

miles away, and it is twenty minutes before they get Red to the emergency room. Dan waits until the intern starts to work and then he strolls down the corridor to the phone. He has a mean job ahead of him. He's got to report to poor Susie that she has a two-timing husband who also packs a rod and will probably do a stretch for it. He is a very heavy-hearted cop as he asks for long distance.

Kitty sounds sleepy when she answers. Dan takes a deep breath. "Sit down before you hear this," he says sadly. "I've got bad news. Red is in the hospital."

There is a pause. And then Dan can't believe what he hears, because what he hears is Kitty's merry laughter. "I know it, Danny boy," she says. "Isn't it wonderful?"

"W-wonderful?"

"AND to think Susie suspected the poor darling!" Kitty goes on. "He knew for months he should have his appendix out, but he never told Susie. And when she suggested separate vacations, he decided it was a wonderful opportunity to have the operation without letting Susie know, because she worries about

him so. He pretended he was going to Skypeak Lodge, but he went to the hospital in Hartford instead. He phoned her from there late this evening and he says he's coming along fine. What are you sputtering about, Danny boy? You sound like static."

"Wait a minute!" Dan yells. "What goes on? If Red is in a hospital in Hartford who the hell did I shoot?"

"We must have a bad connection," Kitty says. "I thought you said you shot somebody."

Dan hangs up. He steps out of the booth in a daze and finds a short stocky guy waiting for him. "I'm the sheriff here, McGarry," this guy states. "You did a nice piece of work. Blackie the Charmer is wanted in five states."

"Blackie the Charmer?" Dan mumbles.

The guy smiles. "Come, come, McGarry," he says. "I may be a backwoods cop, but I know who Blackie is as well as you do. He's just about the most notorious jewel thief in the country. Neat trick of his — dyeing his black hair red. It changes his appearance completely. The house dick at the Lodge had

his picture on file, but he never suspected this red-headed guy." The sheriff gives Dan a friendly slap on the back. "But Blackie wasn't smart enough for a big-town cop like you. I suppose you knew as soon as you saw him that hair as red as that couldn't possibly be natural?"

Dan is still glassy-eyed. "Arumph — arumph — arumph —" he grunts.

"BLACKIE always operated on wealthy and susceptible widows," the sheriff goes on. "Once he got himself invited to their apartments he worked fast. He had poor Mrs. MacGregor bound and gagged in the bedroom. Her jewels — and he had them in his pocket — were valued at forty grand. He'd have been on his way in another minute if you hadn't walked in on him. Oh, it was a nice piece of police work, Officer! The management at the Lodge is very grateful. They phoned to say you can have your vacation on the cuff for the rest of your stay. No greens fees, free horseback riding, free tennis lessons from the pro —"

"Tell them thanks just the same," Dan says, with a great happy sigh, "but there's a double-header in town tomorrow."

The End



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