

their faces close to his cheek.) Jack . . . I love you . . . let me go with a kiss.

WHIT. (*Kisses STEPHANIE and she falls back in his arm dead. He kisses JESS and she falls back in the other arm dead. He faces front as the MUSIC comes UP again.*) It was just another day. I had found two loves and lost two loves. The sun set. The city was cold steel again, like every heart in it. My name is Jack Club.

(*LIGHTS OUT. MILDRED and BRAD applaud as the GENERAL LIGHTS come UP again. JESS and STEPHANIE have exited through the arch. WHIT is putting his coat on again.*)

MILDRED. Now that was excellent. Exactly right. You see, Mr. Duckton, everything all of us did is now a parody. We are anachronisms.

RODNEY. Perhaps. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Olive. Your performances were quite something.

JESS. (*As she enters and crosses to her bag.*) I don't quite know how to take that.

WHIT. (*Crosses above desk.*) Just take it and be quiet.

BRAD. I don't agree, however. My style of writing is still current. I mean, nothing has come along to replace it yet.

JESS. Oh, we can take that off, too. Come on, Whit, let's show him. I'm just getting warmed up.

RODNEY. (*Rises.*) No, no, no. This is for me. I'll show Mr. Benedict what his mystery tales are like if he wants.

BRAD. I'm not so sure I do want.

RODNEY. It's my turn to twist the knife, as it were. (*Crosses below desk on way to podium.*) All right, suppose we take one of Mr. Benedict's famous CIA men. We'll just pick him up in one of your climactic scenes. (*JESS sits on the sofa and WHIT on the settee.*) Come on, Mr. Benedict, you act it out. Over there. (*Indicates by desk.*)

BRAD. How will I know what to say? (*Goes by bench.*)

RODNEY. It's my version of your story, so you'll say what I'm thinking.

BRAD. O.K., here goes. (*Sits on the bench as the LIGHTS DIM to the podium light.*)

RODNEY. We find our hero about to stop the take-over of all Allied Missile information by Chaotic. Those are the bad men. The organization always has initials that spell out a name. You've noticed that, haven't you? Mr. Benedict's hero has been looking for the superspy. Superspies always have catchy names, too. We'll call this one "Silver Leg." All through the story, our hero has been having various affairs with various girls in various unusual places like Turkish baths, cemeteries, the subway—but only the express line! Now we find him in his beach-house with his beautiful secretary.

(*LIGHTS DIM on podium and come UP on the desk area. MUSIC of a mod-beat accompanies this scene. BRAD is sitting on the bench and his secretary is sitting beside him D. with her feet on his lap. She is dressed in a trench coat and bright-colored boots. She is unusually beautiful and hardly looks like a secretary. When she speaks, it is with a slight foreign accent.*)

SECRETARY. There's something about you, 276390845—something different.

BRAD. My pajamas are custom-made.

SECRETARY. I've enjoyed this assignment, working for you all day and all night, too.

BRAD. (*Swings her legs away and rises.*) And now the assignment's come to an end.

SECRETARY. (*Seductively.*) No, 276390845, I'm like Contac paper. I'm going to stick around. (*Pulls him to her and plasters herself against him.*)

BRAD. (*Rises again, holding one leg.*) But I've found out who Silver Leg is.

SECRETARY. (Rises.) You couldn't have!

BRAD. Yes, I could. (*Pushes her down again.*) I planted one of these. (*Holds up a gold button with a pin on the back.*) It's a honing device and I found out everything. This is a miniature broadcasting station and I've been listening in.

SECRETARY. (*Flings herself full length on the bench.*) No!

BRAD. Yes. I planted it on you and heard you reporting to the agents from Chaotic. I'm sorry, Beauty, but I've got to turn you in.

SECRETARY. (*Rises and comes to him seductively.*) No, not yet.

BRAD. (*Hesitates a moment.*) No, business before pleasure. (*Reaches in his pocket for a revolver.*)

SECRETARY. Wait! There's just one thing I've got to know.

BRAD. Which is?

SECRETARY. Where did you plant the honing device? (*Drops the raincoat and she is dressed in a brief bikini. He looks amused and the LIGHTS BLACKOUT. MUSIC OUT and the room LIGHTS DIM UP to find RODNEY looking front, amused, and the SECRETARY has gone off through the arch.*)

RODNEY. There you are, Mr. Benedict.

JESS. At least she was wearing something—

BRAD. Is that how my books seem?

RODNEY. Your detectives are just as ridiculous as mine if you present them that way. (*Moves to below desk.*)

WHIT. Don't stop, please, Mr. Duckton. Go on.

RODNEY. But that's the end.

WHIT. Where was the honing device planted?

RODNEY. I haven't the faintest idea. I don't write that kind of story. (*Sits on bench.*)

WHIT. Spoilsport.

MILDRED. We seem to have lost our purpose somewhere along the line. If we jab at one another, my dears, we'll never be able to collaborate.

JESS. (*Rises and moves toward U. L.*) What we all need is a drink.

JASON. (*Rises and crosses to her.*) You've run out of your allotted time. The unions, you know. The limousine will arrive in twenty minutes to take you to the airport. . . . (*During the above, a GRIP comes in and re-moves the work light. He comes from D. L. and exits the same way.*)

WHIT. This is rather stupid, don't you think? We're supposed to fly down there, spend the night in some dreary little hotel, then clamber into some leaky boat in the afternoon and go off to an island where the house will look exactly like this set. Why don't we just stay here?

JASON. Exteriors. Although the action you write will mostly take place in this room each week, we want you to include some outside shots. Then, there's the press. They will come out Friday morning and take pictures of you in the actual house. Feature stories, you know. Publicity will make the show, not the scripts. (*Realizes the slip he has just made.*) Oh, I didn't mean to say that.

MILDRED. But you did say it.

JASON. I suggest we call this whole thing off and disband until the limousine arrives.

WHIT. Frankly, I don't see that we're going to get any further there than we have here.

JESS. I agree.

BRAD. Maybe we will if we stop making fun of our styles. We each have something individual to contribute and let's concentrate on that.

MILDRED. You're right, young man. (*Rises and crosses to c.*) Come on, let's have that drink together. (*They all start for the arch, RODNEY crossing below the desk and U.*)

WHIT. There's a rather festive-looking lounge across the street.

RODNEY. We'll see you in the limousine, Mr. Summers.