

The girl sat panting in the straight-backed chair; the nurse gripped the girl's crossed wrists behind the chair back.

"Ha!" the prisoner sneered. "Where's your handcuffs, mister? Or did you bring a rope to tie me? Why don't you have me arrested—why don't you?"

Don said: "We're going to, young lady. But it may not be quite as big a thrill as you seem to think."

"Go on. Send me to jail." The girl laughed insolently. "I don't mind going to jail. Not so long as they take me into court afterwards."

*That's what she's after. A chance to cause a sensation in court, probably hoping to disgrace her parents or maybe to get even with a boy friend.* "It may be quite a while before you get to court," he said soberly. "We're not even going to have you charged with malicious mischief for a while. You're going to a psychiatric ward for observation; you're as close to being unbalanced as anyone I've seen for some time."

The insolence left the girl's eyes; the sneer vanished from her lips. "A loony bin?" She cringed. "You can't put me in a crazy house!" Her voice lost its shrillness. "You can't!"

The nurse breathed heavily. "That's where you belong, miss. Wet packs and restraining sheets."

"No!" The girl bit her upper lip fiercely. "You can't do that. Not without my parents' permission. You can't!"

Don frowned. "We don't know who your parents are. If you want to tell us . . . ?"

The girl glared up at him. "No!" she snarled. "No, I won't tell you! You can do what you want to me but I won't tell and you can all go to hell!"