

was going to double-cross them and keep it all for himself. He said we were going to New York and get on a boat to South America. I told him I wouldn't. He got vicious again then and said I'd either go with him or die right then. I—I promised I'd go, just to save myself. I was so scared!"

I nodded.

"Sure you were," I soothed her. "Dames scare easy. You couldn't do anything else, anyway."

She flashed me a swift, real smile at that.

"I'm so glad you see it that way," she said. "Any way, the next thing the car stalled on that road. Joey was furious. He was scared then, too. And then you came along, and the rest you know."

"Yeah," I said. "That brings me up to date. Okay, baby, all we got to do now is hand this suitcase over to the cops and tell them the story, then you can forget all about being scared. Joey's dead, and the cops will pull in the other guys. Then maybe you and I can take a vacation, eh?"

She clutched hard at my sleeve with her gloved hand.

"No!" she exclaimed. "Oh, no! You can't do that. Don't you see, they'll send me to jail? They wouldn't believe me? They'll be looking for me already—they'll know I was dating Joey. Please don't do that!"

I stopped the slow-moving car and looked right at her. She sure was scared. Her eyes looked about three times as big as they should have been, and that sweater was plenty active again. I gave it thought. Maybe there was something in it. The cops would naturally take the view that she acted as the inside contact. In a way, she had. Besides, to go to the cops would splash our names and pictures in the papers, and there were the other hoods to reckon with. They'd be pretty mad by now, with no Joey turning up with the dough. Later, when Joey's death hit the front pages, they'd figure it out their own way. To them it would seem that the dame had outsmarted Joey. It would seem that she had had a partner ready to bump the guy off and snatch the dough. And to them that partner would be me. I didn't like that one little bit. Dames aren't the only ones that scare easy.

"Seems to me," I said slowly, "that the best thing to do is drop the dough somewhere and leave New York. There's something in that South America idea. Care to go along with me?"

She nodded eagerly.

"Oh, yes!" she said quickly. "Let's get away from here!"