

can't possibly think I'm buying this boloney. "Where is he now?"

"At my house in Brewster." She waved at the coats and trousers. "I wonder if you'd pick out a couple of suits he could wear in Mexico; I haven't the least idea which to pack. You see, we weren't going to be married for a month but when he knew he'd have to keep this bandage on his face for a couple of weeks, I talked him into having the ceremony tomorrow and flying right down to Acapulco."

*She must have a gun in the pocket of that mink; if you fool around with that clothing she'll go for it. Better call her bluff now.* "I don't think he'll need any of this stuff. He won't be taking that plane in the morning."

"No? Why?" She kept her dark eyes on him but reached out to the mink, her fingers feeling along the soft fur for the slit of the pocket.

"There'll be detectives at every airport looking for him, that's why." He grabbed the coat, yanked it off the bed as if to hold it out for her to put on. The black and silver label behind the gold chain for hanging up the coat was that of Sari Soeurs, a fashionable Fifty-seventh Street *couturier*; from the lining he judged the mink to be almost new.

"You bastard!" She struggled to pull something out of the pocket. "You lousy bastard!"

"You phony." He held her wrist tightly. "I never heard of any Esther. Where'd you get My's key? Who sent you here to corral his clothes?"

"I did." The voice was soft and elaborately casual; it was only inches behind his ear.

Don turned slowly, seeing first the polished cordovan puttees, then the flaring uniform pants and the chauffeur's jacket, finally the grinning, juvenile face. Salvatore had pictured this "tween-ager" perfectly—the chalk-white complexion, the sideburns, the insolent eyes beneath the black visor like the soft, pulpy, gray-green inside of grapes.

"Leggo the doozie's coat before I shoot off your thumb." The boy held the muzzle of the automatic high, ready to chop down with it.