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The Dark Corner

By Jay Dratler

- Galt in?

- He's in the building someplace.

He'll be right back. May I help you?

Lieutenant Reeves.

Maybe you can help me,

if you know anything I want to know.

I don't know anything

you couldn't find out by asking Mr Galt.

Nice quality, loyalty.

- How long have you been working for him?

- Several weeks.

- What do you know about him?

- I like him.

Keep you busy?

I sharpen pencils, do the typing,

answer the phone,

and mind my own business.

Well, look who's here.

Hello, Reeves.

- What are you working on?

- My income tax.

Get to the point, Reeves. What do you want?

Why didn't you let me know

you were moving offices?

Why should I?

I notified the commissioner of licences.

- But you didn't notify me. I wanna know too.

- Why?

I've taken a personal interest in you.

I promised my friends in California

to see you didn't get into mischief.

You're an impulsive youth, you know.

Look. I got a fast shuffle out West.

Now all I'm asking is a fair chance

to work up a legitimate business.

I'm playing this by the book,

and I won't even trip over a comma.

I hope not. You got a nice setup.

Good view... and a good-looking secretary.

You'd be smart to keep it clean.

It's nearly six. I'd like to leave now,

if there's nothing else.

There is.

Yes?

Have dinner with me.

Is this part of the job?

It is tonight.

Being a private detective, I don't suppose you could uncover a pair of nylons somewhere?

I'll make a note of it.

Working conditions

are certainly looking up around here.

(man) Watch the lady hit the ball.

There she comes. It's a foul ball.

All right, she doesn't know her own strength.

You're out, lady!

How about it?

Come on, step up. Who wants to hit the ball next? Right this way.

Say, that was OK.

- How do you do that after all that chop suey?

- My father was a major-league umpire.

- Well, what else can I beat you at?

- What kind of games do you like to play?

You know, we got some great playgrounds around 52nd Street.

- Among them your apartment?

- Just a coincidence.

I haven't worked for you long, but I know when you're pitching a curve,

- and I always carry a catcher's mitt.

- No offence. A guy's got to try to score.

Not in my league. "I don't play for score, I play for keeps," said she with a smile.

Say, you wanna give me some change?

Ten pennies.

(man) Win something every time you pull a string.

- Hey. Let's take a look at the competition.

- All right.

- Here.

- Oh, gimme another one.

I might fire you and get a Tahitian secretary.

You won't like 'em, those grass skirts are a fire hazard.

Oh.

Aren't any of these for women?

Hey, now here's a nice secretary.

- Mr Galt?
- Don't worry, I'm not gonna fire you.
Mr Galt, I think someone's following us.
Yeah, I know. Guy in a white suit.
About five foot ten, brown hair.
Sports shoes. Ring on his left pinkie.
Don't stare back.
Let's go.
- I've never been followed before.
- A terrible reflection on American manhood.
- Why is he following us?
- Maybe he likes your big blue eyes.
- Look.
- Hm.
I'll put you in a cab. Go round the block
and park across from our office.
- What then?
- I'll ask him to the office for choir practice.
If he's sings nicely, I'll revive him. When he
leaves, follow him. Tell me where he goes.
OK. But...
- What have you been doing?
- What do you think I've been doing?
You could've been doing a lot of things.
You're stubborn and impulsive
and you think you're tough.
You've got some blind spots too.
Yeah? Name one.
Sentiment about women, for instance.
You're afraid of emotion.
You keep your heart in a steel safe.
I suppose you're the blowtorch type.
I can be warm.
(loudly) Good night, Mr Galt.
(loudly) Good night, Kathleen.
See you in the morning. OK, driver.
(footsteps approaching)
Hey.
There's a pepper pot under the hat, buster.
Let's take a walk.
Face the wall.
Legs apart.
Lean against it.
All right, shell out.

(heavy thump)
(Galt) Make nice brass knuckles, don't they?
Brass knucks ain't legal.
I just carry my change the hard way.
All right. Let's play twenty questions.
You answer them correctly,
maybe I won't knock your teeth out.
We'll start easy. What's your racket?
Same as yours. Private dick.
That's the wrong answer.
We don't go on a job without a licence.
I left it home.
OK. Let me coax you.
I can do it the hard way.
- How long you been shagging me?
- Two days. I was in your pocket all the time.
- Who buys the tickets?
- A client.
I don't know his name. He pays me by mail.
You know I can't tell you his name.
It ain't ethical.
Yeah, sure. You and me both,
we're up to our ears in ethics.
Argh!
What's his name? Who's paying ya?
(choking) Jardine.
Come again?
Anthony Jardine.
What's he look like?
Tall. Yellow hair.
Fancy dresser.
Thinks he's class on a stick.
- Where do you live?
- With my brother-in-law on 23rd Street.
What's his phone number?
(blurts out) Chelsea. 043510.
- (man) Yeah?
- Fred Foss there?
- He ain't here.
- When will he be back?
I don't know. Want me to tell him something?
No.
I catch you shagging me again,
I'll ram these right down your throat.

Here. Get the suit cleaned.
Jardine's particular about neatness.
I keep this. I got a poor memory
for names and numbers.
I may want to look you up again sometime.
Hey. This cab's taken, buddy.
Aww!
Did you lose him?
That's fine.
You should have William Powell
for a secretary.
William Powell, who's he?
Don't you ever go to the movies?
He's a detective in The Thin Man.
That's pretty hot ginger ale you're mixing up.
- Who was that man?
- White Suit?
- Yeah.
- Just hired muscle.
- Who hired him?
- Forget it. You'll be better off.
Had the smell of Judas on me
since I touched him.
Who? Come on, open up that steel safe.
I wanna know and I wanna help.
I can't, baby.
But that's...
that's awful good talk.
I like it.
Listen.
If you don't wanna lose that stardust look
in your eyes, go while the door's still open.
You stick around here, you'll get grafters,
shysters, two-bit thugs, maybe worse.
Maybe me.
I like those odds. I'll take them.
And I'm staying.
Whatever this is,
I've got a feeling you can handle it.
And I like your style, Mr Galt.
Thanks, Kathleen.
Having said my little piece,
I think it's time for me to go home now.
- See you in the morning, boss.

- Hadn't you better start calling me Brad?

Say, about those nylons. What size?

Nines.

I'll make a note of it.

Night.

- Good evening, Mr Jardine.

- Evening, Henry.

Good evening, Mr Jardine.

- Mrs Reynolds, so nice to see you.

- What a lovely party. This reminds me...

Yes. Mrs Cathcart's in the ballroom.

Hello, Jardine.

I practically live here.

I shouldn't bother to leave.

A delight to have you.

You're dining with us tomorrow too.

Oh, yes, thank you. I'll be here.

Where's Mari?

She's inside somewhere.

Wasting her charm on a lot of dullards.

Shall we go in?

Ah. Guten Abend, Frau Keller.

The wife of the Austrian critic. She looks like she's been out in the rain feeding the poultry.

- Mrs Kingsley, Mr Jardine.

- How do you do?

- You know Lucy Wilding.

- Nice to see you.

- Mr and Mrs Bryson.

- How do you do?

And the woman

who brightens my reclining years.

Don't exaggerate.

It's only our third anniversary.

You're not decrepit yet, old boy.

Then why do I detect a rather tactless emphasis on that "old boy"?

We present the perfect picture of Beauty and the Beast.

You can be a beast at times, Hardy.

As long as I'm amusing, you'll forgive me.

But senility is unforgivable.

Stop talking like a fool. You're the most attractive man in the room and you know it.

Remind me to tell you, my dear,
that I adore you.

Quite a turnout, Hardy. Everybody's here.
Yes. A nauseating mixture of Park Avenue
and Broadway. It proves I'm a liberal.

Oh, be honest, Hardy.

You're celebrating your anniversary
and drumming up trade for the art gallery
at the same time.

I never confuse business with sentiment.
Unless it's extremely profitable, of course.
But there is an exhibition tomorrow?

That happens to be a coincidence

I was at great pains to arrange.

Mrs Kingsley, I may have that Turner for you.

The landscape?

Oh, Hardy, how wonderful. It thrills me.

- You know what I mean.

- Will you forgive me?

Yes, I do, Mrs Kingsley.

That enjoyment of art is the only remaining
ecstasy that is neither immoral nor illegal.

- Did you receive my Van Gogh?

- Yes. This afternoon.

I... I would've preferred cash,
but if you're short, a painting will have to do.

I imagine I can always dispose of it.

- May I have my letters now, please?

- Certainly.

I'm very proud of you tonight, my dear.

Every man in the room covets you.

I never want you to grow up.

You should remain ageless, like a madonna,
who lives and breathes and smiles,

- and belongs to me.

- That's sweet, Hardy.

(ringing)

Cathcart residence.

Yes, I think he is here.

Might I have your name, please?

- Tell him it's the guy from San Francisco.

- (slide whistle)

Hey. Come here.

- You want a nickel?

- Yes.

Here. Now shut up!

Hello? Hello. Yeah.

Yeah, it worked just like you said.

It took him two nights to spot me.

He took me up to his office.

Pushed some muscle at me.

I played softie.

Yeah, I told him the name.

And when he heard it, brother, he took it hard.

It hit him right where he lived.

Yeah.

Right.

(#jazz)

Oh, boy. Music like that

does something to me.

Yeah, they're OK.

You weren't even listening.

What are you thinking about, Brad?

Oh, just that maybe

you won't be around very long.

- I'm thinking about that Tahitian secretary.

- Well, you won't like her.

Maybe not. Those grass skirts rustle.

- I told you before, they're a fire hazard.

- So are you.

Pl-ease, Mr Galt.

- How about it, huh?

- OK.

What is it, Brad?

I got a feeling something's closing in on me -

I don't know what it is.

That's me.

- What happened with that guy last night?

- White Suit?

He milked easy, but it came out pretty thin.

I wouldn't be so jumpy just about you.

Oh, yes, you would.

Cos I'm playing for keeps, remember?

Wanna tell me about it?

No.

If you're sharp, you'll get out now, fast.

I got a feeling I'm living

behind the eight ball.

Something's gonna happen. When it does
you'll end up in the corner pocket,
with a lot of grief.

Get out now, Kathleen.

You're a poor salesman, Brad.

I'll be back in a minute.

You'll be smart if you're not here.

- Hello, Reeves.

- Hi, Galt.

- I was gonna look you up in the morning.

- Fine. What have you done?

- Nothing. Just wanted to talk.

- Go ahead.

There's a shyster lawyer in this town with a
swank office, a secretary and no law practice.

This shyster's name is Jardine.

He's put a tail on me.

I think he wants to finish where he left off.

You'd think after San Francisco

he'd leave you alone.

He will. This is just for the record.

- Don't play it too close.

- I'm still working by the book.

Jardine is definitely not the bookish type.

Yeah.

I know.

I decided to wait.

I don't want you to be
in that corner pocket all alone.

In addition, I might add,
you've aroused the maternal instinct in me.

I want to look out for you.

- You hate him an awful lot, don't you?

- Who?

The man who hired White Suit.

He makes it easy.

Brad, what has he got on you?

Nothing. Nobody has,
and nobody's going to.

Not you either.

All right, but remember I can get
brand-new tough guys for a dime a dozen.

Here.

Get yourself two dozen.

I'd rather pick you up at a rummage sale.

I'm a sucker for bargains.

Speaking of which,

if you can't get nines in those nylons,

I'll take eight and a half or even ten.

Doesn't matter.

I'll make a note of it.

Come on, let's finish the dance.

- Thanks, Brad. Good night.

- "Good night"?

Can't I come up for a minute?

I'm thirsty. I want a drink of water.

There you go again,

pitching low and outside.

OK.

You all right, buddy?

- Brad, are you all right?

- Yeah.

- Did he hit you?

- No, I scraped it on the hydrant.

You'd better take it easy for a minute. Let's go in Mrs Schwartz's for a cup of coffee, huh?

Come in. Sit down.

- Can I do something for you?

- Some hot coffee.

Yes, surely. A nice cup of coffee.

Brad, was that an accident?

I don't know. The jury's still out.

Hey, mister. I saw that car.

I got part of the number too.

- What was it?

- I only got the first part. 6-3-N-9 something.

- 6-3-N-9.

- Yes.

- Is that all you got? What kind of a car?

- I couldn't see very well. I think a Lincoln.

- Here, kid.

- Gee, thanks, mister.

Do you think you can trace that number?

I know a cop I can call.

He can check on it, call me back.

What do you think you're gonna prove, Brad?

Maybe nothing.

But I know a guy who's handy with a car.

They tell me you have to be in San Francisco.

You know, on account of the steep hills.

- There a phone in here?

- Back on the wall.

(loud car horn)

Oh, it's getting late.

I've got to go to Scarsdale.

Scarsdale? At this time of night?

Unfortunately.

Such is the hectic life of an art collector.

For six months I've been trying

to get a Turner landscape.

Tonight of all nights,

the owner is in the mood to talk business.

Confidentially,

I've got to close the deal tonight.

I've already sold it to Mrs Kingsley.

Then you can't afford to haggle over price.

Lovers of beauty

never haggle over price, Tony.

I probably shan't return much before dawn.

How I detest the dawn.

The grass always looks

like it's been left out all night.

- Can I drop you anywhere?

- No, thanks, I have my car. Good night.

Good night, Hardy.

- Scarsdale.

- Yes, sir.

How long will it take to trace that number?

He's working on it.

He'll call me back in a minute.

- Stop looking at me like that, will you?

- Like what?

As if I belong in a test tube.

Look, a guy named Jardine's afraid of me.

He put a tail on me the other night.

I think he tried to kill me tonight.

He'll go on trying. Now are you satisfied?

No. I wanna know why.

I had a private agency in San Francisco.

This guy Jardine was my partner.

He was a... barrister.

Swift cookie with the women.

They came in coveys.
He worked his charm,
and he worked a little blackmail on the side.
I didn't wise up until I caught him stashing
away dough that belonged to the firm.
I called him on it. He promised to cough up.
We drove out to his place in Burlingame
to get to his private safe.
Along the road he slugged me,
wet me down with Scotch,
set me behind the wheel for a takeoff.
I hit a truck, killed the driver.
Manslaughter.
Two years, less time off for good behaviour.
Jardine had a fixed alibi.
It wouldn't break and it wouldn't bend.
That's the last I heard of him,
until White Suit showed up last night.
Now you know why.
All except why you wouldn't tell me before.
A guy likes to hold his head up...
not look like a chump.
That's not the real reason. Come on, say it.
You're not so tough, Brad.
You just think you are.
I've cracked you wide open and you know it.
(phone rings)
Hello?
Yeah.
What's the address?
Right. Yeah. Thanks.
Oh, Tony.
(Jardine) Darling.
- You're taking quite a chance, aren't you?
- He won't be back for hours.
Anyway, I'm at the point
where I don't care any more.
I'm glad, darling.
- I'll get you a drink, hm?
- Please.
It's so strange, Tony.
He loves me, gives me everything
a man can give a woman.
But still it isn't enough. It isn't enough, Tony.

I know, dear. I know.

Here you are.

Why, you're upset, darling.

Why don't you drink that down?

Cigarette?

Tony, I tried.

I made a bad bargain

and I tried to stick it out with him.

But I just keep sitting

listening to his paintings crack with age.

I want you to take me

away with you, Tony. Please.

Look, Mari. Hardy can afford you,

but he doesn't make you happy.

I love you, but I have no money.

Tony, darling. What does that matter?

I have already borrowed money from you.

Do you think I want to go through life

being taken care of like a pet poodle?

Darling, we have my jewels. They're yours.

You're taking them for me, for my sake.

- Darling, I wanted you to say that, but I...

- No more buts.

Just tell me when we can go.

It must be soon.

Perhaps tomorrow.

I have some business

I have to take care of first.

I'll let you know.

(door buzzer)

(buzzer sounds insistently)

(thud)

- Hi, Tony.

- Hello, Brad.

Still catering to the female trade.

Take it easy, Tony.

What do you want here?

I'm just delivering a message

from me to you.

Lay off. Keep that tail off me.

- Stop playing me for a clay pigeon.

- I don't know what you're talking about.

I'll explain in simple terms.

Like a two-year term for manslaughter.

I kept remembering that pretty face of yours,
Jardine, all the time I was in hock.

If you're not sharp,
you're not gonna have that pretty face.
You're not gonna have any face at all.

I haven't hired a tail.

And I haven't been after you.

I didn't even know you were out.

And that's on the level.

You on the level? Why, for six bits
you'd hang your mother on a meat hook.

(knocks telephone, bell rings)

Hello, operator? I want the police. Hurry.

(breathes heavily)

That's nice lipstick, baby -
whoever you are.

But you're wasting it on the wrong guy.

(police siren)

- Darling, who was it?

- No one you know.

- I phoned the police.

- You what?

The police. They'll be here in a minute.

Don't you realise they'll find you here? Come
on. Go out the back way. Through the kitchen.

(door buzzer)

(door rattling/knocking)

- What's going on around here?

- Nothing, officer. What can I do for you?

- We got a call at the station.

- Why, that's absurd. I was alone. Reading.

A woman phoned in.

You read pretty rugged stuff.

- Who's the guy? Her husband?

- No.

Look, forget about the dame. Who's the guy?

Look, we got a report to make. If you don't
talk here, we'll have to take you downtown.

- Officer, can't we discuss this...?

- What's his name?

His name is Galt.

Bradford Galt.

"Galt, Bradford."

"Fight. Apartment 204."

- You forgot your hat.

- Thanks.

- Are you all right?

- Perfect.

Your coat's torn.

You oughta see the other guy.

- May I come up?

- Sure.

Well? What happened?

We talked.

One thing led to another,
and he led with his right.

- After that he stopped talking.

- Mm-hm.

Where did that get you?

Nowhere. But I feel a lot better.

Come on over here where you belong.

Oh. No, thank you.

If you're feeling that much better,
I think I'd better go home now.

What about that maternal instinct?

That doesn't work after sundown.

You sew a nice seam.

You got any other talents?

I can cook.

Isn't my Turner divine?

Look at it. It grows on you.

You make it sound like a species of fungus.

Oh! Don't run away, Hardy.

You promised to show me that new Raphael.

The one I've been hearing about for years?

I must see it, Hardy.

It arrived this morning. It's in the vault.

- Shall we look at it now?

- Wonderful, Hardy. I'd love to see it.

We're looking at the Raphael. Will you come?

- I'd like to. I've never been downstairs.

- Mrs Kingsley?

This is the portrait that Italian family
refused to sell, isn't it?

Yes. I saw it a great many years ago
and thought it enchanting.

When I couldn't buy it,

I became obsessed with owning it.

So like you, Hardy.
Merely the passion
of the true collector, my dear.
The rest of the Peruscini family
would've sold long ago,
but the old count refused every offer.
I knew I couldn't buy it while he was
still alive, so fortunately, he decided to die.
And I got it.
(Mrs Kingsley) Oh.
Why... Why, it's Mari.
The resemblance isn't pure accident.
- (Mrs Kingsley) You mean it was retouched?
- Certainly not.
I found the portrait long before I met Mari,
and I worshipped it.
When I did meet her
it was as if I'd always known her.
And wanted her.
Oh, how romantic.
- If you prefer to be maudlin about it, perhaps.
- Hardy hates sentiment.
The light is atrocious,
why not take it upstairs?
I want to have it revarnished.
I also want to get another frame for it.
- Shall we go?
- Oh, I wish we could've taken it upstairs.
Tony.
- (low voice) Can we leave tonight? Can we?
- (low voice) Yes, darling.
We're expected at Mrs Kingsley's.
I can make some excuse,
meet you at your apartment.
All right.
- Have MacDonald close the vault.
- Yes.
No one saw you come in?
I came through the side door,
as per instructions.
Also, I never saw you in my life before.
Good. Now, tell me what happened.
- It didn't work. It was a busto-crusto.
- A what?

- A flop.

- Oh. Well, go on.

Galt went over to Jardine's place last night and pushed him around some, but that's all. Somebody called the cops, but Galt got out.

- What time did this happen?

- About one o'clock. I was out front.

Look, if you want my opinion,

I think you're wasting your time.

This guy Galt is a smart cookie. He ain't gonna let himself get shoved into a noose.

And if you can't needle him into knocking off Jardine, why not let me do it?

I can put a slug into him the nice clean way.

- Get him on the phone.

- Who?

- Galt.

- Oh.

And stop flicking your ashes on my rug.

That's a genuine Kashan.

(phone rings)

Hello? Yes.

- Just a moment, please.

- (buzzer)

And no sooner did he get back than he left her again.

And I want him back. He needs me.

My job was done when I found your husband.

- It's your job to keep him.

- I know that...

The man in the white suit is on the phone.

- Yeah?

- Hello, Galt? You got any dough?

Maybe. What are you selling?

I'm selling Jardine short.

He's slow pay, and I like to keep moving.

- You wanna know what he's up to?

- (whispers) You need \$200 to leave town.

I need two yards, powder money.

- Where? Your office?

- (whispers) No, no, no.

- No. No, the heat's on.

- Come to my place. 504 West 52nd.

Apartment 307. 7:30.

- Tonight?

- (whispers) Yes.

Right.

OK. I'll tip you if I can't make it.

All right.

Well, that's done.

Yeah, but how you gonna get Jardine to bite?

After last night he ain't gonna pay no social call on Galt to get pushed around some more.

He'll be there.

Why shouldn't he be?

After all, he's one of my closest friends.

I trusted him,

now he'll trust me.

How can I watch a newsreel while...

Look, honey. The show takes an hour.

It's seven o'clock.

- I'll be back at eight.

- But I wanna go with you.

White Suit won't talk while anyone's around.

One, please.

Never thought I'd have to beg

to go to your apartment.

You've been there. I'll let you know when

I need any more sewing done. Or cooking.

That's one of your talents too, isn't it?

(radio) If your number is selected and for some reason you don't wish to compete...

Number 836. There he is,

let's give him a hand.

Oof.

(door buzzer)

(thud, Jardine groans)

(door buzzer)

(door buzzer)

(door buzzer)

(door buzzer)

(door buzzer)

(Kathleen) Brad? Brad.

Brad!

Brad?

Brad.

Go away.

Why didn't you come back for me?

What's the matter?

Nothing.

- I-I'll see you later at your place.

- (rattles door) Let me in.

Brad, I'm gonna stay right here
until you open this door.

What's the matter? (gasps)

Meet Tony Jardine.

Brad...

Don't crowd me. I haven't got the answers.
But the police'll find 'em. They're like
road markers running right up my alley.

- Brad, they can't.

- Oh, I'll make book on it.

- You've got to call the police.

- What am I gonna tell 'em?

That somebody put me out
with a faceful of ether?

I woke up and there was Jardine
with his brains beaten out?

And me with a poker in my hand? They'll still
be laughing while they strap me in the chair.

You can't handle anything like this alone.

Don't give me that law and justice routine.

The cops operate on facts.

And the facts are phoney,
from here to the death cell.

Now get out and let me dope this out.

I didn't mean that.

I just meant I wanted to help.

Yeah, thanks. Thanks, but you can't.

Now beat it, will you?

I've gotta stall for time
and figure this out.

Now get outta here.

(door shuts)

(shattered glass drops to floor)

I... uh... put the poker away.

- I want to help you, Brad.

- I can't let you. If I miss, you'll be in it too.

If we miss. I don't care, Brad.

Whatever's done to you is done to me,
and I'm hanging onto you, nylons and all.

Brad, listen. This may sound silly,

but I think that man in the white suit
wanted you to spot him that very first night.
Course he did. No guy in his right mind
wears a white suit on a shag job.
Why'd that car almost hit me?
Jardine wasn't out to get me -
I should've known that from the start -
but somebody sure is.
Somebody who knew
about Jardine and me in San Francisco.
Somebody who wanted me
to think Jardine was after me.
But who, Brad, who?
I don't know. There isn't a thing to latch onto.
Maybe it's something you've forgotten.
No, I'm clean as a peeled egg.
No debts, no angry husbands,
no payoffs, nothing.
People don't go around
committing murder and frame-ups for fun.
So it doesn't add. What do you
want me to do, call the Quiz Kids?
- It doesn't make sense, but...
- What?
Maybe if I could find White Suit
I could get a lead.
- Where's that wallet?
- At my apartment.
Come on, let's go.
- What about him?
- They only clean up once a week.
The maid never cleans under the bed.
That'll give me a head start.
Go ask the janitor where I am. Say you
rang my bell and I don't seem to be home.
- Go to your apartment, I'll meet you there.
- All right.
(knock at door)
- Who is it?
- (Galt) Me.
(yawns)
- There's a drink in that cabinet.
- Thanks.
Here it is.

Fred Foss, 328 East 23rd Street.

- I think we're gonna hit pay dirt.

- How do you know it's White Suit?

My thumb, baby. My thumb tells me.

Come on, let's go.

(# Salvation Army band)

- Fred Foss live here?

- Ground floor, round the back, on that side.

Thanks.

(gasps) Oh, mamma mia!

Where's Fred Foss?

What do you want with me?

I didn't do anything.

- Is this your wallet?

- Sure, that's my pocketbook.

I lost it in the subway.

- Thank you. Thank you.

- You're Fred Foss?

Sure I'm Fred Foss. Ask the neighbours.

- My five dollars, it ain't here.

- OK, OK.

- Five dollars.

- I don't want your five dollars.

Thank you. Thank you.

There goes my last lead.

I feel all dead inside.

I'm backed up in a dark corner

and I don't know who's hitting me.

(phone rings)

Yes?

Very good.

Get in touch with me tomorrow.

Same place, same time.

- Who's there?

- It's I, darling.

Just a minute.

Come in.

It's after nine, darling.

We're expected at Mrs Kingsley's at ten.

Oh, I simply can't go, Hardy.

I've got a miserable headache.

All right.

I'm so sorry, my dear.

I'm going right to bed.

Why don't you run along without me?
I wouldn't think of it, darling.
Mrs Kingsley will be so upset.
She doesn't upset that easily.
But I did promise to meet Tony there.
I had rather a delicate matter
to discuss with him.
Hadn't you better go, then?
I imagine it can wait.
I'd rather stay here with you.
Isn't it important?
No. But it's a problem
he's eminently qualified to handle,
a man of his vast experience with the law,
in all its tawdry aspects.
You sound so mysterious.
What's it all about?
The oldest cliché in the world.
One of my friends, who deluded himself
that his was the ideal marriage,
has recently discovered there's another man.
Well, Tony doesn't handle divorces, does he?
The husband doesn't want a divorce.
You mean, he wants her back?
Yes.
And as the lost and found ads say...
he offers a suitable reward for her return.
You mean the other man
would take money and just go away?
When an impoverished character,
unendowed with any appreciable virtues,
succumbs to a rich man's wife,
it has to be suspected that his interest
is less passionate than pecuniary.
But how could she be taken in
by such a man?
Take... Tony, for instance.
I'd never imagine him
to be interested in... Lucy Wilding.
- But he is.
- It's not true! He's always loathed her.
He loathed her rather intimately, I'm afraid.
But he couldn't. I mean, she's too old for him.
Love is not the exclusive province

of adolescents, my dear.

It's a heart ailment that strikes all age groups.

Like my love for you.

My love for you

is the only malady I've contracted

since the usual childhood diseases.

And... it's incurable.

(knock at door)

- Who is it?

- The milkman, Miss Stuart. 85 cents, please.

- Morning.

- Morning.

Oh, thank you.

Nothing.

Maybe I ought to hire a press agent.

- What time is it?

- Seven.

If I only knew who was after me,

it wouldn't be so bad.

How do you fight

if you don't know who you're fighting?

- You're licked before you start.

- I know you.

- You won't let anybody get away with this.

- Oh, don't be too sure.

Worked before.

I can be framed easier than Whistler's Mother.

All right. All right.

We'll just sit down and feel sorry for you.

- We'll build a Wailing Wall.

- OK, OK.

But don't give me that Pollyanna routine

either, about how everything's gonna be fine.

I'm no miracle man.

That maid comes to my apartment and hits

bingo under the bed, I'm as good as cooked.

Here, drink this.

Look at me.

Tower of strength, nerves of steel.

Don't bother, Brad. The stain'll come out.

Stain.

- The ink. I smeared ink on his white suit.

- What of it?

He'd need the suit cleaned.

The cleaners would have his address.
This is a dirty town. Cleaning places
grow on every street like mushrooms.
They don't do their own cleaning.
Where's the classified?
There.
They farm the stuff out
to the big cleaning and dye plants.
- There can't be too many of them.
- What if he didn't have it cleaned?
He wouldn't run around town
in an ink-stained suit. It ain't neat.
That's a pretty long list.
We'll each take half of it.
It's early in the season for white suits
so we ought to find it if we have it.
There's a five-spot in it for you
if you do. Get moving.
We had a couple of white suits,
but none with ink on 'em.
OK.
No white suits. Sorry.
(slide whistle)
These are the contracts
and this is your dental appointment.
(phone rings)
Cathcart Galleries.
Yes.
- A Mr Smith from San Francisco.
- Oh, yes.
That will be all.
(door shuts)
Yes? Look here,
there's nothing in the papers, not a word.
I told you the deal went through and it did.
Can I help it if they ain't found the shipment?
Well, that sounds very odd to me.
You're positive nothing went wrong?
What do you want me to do, take out an ad?
Listen, Cathcart. We get this deal settled
today or I'm coming down to the galleries.
And right through that front door.
I have a three o'clock dental appointment
in the Grant Building. Meet me there.

Wait a minute.

Grant Building. 31st floor. Three o'clock.

OK.

(buzzer on radio)

(police dispatcher) Car 15. Car 15.

- What time is it?

- 1:

(phone rings)

Hello? Yeah?

No. No, not a seersucker. A white linen suit.

Yeah. Thanks.

(dispatcher) 1164 Broadway.

Attempted robbery.

(knock at door)

Car 21. Car 21.

Fire in warehouse.

Hi, Galt.

Forgot your boy scout oath, didn't you?

I thought you were gonna lay off Jardine.

- I'm clean, Reeves. That's on the level.

- Sure, sure. I believe you.

Anyway, he didn't press charges.

I don't blame you for mussing him up,
but breaking in and wrecking his furniture?

I'm going to have to take your merit badge
away from you if you don't lay off.

Just thought I'd let you know.

(whispers) Thanks.

Thanks.

(phone rings)

Hello? That's right.

Yes, that's the suit!

What name? What name did he give?

Just a minute.

Yes, I have it. What address?

Oh, thanks, mister.

I'm sending you ten bucks. No, 20!

- Brad, we've found him.

- Great!

Martha!

- Where's Martha?

- What?

- Where's Martha?

- She ain't here no more. She quit yesterday.
- Well, good riddance.
- Yes'm.
(screams)
(slide whistle)
- Hello.
- Hello.
Man named Stauffer live here?
Sort of a heavy-set guy?
He left half an hour ago, bags and all.
Where'd he go?
- Cop?
- No.
- Please, lady, where'd he go? It's important.
- I know.
- You do, honey? Tell me, where'd he go?
- Don't mind her. She don't know nothing.
Yes, I do. Yes, I do!
I heard him on the telephone.
Well, tell him then.
Honey, would you like a nickel?
Here. Where'd he go?
- He went to a building.
- What building?
Same as the president.
The one with the beard.
- Lincoln Building?
- Uh-uh.
- Grant Building?
- Uh-huh. He was sick.
Was he?
He said he was going to get
his cascara at the gallery.
Can you get cascara at a gallery?
I don't know, honey. Here.
OK. We're in the clear.
I can't understand
why there hasn't been a word in the papers.
You're positive nothing went wrong?
When I do ajob, I do ajob.
They just ain't found him yet.
I came straight here from the bank.
I didn't have a chance to count this. Oh.
(screams)

Don't stop traffic.

Come on, move it out of here. Go ahead.

Everybody, please.

(officer) Stand back.

- What happened?

- Keep back, buddy. Keep back.

- Get those cars moving.

- He says to drive to the Grant Building.

He seemed OK,

even asked me to wait for him.

How did I know

he was going to take a brodie?

Brother, he came out of there like a hot rivet.

I've still got his bags in my hack.

You know, it's a funny thing.

I never yet seen one of those guys bounce.

Hey, you! Come back here!

Hey, he's stealing my cab!

(horn blares)

(police whistle)

(tyres screech)

(horn)

(whistle)

There goes the ball game.

Not a card, not a letter, nothing.

I played tag with a .38 to get this stuff,

and this trail stops cold

on the 5th Avenue sidewalk.

- He'll never even be identified.

- You'll get a break.

The cleaner found the suit.

He gave me Stauffer's name and address.

The girl told me the Grant Building.

What more break can I ask for?

I may be stupid, but I know when I'm licked.

- Well, I'm not licked.

- Nobody asked you to be.

OK. So I'll fry. I can't help that.

Yes, you can. Use your head. Think hard.

For instance, what else did that kid tell you?

- Nothing. Nothing that made sense.

- Well, what was it?

Something about Stauffer had to get

his cascara at the gallery. OK, figure that one.

Cascara at the galleries. Cascara.

You don't even get cascara at the galleries.

Maybe he was sick and he went
to see a doctor at the Grant Building.

Brad.

There's an art gallery. I've seen
their ad in the paper. It's on 5th Avenue.

There it is. Cathcart Galleries.

Cathcart Galleries. Cathcart Galleries. What
would Stauffer have to do with an art gallery?

That's the point. He wouldn't
unless there was some connection.

You got something there.

Up in Jardine's apartment...

I remember now...

there was a painting, just unwrapped.

(tyres screech)

Reeves. Get this stuff out of the way, quick.

I'll go down the back way. You stay put.

- Meet you at your place.

- Where will you be?

Absorbing culture at the gallery.

I don't wanna die ignorant.

- Where's Galt?

- He isn't here. What do want me to tell him?

You can tell him goodbye.

He's going to the chair for murder.

- May I help you?

- Yeah. I want to look around.

Well, it's almost closing time,

but if I can be of any help to you...

Yes, you can. You can take the tour with me,
tell me about the paintings.

- And I'd like to ask you some questions.

- I'm at your service.

Oh, has Mr Pagacelli been in today?

- The great Dutch critic.

- I don't believe I know him.

He's a big beefy guy with a broken nose.

He wears a white suit,

even though it's early in the season.

- Are you sure you haven't seen him here?

- Why, no. I'm sure I haven't.

Maybe you'd care for something like this.

Uh-uh. (snorts)

I don't think so.

She looks like she's been stuffed with kapok.

(knock at door)

Come in.

Shall I close the vault, Mr Cathcart?

- Everybody's gone?

- One customer with Miss Dennis.

You may go. I'll lock the vault.

There's something to put away.

- Good night, Mr Cathcart.

- Good night.

This is one of Donatello's finest pieces.

- How much is it?

- \$40,000.

- Wrap it up.

- You mean you'll take it?

- How much for the pedestal?

- It's just one of our ordinary pedestals.

I know, but I've got to have it.

- By the way, who owns this place?

- Hardy Cathcart.

- Is he in?

- I believe so.

I realise a small sale doesn't entitle me to any unusual consideration, but I'd like to see him.

Why, certainly. Would you follow me, please?

I'm sorry. Mr Cathcart must be in the vault.

- Just make yourself comfortable.

- I will.

- I'll tell him you're here. He'll be right up.

- No hurry.

Mr Cathcart, a gentleman in your office wishes to purchase the Donatello.

- He wants the pedestal too.

- That can be arranged.

He wants to take it with him.

He asked me to "wrap it up".

- "Wrap it up"? The Donatello?

- Yes, sir.

I'll attend to it myself.

You may go now, Miss Dennis.

- Good night.

- Good night.

- Mr Cathcart will only be a minute.
- Thanks.
- Would you care for a glass of sherry?
- No, never touch it.
- Well, then. Good night.
- Good night.
(door opens)
Hardy, I...
Oh, I'm sorry.
I thought my husband was here.
- Mrs Cathcart?
- Yes?
Your husband's in the vault.
He'll be up in a minute.
Thank you.
I believe we have
a mutual acquaintance, Mrs Cathcart.
- Yes?
- Anthony Jardine.
He's a very good friend of my husband's.
- Have you seen him lately?
- Oh, not for several days.
I'm afraid you won't be seeing him
for a long, long time.
- He's been murdered.
- Murdered?
Oh, no!
That's what I came
to see your husband about.
Hardy?
Hardy did it.
How dare you touch her.
Keep your hands off her.
Cathcart, huh?
It's good to see you out in the open at last.
It cuts you down to size. Way down.
Strange, Mr Galt.
Seeing you here
causes me to revise my opinion of you.
It's gone up.
Now... shall we go?
- I prefer privacy.
- What for?
For our little chat.

Downstairs.

You came to see me, Mr Galt.

About the Donatello, wasn't it?

Actually, I'm interested
in a piece of modern art.

Something stiff as a statue by now.

It was finished the night before last.

I think it belongs in your collection.

A Tony Jardine.

Nonsense. I never handle anything
as worthless as a Jardine.

No. You mishandled it.

Did I? When it was found in your apartment?

Perhaps it was delivered
to the wrong collector.

- Sure you can't claim it?

- Positive.

Actually, this Jardine really belongs to you.

- You paid to have it done.

- Did I, Mr Galt?

Somebody had to pay that muscle artist
to brush him off. Or didn't you ever pay him?

Perhaps you launched him out the window
to get what was coming to him.

Mr Galt, your imagination
is beginning to bore me.

- Step in there.

- Listen to me. You can't get away with this...

Can't I?

You're a criminal. I apprehended you.

Your wife knows you bumped off
her boyfriend. You think she'll keep quiet?

What my wife does is no concern of yours.

Leave her out of it.

Jardine's corpse was found
in your apartment, and that ends it.

Oh, no, it doesn't. Not by a long shot.

You pinned the evidence on me,
but when the police finish digging,
they'll find out you had a better motive.

That's the only sensible thing
you've said so far.

I dare say, at a trial, our respective motives
will make an interesting case.

Who knows, it might even have the distinction of reaching the highest court. But unfortunately, Mr Galt, you won't be around to hear the decision. Now, get in there.

(gunshots)

(sobs)

Hey, Mac.

Do you suppose anybody in his right mind ever buys a piece of junk like that?

Sure they do. That is art.

Thanks, Reeves.

Good night, Reeves.

Good night. I'll see you first thing in the morning.

Would you make that later in the day? We have a date in the morning. At the city hall.

He hasn't asked me yet, but I told him from the beginning I was playing for keeps.

Looks like it'll have to be tomorrow afternoon.

- OK. I'll see you then. And congratulations.

- Thanks.

- Good night.

- Good night.