

"You go to h-l—"

"If I oblige, I shan't come to tell you of my experiences."

Dr. Capen scowled: "You can be irritatingly complacent. Like one on the John — after..." He smiled, "And all the time making a fool of me. All right, I may be delayed here half an hour or so. Do as you damn please with your time, since you seem to know the Street so well."

"I'll saunter a bit," George said with good-natured irony, "or watch the stars. Toot the horn if I am not around. I shall appear..... cavorting with the stars."

"Better be pronto, Gigolo of the stars, or I shall blast the neighborhood awake," Dr. Capen mocked a warning as he disappeared in a dark alley.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Shadow and Substance of Sex Act

I'll bet he grabs himself a piece everytime he gets here, George thought. Why not, he knows what's clean and what isn't. Can't blame the guy too much, Old Bache and all.

If Doc had invited him in... the old connoisseur! Leading a blind horse to the trough.... He felt his heart race up a bit. Na, he probably wouldn't go anyway. Not prudishness, but- but --- What the h- did he take me here for! Could have taken me home first. Could walk home! He'd be looking for me. Let him look. Leave a note? Probably wouldn't notice it in the dark. Sit. Sit where you are. Vicarious pleasure sitting in front of the "House". He thinks of the tenderness and sweet agony of the nuptial night. The pure whiteness and dewy freshness of young clear innocent womanhood. It's an act of blessed holiness. Nat-

ure's trick for the propagation of the species, but a good one! But not this bilge and perversion! His emotional brain brings the image up of a young girl in a neighbor's house. He's caught up with the shivers, as the stimulus of his imagination brings the picture into sharp focus. A beautiful slim dark girl sitting on a divan, her knees apart. Her firm young thighs are silhouetted in round sloping molds against the tenuous softness of her dress. The fat slovenly mother caught his glance at the same moment she looked at her daughter. Ah, for shame, how that creature had to bring the thing into the open and bawl out her daughter for the pose. Nothing is too secret or sacred to those old buzzards, to whom sex has become matter-of-fact, and as prosaic as eating; but hidden until ripe to be plucked by the rightful owner. And the young maiden, and the virtue are both up. And the dream disappears. Nothing, nothing ever was there. Only the old woman with the flabby breasts, and the butter-tub body.

But it's good! If all women were tempting and pretty would the wages of sex be death? Dr. Capen had said it wasn't so. He cited the cave-men, with their sturdy women, strong thighs, ample hips and tight buds. The men had plenty of time for the sex act, yet they were a sturdy race. The freer the sex, the healthier the race. "And look at Tommy the Sphinx," he had once pointed out the library cat. "See how huge he is, thriving on his female harem. No restrictions - economical, or the public gaze. No worry about disease or conception. Free as the wind."

He pondered the effect on Tommy of his great sex proclivities. His stamina and morals. Probably they'd be the same with or without sexual experience. He'd sprout his tail and claw the same at an invader. Reason: No cat - male or female - had discussed sex with him and got him all wound up. No repressions of his natural urge. No premium, <sup>or purism</sup> set on his natural act by other cats. And may the world laugh at him, he'd laugh right back, and show it the virility of his loins!

The shadow and substance of the sex act. Shadow of a sordid illusion!

The fangs, the smiling white line of teeth, the claw buried in the soft flesh - lilly white paw! The glow and veneer of the carnal act.

The rape and murder.

Sexual sycophants.....!

The dark brooding mystery of the waterfront, where the deposit and smell of the world's human cargo hits the nostrils. Where the miscreants and their knaves and panderers find their lairs. The motley, ugly mob on every wharf and waterfront. Yet, they are but a stone's throw from that more elegant crowd who buy their exotic thrills in the perfumed boudoirs of the refined ladies, washed and distilled in delicate essences. Where they are in their swarms, brought to the greatest optimum of desireability in secret and refined flesh-auctions. Where they come to dress and perfume themselves, and to ventilate with new breezes the musty emptiness and decadence of their fustian apartments, to regild their tarnished and jaded appetites with new erotic experiences. To sleep and whore in a bed where the effluvium of the former occupant had hardly left it. Where the spirit partakes of the decay of the flesh, where pollution spills over <sup>l</sup>bige, and the humors and muck of man run amuck. Where the male and female play and dance the Macabre. Where the pimp and the pervert hold sway. Where nature's most precious gift is tortured into the most heinous acts, degrading even to the beast.

How much of this wharf life had seeped into Foster's early childhood, and how much of the life of his grandfather's house had been assimilated into the sinews of his growth to adolescence? How well had he learned the lesson of his grandfather's marriage <sup>2</sup>a second time to one much younger than he, who had sought satisfaction elsewhere than in the

big empty house, where her mummified husband ~~husband~~ had dominated and supervised her every <sup>e</sup> motion? Had Foster visited his childhood scenes, and overwrought with urge - and knowing the how and where - had made the fatal plunge?

He saw Foster prowling the darkness as he was doing. He pitied him.

A boy, a man, walking the earth alone. Alone with the memories and scenes of his childhood, alone with the unsolved problems of youth, and the burden of the stream of endocrinal secre<sup>i</sup>tions that pour and pour and find no outlet.

He made the plunge and came out befouled. Maimed? The good doctor says he is cured. Or was he?

## CHAPTER IX

### The Eternal Cycle of Creation And Decay

Led by the pale shimmer of the water George found his way through the murky dusk to the end pilings of an old neglected wharf.

He stood there. Alone! The gentle lappings and murmurings of the sea came to him, and he hears his father's <sup>voice</sup> in them and in the silence of the night. The sea never rests, life fills it inside and out. A great womb, a great mother - the sea. All born in the sea. The mystery of creation is there. The mystery of life and death! The mingling of the smells and effluvium of Life's Force in its eternal cycle of creation and decay. The salty, clean smell of fresh new life in the new tide, and the washing of the wave. The mark of the thick-layered crustaceans that cling and inhabit the understructures of wharves and boats - the mark and sign of life in the sea. The misty must<sup>i</sup>ness and stench of time's corrodings - once living water, dead and decaying now.

The interlocking, the intermingling and confusing and uncertain