

JANE. (*Over microphone.*) . . . I thought I'd never get you alone.

BRAD. That's Jane's voice.

JANE. (*Over microphone.*) I've got the plans, but we'd better not be seen talking out here. Even those stupid authors might suspect something.

BRAD. Who's she talking to?

JANE. (*Over microphone.*) Meet me in the living room. I've got the plans hidden away in a book . . . no, not here. Save the romance for later. . . . Oh, all right, if you insist. . . . (*Sound of a very noisy kiss.*)

BRAD. Those spies are all the same. (*Puts pen away.*) The living room? That's here. I'd better conceal myself and find out who the Master Spy is. (*He ducks down d. of the desk.*)

JANE. (*Comes from kitchen, looks around. Takes book from bookcase U. R., brings it down to desk. Calls.*) Come on, hurry up before the others get back.

(*Footsteps are heard coming to door from kitchen.*)

RODNEY. (*Enters.*) Where are the plans? (*In this imagination sequence, RODNEY is a smooth but hard villain and JANE a rather sexy agent.*)

JANE. Keep your shirt on. I'm getting them. (*Takes paper out of book. These are the plans and they are actually on flash paper which can be obtained at any magic supply shop.*)

RODNEY. (*Crosses D. to her.*) Chaotic will pay millions for those. Millions.

JANE. (*Holding up the plans.*) Here they are.

RODNEY. Perfect. (*Reaches for them, but she holds them back.*) Every missile site on the eastern seaboard. How did you get them?

JANE. The usual way. No one can resist my body.

RODNEY. The entire eastern seaboard?

JANE. In six days. I was slowed down in Jacksonville.

RODNEY. Incredible.

JANE. (*Waving paper in front of him.*) Now I want what's coming to me.

RODNEY. And that's just what you're going to get. (*Takes pocket comb from his pocket.*)

JANE. I want the dough. This is no time to fix your hair with that innocent-seeming comb.

RODNEY. Your usefulness is over, my dear. (*Slides his fingers along the comb while pointing it at her. The teeth of the comb click and she stiffens and collapses. He grabs her, tries to put plans back in book, but can't get near the desk with the weight of the body.*) Now the plans are all mine. But what to do with you? I know. The oven. Those stupid authors will never suspect that Chaotic is mixed up in this. They're too concerned with themselves. (*Has been dragging her off through the kitchen door.*)

BRAD. (*Comes out of hiding.*) So that's it. (*Pulls out pen and clicks it.*) Now to listen what he's doing with the poor child.

RODNEY. (*Over microphone.*) Good lord, she's heavy. BRAD. He's getting old.

RODNEY. (*Over microphone.*) I'm not getting old. Just tired. Now, down you go. Open comes the oven door. (*SOOUND of metal door opening.*) And on goes the gas. (*SOOUND of hissing.*)

BRAD. Now for the showdown. The way I write it, I get the plans back and capture Rodney Duckton, Master Spy. Reality isn't so different from imagination, after all. (*Puts pen away.*)

RODNEY. (*Enters from kitchen smoking a cigarette. He dusts off his clothes.*) Now to condense these plans into a microdot on film. (*Sees BRAD.*) Oh—did you—did you find anything in your search of the island? (*Puts the plans behind his back.*)

BRAD. Never mind the act, Rodney. Give me the plans.

RODNEY. Of course, Brad Benedict. (*Takes comb from his pocket.*) As soon as I comb my hair. (*Puts plans on desk.*)

BRAD. Don't pull that innocent-seeming comb on me. See this! (*Takes a cigarette lighter from his pocket.*)

RODNEY. I know about the innocent-seeming cigarette lighter. I can stop you fast enough. (*Holds up his wrist and points the watch toward BRAD.*)

BRAD. (*In terror, holds his hands up.*) Not the innocent-seeming wristwatch?

RODNEY. That's right, Brother. (*Picks up plans.*)

BRAD. So you win, but you won't keep the plans.

RODNEY. Of course I will. They're right here and they're mine. All mine. (*The cigarette inadvertently touches the plans and the flash paper disappears in a flash.*) Good lord.

BRAD. When they touch a Chaotic agent, they self-destruct in five seconds.

RODNEY. I should have known. (*Collapses on desk with his head on it as he sits on bench.*) I killed Summers, Gregory, and Jane to get those and now my plans have all gone up in smoke. (*Raises his head to see BRAD's shoe on the desk in front of him. BRAD is about to tie his shoelace.*) What are you doing?

BRAD. Just tying my shoelace.

RODNEY. (*Rises.*) You think that innocent-seeming shoelace will stop this innocent-seeming wristwatch, do you? (*Points watch at him.*)

BRAD. That's what it's made for.

RODNEY. Then take this. (*His hand on his tie clasp.*) BRAD. The innocent-seeming tie clasp. (*RODNEY flicks it, BRAD stiffens and reels into D. R. area.*) This is wrong. All wrong. Chaotic isn't supposed to win.

RODNEY. (*Backs away holding the book from desk. The room LIGHTS dim to out and BRAD is left in the D. R. spot.*) You didn't write this, Brother. This is reality. (*He puts the book back in the bookcase and resumes original positions as the others do.*)

BRAD. Oh, Bradley Bruce Benedict, it isn't a good idea to say what's on your mind. Of course, Rodney may be the murderer. He's old and senile and his mind may have snapped. Now stop it! Every time someone

thinks he knows who the murderer is, that person gets killed. I'll just say nothing.

(*General room LIGHTS up and all are in positions as before BRAD's imagination.*)

MILDRED. Mr. Benedict . . . Brad—

BRAD. (*Coming to.*) Oh, sorry. My mind was wandering.

MILDRED. You were just telling us that if you said what was on your mind, we wouldn't agree. Just what is on your mind?

BRAD. Nothing. Not a thing.

MILDRED. Just as I thought.

BRAD. However, I can make a prediction.

JESS. Well, go ahead. Make it.

BRAD. Rodney, you're going to be killed next.

RODNEY. That's not a very polite thing to say.

BRAD. (*Moves to bookcase.*) Nevertheless, it follows the pattern.

RODNEY. (*To BRAD.*) What pattern?

BRAD. I'd rather not say.

JESS. If you know something and you're not telling us, then you're cheating. We're supposed to be collaborating.

BRAD. (*Takes book from bookcase.*) Oh, here's the first book I ever wrote.

RODNEY. (*Standing beside him.*) This is no time for narcissism. Why did you say I was going to be killed next?

BRAD. Because you are. (*Opens book and a puff of smoke comes out. He grabs his throat and falls to the floor. The effect can be gotten by cutting the pages out of the center of the book and putting some flour or Fuller's Earth in there with a small rubber syringe-bulb which BRAD merely presses.*)

MILDRED. (*After they look at him for a moment.*) Everyone is wrong about everything tonight. RODNEY. Thank God for that.