

From somewhere above him there was a dull bumping; it was repeated a couple of times at quarter-minute intervals. He thought it sounded like someone closing the drawers of a desk or a bureau. *Means you weren't seen, boy; you haven't been heard, either, so far.*

It was easier to see, there in the first floor. A little light filtered in under the drawn blinds. Enough to let him tiptoe through a big, old-fashioned kitchen, down a long narrow hall to the staircase.

He glanced out through the long glass panel beside the front door. Nobody on the street.

A door opened somewhere in the second floor but no light showed. *Closet, probably.*

He went up quickly; the stairs were carpeted.

From the top of the stairs he could see a slit of light beneath a door. He decided it was a bedroom at the back of the house.

Someone was moving around in there, making no particular effort to be quiet.

He got his hand on the knob of the door, turned it slowly, opened the door fast.

A girl in a gown sparkling with sequins backed out of a closet with an armful of clothing on hangers. A brunette with a figure that was made for the strapless turquoise gown. Her shoes were turquoise, too, the French heels studded with brilliants. She turned to lay the stuff on Grolheim's mahogany four-poster, saw him.

"Jesus!" She flung the clothes on the bed. "Jesus Christ, but you startled me! What the hell are you doing in this house?"

"You beat me to it." He noticed she was wearing short white kid gloves. "You took the words right out of my mouth. That's what I was going to ask you."