

flipping the discs means slapping the plates down in front of the cash customers in an eatery. I shook my noggin this time, just for a change. Somehow, it didn't add up. She just wasn't the type. Too well manicured, too well dressed, too . . . It seemed screwy to me.

I guess she sensed that. She smiled and nodded.

"Of course," she added, "that was some time back. I had to work for my living then."

"That right, Weepy?" I shot at him. The question caught him between sniffs, and I got an answer right off.

"That's right, Ray," he confirmed.

"Well," I admitted, "now I've seen everything. Here!"

And I passed his paper back to him, having noted incidentally that Wilmington Wanderer started an odds on favorite, so I wouldn't have made much profit on my half-century even if it had passed those other crocodile traveling bags and stuck its schnozz in front. The knowledge kind of resigned me to life.

"And of course," I said to Lou, with the sarcasm laid a couple of inches thick on every word. "Of course you found a whole raft of clues in the theatre and all you have to do is go down and slap them in front of the police commissioner in the morning and presto! your brother is out of the bastille."

"No," Lou admitted wearily. "We didn't find a thing. Not a thing. Except you."

I didn't take her up on the warm look that went with the last two words.

"No," I said sourly. "Our New York police are wonderful. Everybody says so. And you usually find very little lying around after they've been over a joint. I will even bet," I went on, "that you wouldn't have found me if the cops had seen me around, either. I'd have been gathered in along with anything else of note. And at that maybe I'd have been better off than having Polo Riker gunning for me."

"Polo Riker?" Weepy was on his feet, shouting it. "You mean Polo's in on this?"

"Polo Riker!" he groaned to himself. "Lady, what you let me in for!"