

GILLIAN. Here?

REDLITCH. In New York. *Witchcraft Around Us*. What do you think of that for a title? (Nicky crosses to console, pours drink.)

SHEP. (Crossing to R. of sofa.) It sounds provocative. What does it mean—exactly?

REDLITCH. It means exactly what it says. Witchcraft around us. All around us.

NICKY. (Fascinated and amused, crosses to R. of ottoman.) Is it?

REDLITCH. It sure is, boy. You probably thought that sort of thing was confined to the tropics and the jungles—if you thought of it at all. So did I, until now.

GILLIAN. Oh?

REDLITCH. You won't believe this, but right here—all around you—there's a whole community devoted to just that.

SHEP. That's a novel idea. (Looks at Nicky. They laugh.)

REDLITCH. Hell, it's not an idea. It's true.

GILLIAN. (Leans on L. arm of sofa.) How do you know?

NICKY. Tell us. (He and Gillian sit simultaneously. From here on, he and Gillian play to each other. He, mischievously amused; she slightly so, but also very much on the alert and watchful.)

REDLITCH. (As Shep crosses back of sofa table L., and sits on the L. sofa arm.) Well, I've met a couple. Met them through my book. They let me in on a few things. Then, from there—well, I've made it my business to find out. You've no idea. They have their regular hangouts—cafés, bars, restaurants. Ever hear of a night club called the Zodiac?

NICKY. Yes.

SHEP. (To Gillian.) Say, isn't that the place you were talking about? That drawing . . . (He points to it.)

REDLITCH. What drawing? (He crosses to it, as Nicky backs to R. of ottoman.) Sure. She used to dance there. Who did that?

SHEP. He did. (Points to Nicky.)

REDLITCH. (Up R. of sofa.) And I suppose it never occurred to you that she was one?

NICKY. (Acting incredulity.) No!

REDLITCH. Sure. Ever look at the proprietor there?

NICKY. Don't tell me he's a witch, too!

REDLITCH. Well, when it's a man, they're called warlocks. (He gives Shep a sudden, odd, suspicious look and then turns away.) Say, I'd like to have this for an illustration, too. (He crosses back to below sofa.)

NICKY. I daresay Gill would loan it to you. Go on. This is fascinating.

REDLITCH. (Sits on sofa, Nicky sits on ottoman.) Maybe you don't take it seriously . . .

GILLIAN AND NICKY. Oh, but we do!

NICKY. Tell us more about them, and their—doings.

REDLITCH. Well, then there are the places where they hold their meetings. You think of witches meeting on a blasted heath (Looking at Shep.), don't you?

SHEP. (Dryly.) I don't think I think of their meeting at all.

GILLIAN. Where do they meet? Do you know?

REDLITCH. Sure, I know. One of their main places is up in Harlem. It's an old vaudeville house. There's another down in the Village. And sometimes they have them in a suite of offices on the top of the Woolworth Building. (He finishes his drink, and hands the glass to Nicky to replenish, drinks some water and spills it over himself. He hands glass to Nicky who puts his own drink on coffee table, takes glass, crosses up to console and fixes another drink.) You'd be amazed what's going on under your nose that you'd never suspect. Talk about spy-rings and organized vice—they're nothing compared to it.

SHEP. What do they look like? The witches, I mean? (Nicky crosses back to sofa.)

REDLITCH. Like anyone else. Like you—or you—or you. (He points to each in turn.) You couldn't tell them, but I could.

NICKY. (Giving him the drinks.) You mean you can—recognize them?

REDLITCH. Like a shot.

GILLIAN. How?

REDLITCH. (Puts drink on table.) Well, that's hard to say. It's a something. A look. A feeling. I don't know. But if one were to walk in here right now, I'd know. (He looks at Shep's hand, on back of couch. Shep, nervously, removes it and rises, very uncomfortably.)

NICKY. (Takes his glass, sits on ottoman.) Gill, I wonder if we know any.

GILLIAN. I wonder.

REDLITCH. I'll bet you do. I bet that I could tell you names that . . .

NICKY. Oh, do!

REDLITCH. (Leans back on sofa.) Uh-huh. Can't do that. I'm careful. That's why there can't be any names in my book. Though I've got protection, up to a point.

SHEP. (At stove.) Protection?