



The INTRUDER

by CAESAR V. VILLA

THE MAID opened the kitchen service door in response to a knocking, but before she could find out who was there, a fist rammed against her jaw and she fell asleep. The attacker tied her and proceeded to the sala.

In the darkness that engulfed him, he surveyed the room. Presently, he had a better view of his surroundings. He found, to his satisfaction that he was in the right place. The sala was a five-by-five affair, not too lavish in decoration, but even in the darkness he could see that the owner, Mr. Roa, was a man of exquisite taste. The diner was about one half the size of the sala. He made straight for the kitchen.

He grimaced as he looked at the maid, gagged and hogtied, squirming to break loose. There, he saw a neat perfection stove and a refrigerator. He opened the latter, but seeing nothing that interested him,

settled for a beer. He pried the cork off and brought the foaming bottle to the sala.

He picked the most comfortable upholstered chair in the sala set and dragged it to the diner, placing it in such a position that when he sat on it, he faced the front door with the dining table to his right. He took the half-cocked automatic forty-five from under his belt and placed it on the table where he could reach it at a moment's notice. Then, he gulped the beer.

Willfredo Russel, appeared to be relaxed and at home but a long stare at his boyish and sensitive face revealed uneasiness and impatience. He just sat there, his hate-filled eyes staring blankly into the darkness. Willie was the type bobby-soxers considered as a Tony Curtis or a Rock Hudson or something of the sort. He appeared to be four or five years younger than his twenty-five. He had fair skin,

a straight nose, wavy black hair and a pair of dimples that appeared at the slightest hint of a smile. This wide-eyed, tall and husky Apollo had on a dirty white T-shirt and blue denim pants which were just about as dirty as his shirt.

The night was cold but endless beads of sweat streamed down his neck and soaked his shirt. His impatience mounted. He took another long gulp at the beer and lit a crooked cigarette. He took three full drags at it, then he stamped it out. The beer, cold as it was, tasted flat in his mouth and the cigarette only made it worse. He wiped his sweat-soaked face with the back of his hand and unconsciously started to bite it until the pain forced him to stop. He held the aching hand before his eyes and after feeling a warm trickle from the part he bit,

concluded that he had cut his hand. A litany of long curses escaped his lips. He glanced at his watch. It was exactly ten-forty in the evening when . . . the door before him opened.

"Grace Kelly was just great, wasn't she, Pa? I wish she'd appear in another picture, she's just superb!" commented Andres Roa, Jr.

"She can't appear in pictures anymore," remarked Andy Roa.

"But why?" asked junior.

"Because she's now the princess of Monaco, that's why," said Mr. Roa, playfully messing the hair of his eight-year old son.

"But why can't a princess be a movie star?"

"You'll find out when you grow older. Now go to bed."

"Anybody care for a sandwich? I'm hungry," complained Mrs. Roa, simultaneously switching on the light. (Turn to next page)

The lights flickered, then blazed on. They saw him. He was right there in front of them, lounging in a chair with a cynical smile on his face and the gun in his hand. It was a moment of tenseness... as though something snapped... and all the little family could do was stare at this intruder inquiringly and fearfully. Obviously, they knew the man.

"Hello, folks!" greeted Willie, the smile still on his lips but the hatred even more permanent in his eyes. "Well, don't just stand there. Say something! Something like 'How are you or how do you feel!'" he yelled.

"Willie, I've paid for what I did. What more do you want?" blurted Andres nervously.

"Oh-h-h- I sentence you to two years and one day in the State Prison for homicide through reckless imprudence. That's cute. But that ain't enough, hear me?" shouted Willie.

Willie got up, walked slowly towards Andres, held his collar and whispered. "It was my son you ran over with your flashy new car, old boy, and the punishment you got just wasn't enough. You owe

at the three. Andres lay on the floor with the boy embracing his prostrate body, sobbing.

"You beast! You filthy murderer!" said Mrs. Roa.

"Don't say that, Ma'am, because I haven't murdered anybody. Not yet, that is," Willie answered, the smile still on his lips.

"If you ever touch Andy again, so help me because that gun isn't going to keep me away from you! I'll kill you!" Mrs. Roa glared at him with tears in her eyes.

"I shouldn't worry about your husband if I were you, Ma'am. That's about all I'm going to do to him," he said. "If he behaves."

Andres regained consciousness. Aided by his wife, he got up. His left cheek was swollen from his blow and his mouth was still bleeding. He got out a handkerchief and put it over his mouth.

"As I said, Andres, you owe me a life," he paused to puff at his cigarette, then stamped it out. "I think, Junior should start paying now because he's just as good as dead," he said.

The effect was slow. Then the Roas looked at each other, realiz-

Willie. "Take my life but not my little boy's!"

"No! No!" shouted Mrs. Roa. "Please, for having accidentally killed your son, we have suffered enough already. Please, please, Mr. Russel, if you go now, we'll just forget about the whole thing."

The unmoved Willie only stared at them. Then, he said, "It's too late. I've made up my mind. I will kill your son... definitely."

Knowing the situation to be hopeless, Andres ran to the phone and desperately began to call the operator. Central didn't seem to answer so he clicked the phone repeatedly. He heard Willie laughed. He turned to Willie inquiringly. Yes, Willie cut the wires. He rushed to the door but again Willie cut him short with a smashing straight right to the mouth and he fell to the floor. Andres Roa would be needing loose teeth from that moment on.

Mrs. Roa didn't rush to help her husband this time because she knew her husband was in no particular danger anymore but she clung to the boy.

"Mr. Russel, where is your sense of decency? Where is your conscience? You're a brute, you're no better than an animal! Yes, an animal! And what's worse, you haven't got a heart! You'll never get away with this. You'll hang! Yes, I'll see you hang!" She screamed then burst into an agonized cry.

"Ma'am, do you think I enjoy killing your son? Sure it's easy for you to say 'forget it... let bygones be bygones!' Yes, easy... for you. But do you know how it feels to live without a heart? When my son died, I buried my heart with him. But now, there you are condemning me for not having one. Is it my fault? Tell me, is it my fault that I lost my heart?" Willie shouted at the top of his lungs, then continued calmly, "you know why I want to take your son? I want you to feel the misery that I'm feeling, the feeling that it's easier to die than live without a heart. So, stand aside or you'll get hurt!" he commanded.

Mrs. Roa clung to the boy desperately. She placed her body in such a position that it shielded the boy from Willie's gun. Both mother and son raked the room with sobs. She knew Willie meant everything he said but still she clung to him.

Realizing that Mrs. Roa had no intention of parting with her son easily, Willie grabbed her by the hair and flung her away. Both mother and son sailed and landed in such a way that Mrs. Roa's head

Any Other Suggestion?

The suggestion that the professors in this University use more humor in their ways of teaching is meeting favorable response from the cracker-barrel students. The mortality rate of studes dropping asleep during lectures is great and the teachers should liven things up a bit. Very recently, for instance, when a felon had a happy meeting with Morpheus, we were saddened to see that the professor wanted him wakened. It was unjust for the professor to order someone to shake the napping culprit since it was he who placed sleephead in such a comfortable position in the first place.

From Escobar's "Monkey Wrench"

me a life, Andres, and you're going to pay for it with somebody's life. Or yours."

He hit Andres' jaw with the barrel of the automatic. There was a dull thud as Andres slumped on the floor and a simultaneous scream came from Mrs. Antonia Roa. She rushed to her husband's side and wiped the blood from his mouth. He was unconscious.

While suppressed sobs filled the room, Willie walked slowly to his chair and lit a cigarette. He looked

ing what was coming, grabbed the boy and shielded him instinctively with their bodies, crying unashamedly like children.

Then Andres calmed down and got up.

"It is true, Willie, I owe you a life. I was responsible for the death of your son. If it's a life for a life, then it shall be my own life you're going to take. Besides, what has my little boy ever done to hurt you that you should ask his blood? Please, I beg of you," he knelt before

bumped against the wall. She fell senseless to the sofa with the boy still in her embrace. Willie got the boy out of it and put him in the center of the sala while he withdrew to his seat.

He sat there staring at the boy. Junior laced him squarely. He stifled any sob or tear that attempted to escape. Junior wanted to be a man and he decided that this was as good a time as any. He stared at Willie not pleadingly but with bravery and defiance and courage. He showed no fear. He put his hands on his hips and said, "Go ahead."

This amazed Willie. Then he began to wonder if he really wanted the boy dead. His son would be just about Junior's age if he had lived and he would have wanted him to be like Junior now.

Nevertheless, he pulled the hammer of the gun from the half-cocked position to full. Slowly, he raised the gun and took aim. The sights were now leveled and he knew that what mattered now was that little squeeze on the trigger. He knew that the little squeeze would send a bullet plummeting into the boy's belly. He summoned all his strength for that little squeeze, but his finger wouldn't move. He then realized that he couldn't kill this little Mr. Defiance. He lowered the gun, placed the hammer to half cocked, and placed it back under his belt.

"I guess you get me beat, kid," he sighed. He took the half-filled bottle of beer and downed it all. Then he looked at the boy again, still glued to the spot.

"Well, what are you staring at? G'wan, get lost!" Willie said, and the kid ran to help his parents.

"Willie," someone called out as he was just about to leave. He stopped in his tracks, hesitated and turned. Then their eyes met.

"You! What are you doing here? Where have you been hiding?" he asked.

"Oh, I followed you and hid in the bedroom when you went to the kitchen. Willie, I'm glad you're not a murderer. I'm so glad. Besides, you couldn't kill anybody with that gun. I emptied it before you left the house!"

"Women, women, when will I ever learn to understand your species," Willie sighed, "and since when did you start following me around?"

"I'm your wife, am I not? And I got a right to know where my husband is going and what he's doing. Aw, let's go home." §

Three Heroes and A Story

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sentful **Old Faithful** with the guilty feeling of "deserters".

Our grand entry into Poma had all the drama and fanfare that simple folks can alone concoct for the beloved. The only missing touch was a brass band. But that even was fairly done up for by the wonderful singing and rhythmic thumping each one seemed to be so expert in. The evening was still young when we broke into camp. The whole village was reception committee headed by the Missionary who stood in a cleanly swept clearing... expectant. **Bapak Uskup! Bapak Uskup sudah datang!!** (Father Bishop has come!) the litany was endless. The Missionary, elbowed and surrounded by a "mobby" crowd of people who were so eloquent, they were all talking animatedly at the same time in their native tongue, fell on his knees in reverential greeting to his Superior. Above the hustle and the bustle... the jostling... the foul, unwholesome smell of sweating bodies... the sore scurrying... the mad fighting for grandstand seats near His Excellency, all three: Monsignor, the Missionary, and my dust-laden self experienced a warm and deep kinship that only brothers in a religious community can feel.

Close to midnight, after hearth fires had burned low, the three of us retired... grimy, exhausted. On the morrow another drama was forthcoming. I was up at 5:00 o'clock the following morning, washed myself hurriedly and hid me to a dilapidated structure which is a strange, incongruous definition of a church. I wanted to hear confessions, only to find that my Bishop had beat me to it again. Half an hour ago, I was told, he had entered the improvised confessional — a tin box set by the wall. Now the b-line was five meters long.

Solemn ceremonies started promptly at seven. Even here in Flores. Time can be a dictator. When His Excellency walked down the aisle to the thundering rendition of the impressive **Ecce Sacerdos**, ten altar boys in full regalia as regal as their Father they were ushering, all eyes flew to **Bapak Uskup. Ecce Sacerdos** shook the rattlers as school children sang spiritedly from memory, each note precise and pure and sweet. Their lilting hearts, their surprisingly wonderful talent for music showed beneath the seams

— a gift that compensates for a lot of things they miss and which civilized society takes excessive pride in. During sermon time, the motley congregation was attention personified. One could hear a pin drop... their quietness was breathless, punctuated only sometimes by mischievous giggles from sprightly, dark-skinned cherubs who could not detach their wondering, caressing eyes from Monsignor's golden Crozier. Among the Catholic audience were elderly pagans... why, they would not for the life of them miss the **pengadjaran** (sermon) of Father Bishop... they sat not stolidly, listening with the intensity and seriousness and rapt attention of the child learner. Mass finished, confirmation was administered to children and adults alike. That, indeed, was a most beautiful spectacle inside the house of the Lord. Some 500 souls were made stronger knights of Christ. Many of them were children of pagans who gave the impression that they got more kick out of the solemn rite than most christian parents get.

Festivities followed the rites — that was the "adat" in all the villages: pigs and "kerbau" (water buffaloes) were slaughtered for the gala occasion. His Excellency was lavished upon with gifts that ran from horses to gaily colored, hand-woven fabrics. The blessed cherubs made a show to their Father Bishop of their graceful, supple bodies in several dance rhythms. Our loud applause after their dance never failed to evoke big, wide smiles. A nod of approval, a complimentary word from Monsignor was a rare gem to them. The angels!

On the other hand, Father Bishop interpreted to them, not in vague terms, the essence of the word LOVE. I came to realize during that trip with him that it is this powerful force that makes the Monsignor more than a name — more than an ecclesiastical figure to be revered by those whose lives he has touched. He possesses the capacity of looking deeply into the human heart and, of understanding fully, with infinite sympathy, what he sees therein. His everyday way of living, his inexhaustible patience and kindness — his habit of dumping Charity into everybody's lap, regardless of color and creed: this is

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