

Just had a queer chat with Grolheim on the phone. He claims everything will be straightened out by then."

"By then that coat could be in Rio."

"And Press might be in his——"

"Don't say it!" she cut in sharply. "Speaking of those crown sables, your shot in the dark may have hit the mark."

"Credit our Gee Em for the aiming. What did you pick up?"

"Geoffrey Rulz, the syndicated tattler. Just had coffee *schlagober* with him at his apartment."

"Hm. You have to go that far for the information?"

"Don't worry. Geoff's only affair is with his gossip column. He goes for flattery the way I went for that whipped cream. He admitted there were whisperings in so-so-society circles about Miss I. and Mister R."

"Such as . . . ?"

"Item: when she made that *Magnificent Hussy* picture in Venice last summer, he just happened to spend weekends at the Lido. Of course it's no sin to be seen sun-bathing together. . . ."

"No. So?"

"Item: couple weeks ago she flew to Vegas for some guest shots at one of those cushy caravanserais—guess who turned up next to her at the roulette tables every night?"

"He'd be a handy man to have around when the chips are down."

"One of his companies buys the commercial spots on the last half of her show. He's always in the sponsors' booth but never brings his wife."

"Doesn't he have any competition?"

"Nothing else but. Dimpled darling goes out with more celebrated spenders than the columnists can keep track of. Cattle barons from the Argentine, French movie stars, last week one of those ruby-rich maharajas. She's never seen with Mister R. in public. But then, as Geoff points out, the most interesting tête-à-têtes are seldom in public. And, by the bye, he owns the Buckingham."

"Convenient for all concerned." He considered the possibilities. "Nice, snug job of rounding up the rumors, chum."