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The Killer That Stalked New York

By Harry Essex

New York. The biggest town
in the whole wide world.
And because I love it. I think it's the best.
It's safe and secure,
like the granite it's built on.
How do I know? I live in it. I know it.
Better than that. I know the muscles of it.
I watched it fight for its life.
That's what this story is all about.
When we almost had a city
without any of those people.
When a killer stalked them in the street.
It began on a November day in 1947.
Death didn't sneak into town
riding the rods or huddled in a boxcar.
It came in on a streamliner,
first class, extra fare,
right into the Pennsylvania Station,
big as life.
And when it finally stepped out
of its drawing room and onto the platform,
it was something to whistle at.
It wore lipstick. nylons
and a beautifully tailored coat
that sported a silver dancing girl.
Souvenir of Cuba.
Its name was Sheila Bennet.
A pretty face with a frame to match,
worth following.
And followed she was by a big-faced man
from the U.S. Customs Service.
A T-man on the make.
Not for the girl. but for what she had done.
She knew he was there.
And it made her nervous.
Real nervous.
Odd part about the whole thing is
the customs cop thought he was just
trailing a candidate for a federal pen.
Never suspected
the blonde target was a killer.
Oh, no. She didn't deal death out of
the end of a gun or off the point of a knife.
She delivered it wholesale.

Just by walking through a crowd. climbing
some stairs, pushing through a turnstile.
Standing in the station.
Better than wholesale.
For free. No charge.
The tragedy was she didn't know
she was death either.
This is what made thejigsaw puzzle
so tough to put together.
If the T-man had known
and if Sheila had known,
my hometown wouldn't have been
punched to its knees a short time later.
All Sheila knew. she had a headache.
- Aspirin, please.
- Sorry, we haven't any.
A headache, butterflies about
the T-man who was following her,
and a terrible hunger to get to her husband.
I guess when a woman loves a man,
a headache is a simple thing.
Shaking a bloodhound off
a red-hot trail is worth the risk
if it means getting rid of that pain
that comes with empty arms.
So little a thing as
the sound of a lover's voice
can give a woman a lot of strength.
To get it. Sheila dropped a nickel in the slot.
Hello. Sheila, where are you?
Penn Station. I just got in.
I missed you, Matt, terribly.
No more than I've missed you.
Is everything all right?
I'm being followed. Positive.
Have you got them with you?
No, I mailed them along the way.
I wasn't taking any chances.
Smart girl. All right, then, listen carefully.
Check into the America Hotel and...
Don't ask me to do that, Matt.
I can't stay away any longer.
It's all I've been thinking about.
All the way from Cuba, just seeing you.

You want to queer everything?
All right then, do as I tell you
and stay away for a couple of days.
Maybe a federal cop was waiting for you
to lead him here.
That's a good girl.
I'll call Francie at her office
and tell her you're back. Bye, baby.
Francie, your sister's back.
I'm frightened, Matt.
There's nothing to worry about
as long as you do as I tell you.
Oh, Matt.
Just let me handle this.
- Porter, ma'am?
- Yes, please.
America Hotel, please.
Anything wrong, miss?
Is the hotel doctor around?
He's gone, past office hours.
Dr. Findley takes his calls.
I can get him over.
Please.
Ten dollars if he comes over here.
Five if you go there.
He's just up the street.
How would you like to make that extra five?
Brains, they call me. Brainy Danny.
There's somebody waiting downstairs.
- Somebody I don't want to see.
- Freight elevator, out the back way.
My friend might have thought of that, too.
Come on. I know a different way.
- Smart boy.
- Ask anybody. Brainy Danny.
There now.
You'd better come along with me.
- I'll be all right, Officer.
- Will you, now?
Maybe we can get the doctor in the
Health Office here to take a look at you.
I know. The clinic is only supposed to
handle babies and mothers and take x-rays,
but she's an emergency case.

Here.

- Feel better?

- Yes, thanks.

I think we'd better let the doctor see you.

Yeah, you'd better, miss.

Well, I'll be getting back to the beat.

- Thanks, Houlihan.

- Not at all. Don't mention it.

Your name?

Agnes. Dean.

- Address?

-621 East 10th.

I'll tell Dr. Wood.

But, Officer, that no parking sign
wasn't here when I drove up.

I'm going to the hospital.

- Is that good?

- In an ambulance.

Great. Gonna get a free ride
in an automobile.

Do you have a little girl?

No. But I wish I did.

Say, that's a mighty big handkerchief
for such a little girl.

Dr. Wood gave me it for when I cough.

It keeps my germs locked up.

- What's your name?

- Walda. That's a pretty pin.

Here, would you like it?

There we are.

But I can take care of her at home.

What about the other kids?

Alec, Timmy, the twins?

Walda's cough is contagious.

That's why the city has hospitals
like Willard Parker.

But she's so little.

She has never been away from home.

She cries so easy.

I'll tell you what. I'll look in on her
myself every night. How's that?

Now, you haven't got a thing to worry about.

Walda's going to be all right.

- Thank you.

- Good night.
- Houlihan brought you a patient.
- Another emergency?
- She fainted.
- All right, send her in.
- What do you do for a living?
- I'm a singer.
- Eat regularly?
- Mostly on the run.
- Try slowing down for a while.
- It's nothing serious, is it?

No, I don't think so, but see your own doctor. He'll make some tests. Meanwhile take this medicine as directed. Thanks.

Tired?

Yeah. Tired of worrying about where people live and how they live and whether the water they drink is polluted and...

- I'll buy you a sandwich?
- Can't.
- Have some lab work to finish.
- Even on your own time?

I get my bad habits from you. You didn't have to promise to look in on Walda every night either.

Matt!

- Matt!
- Who is it?

It's me Matt, Sheila.

Sheila.

Hey, hey, let a husband get to his wife.

- Hello, baby.
- Hello.

I hadn't figured on you for a couple of days.

I lost the cop, Matt.

Are you sure?

He may have followed you here.

- He's still waiting at the hotel.
- Matt called me right after he talked to you.
- It's good to be home again.
- Just like old times, the three of us.

Only I'm not sharing

my husband with anybody.
Well, it looks like I'm a crowd.
I'll talk to you tomorrow, Sheila.
Now we can go away.
Are you sure the cop didn't
see you mail those stones?
I was very careful, Matt.
With \$50,000 in diamonds,
we can go anywhere we want to
and not worry about a thing.
And you never saw her again
after you brought her up, huh?
No, sir. But I thought she was
up to something, the way she was acting.
How was she acting?
Well, you know, shifty, kind of.
Any idea how she got out?
No, sir. I couldn't say.
All right, you can go.
Spread the word around
to the rest of the boys.
They'll do better to talk now.
Gotcha.
- Find anything?
- Nothing we don't already know.
She's a singer, uses an obvious alias
and smuggles diamonds.
Smart cop. Follow her all the way from Cuba
to find out who she's working with,
then lose her.
They'll probably try to unload the stones.
Maybe that'll give us a lead.
Notify the jewelry trade. Furnish
a description of the diamonds and the girl.
- Good morning, Mr. Krane.
- Hi.
We're running a special today
on cottage cheese.
How about me leaving some with your milk?
- I'm busy.
- Best on the market.
Some other time.
- Morning, sir.
- Morning. Have you got something for me?

- A little package.
- Nothing today.
- Well, make sure, will you?
- I am sure, mister.
- Good morning, Belle.
- Hiya, Charlie. How's your feet today?
My feet are still killing me.
- Went to see a new doctor...
- Yeah, I know, I know. Too bad. Too bad.
- It didn't come yet.
- It will.
- It should have been here by now.
- Mail gets delayed sometimes.

What about stamps?

Did you put enough on the package?

- More than enough.
- Then where is it?

Give it another day.

Maybe tomorrow.

- That's pretty.
- A nice lady gave it to me.

I'll be back tomorrow, Walda, with lollypops.

There's no doubt about it. She had whooping cough when I admitted her.

Well, the whole thing's more complicated now.

Yes. But what is it?

I've had two of the best diagnosticians in the city examine her.

We've run tests on every possible disease from typhoid to mumps.

Yet the symptoms persist.

The same chronic headache, backache and recurring fever.

Twenty minutes ago her temperature was 105. Now it's back to normal.

And we have the added symptom now in the rash.

One minute at play and the next minute crying in pain.

Well, Ben, perhaps at tonight's consultation we'll figure it out.

It may be too late then.

What good is all our modern

lifesaving equipment and all our hospitals?
As far as that child is concerned,
we might just as well be back in the days
when medicine was groping blindly.
Those things were expected then, but now...
For all our knowledge, we're unable to add
up a group of symptoms to mean anything.
Symptoms are warnings.
What are they trying to tell us?

Ben.

Suppose we were in those
medieval days again.
When plagues wiped out whole cities.
Before x-ray, vaccine and anesthesia.
And the symptoms were a headache,
backache, fever and rash.
What would they have meant?
Smallpox.
The symptoms could fit, couldn't they?
But here, in the middle of New York City?
Why, I've never even seen a case.
Well, I have. In Europe, as a child.
Hundreds of them.

Screaming and twisting creatures.
Doomed to be fed to a huge bonfire
that was kept going for weeks.
I should have thought of it before this,
except that New York's the last place
in the world we'd expect smallpox.
We haven't had a case in 10 years.
How could she possibly get it?
She'd have to pick it up
from someone who was already sick.
Well, that's what frightens me even more.
If Walda has smallpox, then
someone else in New York has the disease.
Do you know what that would mean?
Only too well. A killer out of the past,
loose amongst eight million people.
That's fantastic.
This is 1947 and we do have
vaccine against smallpox.
Was Walda ever vaccinated?
No.

Nurse.

Tell the head nurse to make arrangements
for all patients and personnel

- to be vaccinated at once.
- Vaccinated?
- Hurry. This may be smallpox!
- Yes, Doctor.

Get blood and tissue samples from the child.

Do you suppose we have a case
of smallpox here, Doctor?

I hope not. But Cooper's taking no chances.
That's why the vaccinations.

Do we have a case here, Doctor?

We won't know until the Army lab
in Washington finishes testing.

Funny. A hospital
for communicable diseases,
yet we had to send out to make the tests.
As a matter of fact, there are only
two or three labs in the entire country
that have specialized personnel to do it.
It's an immensely complicated procedure.
Keep them crossed.

Smallpox in New York City. Wow!

I'll never forget one smallpox epidemic
in China in 1902.

Spread like a swarm of hornets and as fast.
Killed half a million people
before we knew what was happening.

When I hear of a single case of smallpox,
even in Timbuktu,

I break out in a cold sweat.

But in New York City!

Keep your fingers crossed, General.

- Maybe the test will be negative.
- It's ready, sir.

It's positive. Smallpox.

What's the mortality rate?

One out of three die?

Yeah. And if you live,
you look like this.

Get me the Commissioner of Health,
New York City.

We're up against a disease that spreads

like wildfire. A plague out of the Dark Ages.
Somewhere in the city is the cause,
and every second it takes to find it
means that much more spread.

That's why we've got to work fast, Mr. Skrip.

I want anyone who even remotely
had contact with the child vaccinated.

That means everybody in the building
where she lived, where she went to school,
where her parents worked.

I'm depending on your staff of investigators
to locate these people.

How many vaccination teams
can you throw in, Dr. Penner?

- Ten, so far.

- Investigators?

About 40.

Use every means short of a gun
to get cooperation.

Anyone not vaccinated
is liable to get the disease.

If they still refuse to submit,
tell them what they face.

A thousand ugly sores breaking through
and a fever that burns its victims to death.
You better get started.

Commissioner, what do you want to do
about the papers?

They'll be asking questions.

Better keep it out of the papers
for a while, Mr. James.

- We've got enough for now without panic.

- Yes, sir.

How much do you know
about Walda's family?

They came in from a mining town
a few months ago.

History of poverty and neglected health.

That's why I insisted the girl
be sent into the hospital.

In a sense, I feel responsible
for what's happened to her.

You did your job.

I'm putting you in charge, Dr. Wood.

It's your neighborhood that's been attacked.
Somewhere in Walda's family and
circle of friends is a person with smallpox.
Find that person
and we stop the disease in its tracks.

Good morning.

Well, got something for you today.

Mr. Krane. Mr. Krane,

how about that cheese special?

Look, it comes in a painted glass and when
it's empty, it goes right in your kitchen.

- Talk to my wife about it.

- You can use it as a... Sure.

Not now. Tomorrow.

The fellow who sells the most this month
gets a gold button.

- That you, Matt?

- Yeah.

Did it come?

- No.

- Tomorrow, Matt.

Sure, honey, tomorrow.

Now, don't get up. You just rest there.

- I'm going out for a while.

- I'm not very good company.

No complaints.

Don't forget your medicine.

We'd appreciate your calling us
if anything like that comes along.

- I certainly will, sir.

- Thank you.

- Who's that?

- Treasury Department.

Here, read all about it.

It's Sheila's description.

Suckers.

Don't bother taking them out, Matt.

You're gonna have to wait.

- Why?

- Those stones are too hot.

Give them a chance

to cool a couple of weeks.

- But he's already been here.

- He can come back.

You put me in a spot, Moss.

I've already made arrangements to leave.

Forget it. For at least 10 days.

All right. Ten days.

Don't tell me. Let me guess.

You know, the Chinese tell us that
one picture is worth ten thousand words.

If we had one of Sheila Bennet,
we could circulate it, maybe get some help.

Well, she was a singer. She must have
had some pictures taken professionally.

Well, let's see if we can't dig one up.

It's a cinch she didn't have it taken here.

Hey, fellas, look! They're vaccinating
everybody in the building.

- What's that?

- They make with the needle.

They're up at Kowalski's now.

- Look, don't even show.

- Mary, the stew is burning.

You say Walda's uncle took her out
a couple of weeks ago.

- Yes.

- Remember where they went?

To the circus.

You see, they ain't got no kids of their own.

Why are you asking so many questions
about Walda?

- Something's happened to her.

- She'll be all right, Mrs. Kowalski.

- I'm going down to see her.

- It's not allowed at Willard Parker Hospital.

- But...

- Come now, Katie.

Ain't you the one always saying
how you trust Dr. Wood?

Doctor, we still have two floors to go
on this building.

I was surprised to hear that she's sick.

She was healthy-looking like a baby-oil ad
the day I took her to the circus.

- Where was this circus?

- Up in the Bronx.

- Where in the Bronx?

- Brooks Avenue near Crotona Park.

Check on that

and take a vaccination team along.

- Right.

- It ain't there now.

- It was one of them traveling circuses.

- Well, what was it called?

Can't remember.

But I'm sure it wasn't Barnum and Bailey.

I don't want to be vaccinated.

You're a big girl now.

Well, there now. That didn't hurt, did it?

No.

- Anybody sick at your house?

- Only my mother.

- What's the matter with her?

- She just came home from the hospital.

From having an operation. She has a baby!

Thanks.

Here's my report on the rest

of the people in the Kowalski neighborhood.

- Anything at all?

- Not a thing.

Okay, thanks. I'll take these

to the Commissioner myself.

- How'd you do?

- We finally caught up with that circus.

In Canarsie. All healthy. All vaccinated.

- Any leads from this end?

- No, nothing yet.

Maybe there's nothing

to worry about anymore.

That's wishful thinking.

Don't forget, whoever made Walda sick

is still roaming around.

Maybe he's through roaming.

Maybe he's dead.

- Hiya, honey. Expecting someone?

- Turn that thing down, can't you?

I like music with my work

and you should, too,

seeing as how your husband

makes his living at it.

Only he ain't been around lately, has he?

- Nobody's asking you.

- Okay, I talk to myself.

- He'll be back.

- Oh, sure. Sure he will.

Only I ain't waiting that long for the rent.

- What do you want?

- My rent.

I'm expecting some money.

If it's coming in a package, forget about it.

It got here two days ago.

Come, now, you ain't that dumb.

You don't know what he's up to?

He ran out on you, gave you the gate.

Sure.

Men like him are all alike, I know.

I don't understand, Willie.

What did he say before he left?

- Nothing. Just that he was quitting.

- Well, he must have said something.

He just didn't leave

without saying where he was going.

Look, I got piano players coming and going.

He just wouldn't walk out on me, not Matt.

He must have had a reason.

Your sister. The nice kid

you're always looking after.

- You're a liar.

- She met him here every evening.

Well, I told her to...

I told her to keep an eye on him.

She did better. She gave him the eye.

- What's the hurry?

- Let me go.

Your job's waiting for you.

You can sing those torch songs to me.

Sheila.

It's good to see you up again.

I was just about to get back to the office.

How's the job coming?

Swell, except the timekeeper's

still trying to date me.

I stopped off there to see you.

They told me you quit a week ago.

All right, I did.

Why did you lie?

Because I knew

you'd go into one of your routines.

- Look, Sheila, I'm not a kid any longer.

- You'll never grow up.

Maybe I will, if you'll quit

trying to tell me how to live.

You don't need anybody anymore.

You learned a lot of things while I was away.

Even cooking.

You get to learn a lot

when you're on your own.

Like running around with married men?

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

- Willie does.

- He had to tell me about you and Matt.

- You're not going to believe him?

Where is Matt?

Isn't he with you?

- You know he's not.

- When did he leave?

He left two days ago.

Why does it shock you?

Is it because you thought

he'd come back and get you?

Is that it?

- Yes.

- Then what?

We were going away

after he sold the jewels.

Neat.

My own sister. Why?

- Why?

- I don't know why, Sheila.

How can I blame you?

You never had a chance with him.

Maybe it's my fault trusting him,

but I loved him.

I couldn't think of anything else.

Tell me the truth, Moss.

Did you give him money for the stones?

I wouldn't lie to you, Sheila.

My one remaining virtue.

Well, the stones have to be cut first.

He'd have to bring them to you.

Quite so. Only I sent him away.

- Since when is charity in your line?

- It isn't, but good sense is.

It might interest you to know the police were here looking for two registered stones, smuggled in by a woman answering your description.

Under the circumstances, it would have been most imprudent to take the stones just yet.

- Where is he?

- I didn't ask him.

- Help me find him, Moss.

- Suppose you do catch up with him, Sheila.

- What'll it get you?

- I've got to find him.

Consider it a bargain to be rid of him.

Help me, Moss. I'll give you my share.

That's being impractical. I'm a jeweler.

I appraise things.

The stones are worth \$40,000.

Matt, nothing.

You'd be making a bad bargain.

Is it a deal?

All right, Sheila.

I just don't want you to get hurt.

- When is he coming back?

- In 10 days.

Thanks.

Be careful, Sheila.

Remember, the police are looking for you.

I'll be at my sister's place.

- Ain't no doctor going to help her anymore.

- What happened?

- Suicide.

- She lived right next door to me.

Poor Francie Bennet.

Attention all staffpersonnel.

Report to your supervisor immediately.

Report to your supervisor immediately.

What's it all about, Donna?

They've just admitted

a second case of smallpox.

- Where do you work?

- I'm a porter, sir, over at the Penn Station.

Do you remember seeing
anyone who looked sick?

I see hundreds of people every day.

That's why it's important
you try to remember.

Try.

So many people coming and going all day.

So many.

Well, we've been through every angle
and it just adds up to one thing.

The porter at Penn Station and Walda here,
there couldn't have been any contact
between them.

Apparently there's still a third person
who gave them both the disease.

Not a very bright prospect.

Two cases of smallpox on our hands.

Not even the beginning of a lead
as to the person that gave it to them.

A city of eight million with every facility
for police and health protection,
yet one infected person can sneak through
and threaten the lives of millions.

How do we stop it?

- I don't know yet.

- The police?

What'll we tell them to look for?

Man, woman, child?

All we do know is that wherever he moves,
there'll be victims.

Hey!

What are you doing here?

No law against a sister seeing her brother,
is there?

Why the sudden interest in your family?

I forgot.

Families get together
whenever there's a tragedy.

Don't, Sid. Not now.

The Bennet girls. Pride of Brooklyn.

Well, you don't have to worry
about the kid anymore.

She's dead because of Matt.

Don't you think I know?
Then why didn't you do something about it
when she was alive?
How did you expect her to know
the difference between right and wrong
when you got tied up with a guy like Matt?
Nobody's asking you for a lecture.
A flophouse manager,
a flunkey to a lot of bums.
Yeah, that's right, Sheila,
but it gives me an address
and I can sleep nights.
I didn't come here to fight with you, Sid.
I need a place to stay.
The police are after me.
You can use my room if you want to.
But forget Matt, Sheila.
He'll only mean more trouble.
There're some things
you don't understand, Sid.
Like the murder burning in your eyes?
You look like you could kill.
Dr. Wood.
His name is Willie Dennis.
I'll be in to see him in a minute.
Can I get you anything, Jerry?
A drink of water, please.
The porter's dead.
I heard.
He didn't have much of a chance.
Yet a simple thing like vaccination
could have saved his life.
Learn anything from the new cases?
No more than we got from the others.
The boy had contact with someone
who was sick, all right.
His brother Manny had the flu last year.
What about the fellow
who runs the nightclub?
He shakes hands with all of his customers
when they come into the place
and again when they leave the place.
Yes? Just a minute. For you, Commissioner.
Ellis speaking.

Well, what's the address?

910 Grant Avenue. Thanks.

A Staten Island doctor

thinks he found a case. A milkman.

- Milkman?

- Get going.

Last Thursday, it was.

He could hardly get to work that day.

"Joe," I tell him. "Stay home. "

But not him, not Joe Dominic.

He's gotta make a record.

It was only a little headache, hon.

I know you, Joe Dominic. You gotta be

half dead before you take a day off.

May I see your delivery list?

Why, sure. It's in my coat pocket, hon.

Nobody but Joe Dominic can deliver

the milk to the babies.

Never been late in five years, he hasn't.

He's looking for a record, a gold button.

Him and his ambition.

- I'd like to borrow this.

- I'm going to need it.

Not for a while, you won't.

You're going to the hospital.

See that he gets there, Miss Lorie.

Total of four. All Manhattan.

Well, you can add another pin

to the collection.

The milkman has smallpox.

That's right.

The same fellow

that delivers milk to the babies.

Keeps us awake rattling bottles.

Any leads?

I've got Skrip and his men checking

the delivery route.

- Maybe he got it from one of his customers.

- And maybe not.

It's getting out of hand, when it gets around

to children and food.

We can't just sit by and wait for a case

to come in

and then rush vaccine over.

It's too late then.
Look at that map.
It's beginning to crawl with pins.
It's already jumped to Staten Island,
making five cases.
Tomorrow some other borough,
then 10 cases, then 20,
reaching to hundreds and thousands.
We're a threatened city.
There's no limit to it.
Every case spreading out on its own
until the very air is polluted
and breath means death!
We have to stop it.
Get to the people first, beat the disease.
Vaccinate the whole city!
Eight million people? Impossible!
We've got to.
This thing's getting out of hand.
- That would take hundreds of clinics.
- Get them.
- And doctors.
- We'll draft them.
Do it, sir. It's our only chance.
Call the Commissioners of Police
and Hospitals.
We're going to see the Mayor.
- It's Sunday!
- No one told smallpox it's Sunday.
He's safe, he's safe.
Get it!
- You're out.
- You're a robber, Mr. Mayor.
You're as blind as a bat.
- All right, you call them, Pinkie.
- Okay.
- That a boy, Pinkie!
- Pink couldn't even call his name.
All right, you have eight million
arms to vaccinate. What do you need?
- An extra thousand doctors.
- You've got them. What else?
Facilities for vaccinations.
You're donating your police stations

for clinics.
The same for the fire houses
in all the boroughs.
I take it the Commissioner of Hospitals
has something to offer.
Every city hospital and staff on call
24 hours a day.
- All right then. We're ready.
- Not quite.
- How much?
- We'll need half a million dollars
to get underway.
Vaccinations are free.
At six cents a life, that's a buy.
You'll start with me.
The Mayor didn't waste any time.
A few hours later he had his sleeve
rolled up and took the big scratch.
And after the headman set the example
for his town,
the Health Commissioner took to the air.
If you were tuned in,
you heard the opening gun
on a fight-to-the-finish war,
and if you couldn't hear it.
you could read about it.
The newspapers got the facts,
the who, the what. the where,
the when and the why.
The biggest headlines we'd seen
since V-Day hit the town
right between the eyes.
The next thing you know, they'll be
running pictures of him brushing his teeth.
There wouldn't be headlines that big
if it wasn't serious.
Two cases of smallpox
don't make no epidemic.
I agree with him. Nothing but publicity!
And even if it ain't,
what right has the Mayor got
to spend the taxpayers' money like this?
Do you know what it'll cost,
all this free vaccinating? Millions!

You ever been in a smallpox epidemic, Mac?
Ever seen one?
No, but I don't see
what that's got to do with...
Well, if it ever breaks loose in this town,
look out, brother, that's all.
But the cases are quarantined.
They ain't letting them walk around loose.
Nobody can get it unless they rub up
against somebody that's got it.
Oh, yeah?
Look at that guy there on that chair.
He could have picked up the pox
from one of them people in the hospital.
Have it and not even know it, see?
All right, you come along.
You sit in that same chair.
Blooney, you got the pox
from just sitting there.
You're next, mister.
Not me. I'm getting vaccinated!
So, as the facts sank in, the people lined up.
The rich and the poor.
Everyone was a setup for smallpox.
Some had been stricken early.
Others who had unknowingly
contacted the disease
were saved by being vaccinated in time.
Even heels like Matt Krane.
Honest folk. shady folk
and intellectuals like Brainy Danny.
Sure, there were some who didn't
believe in the city's fight.
Now, nobody's gonna put no germs
into me or my family!
But the ball was rolling,
and whether you liked it or not.
unless you grabbed for the life insurance
that only cost a 10-minute wait in a line,
you were out of fashion. Not in style.
An aching arm told your neighbor
you had good sense.
The count went up.
One million vaccinated.

Two million.
But smallpox is never a local affair.
It concerns the world.
Washington, London, Paris,
all waited for the news our Mayor
was punching out on the home grounds.
Be safe, be sure, be vaccinated.
Sure, the T-men went for the big
scratch, too,
but vaccination to them
was only a short pause
from the main job of trying to nose
a cold trail into a hot one.
And while they worked.
the Health Department stuck
to its leg-tiring task
of checking Joe Dominic's milk route.
From dairy customers' doors
to uptown photo shops,
here were two agencies
seeking the same thing.
Yet fate continued its grim joke
and somehow kept the federal men
and the health detectives
from pooling their efforts.

- Yeah?

- I'm from the Board of Health, madam.
Look, mister, I just got vaccinated
in the basement.
You take milk from
the Ace Dairy Company, don't you?

- What about it?

- Well, is anyone in your family sick?
Why?
Because we're looking for someone
who has smallpox.
She gave her name as Sheila Bennet.
That's her, all right. Any other information?

- Referred by Willie's place.

- What's that?
It's a little club down in the Village.
518 Waverly.

- Mind if I borrow this?

- Compliments of the house.

Thanks.

Hey, what's up, Bub?

On your way, sonny.

Are you guys detectives? What's the pitch?

Willie ain't around. He's in the hospital.

- Which one?

- Willie Parker.

On account of him I had to get vaccinated.

He's got smallpox.

Hey, fellows,

I bet you they're government dicks!

Hey, you guys got a siren?

Come in.

- Dr. Cooper?

- Yes.

My name is Johnson, U.S. Customs.

I'd like to talk with a patient of yours.

A man named Willie Dennis.

I'm sorry, Mr. Johnson, but he's one of our smallpox cases in isolation.

No one can see him.

It won't take but a minute, and it is important.

I'd like to cooperate, Mr. Johnson, but he's a very sick man.

We've come a long way for this lead, and it's our only link with the jewel smuggler we're tracing.

Mr. Johnson, even if I did make an exception, it wouldn't do you any good.

He's been delirious for hours now.

As a matter of fact, there's a chance he will never regain consciousness.

Well, in case it becomes possible to talk with him, would you call me, Doctor?

- All right, sir.

- Any time at all, night or day.

We'd appreciate it.

We've been tracing this jewel smuggler for a long time.

Right now, our own health detectives are trying to trace a smuggler, too.

A smuggler who brought smallpox

into the country.

Yes, I know.

We're looking for the person
Joe Dominic delivered this stuff to.

You mean Sheila Bennet.

Well, they've been there ever since she left.

You say she was sick?

Yeah. Right from the first day
she ever got back.

Always lying there
and complaining about headaches
and hardly ever going out.

Mind if I use your phone?

Now, look, mister, this ain't gonna
make any trouble for me, is it?

Yeah, she left about two days
after the husband walked out on her,
and you know what,
she didn't pay her rent, either.

You're sure you wouldn't know
where she went?

No, sir. Boy, I'm sure glad I was vaccinated.

- Anything at all?

- Nothing so far.

Nothing in here.

- Do you have a picture of Miss Bennet?

- No, we wasn't social, ever.

- Well, what did she look like?

- Terrible.

No. Height, weight, color of hair.

What was she wearing the day she left?

Anything at all to distinguish her.

Well, she was blonde and about...

5'4" in height.

Wore a dark blue suit at the time she left.

No distinguishing marks.

Uses the name Sheila Bennet

and is married to Matt Krane, a musician.

Get that to all the newspapers.

- Not much to go on.

- It's something.

- Yes, sir?

- Get me the Police Commissioner.

Better get that description

to all the radio stations, too.

Right.

John, we've got a lead on what we think may be the person we want.

It's a woman, last living at 810 West 49th Street, New York City.

Come on, Owney.

What was she doing in Cuba?

Smuggling diamonds into the States.

No quarantine restrictions between Cuba and the continental United States.

She could have passed through an area of contagion and brought the disease into the country. She did. She was carried into the clinic after a fainting spell the same night I sent Walda to the hospital. I remember the symptoms now.

She had smallpox, and I let her slip through my hands.

Where is she now?

That's what I hoped to find out from Willie Dennis at the hospital, but they wouldn't let me in to see him.

- Were you vaccinated?

- Yes.

- You'll see him now.

- Let's go!

Okay.

And that's the last time you saw her, eh?

Do you have any idea where she might be now?

She made you sick, Willie.

Maybe her brother Sid knows.

He runs a flophouse called The Moon on Third Avenue.

You stay here with the doc.

Keep your eyes open.

I'll see what I can find out from Sid.

I'm coming with you.

Hi, Sid.

Now, don't go bothering me, Tom.

Let me stay here till the cops go away.

- What cops?

- Come here. Look, look!
I can spot them a mile away.
They always pick me up
and throw me in the tank.
They see me in here,
they think I'm respectable.

- Get behind the desk.

- Who? Me?

Yeah, yeah. Tell them
I'm upstairs cleaning, you understand?
Only stall them before you let them in.
You do that and I'll give you a bed tonight.
Sheila!

Open up!

Open up, I tell you!

Just a minute!

But the police are here.
They'll follow you wherever you go.

Open up!

- It's stuck. The lock's stuck!

- Open up!

- Tell them the truth, Sheila.

- No.

- You can't go on running.

- I've got to.

Sure. You've got to look for revenge.
That's all you've had to do.
Just sit here planning murder.
What's happened to you, Sheila?
I'll find him. I've got to! Help me, Sid.
All right.
It's stuck!
Go down the fire escape
and through the cemetery.

- It'll get you out on another street.

- I didn't mean to make trouble.

Neither did Francie,
but you'll wind up the same way.

- Sid...

- Now, get out of here.

- The lock got stuck. It's a bad lock.

- Where's Sid?

Sid? He's cleaning up for the customers.
Take us to him.

Policemen, Sid, policemen!

- Are you in trouble again?

- I didn't do nothing.

It's Sheila we're looking for, Sid.

There was somebody here all right, Doc.

- Come on, you, start talking!

- I tell you, she wasn't here!

- You took long enough letting us in.

- I was cleaning.

And that open window.

We're not looking

for a smuggler anymore, Sid.

We're looking for a killer.

I didn't think doctors

went in for third degrees.

I'm giving you facts.

Your sister's got smallpox.

She's the one that brought it into the city.

Unless we find her, she'll die,

and with her a lot of others she contacted.

She couldn't have known that.

She was sick, wasn't she?

Yeah, but smallpox!

- Where is she?

- I don't know. I told her to get out.

I gave her this bottle myself.

- How important was that medicine?

- It helped keep her on her feet.

- Then she won't get far without it.

- Well, it depends.

Some people are hit quickly

and others hang on.

I didn't know. I didn't know.

Come on, you, you've got

some questions to answer.

Get him vaccinated first.

Sheila Bennet's our girl, all right.

We found her at her brother's hotel,

but she got away from us.

We've got to vaccinate that whole area

right away.

We can't. We're out of vaccine.

What?

The warehouse just called.

We're down to 1,000 units.

With four million still to be vaccinated
and cases mounting?

Well, they expected new shipments all day.

Now the drug manufacturers say
they can't meet the demand.

By tonight there won't be
a single office with any vaccine.

Well, what about
the out-of-state companies?

Well, they're flying in what they can
and even taking it off the druggists' shelves.

How long will that take?

- Four days.

- Four days?

We can't wait four days.

Not with Sheila Bennet on the loose
spreading the disease.

SOS! SOS!

Vaccine for four million!

But there wasn't any more, anyplace.

Even the Army and Navy gave all they had.

And when the doors closed
at the vaccination centers,
the big fear began.

As the frightened city felt the clammy hand
of death settle in the streets,
panic was born and became epidemic
as the disease itself.

Those without the scratch
stood alone and unprotected
against the ravenous killer.

The Mayor called a council of war
and again demanded the impossible.

I need vaccine. Lots of it,
and you drug manufacturers
are going to supply it.

We will, Mr. Mayor,
but it'll take several days.

- Tomorrow!

- That's impossible, sir.

So is what we're doing.

This city's in a jam,
and you're going to pull us out of it.

But, Mr. Mayor, the vaccine
has to be packaged in single doses.

That takes time.

- Then deliver it in bulk.

- We can't. Medical regulations.

Break them. Send it over in beer bottles.

But get it here.

All right, how many units from you?

- We'll try to get out about 20,000.

- Thirty.

- You, sir?

- Well...

Thirty.

There's still the problem of needles.

Needles?

Get me a sewing machine company.

They make needles. We'll sterilize them.

You gentlemen don't

seem to realize we're facing death.

No!

My baby!

You promised.

You made me send her away.

We did all we could.

Murderer!

Murderer! Murderer! Murderer!

Sheila Bennet! We've been looking
everywhere for you. Everywhere.

And you've come back.

I need medicine.

You've got smallpox.

Stay back.

We need your help, Sheila.

Stay back, I tell you!

You can't hold out much longer.

I've got to, until tomorrow.

No. No! Don't come near me!

Don't come...

Police Department.

She's got to be found.

We must learn where she's been,
who she's been with.

How could she stay on her feet?

By rights she should be dead by now.

If not that, at least flat on her back
in the hospital.

But she's still running around.

How does she do it?

How do cripples who've been bedridden

for years manage to get up and walk?

Because the reason for walking
is more important than their infirmities.

I know, I know, but Sheila Bennet's
got smallpox.

She said something to me when I told her
she couldn't hold out much longer.

She said, "I've got to, until tomorrow. "

There's a drive in that girl.

Something she has to do tomorrow
that's keeping her alive.

Tomorrow!

With eight million people looking for her,
we'll pick her up tonight.

The city's finest engraved the image
of the blonde death in their brains
and carried a spare, just to make sure.

Then set out to search for the sick animal
that might destroy them all.

If you tried to drive in or out of New York
that night.

you had to pass inspection.

If you were a female, 5'4",

and addicted to the rinse
that makes hair the color gentlemen
are supposed to prefer,

you had to prove you weren't Sheila Bennet.

Eight million people looked
for one sick, weary girl.

who dragged herself

to the one last place to hide.

A place where newspapers and police calls
never reach.

A convent.

Dr. Wood was right when he said
there was a drive inside Sheila.

She had the strength that comes
when a woman has to settle a score
with a man like Matt Krane.

A strength to last until tomorrow.
until the 10 hideous days were up.
I've come a long way, Mother.
If I may rest for a while?
Of course, child.
Sister Maria will show you to a bed.
Thank you, Mother.
Must hang on.
Must.
Must.
Well, how much?
Should bring about 40,000.
They're worth 50!
Matter of supply and demand.
For me, they're worth nothing.
What did you keep me waiting for?
It's simple, Matt. You need money,
and I don't want you to have any.
I don't like the deal you gave Sheila.
I need money!
Get it!
Demand and supply.
I've been waiting for you, Matt.
- I've got the stones.
- Don't move!
You're not going anywhere.
You'll never go anywhere again.
Moss!
He tried to help me.
He wouldn't take the stones.
After what we've been through...
What have you been through?
Look.
Look at me.
Something else I picked up for you
besides diamonds.
Not a pretty sight, is it?
The face you kissed once.
You figured things good, didn't you?
That's right, Matt.
I came here to kill you
for what you did to me and Francie.
You're crazy.
But I don't have to, now.

They'll burn you, Matt, for murder.

- Sheila, listen to me.

- No more.

Not much time for talk now.

I'm dying.

You can't turn me in!

This is Sheila Bennet.

- Sheila Bennet.

- What?

- Notify the Health Department.

- I already did.

Good boy.

The way I loved you.

I even let you make me a thief.

You've got to believe me!

You're frightened, Matt.

Maybe Francie was frightened, too.

Funny how things come clearer

when it's too late.

Everything Sid tried to make me see.

Sid was right.

He's up on the top floor. Come on, Mac.

Matt!

Hurry up. Get that ladder out.

Started out after her, Doc, but it scared her.

She almost fell off.

She's probably delirious.

Doesn't even know where she is.

Take it easy, Doc.

Sheila. Sheila.

I'm not a policeman, Sheila. I'm a doctor.

I'll help you back, Sheila. You can trust me.

Remember Walda, the little girl

you met in my office?

- Do you have a little girl?

- I wish I did.

- Do you have a little girl?

- She's dead, Sheila.

You killed her when you touched her.

Give me your hand, Sheila.

Unless you help me, Sheila,

lots of others will die.

All those others you touched.

Give me your hand, Sheila.

All right, all right. Break it up, break it up.
It's all over. It's all over.
Go on home. Come on, go on. Go on home.
Read about it in the papers tomorrow.
And so, on a ledge
five stories above a street.
the city's terror came to an end.
Before Sheila passed on
in a last blinding burst of fever,
she found the strength to tell the doctors
what they had to know.
And smallpox. the ancient killer,
was forced back into the Middle Ages
from whence it had sprung.
There were the dead.
but eight million lived on.