hated it when people were less logical than him.

"This is Sergeant Tunney of the New York police. Come down and we won't shoot you."

"Why don't I believe that?"

A commotion ensued below and he wished he dared raise his head to see what it was about. Then, a female voice was raised among several male voices: Carrol had made it that far.

"He's just a boy – he's barely twenty-one! He hasn't done anything wrong!"

"There's two dead men back there and an injured man who says your boyfriend shot them down in cold blood and then beat him up."

"He didn't! He beat up Roxie and then shot the men – but that was in self-defence! Those men attacked us and Tony stopped them."

There was general laughter. "We're supposed to believe one skinny-ass kid fought off three grown men in a stand-up fight? Girl, you got a screw loose!"

"You don't know my Tony! He can take on any six of you!"

"Don't make promises I can't keep, sweetheart!" he yelled down to the crowd.

"Your Tony, is he? Well, we'll look into that later. Bonfuzzi, you've got one minute to come out!"

"Why don't you come in – by yourself, Sergeant? Then, I'll show you what she's talking

about!" He was starting to get angry about this. He looked around for some non-lethal help.

Carrol was yelling, again. "Those men were criminals and murderers. I should know: I was part of their stable until Tony got me away from them when they murdered Zwerbach and Lewis."

"Oh, you were both part of that, were you? Arrest her, too." And, from the sounds, they were doing just that.

Harry risked the bullets and stuck his head up. "Leave her alone, you son of a bitch! I'll remember this. I love you, Carrol!" He'd got one of the smudge pots loose from its base and was looking for matches.

Carrol seemed to be struggling outside when she yelled, "I love you, too, Tony! Listen to me! You've got to let him go. You think he broke the law, but he only helped the law!"

Then Tunney yelled after her, "I'm the law, god damn it, and the law comes first!" He heard more struggles below, as they dragged her away and he nearly screamed in frustration. There was nothing he could do to help her.

Silence fell over The Bowery, then Tunney yelled again. "Time's up, Bonfuzzi! We're coming in!"

Harry lit the smoke pot and aimed it at the door as a storm of bullets broke every window in the room, while the door suddenly began to shudder from the battering it was being given on the other side. Smoke from the smudge pot started to billow upward, straight at whoever came in the door.

That was a double-edged sword: it interfered with whoever was coming in, but, while they couldn't see him well, it also hid whatever they might be doing to him.

With a crash, the door swung open, banging wide, then nearly closing again from the force. The bullets from outside stopped; the door was kicked wide again and a dozen cops came into the room.

Well, if I'm going, Harry thought, I'm taking an honor guard with me.

He waded into the sea of blue coats – fists, elbows, knees, and boots swinging.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

August 17, 1908

"Tony Bonfuzzi, alias Tony Wheels, alias Tony The Fist, alias Tony The Hammer ..."

"Are you nuts? Nobody calls me anything like that."

It had taken a week before he was in any kind of shape to sit up and listen to charges being laid. He liked to think he gave as good as he got but, when there's a dozen of them and one of you, it's going to go badly for you. The upshot was, when he complained about his aliases, it was more of a split-lip, swollen-eye mumble than a legal statement.

"What? Do you think we just make this up?"

"Well, somebody does. The only nicknames I've ever had were 'sweetie' and 'darling' and things like that." He decided to forget about 'Deadeye' Devon from a few years back in Dawson.

"Oh, we know about your women, too – running a string of them for Max Zwerbach before he got killed. How many women have you seduced and abandoned in New York, alone? Not to mention some of them being under eighteen."

"Well, so was I!"

"Doesn't matter. Now, shut up and let me finish." The assistant district attorney went back to the beginning. "Tony Bonfuzzi, alias Tony Wheels, alias Tony The Fist, alias Tony The Hammer ..." Harry snorted, but kept his mouth shut. "... you are charged that, on the seventh of August, 1908, you did willfully murder Charles Malitti, at Coney Island Beach, New York; further that on the same date and in the same place, you did willfully murder Nicholas Abatonis; further that, on the same date and in the same place, you did grievously assault and cause bodily harm to Roberto Vanilli; further that, on the same date and in the same place, you did grievously assault and cause bodily harm to seven police officers who were trying to effect arrest on your person."

"Ain't I something?" He was pleased that the official tally of hurt cops was higher than Carrol's estimate of his ability.

"As you are of no fixed address and have no known means of support, the DA has requested that you be held on two hundred thousand dollars bail."

"No fixed address? I own a house in Yonkers – and I've got a bank account bigger than yours, bub!"

"All of which have been confiscated as being the proceeds of crime. Have your rights under the law been explained to you?" Oh, well. Easy come, easy go.

"Yeah, sure. I can keep my mouth shut and I can get a lawyer. That's the Fifth and Sixth

Rights, right? Or have you ever read them?" He lifted his battered face to look at the lawyer. "That house and bank account came from money I earned legit before I ever got to New York. None of it was from 'proceeds of crime'. Zwerbach paid me to drive, that's all, and I never touched a penny from the girls – Vanilli took it all; he was the pimp ..."

"And you were just the enforcer. I've talked to the girls: they were terrified of you."

How do you like that, he thought? Nobody has any gratitude. And this jerk was believing every word Vanilli said.

The manacles and ankle chains were cutting into his flesh but the guard had just laughed when he complained. He didn't mind the black and white suit they'd given him – it was the closest to a pin-striped suit he'd ever had. Mind you, the stripes were going the wrong way and the white stripes aren't usually as prominent, but it was the thought that counted.

"Where's Carrol Terry? What are you doing to her?"

"Miss Terry is fine where she is. It's no concern of yours."

Harry stood quickly, as far as the shackles would let him. "What do you mean? She's my wife!" The guard behind him pulled him back into the chair.

"The hell she is! She's your whore; she's your concubine; she's a lot of things, but she isn't your wife. Oh, that's another potential charge: cohabitation." He made a note on the top of the file. "Just the cherry on top. Do you know what you're facing, Bonfuzzi?"

"Ten dollar fine and a stern lecture?" Never let them think they've scared you, even if they have.

"Funny boy. Two years for cohabitation; four years for each of the assaults on the police officers; ten to twelve for the assault on Mr. Vanilli ..."

"*Mister* Vanilli! When I was still sixteen, I told him I'd never 'mister' him if he held a gun to my head – which he has done on several occasions. You're hanging your case on the wrong witness, Mr. District Attorney. Vanilli is pure scum."

"And, for each of the two murders: death. Things don't look good for you , Bonfuzzi." The A-D-A closed the file and sat back with smug satisfaction. "Well?"

"I've been in worse spots. There was this wolf, once – looked a lot like you – who figured I'd make a nice midnight snack. He had friends, too. I carried his head around for months." That made him think of Frona Welse and he didn't want to, so he changed the subject. "At most, all I ever did was get in a few fights. All in self-defense – everything, even dusting it up with those cops. They were shooting at me, for no reason. All I did was defend myself. Where's Carrol Terry?"

"What do you care?" The guy was actually sneering.

"I care."

He said it low and didn't expect any response but the A-D-A leaned in and said, "She's fine, Tony. It's better for her to be out of the picture. She's safe, where nobody can trace her. Best to let it be."

He tried to think through the rush of noise in his head. "Does she have money?"

This time the man smiled. "She's got the proceeds from selling a little white house with rose trellises. She'll be fine, if she's smart."

Harry wasn't sure how smart she was – she was with him, wasn't she? Or she had been with him. He'd have to think hard about what to do when he got out of this mess.

If he got out of this. He'd been keeping track of the sentences he was being promised:

forty-two years up to the assault on Vanilli, but he sort of lost track of that when they got to the big charges.

Death. Twice. That's unnecessary by anyone's definition.

The second death sentence didn't worry him in the least. It was the first one that was a puzzler. He, Carrol, and Vanilli were the only witnesses to what happened in that lot. Nobody was going to listen to him and Carrol was very neatly removed from the equation. That left upstanding citizen Roberto 'Roxie' Vanilli to stand up and tell the truth, the whole truth and any cock-eyed story he wanted to come up with. It was obvious as hell that Harry was going to be found guilty, no matter what the truth was. The law has little ways of making things like that happen.

He looked at the A-D-A. "So, are we through?" He rattled his chains. "Can I go back to my cage, now?"

He actually got a laugh back in reply. The guy was warming up to him. "No, we are not through! You are in a very dangerous situation, young man." Nobody had called him that for a long time. "How about you suggest some ways that we avoid strapping you into a chair and putting fifty thousand volts through your brain?"

Harry tried to do some quick conversions in his head. "Probably better to use sixty thousand, buddy. Fifty's just going to cook me slowly and you don't want anyone saying you were cruel. You could get a bad reputation."

"Nice of you to be concerned."

"Oh, I'm like that. Always thinking about the other guy. Like the record I kept of every trip I made for Max Zwerbach and every pickup and drop off – and the people who got picked up

and dropped off. Would you like me to start singing like a little canary on the witness stand? There are more than a few people from precinct cops to Tammany Hall to City Hall who would have egg all over their face if things got out. There's even pictures of me picking up one of them at City Hall – pictures the newspapers were nice enough to publish all on their own. They didn't realize who I was and who else was in the machine. But, make no mistake, I'm there, clear as a picture."

"Are you trying to blackmail your way out of this?"

"Bet you I can." He hoped he sounded more confidant than he felt.

He could see the lawyer suddenly realizing the potential risks involved. Everything from an end to career advancement to straight up firing, from political pressure to getting gunned down in the street. There were endless possible variations.

"And where have you got these records? Because it's not likely you're going to get out to retrieve them. Why don't you just tell us where to find them and we'll bring them to you?"

It was the best laugh Harry'd enjoyed in days. "Why don't you let me out to get them, and then I'll come back and you can lock me up, again?"

The laugh was mutual. Harry leaned in as far as his shackles let him.

"Look, Mister A-D-A, why don't you go talk to the District Attorney, who is, I am sure, as honest as the day is long, and ask him about a weekend back in – June of '06, I think it was – on the governor's yacht? I'm sure you'll be enthralled by the details." Having gone that far, the question was which way would the D-A take it? Would he order Harry murdered in his cell? Would he give justice a chance to take its course, a course which would inevitably lead to all kinds of consequences, because Harry wasn't bluffing; he really had the goods.

Or would they unlock his manacles and let him walk away? Harry was even willing to walk away in his prison togs if that was convenient for them.

Instead, they frog-marched him back to his cell in the Tombs, threw him into the room, and slammed the door. He watched them walk away without a sound, then turned to get water from the faucet and throw it on his face and neck.

That they'd left the shackles on made even that little task difficult, but he managed. After a few minutes of staring down the corridor, he laid down on the lower bunk, perforce, curled up into a nearly fetal position.

A hand and arm extended downward from the upper bunk. The hand was holding a slim steel instrument, like you might use to pick the meat out of a nut. The end of the instrument was a strong, fine wire that was bent at ninety degrees.

He rolled to his feet and hobbled across the floor to put the wall at his back. "Who the hell are you?" When he left, he'd had no cell-mate. That he had one, now, was a deliberate move on the prosecutor's part. Who the guy was might make a lot of difference.

"Take it, then give it back. You should have one of your own. You'll drive them nuts if you get out of those every time they put them on you." The lock-pick was still being proffered.

Hobbled and bent over by the shackles, he couldn't see the face the arm belonged to but, heck, you've got to trust somebody, don't you?

"Drop the thing. I can't reach up." So, it was dropped and tinkled to the floor. Harry went to his knees to recover it, then sat on the bed, feet pulled up, hunched over. He worked on the ankle cuffs first and it took him much longer than he hoped it would, but eventually, the locks on both had clicked open, allowing him to slide the chain between ankles and wrists clear and stand

up for the first time in hours.

After a good stretch and back-crack, he began on the wrists. This was harder because he couldn't really turn his hands properly but eventually, they too were free and the manacles were on the floor. Rubbing wrists and massaging calves, he hung the chains on the cell door. After all, they were required to keep their cells tidy.

Again with his back to the wall, he repeated his earlier question. "Who the hell are you?"

"Just a guy on a bunk. Can I have my iron back?" The slim piece of steel wasn't something that could be made in prison; it was a professionally built tool, smuggled in somehow.

"Yeah, well, thanks." Harry handed the lock-pick back. "They'll probably slam them back on me when they do the bed check but it's nice to stand up straight for a while."

He climbed back onto his own bunk and continued to massage places where the chains had rubbed his flesh raw. He wondered who might have enough clout to get this guy put in the cell with him, and who would care enough to do it.

"How's Petrosino doing, these days?" he asked, just to see the reaction.

"Real good. He sends his regards."

"Regards? I didn't know he had any regard for me."

"Oh, sure! He thinks very highly of you – one of the nicest criminals walking the streets. Except you're not walking the streets, anymore, are you?"

"That'll change."

"Maybe. You were very hard to find for a while there. What'd you do, go play house somewhere?" Harry still hadn't seen this guy's face.

"What's the little guy want? I gave him everything he asked me for and he's done

nothing. Otherwise, I wouldn't be in here."

"You aren't in here." That was surprising. "I mean, your name's not on any books – not yet. They're holding off."

"For what? Me to spill the beans on somebody? I was a driver. Max Zwerbach liked me but he's dead. I ran like hell and tried to put it behind me. It didn't stay behind me. That's the whole story."

"They're going to convict you on Tuesday."

"You think I don't know that?" And what was the hurry? Who had it in for him?

"Look, Tony. Who wanted Kid Twist Zwerbach out of the picture? Who set up the meet between them and gave Kelly the manpower to do it? You and Roxie Vanilli were the only Eastsiders to survive it. Vanilli's in hot and heavy with Kelly, now. It stands to reason you are, too."

"How the hell did Roxie get in tight with Paul Kelly? He sent Luca di Domenico's cock and balls to Kelly in a box."

"And killed Luca D, as well?" Harry nodded. "How do you know that?"

"I delivered the box. Has Vanilli been charged with anything? Spitting on the sidewalk? Crossing the street without looking both ways? Anything?"

There was a chuckle from the top bunk. "No idea. His luck's got to run out sooner or later." The chuckling stopped. "So what do you know about who's funding Paul Kelly?"

"I don't know nothing that Petrocino doesn't know. Kelly sold out to the Black Hand; we both know that. Why would I hold out? What's the idea: I stay in here until I rat out Kelly?"

The lock-up buzzer began to blare and, down the corridor, turnkeys began to slam the

cells shut and rattle keys in locks. The man on the bed hopped down and went to the door, waiting. He was a short-ish, heavy-set man with center-parted hair and a good suit. Not a fellow inmate, after all.

It took only a few seconds until a pair of turnkeys arrived at Harry's cell. The door was already closed and locked. The turnkey opened it; the man from the top bunk stepped through and the door was locked again.

The second turnkey saw the manacles draped over the bars in the door. "Funny man," he said and collected them. Then they continued down the cell block, clanging, banging, and rattling.

The man from the bunk stopped to look into the cell. He placed each hand on a bar and said, "Here, Tony. Let me do this for you." And he rattled the bars as hard as he could, which, admittedly, was not as hard as Harry could. "See? They're not going to open for you. There's no walking away from this. Think hard, Tony. How can you find what they want, because, if you don't, or won't, come up with what they need, there's only one way this ends. And fifty thousand volts will do the trick, quite nicely."

The man had long since disappeared down the corridor before Harry walked up to the bars, placed each hand on a bar and tried them.

The lock held.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

October 19, 1908

He hadn't showered or shaved in a week; he hadn't eaten in two days. They hadn't given him a change of clothing in two weeks. So, when they brought him, hobbled and hunched over by his manacles, into court, he was a grotesque hobgoblin that looked anything but human.

He'd seen an attorney once, who looked over the file while he was talking, suggested begging for leniency, shook his head and left.

The lawyer was in court, now, sitting at a table to which the guards led Harry. They forced him into a chair and began to chain his shackles to rings in the floor. "That's not necessary," the lawyer said but they did it, anyway.

"All rise." A bailiff was calling to quiet the assembly. Harry struggled to stand straight, but was still well bent over. "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All persons having business before the

Honorable, the Eighth Judicial District Court of the United States, are admonished to draw near and give their attention, for the Court is now sitting, the Honorable ...” Harry missed the judge’s name because he saw Joseph Petrosino in the gallery. If Petrosino was there, things were serious, indeed. Beside Petrosino was the man from the top bunk, who nodded coolly. Petrosino ignored him. The bailiff ended with “God save the United States and this Honorable Court!”

“You may be seated,” said the judge, as he opened a file of papers and continued to look at them for a full two minutes, while the courtroom rustled and coughed. Finally, with an exhaled ‘humph!’, he closed the file, pushed it to one side and asked if the jury were ready.

“They are, you honor,” from the bailiff and twelve men, good and true, were brought in. Harry, for the first time, saw the men who would determine his fate. At least one was as drunk as Harry wished he were; a few others were obviously only there for the meals. The rest looked like good upstanding citizens, who would happily follow instructions from the law.

The judge, satisfied with the integrity and upstanding qualities of the jury, nodded to the clerk, who read aloud: “The case of The People versus Tony Bonfuzzi, alias Tony Wheels, alias Tony The Fist, alias Tony The Hammer.”

“Is the defendant in court?” Harry’s lawyer rose. “He is, Your Honor.” And Harry was dragged to his feet, or as nearly to that as he could be, given that he was shackled to the floor.

“Read the charges.” The clerk read from a volume as thick as a dictionary, with accompanying thesaurus attached. ‘That he had ... did willfully ... grievous bodily harm ...’ The list went on and on. There was nothing especially new in it, apart from a few minor charges, such as illegally entering the Fighting The Flames building and unlawfully igniting a noxious substance – which Harry assumed was the smudge pot – causing grievous harm to officers of the

law. There was a lot of grievous harm happening, apparently, but that hadn't slowed them down in beating the crap out of him.

When, at last, the clerk finished, the judge turned his gaze from on high to Harry. "You have heard the charges against you. How do you plead?"

Harry looked from the judge to his lawyer to his old buddy the A-D-A at another table, then back to Petrosino and the lock-pick man, finally back to the judge.

"What are my options?"

"Guilty or not guilty. If you refuse to enter a plea," the judge went on, "one will be entered for you. How do you plead?"

"Oh, not guilty, your Honor. Damn well not guilty."

The judge slammed his gavel down. "Keep a civil tongue in your head! And stand up straight when you address the bench."

Harry looked down and rattled his chains. "I'm standing as straight as they'll let me stand, judge. Some of the boys think I'll go crazy and kill all the women, rape all the men, and eat all the babies in the building."

The judge stared at him. "Are you likely to?" And Harry shook his head. "Be seated." Harry was. "Is the prosecution ready to proceed in this case?"

The A-D-A rose. "We are, your Honor."

"Is the defense ready?"

His attorney rose. "We are, your Honor."

"We shall proceed to opening arguments. Mister Prosecuting Attorney."

The A-D-A rose and assumed a pose that he had obviously practiced in a mirror. "Your

Honor, gentlemen of the jury. We live in an age of astonishing things. Just five years ago, men first left the ground in a powered aeroplane; now such flights are to be seen around the world. Messages can be sent, by the miracle of electric telegraphy, across continents in an instant. Likewise, the human voice can be transmitted from home to home, allowing people to speak with loved ones and family at great distances." He had the attention of the court with this unique opening.

"But, gentlemen, I tell you that the most astonishing thing in all the world, the most remarkable circumstance any one of us could conceive is that there exist on the streets of this great city, on the very avenues of New York itself, gangs of men of such ruthless and criminal bent that the very law which holds our society together is regarded by them with total contempt, indeed, it is nothing to them but a tissue to be used to hide behind in defending themselves against the consequences of their heinous crimes."

Harry couldn't help looking around. Were any of those men in the courtroom today?

"And one of the worst of those men, a man so downgraded in his perverse way of life that life itself is of no value to him, is before you in this courtroom."

Oh, so there was someone of that ilk here! He wondered who it could be.

The A-D-A pointed to Harry. "Look at the defendant. A man so steeped in his evil that its very essence oozes from his pores, refuses to wash from his skin, lies with a putrescent odor on the air around him."

Well, that was just rude. Still, Harry had to admit that he did look the part. The judicial system had done its job in that regard.

"The prosecution will prove, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that this man before you,

with no compunction or remorse, walked up to Charles Malitti and Nicholas Abatonis and ended their lives with bullets from an illegally obtained gun. That he further grievously assaulted an innocent citizen, one Roberto Vanilli, causing ongoing pain and distress. That he went on, that very night, to assault and cause grievous harm to more than a half-dozen New York police officers. And that, prior to the events of that night, in fact, going back at least two years, had been complicit in dozens of criminal acts in New York City of such outrageous and heinous nature that the prosecution is reluctant to detail them here."

Harry thought it might be a good idea to detail the acts, if the man was going to make a case, but he didn't want to tell him how to do his job.

Again, the A-D-A pointed at Harry. "In short, the prosecution will show that this man, Tony Bonfuzzi, is a hardened, life-long criminal who thinks nothing of murder, assault and much, much more and we intend to demand the full penalty the law will allow for his crimes."

If the gallery hadn't begun applauding, Harry would have. It was a good speech. Now, it was his turn, he hoped.

"The defense may present their opening arguments."

His attorney seemed surprised to be called on. "Oh! Thank – thank you, your – your Honor." Was this the man's first time at this? "Ladies and gentlemen – " The judge's gavel pounded hard.

"Kindly address the court and the jury, not the gallery. There are only men on the jury and I assure you, even though I wear robes, I am not a lady."

It *was* the man's first time. Harry looked at the ceiling and sighed.

"Your Honor and gentlemen of the jury. The prosecutor has laid many accusations against

the defendant, but I doubt very much that he has proof of all of those charges – and any crimes the defendant did commit, he probably had a very good reason to do them. So, I say he probably didn't do what he is accused of and ... and ... thank you."

The man sat down!

Harry leaned over to him. "That's it? That's the whole defense you've got?"

The lawyer turned his head to look at him. "You're lucky to get that, aren't you?", he whispered and turned back to look at the judge, who was sorting papers again.

Harry looked behind to see if Petrosino was still watching. Instead, he found himself gazing into the dark eyes of Anna Walsh, two years older, now, every bit as pretty. She looked at him with both fright and fear (two different things) on her face, before turning away.

"The prosecution may proceed with the case against the defendant."

It was long, it was detailed. It was surprisingly thorough. There were a dozen witnesses who attested to knowing Harry when he was on the Bowery, running little scams, profiting from petty thefts, organizing heists from the back of delivery carts. One enthusiastic woman even swore she'd known him as a young child, a no-good kid who started fights, beat up smaller children, and stole apples. That was an interesting memory trick when you consider that, at the time, Harry had been busy growing up several hundred miles away in a different country.

"What's any of this got to do with the case against me? None of these people know anything about what I'm charged with," he whispered to his attorney.

That gentleman leaned over to reply, "They're just establishing that you're a hardened criminal, with decades of crime behind you. It sounds all right to me."

Another witness and, at long last, Harry's attorney jumped to his feet. "Objection, your

Honor!"

"On what grounds? The prosecution hasn't asked a single question."

"The witness didn't actually place her hand on the Bible while the oath was being given. It could invalidate this witness's entire testimony. I request that the witness be sworn in properly." Who's side was this guy on?

So, they swore her in properly, and the 'witness', a young-ish whale-boned woman whose principle assets swelled from the top of her dress and whose scarlet-stockinged calves were displayed below for all to see, proceeded to talk about how Harry, even before he began to work for Max Zwerbach, was well known on the street. His main occupation was to trap young girls into offering their services to strangers on the street. Harry decided that, whoever this guy was, he should be locked up immediately, but it certainly wasn't him. He'd never seen the woman before in his life.

While the court was agog, watching silk-cased legs and heaving bosom, listening to the salacious details of Harry's seduction and induction of her and a thousand other girls into his vast network of prostitution, at long last the word "Objection!" came from a strong voice at the defense table.

The judge dragged his eyes from the witness's bosom (after all, he had a great view of it from on high) and turned to the defense table, where Harry was looking down and the defense attorney was looking bewildered. "What's the objection, this time?" Harry's attorney was whispering frantically to his client. "Well, are we wasting your time, Mister Defense Attorney?"

"No, sir. I apologize. It was my client who objected, not me."

The judge turned his frown on Harry. "You don't get to object in this court."

"I figured somebody needed to," Harry grumbled. He who tooteth not his own horn ...

"Very well. What is your objection?"

"That guy over there ..."

"The Assistant District Attorney?"

"Yeah, him. He hasn't proven how or when that woman knew me. He just said she did and let her talk."

The judge looked impressed. "Good point. Your attorney should have made it for you, but he didn't, so I will." He turned back to the witness, looking down on that impressive expanse of white skin. "The witness will tell the court how long ago she knew the defendant."

"Oh, it has to be ten-eleven years, now. I was sixteen. All the girls was scared of him."

Harry's lawyer was on his feet, suddenly. "Objection!" The judge's glance showed that it was expected. "Your Honor, my client is only just twenty-one years old, today. Is the court supposed to believe she was so frightened of a ten-year old boy that she allowed him to force her into a life of prostitution? The witness is clearly lying."

The judge's gaze went to the prosecutor. "Mister A-D-A?"

Scrambling at this turn, the prosecutor tried to double down. "Look hard at the defendant. Is this the man you positively identified as the man who forced you to become a prostitute?"

"Oh, sure. That's him." She smiled broadly to the jury and shook her chest a bit.

The judge's mood had altered and he leaned over. "You didn't bother to look at him, madam."

This time, she actually looked. "Well ... on second thought, maybe that ain't him, after all. He just kinda looks like him – but he's a lot younger than the other guy."

"No further questions, you Honor."

Harry's attorney rose for his only question. "On penalty of perjury and remembering that you are under oath, have you ever seen the defendant before?" The woman suddenly looked frightened, shook her head, and muttered something that might have been 'naw'. "No further questions, your Honor." And, the judge dismissed the witness, followed by a stern admonition to the jury to disregard anything the witness had said.

That was lunch. While others went to nearby restaurants or their homes for a nice relaxing meal and a nap, Harry was dragged back to his cell and treated to a tuna-fish sandwich and a tin mug of water. Somebody really had it in for him, but he couldn't figure out who. Still, as it was the first meal he'd had in two days, he enjoyed every morsel.

Assembled once again, the court waited for the judge to arrive. Harry looked around but couldn't find Anna anywhere. She must be very angry with him, after the morning's testimony.

With the judge in, the trial continued. "Leaving behind the establishment of character and history, Your Honor, the prosecution would like to turn to the events of the seventh of August, 1908. The People call to the stand Sergeant Thomas J. Tunney of the New York City Police Department."

The bored clerk held out a Bible, which Tunney carefully covered with a large hand. "Doyousweartotellthetruththewholetruthandnothingbutthetruthsohelpyou God?" The policeman replied, "I do." The clerk went on,"Stateyournameandoccupation."

"Sergeant Thomas J. Tunney, New York Police Department."

Preliminaries over, the A-D-A rounded on the new witness. "Sergeant Tunney, you are assigned to New York's 60th precinct, which has responsibility for Coney Island, are you not?"

Tunney replied “I am.”

“Were you called to an incident that occurred on the evening of the eighth of August of this year on Coney Island, New York?”

“I was.” At the encouragement of the prosecutor, Tunney elaborated. “We were alerted to the presence of three men accosting women in the auto park at the Dreamland section of Coney Island. At first, I ordered two constables to attend, but when we received a second call saying there would be violence, I decided to take a full squad out myself to deal with the situation and, if possible, prevent any such violence.”

“On this map ...” The A-D-A produced an easel bearing a map of Coney Island. “... please detail what you found when you arrived.”

“We found three men lying in the auto park.” Tunney pointed it out. “Two had been shot and were determined to have expired. The third had been beaten severely and was suffering from a number of injuries.”

“Was any weapon found?”

“A chrome-plated Colt revolver was found on the scene. Three rounds had been fired. Each of the dead men likewise had a revolver on their person.”

The prosecution then produced Exhibit A, a chrome-plated Colt revolver. Tunney consulted his notes, compared serial numbers and verified that it was the gun found at the scene.

“Not mine,” Harry whispered. “That belonged to Vanilli. I took it from him.”

“And used it to shoot the other two?”

“Well, yeah, but they were being mean to my girlfriend.”

Tunney was continuing. “The injured man, Mr. Roberto Vanilli, told us a single man, the

defendant, had been the one who was harassing the women and he had tried to stop him. We observed a man running toward the area in the amusement park known as The Bowery and proceeded to pursue him. At first, we were unable to locate him, but soon determined that he had taken refuge in a building known as the Fighting The Flames exhibit." Tunney pointed The Bowery and the Fighting The Flames building out on the map.

The rest proceeded pretty much as Harry recalled, except, for some reason, there was no mention of Carrol. None. Not of her running with Harry, not of her being in the building, not of her coming out to talk to Tunney. She didn't exist.

"And, when your officers affected entrance to the building, what occurred?"

"The suspect in the building had lighted an incendiary device that caused officers to be blinded, then proceeded to attack and injure seven of the officers."

The names of the injured were read out and introduced as evidence.

"What happened then?"

"My officers subdued and arrested the defendant."

"Was the defendant injured at all?"

"Only such injuries as might be consistent with a fall down a flight of stairs." And, that was true, if a half-dozen men were putting the boots to you while you fell.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Bonfuzzi? You snorted?" asked the judge.

"My apologies, your Honor. Allergies. I'm allergic to lies."

"You're on thin ice, Mr. Bonfuzzi."

"I sure am, your Honor."

That was the end of Tunney's testimony. Harry's attorney rose to cross-examine.

"You say that the defendant's injuries were consistent with 'a fall down a flight of stairs.' Correct?"

Tunney took his time, recalling his words. "Yes."

"Did the defendant, at any time before or after he was in police custody, actually fall down a flight of stairs?"

Tunney took his time, again. "No."

"In your opinion as an experienced police officer, could the defendant's injuries have been caused by a beating while in custody?" Well, his attorney was going to defend him!

"My officer's don't do that kind of thing." Ooh! What a liar!

"But are they 'consistent' with such a thing?"

"They could be – if police officers did that kind of thing, which they don't."

"No further questions, your Honor." Ah, right back to form, Harry thought.

The prosecution had one more witness: Roberto Vanilli, who took the oath with a bright, cheerful face without flinching, hand on Bible, and proceeded to lie his ass off.

"Me and my friends was at Coney Island, having a nice day, you know, and it was late and we was going home when this madman comes running up and starts punching me. Well, Charlie Snake Eyes and Nicky Three Fingers – I mean, my two friends, Charles and Nicholas, they tried to stop him and he pulled out a gun and shot 'em both. Shot 'em dead."

The A-D-A leaned in for his next question. "Both of the shooting victims were armed, yet neither drew their weapons." One of them certainly had. Roxie must have put the second guy's weapon back in its holster before the cops arrived. "When they had weapons, why didn't they draw them?" the lawyer asked.

"Oh, Nicky and Charlie was peaceable guys. They'd never hurt a fly. They just had them guns in case of, you know, snakes or something."

"When the defendant shot your friends, what did you do to stop this outrage?"

"Oh, I was too bad hurt to help, but through the pain, I seen him running away with some skirt – I mean, woman. And, then the bulls showed up. Sorry, you Honor, I mean, the cops."

"How long did it take for you to recover from your injuries?"

"Oh, months, sir. I was hobbled up. My wife ain't been happy since, if you know what I mean." Vanilli had a wife? Who the hell would marry ...? Never mind, he thought, there were more important matters, right now.

Harry's defender's cross examination consisted of two questions: "You say you saw the defendant running away with 'a skirt', meaning a woman, but no other testimony has mentioned a woman. How do you account for that?"

"I must have been mistaken. Maybe it was just a hallucination." That settled that.

The second question was: "Is it true you are a member of the notorious Paul Kelly gang and have been identified as a murderer and a procurer of young women?"

"Oh, no, sir. I run a haberdashery in the Bowery."

"No further questions, your honor."

Harry leaped as close to his feet as he could. "Well, I've got questions! Roxie, why don't you tell them whose cock and balls you handed me to deliver to Paul Kelly two years ago? How many girls made up the two strings you were running out of that 'haberdashery' of yours? Five thousand a week you were taking in from them, wasn't it? Why don't you tell them about the day you tried to castrate me on a public street?"

The judge pounded his gavel hard. “That’s enough! Mr. Bonfuzzi, if you offend this court one more time with your foul mouth, I will have you gagged!”

The prosecution rested. The case for the defense had one witness and Harry had never heard the name, before: Mrs. Stanley Winston. The shock was, when she reached the stand, Mrs. Stanley Winston was Miss Anna Walsh.

After the swearing in: “You are Mrs. Stanley Winston?” She was. “Prior to your marriage, what was your name and where did you live?”

“Miss Anna Walsh. I lived in a apartment I shared with four other girls on East 4th Street, near 2nd Ave.”

“Did you know the defendant, Tony Bonfuzzi, at that time?”

“Sure. Hi, Tony! What have they done to you?” The judge used his gavel.

“What was your relationship with him?”

“You might say we were boyfriend and girlfriend.”

“Is your husband here in the court?”

“Yeah. He’s right over there.” Harry looked along with the rest of the court. Mr. Stanley Winston was everything his name promised.

“Did he know of your relationship with the defendant?”

“He does, now.” She shrugged and smiled apologetically at her husband.

“Describe that relationship.”

“Tony was the nicest guy I knew – until I met my husband, of course. He was a gentleman and all the girls liked him. He never hurt nobody nor did nothing wrong, except maybe he stole some food now and again for the kids that didn’t have any.”

"Can you describe the day you first saw the man Roberto 'Roxie' Vanilli?"

"I was walking with some friends. Tony and me had had a little squabble and I cut him dead in the street, but then I decided to go back and make it up with him, except when I came back, three guys had Tony on the ground down an alley. They'd opened his trousers and had his ... stuff ... out and that Roxie guy had a knife and he was holding it to Tony's ... stuff! So, I yelled and started running at them and they ran away."

"Why did you run toward them?"

"Well, I didn't want them hurting Tony's ... stuff. A girl might have a use for it, you know?" The judge gaveled again. "Sorry, Stanley. I mean, it might have killed him."

"So, did Tony Bonfuzzi ever try to recruit you to work as a ... well, as a prostitute for him?"

"Tony? No! It was Roxie Vanilli who was always after the girls for that. He was a brute and he used to beat the girls up until they gave in. It was Tony who got me away from anything like that, and he took care of me, and made me straighten up and, from the time he got me away from Vanilli, I was on my best Sunday School behavior until I met my husband. Tony! That's Stanley. Stan! That's Tony. Say hi." Harry lifted his hand as far as he could. "But, get this straight, Mr. Prosecuting Attorney. Tony Bonfuzzi is a great guy and anybody says otherwise is a liar!" Well, it's nice to have friends.

After the prosecution cross-examined her – and she had told him what she thought of him – she was allowed to leave. Anna's testimony may have scotched all the minor charges, but the big ones still hung over him. He *had* shot the men, and Carrol Terry was the only one who could tell the truth of why – and she was nowhere to be found. Harry decided he was the only one who

could shed light on that matter.

"Let me on the stand," he whispered to his lawyer.

"Are you kidding? The judge hates you. The jury, too."

"So, it can't hurt. Let me testify."

The judge was getting impatient. "Have you any more witnesses for the defense?"

The lawyer stood up, looked at Harry and said, "The defense rests" and sat down.

If his chains would have allowed it, Harry would have strangled the man right here.

There wasn't a lot more to the trial. The lawyers summed up; the jury went out; Harry went back to his cell and waited.

The jury was out one hour. Harry had only just been given his supper (another tuna sandwich) when they came, took it away from him and brought him back to the court room. His lawyer looked gloomy, but then, he always did. The judge came back in and everybody sat, then the jury came back in and they sat, too.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?"

"We have, you Honor," said the foreman, who was the guy Harry had thought was a drunk. The written verdict was passed to the judge, who read it and passed it back.

"Is this your unanimous verdict?" It was. "Read it."

"We, the jury, find the defendant, Tony Bonfuzzi, not guilty on ..." all of the lesser charges except assaulting the cops – well, that was to be expected. "On the charges of the murders in the second degree of Charles Malitti and Nicholas Abatonis, we find the defendant guilty."

"Thank you." The judge turned to Harry."The jury have found you guilty on two counts

of murder in the second degree. It is the sentence of this court that you be taken from here to a place of lawful execution, there to suffer the penalty of death by electrocution. Such sentence to be carried out not more than three days from the ending of these proceedings."

And the judge's gavel ended the proceedings.

EPILOG

October 22, 1908

"What do you want for your last meal?" His lawyer was trying to make up for being so lousy in the court-room. The warden, behind him, didn't give a damn. He was used to it.

"I had a friend who was Chinese; I really like the food. There's one delicacy that old Tchin Len recommended, but I never had. I'll have thousand-year-old bird's nest soup."

"We don't have any thousand-year-old bird's nests."

"I'll wait."

"We won't." The man had no sense of humor.

His lawyer mediated. "Come on, Harry, be reasonable. What do you really want?"

"What makes you think I want anything? I want a fair trial, is what I want!"

"You got one, you murdering son of a bitch," the warden snarled. "These are the

consequences. What meal do you want?"

"You fed me about every third day as long as I've been here. What makes you want to stuff me full before you fry me?"

"Because the law says so. Because we want the newspapers to report 'the condemned man ate a hearty meal'. Just because."

"I don't want anything. I was born hungry and I'll die hungry. How's that for a newspaper quote?"

The warden wasn't done, though. "Apart from the meal, do you have any last request?"

Harry thought hard for a moment. "Yes, I do, actually." He fixed a gaze on the warden. "Will you hold my hand when the time comes?" The warden left, quickly and gratefully. "Now, can I have some privacy, please? I've got things to do."

But the lawyer wasn't finished, either. "Tony, there's a priest outside, waiting for you."

"A priest?" Now, that was rich. "What makes you think I want a priest?"

"Well, you're Italian, so I thought you must be Catholic and, well, tomorrow ..."

"There's nothing I need from a priest that I can't get from this book, right here." Harry held up a black, hard-cover tome.

"The Good Book?"

"Hell, yeah, it's a good book." He turned the volume around. "The Call of the Wild by a stampeder named Jack London. From the prison library. I intend to finish it before dawn." And, he pointedly sat back in his bunk and opened it to page one. After a while, the lawyer got the hint and left.

It grew dark in his corner, so he switched to the foot of the bed to continue reading. For

once, they didn't turn off the lights in his cell – they decided he deserved a little light if he wanted it. He read hard, flipping pages, fighting the night.

"You're a magnet for trouble, aren't you, young Harry? I should have known." Sam Steele shook his head sadly and wisely, while Sergeant Holmes moved in. "Sam has a high opinion of you, Harry. He left a full report."

He opened his eyes and realized there was no one there but himself and Buck the dog. Twenty pages later ...

Sergeant Holmes was standing at the top of the Chilkoot Pass, saying, "It's over, Harry. All of this up here. All the crazy, wild madness. It's over; it's dead and gone."

Harry heard himself shouting that it wasn't dead – he wasn't dead, but Holmes shouted back, from such a long distance away, "That's what it does to a man – gives him hope, gives him dreams and, in the end, leaves him with nothing."

Then Carrol was there, or it may have been Anna, but it was Frona's shrieking face falling away into darkness, falling forever and he couldn't reach her.

He didn't know how many times he'd wakened in the night, read a few pages, fallen asleep again, but dawn must surely be near. He rose, stretched, used the bucket in the corner, got himself some water, sat, got up again and thoroughly washed himself in the cold water, then sat and waited.

It was not a long wait, but it seemed forever. At last, the scuff of feet and the rattle of chains came to him down the corridor, echoing strangely to his ears.

They gathered in front of the cell, his lawyer, the warden, a priest in a cassock with a bible, two guards with manacles.

"It's time, Bonfuzzi."

"Yeah, I figured it was." He looked at the book on the bed. "Can I read just one final paragraph, warden?" The man nodded and Harry opened the book to the last page.

"But he is not always alone," Harry read out loud. "When the long winter nights come on and the wolves follow their meat into the lower valleys, he may be seen running at the head of the pack through the pale moonlight or glimmering borealis, leaping gigantic above his fellows, his great throat a-bellow as he sings a song of the younger world, which is the song of the pack."

Harry closed the book with a warm feeling. So, that was the Klondike. Harry wished he'd been there. He handed the book to the warden. "Would you see that gets back to the library, please?" And, the warden nodded.

The two guards entered the cell. "Stand up and turn around." The shackles went on wrists and ankles. At least the connecting chain was long enough for him to stand erect, this time.

"This way, Bonfuzzi," directed the warden, his arm at full length to point down the corridor. Harry looked eagerly ahead.

"Never been down this way, before. I wonder what's down here." He smiled at his own joke, but his guts were liquid.

"You'll find out."

A couple of other prisoners were peering through the lattice of their cell doors and Harry nodded as he passed. They nodded back or lifted a hand. Their day would come. No one spoke ...

... except the priest who was intoning the 23rd Psalm.

"Hey, priest! Knock it off, will you? Or, at least, give me something more exciting. How about: 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks; thy two breasts are

like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.'"

The priest sputtered. "Well, I ... we aren't encouraged to read that."

Harry laughed aloud. "Why not? It's a chaste allegory of God's love for humankind – isn't it? Or maybe it isn't. How about: 'I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.' Seems appropriate for the event, doesn't it, warden?"

The warden didn't speak, so Harry decided to give him something more to talk about, later, by singing at the top of his voice.

"When a man grows old, and his balls grow cold,

And the tip of his prick turns blue,

When it bends in the middle like a one-string fiddle

He can tell you a tale or two.

The priest was sputtering again. "My son! Have you no sense of what is happening? Be humble for you are about to meet your Creator."

"Really? That should be interesting. 'Cause I've got a few choice words for him, father."

Behind, Harry heard running footsteps.

"So pull up a seat, and buy me one neat

And a tale to you I will tell,

About Dead-Eye Dick and Mexican Pete,

And a girl named Yukon Nell."

The warden had never heard of such goings on in his sacred territory and yelled over Harry's singing. "That's enough out of you! Who do you think you are?"

"I think I'm the star of the show, warden, and I'll do as I please. What are you going to do to me? Hang me?"

The warden pointed to the sign over the door they were approaching: 'Silence'. Sometimes you've got to laugh.

The footsteps had nearly reached them, now, but they, too, had nearly reached the small room at the end of the corridor. A guard standing at the end swung the door open and stood back as the procession reached him.

"Warden!" came a shout from behind.

"In you go, Bonfuzzi. Don't pay any attention to that." The warden was a one-track minded guy. Harry looked at his lawyer.

"Can you do one thing right by me and go find out what the hell the guy behind wants?"

"Get him inside," the warden said to the two guards, who each grabbed an arm and frog-marched him into the chamber. There were rows of comfortable chairs along the side walls. There was a booth with three glass walls at the very end of the room. In front of the booth, there was an interesting wooden chair with too few cushions and far too many straps and electrical cables attached for Harry's liking.

The door to the chamber was closed behind them. The guards pushed him into the chair and strapped him down, chest, arms, legs, head.

Outside, there was arguing.

"Nothing to do with you," one guard said with a smirk.

"Kind of think it does." The guard was taking off the chains, while the other was clamping a steel-lined cap on Harry's head. Harry looked at the empty rows of comfortable

chairs. “Aren’t there supposed to be witnesses? Officials? My mother?” The guard pulled a gag across Harry’s mouth and began to buckle it in place. A rubber mouthpiece slid between his teeth to stop him from biting his tongue when the juice flowed. Nice of them.

The door swung open and Harry’s lawyer stepped inside the chamber.

“That was from the governor. He wants to see you.”

It’s hard to answer a statement like that with a rubber and leather gag across your face, but after a few moments, the guard loosened it to let him speak.

“Tell him I’m just about to have my hair trimmed, my good man. I’ll see him when I’ve done.” A look from the warden to the guards brought him a half dozen solid punches to the stomach and chest while still strapped down. At least one connected with Harry’s face. One more mark against the warden in Harry’s mental ledger.

The warden waited until the beating was over, then spoke.

“Now.”

HARRY DEVON

WILL RETURN IN

‘THE BULLPEN IMMUREMENT’

HISTORICAL NOTES

This story has a more tenuous historical connection than the other Harry Devon books but, neverth**eless, it does touch on actual history here and there.**

THE EASTSIDE GANG, MAX 'KID TWIST' ZWERBACH and LOUIS 'CYCLONE' LEWIS: 'Monk' Eastman ran the Eastman gang with an iron fist. They became the largest crime outfit in New York but, in 1904, Eastman made a mistake. After getting away with who knows how many murders, rapes, swindles, assaults, and just about any other crime on the books, he slapped a man on the street in front of one of the few cops in New York he wasn't paying off. That landed him in Sing Sing for an extended visit, and Max 'Kid Twist' Zwerbach took control. Zwerbach's real character is well documented, along with that of his *consigliare* Louis 'Cyclone' Lewis. The Eastside gang, as it became known, continued to expand, with fingers in the Bowery, the Lower East Side, Little Italy and even into Chinatown. They worked

with Tammany Hall to elect mayors and councillors who were friendly, bribed police and even judges. Then Zwerbach and Lewis made the mistake of going to a peace conference at Dan The Dude's Café. That was all she wrote for them.

ON LEONG and HIP SING TONGS: The *On Leong Tong* is actually a Chinese merchant's association that still exists in New York. You read that right: a merchant's association. It says so right on their building at the corner of Mott and Canal Streets in New York City. They had absolutely nothing to do with the events described in this book. Absolutely nothing. Everything they have ever done was friendly, above board and legal. No question. So don't believe what I wrote about them in this book. *Hip Sing Tong* is likewise a mercantile association. The same caveats apply. Mr. Mock Duck really was the leader of the *Hip Sing* at that time.

BOW KUM and **TCHIN LEN** were real. Bow Kum was a girl who was sold by her father in Kowloon for a few dollars and brought to San Francisco. There, Four Brothers *Tong* member Low Hee bought her for $3,000 (an extraordinary price), with the intent of putting her into the sex trade. At that time, fewer than 4% of Chinese in North America were women; there was great demand. BUT! Tchin Len, himself a farmer's son from somewhere in China, saw her and fell in love. He persuaded her to run away with him to New York, where the *On Leong Tong* provided protection. Bow and Tchin married and had a brief life together before the Four Brothers *Tong* found her, demanded Low Hee's $3,000 back and, when refused, sent Low Hee to break into Tchin's apartment and murder poor luckless Bow Kum most savagely. The publicity, ensuing trial and tensions led to a years long tong war that saw running gun battles in the streets between gangs of 'ninja' type warriors (I know: 'ninja' were Japanese) and left up to a hundred

dead, including Tchin. Much of the fighting took place on Doyers Street, which became known as the Bloody Angle, after the infamous spot at the Battle of Gettysburg. Bow Kum was either 16 or 18 when she was murdered.

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH PETROSINO: Joseph Petrosino was pretty much as described in this book. He was short (5'3"), fiery, impetuous, and fiercely dedicated to stamping out the influence of the Black Hand in New York. He managed to join the NYPD despite being several inches short of their minimum height requirement (thanks to his friend, Teddy Roosevelt, the police commissioner); he thwarted a Black Hand attempt to kidnap and possibly kill Enrico Caruso, perhaps the greatest tenor in history; and he did try to warn the Secret Service about a plot against the life of President McKinley (it was actually another plot that killed him but, had they not ignored Petrosino's warning, security might have been tighter). Petrosino's single-minded hatred of organized crime led him to chase the Black Hand to Sicily – where he was assassinated in 1909. In Chapter Nineteen, Harry parks his car beside a triangular-shaped park between Kenmare and Spring Streets, which is now called the Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino Park.

CARROL TERRY: Carrol Terry existed but, try as I might, I can find no trace of her beyond the facts that she was a dance hall girl on Coney Island and that she was involved in the fatal shootout at Dan The Dude's Café on May 14, 1908. Her life may have been something like what I wrote, here – or it may not have been.

CONEY ISLAND used to be an island! No, really! By the time of this story, it had been connected to the rest of Brooklyn by landfill; I won't comment on the obvious symbolism. From towering amusement park rides to menageries, exotic displays from foreign lands, to the famous seaside beach, it was actually quite a marvellous attraction with four separate parks, each offering

different kinds of amusement. One of the features of the Dreamland Park was a show called "**Fighting The Flames**", which was influenced by the popularity of melodramas like "Fireman, Save My Child", made into at least three movies over the decades. **Louis Stauch** came to Coney Island in 1880 and slept on the beach the first night; the second night, he had a job at a restaurant there. Inside a year, he owned it. He was one of the great personalities of the huge carnival that was Coney Island at its peak. Stauch's restaurant could seat 5,000 at a time. He claimed he never spent so much as one night away from Coney Island from the day he first arrived.

INSPECTOR (SERGEANT) THOMAS J. TUNNEY: Tunney joined the New York Police in 1897 and retired due to ill-health in 1919. He was commander of the 5th Precinct in 1907, which had responsibility for the area including Coney Island. Later, as we find in the fifth book in the series, The Kingsland Konspiracy, Tunney became head of NYPD Bomb and Neutrality Squad. He also authored one of the principal books on German conspiracies in America, 1914-1918, called '**Throttled**' (1919).

THE BLACK HAND in America. *Il Mano Nera* were either a collection of low-life punks who did their best to extort money from ordinary citizens, almost all Italian immigrants, and who were actually pretty impotent and not very successful, or they were, according to Joseph Petrosino, "the worst collection of murderers, kidnapers, drug dealers, pimps and more in America". He believed they were the most dangerous criminal gang of their time and gave his life to fight them. In the end, they were the forerunner of the modern Five Families that still run organized crime in America today. Their connections to 'the Old Country' (mostly Sicily) ran deep and their organization helped pave the way for the Lucky Lucianos, the Albert Rothsteins, the Bugsy Morans and, not to forget, the Al Capones of a decade or two later.