

WORLDWIDE TV SPECIAL

60c

THE MOD SQUAD

#1: THE GREEK GOD AFFAIR

The most incredible police team
ever—the most exciting TV series
of the year! **by Richard Deming**



Where have all the young girls gone?

Gone to . . . nowhere . . . every one . .

Five runaway teenagers had found sanctuary at the Reverend Zeus's strange Temple—a weird mixture of health resort and nut cult, complete with Greek gods and goddesses.

Then . . . they'd vanished. The Mod Squad had to find out why—and the only way was for Pete, Linc and Julie to put themselves in danger of the same fate!

Here's a bizarre case for that tempestuous trio of swinging sleuths—THE MOD SQUAD.

THE MOD SQUAD:

The Greek God Affair

RICHARD DEMING



PYRAMID BOOKS



NEW YORK

THE MOD SQUAD: The Greek God Affair

A PYRAMID BOOK

First printing, October 1968

This book is fiction. No resemblance is intended between any character herein and any person, living or dead; any such resemblance is purely coincidental.

Copyright © 1968 by Thomas-Spelling Productions

All Rights Reserved

Printed in the United States of America

PYRAMID BOOKS are published by Pyramid Publications, Inc.
444 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022, U.S.A.

CHAPTER 1

THREE young people sat on a bench in the waiting room of Juvenile Division, surreptitiously examining each other. The girl, a slim ash blonde with brown eyes, delicate features and an exceptional figure, looked about eighteen. The two boys—one white, one black—looked perhaps a year older.

All three could have been older than they appeared, however. Between the late teens and the mid-twenties it is hard to pinpoint age. Except for a tendency to outgrow the coltish awkwardness associated with the teens, people change very little physically during that period.

A uniformed policewoman sat at a desk behind a counter across the room from the bench. A low voice, too indistinct for the waiting young people to hear, issued from the intercom speaker on her desk.

She said, "Yes, sir," then called across the room, "You may go in now, Miss Barnes."

The girl rose and crossed to a door inscribed: CAPTAIN ADAM GREER. She took a deep breath before opening it and going inside.

The man behind the desk was around forty, squarely built, with an intelligent but rather stern face. He wore a dark, well-pressed, conservative business suit. The girl looked vaguely surprised when he rose to his feet.

"Hello, Julie," he said without smiling. "Shut the door."

She shut the door behind her. Her ash blonde hair hung free to below her shoulders and tended to get in her eyes. Nervously she pushed a strand back from her forehead.

"Sit down, Julie," Captain Greer said.

The girl took the chair before the desk, holding herself stiffly erect and primly folding her hands in her lap. The captain reseated himself.

"What's this all about, Captain?" she asked with a touch of indignation. "I haven't done anything."

The captain regarded her curiously. "Did someone say you had?"

Her indignation turned to uncertainty. "Well, I was practically ordered down here."

"Asked, Julie. Only asked. If you'd been pulled in again, this time you wouldn't have come here. You're no longer a juvenile."

Apparently this had not occurred to her, for she looked startled. After a pause she said, "Then why was I asked here?"

Adam Greer steepled his fingers and examined her estimatingly. "How's your job coming, Julie?"

Julie made a face. "It's a living. I don't think you can call car hopping a career."

"It's managed to keep you out of trouble. It's a long time since you've done anything stupid, such as that minor reign of terror you participated in with your motorcycle gang friends. I've been keeping track of you."

The girl's eyes hardened. "Fuzz psychology. Never let anyone forget a mistake. Just keep hounding forever."

The captain said gently, "You think it's hounding for a cop to continue interest in your welfare? Name somebody else who has any interest in it."

After staring at him for a moment, her gaze shifted away and her eyes suddenly misted.

"Heard anything from your mother?" he asked.

She made an unsuccessful attempt to make her tone sardonic. Instead it came out somewhat lost. "I got the point, Captain. You don't have to drive it into the ground. Yes, I heard from my mother about six months ago. She phoned collect from San Francisco to ask me to wire fifty dollars. I had to borrow it from my boss against my pay."

"I'm sorry," he said sincerely, then abruptly asked, "How would you like a better job?"

She cocked an eyebrow at him. "Like what?"

"For some time I've been discussing with Chief Metcalf the idea of establishing a special squad to help combat the growing juvenile problem, and he's finally agreed to let me give it a try. I need people with rather unique qualifications for my squad. They have to look young enough to pass as teen-agers, yet actually be old enough to meet the civil service requirements for cops. Furthermore, I want kids who have been there, who have had some of the same problems the kids they'll be dealing with are having now, so that they'll have some understanding of teen problems.

And last, they not only have to have been there, they have to have made it back. I can't chance making a cop of anyone who I'm not satisfied is permanently straightened out."

Julie gazed at him with her mouth open. "You're offering to make me a cop?" she said incredulously.

"A chance at it," he corrected. "You have to pass physical and written examinations."

"Me a cop? Why less than a year ago I spit right in a cop's face!"

"Less than a year ago you were a different person," he said quietly.

She continued to gaze at him, but her astonishment was gradually changing to curiosity. Presently she said, "I'm not of age."

"You would be by the time you got out of police academy."

"I would have to go to police academy?"

"All police applicants who are accepted do, Julie. Tell you what. I have to interview a couple of more kids for the squad—to start out the chief is limiting me to a squad of three. Suppose you sit outside and think it over while I talk to them? Afterward I'll go over matters with all of you together in more detail, and you can decide then if you want to take the offer."

"All right," she agreed. "It's going to take some thinking over."

As she rose to her feet, the captain pushed a button on his intercom and said, "Send in Peter Cochrane, will you, Polly?"

The white youth who had been seated in the waiting room came in as Julie Barnes went out. He was a lean, handsome boy about an inch under six feet and weighing about 160 pounds. He had light brown, curling, unruly hair and green eyes. He wore sneakers, denim slacks and a light cloth jacket over an open-necked sport shirt.

"Hello, Pete," the captain said. "Close the door."

Pete Cochrane shut the door, slouched over to the chair in front of the desk and sank into it without invitation. His expression was one of cultivated boredom.

"You were hard to find," Adam Greer said. "Your parents said they hadn't heard from you in six months."

"I phoned a couple of times," the boy said indifferently. "Maybe the maid forgot to tell them. Or, more likely, they were too busy to listen. My father is always in board meetings, you know, and my mother has all those women's clubs and community activities on her mind. Beverly Hills would collapse without her."

Captain Greer studied him quizzically. "This a new attitude, Pete? You never used to blame your parents for the troubles you got in."

"I'm in trouble again?" Pete asked with raised brows.

Greer shook his head. "Not unless you've been doing something I don't know about. Quit ducking my question."

Pete Cochrane shrugged. "I still don't blame them. They gave me everything an only child could want, except attention. You know what my present was on my sixteenth birthday, Captain?"

When Greer shook his head, the boy said, "My own Jag. A half-dozen thousand dollars worth of automobile. Only I went to a private driving school to learn how to drive it. My father was too busy to teach me. Still, in their way they were probably better parents than most. At least they never beat me, which shows remarkable restraint when you consider the gray hairs I put in their heads. I deserved to get kicked out. I would have kicked me out too if I'd been my old man."

"I wouldn't have," the captain said coldly. "I would just have kicked your pelvis up between your shoulder blades. Particularly after that last arrest, when you gave the cops a hundred-and-twenty-mile-an-hour chase."

The boy shrugged again. "Speeding's hardly criminal."

The captain's face reddened. "On Wilshire Boulevard? The hell it isn't. It's only blind luck that you didn't clip some pedestrian at that speed. You could be in San Quentin for manslaughter right now if you hadn't been lucky."

Pete Cochrane had the grace to look abashed. "All right," he muttered. "I said I deserved to get kicked out. Have I done anything that stupid since?"

Captain Greer's color gradually faded. "Not that I know

of," he admitted. "Which is why you're here. Do you have a job at the moment?"

"Nope. Unless you call beachcombing a job."

"You're just sponging on those hippie friends we found you living with, huh?"

This time it was the boy's turn to redden. "I don't sponge on anybody, Captain. I told you I was beachcombing. I pick up driftwood and shells for tourist shops. You would be surprised how much odd bits of driftwood can bring, if you have an eye for form. I pay my way."

"Well, you can't be living very high on the hog. You interested in a real job?"

"Like what?"

"How would you like to be a cop?"

When Pete Cochrane got over his surprise, the captain told him the same thing he had told Julie Barnes. The boy had a few more questions than Julie had asked, though.

"This is going to be a special squad working with juveniles?" he said. "What kind of work?"

"Undercover. You won't be restricted to any particular type of case. You'll be a roving squad, available on loan to any division that needs you. You may be working a homicide one week and a narcotic case the next."

The boy frowned. "You mean we're supposed to fink on kids?"

The captain's frown was just as deep. "Your primary mission will be to help straighten out kids who are in trouble. If you consider that finking, you're not suitable for the job."

The boy stared at him for several seconds, then a slow smile formed on his face. "You burn pretty easy, don't you, Captain?"

An answering smile started to form on the captain's face, but he killed it before it fully developed. His expression resumed its normal sternness.

"Well?" he said.

"Can I think about it for a few minutes, Captain?" the boy asked. "The idea of being a cop takes some mental adjustment. I'm used to regarding cops as the enemy."

"You can mull it over in the waiting room while I'm

interviewing the third prospect," Captain Greer said. "The young lady sitting out there is a prospect too."

An interested look appeared in Pete Cochrane's eyes. "Oh?" He got to his feet. "Take your time with the third guy, Captain. I'll be getting acquainted with my possible colleague."

As the boy moved toward the door, Captain Greer said into his intercom, "Send in Lincoln Hayes, Polly."

The black youth was an inch taller and a few pounds heavier than Pete Cochrane, but was built along the same general lean lines. He was a good-looking youngster with exceptionally white teeth and an African haircut. A slight space between his upper front teeth oddly added to his looks instead of detracting from them. Like the other boy he wore sneakers and denim slacks and an open-necked sport shirt, but he wore no jacket over the latter.

He closed the door behind himself without waiting to be asked and stood gazing at the captain without expression.

"Hello, Linc," Captain Greer said. "Sit down."

The boy strolled over to the chair before the desk, spun it around and straddled it, arms resting along its back. He continued to gaze at the captain without saying anything.

"Still carrying a chip, huh?" Captain Greer said.

In a reasonable tone Linc Hayes said, "I behave myself for six months. I hold down a job and make regular payments on that bill the judge handed me for those busted windows. Then the fuzz taps my shoulder anyway and says go see Captain Greer. It's not exactly police brutality, I guess, but you expect me to cheer?"

"I would expect you to wait and find out what it's all about before you start yelling bum rap."

The black youth smiled without humor. "Okay, Captain. What's it all about?"

This time the captain eliminated all preliminaries. He said, "How would you like to be a cop?"

The humorless smile disappeared from the boy's face and he gazed at Adam Greer blankly. "Me?" was all he could manage, and that was in a high voice.

"Uh-huh. You."

Once again the captain outlined his proposition. When he finished, Linc Hayes looked stunned.

"Me a cop?" he repeated with an odd mixture of disbelief and fascination. "Why six months ago I was throwing bricks at cops. Once I helped upend a patrol car. And I still boo when the fuzz arrests anybody in Watts."

"It'll take some mental adjustment, I imagine," Greer conceded. "While you're adjusting, I'll introduce you to your probable squadmates."

He said into the intercom, "Polly, send Julie Barnes and Pete Cochrane back in."

CHAPTER 2

Two months after their graduation from the LAPD Police Academy the trio which had come to be known throughout the department as the Mod Squad gathered in Captain Adam Greer's office for its usual weekly staff meeting.

When Julie, Pete and Linc were settled in chairs before his desk, Captain Greer opened proceedings by saying, "It's about time we reviewed our noble experiment. So far you kids have worked on three important cases aside from routine jobs. Your routine work has been adequate, though hardly outstanding. You completely blew the Handy case by overacting your parts, and you did only a so-so job on the Gagnon case." He paused before concluding, "I just got a note of commendation from Captain Roberts over at Homicide for your help on the Wheeler case."

Linc Hayes said laconically, "At least we seem to be steadily improving."

"It could be coincidence that you did your best work on your last case," the captain said harshly. "Another way to look at it is that you're only doing competent work a third of the time."

Pete Cochrane glowered at him. "Want us to resign?" he asked in a surly voice.

Adam Greer gave him a cold glance. "I want you to shake yourselves together and make sure you continue to

maintain the same level of efficiency you showed on this last case."

Linc looked at Pete and grinned. "Man, I've had rough bosses in my time, but this is the first one ever bawled me out for showing improvement."

Pete said sardonically, "The captain believes that to spare the rod is to spoil the child."

"You're not children," Captain Greer shot at him. "One of your problems is that you still haven't realized that. You're cops."

"Probationers, Captain," Julie Barnes corrected.

"Cops," Greer repeated in a definite tone. "Your permanent appointments came through today."

After staring at the captain, the three young people looked at each other, and suddenly all three burst into wide grins.

"You have an odd way of breaking good news, Captain," Pete said. "I would hate to have you break bad news to me."

"Don't let it go to your heads," Captain Greer said dourly. "As far as I'm concerned, this is still an experiment. The only difference now is that instead of being dropped from the force if it doesn't pan out, you'll just be transferred. Probably Pete and Linc would draw rookie beats and Julie would get some assignment like conducting the daily public tours through the Police Building."

The three young people looked at each other again, but this time they exchanged shrugs instead of grins. They were becoming resigned to the captain's hypercritical reaction to everything they did.

Linc said, "What's our next assignment, Captain?"

"No one has a request in for you at the moment, so it's back to routine duty. Ever hear of the Sanctuary?"

Linc and Julie both looked blank. Pete said, "That teen flophouse on Los Angeles Street up near Chinatown?"

"Uh-huh, except I doubt that the Reverend Zeus would appreciate hearing it called a flophouse. It's a non-profit shelter for homeless young people."

"Mainly runaways," Pete said.

"Well, I wouldn't say mainly, but they do get a lot of runaways."

"I know the place you mean now," Julie said. "There was a newspaper feature article on it about a month ago. This Reverend Zeus isn't really a minister, is he? Doesn't he head some kookie unrecognized religious sect?"

Captain Greer allowed himself an austere smile. "The Temple of Olympus. But it's recognized, at least by the state. It's incorporated as a church. I guess he's the only minister in the sect, and he ordained himself, but he's still a minister."

Linc said, "Isn't he the kook who wants to bring back worship of the ancient Greek gods?"

"Not exactly. He's merely trying to revive ancient Greek mythology with modern innovations. Hence the name, the Reverend Zeus. His real name is Jones or something. I forget exactly what. He claims he has combined the ancient precepts handed down by the Greek gods with the teachings of Christianity to produce an entirely new theosophy."

Pete said, "Sounds like a good trick, if he can make it work."

"Oh, he's making it work, at least financially. His theosophy is pretty hedonistic, and it's drawn a lot of rich people. 'Salvation through pleasure' is the motto of the Temple of Olympus. The members are taught that the cardinal sin is to fail to enjoy life. It's an appealing pitch for people brought up in fundamentalist homes where anything at all which was fun was at least suspected of being sinful."

"This place is on Los Angeles Street?" Linc asked.

"Just the Sanctuary, not the Temple. That's in the Santa Monica Mountains. The Reverend Zeus bought and restored an ancient Spanish castle which was crumbling into ruins. It dates back to the days of the Conquistadors. He operates it as a retreat, and converts check in to enjoy his tutelage for periods ranging from a single weekend to months. I understand the rates are fantastically high."

"The whole thing is a con game?" Pete asked.

"Not necessarily, unless you consider any religious movement that's solvent a con game. In any event it seems to be legal. We're not concerned with the Temple anyway. Our sole interest is this Sanctuary sponsored by it."

"That's a con game?" Pete asked.

Captain Greer frowned at him. "You've got con games on the mind. The Temple of Olympus may be a little way-out, but I think its sponsorship of the Sanctuary stems purely from desire to be of community service. It's a fine project and I'm sure it's helped straighten out a large number of teen-agers."

Pete Cochrane slid lower in his chair, stretched out his legs and folded his hands across his flat stomach. "My guessing mechanism doesn't seem to be working very well today. Guess I'll just sit here and listen."

"Good idea," the captain told him. "Maybe you'd learn something." His tone became wry. "Even though we approve of the work the Sanctuary is doing, it presents us with something of a problem. The custom at the shelter is to ask questions of every kid who shows up, but not to require answers. There's a sound psychological reason for this. If they started phoning kids' parents or turning runaways over to the police, they would damn soon stop having any runaways check in."

Linc said, "That figures."

"So what they do is encourage runaways to phone their parents, or give the Reverend Zeus permission to, but they don't insist. If a kid flatly refuses, that's that. They aren't even required to give their real names and home addresses, although most do once they understand the information won't be handed out to anyone without their permission."

Julie said, "I'm beginning to see what your problem is."

Pete said, "I'm not," and Linc merely gave a puzzled shrug.

The captain said, "It should be obvious. Here is a place where we could routinely look for runaways. But if we did, it'd soon become the last place in town a runaway would go. So by doing what we ought to do, we would destroy a worthwhile community project."

Understanding dawned in Pete's eyes. Linc said musingly, "Isn't this Reverend Zeus kind of sticking his neck out by harboring runaways? Couldn't some screwball parent charge him with contributing to the delinquency of a minor?"

"Zeus covers himself by deliberately knowing nothing about the backgrounds of kids who refuse to let their

parents know where they are. While he generally supervises the place, he pretty well lets the kids themselves run it. They have to work for their keep, you see. Some handle the cooking and housekeeping, others handle administrative chores. Some of the older kids do all the interviewing of new arrivals and keep the records. They turn over to Zeus all kids who agree to having their parents contacted and simply don't inform him of the others. So he can truthfully testify under oath that he had no knowledge of a specific runaway being sheltered at the Sanctuary, if some parent decided to make trouble."

Pete asked curiously, "How do you know all the intimate details of how he operates, Captain?"

"Because he came in here for a policy discussion before he opened the Sanctuary. He explained exactly what he wanted to do, said he intended to cooperate fully with the LAPD, but pointed out the problems I've mentioned. We decided to cooperate with him too, insofar as possible. Off the record we let him understand that we would stay away from the Sanctuary unless we started getting complaints about it. At the same time we made it clear we expected him to turn over to us any fugitives he was sheltering that we specifically asked for. We stipulated that we would ask only for kids with criminal charges against them. Escapees from penal or mental institutions, for instance. But if we did inquire about such a case, we didn't expect him to hide behind his deliberate lack of knowledge of who was in the Sanctuary. We wanted him to make a thorough check to find out if the kid was there. He agreed to this. Every kid who checks in there is told he will not be harbored if it develops he is wanted by the police for anything other than running away from home. And they aren't. Zeus has tipped us on escapees and fugitives from criminal charges a number of times."

"So what is your big problem, Captain?" Julie asked.

Captain Greer glanced her way. "Since that newspaper feature article on the Sanctuary you mentioned, we've been getting pressure from the public to make routine checks on it. Parents keep writing to the chief asking if the Sanctuary has been checked for their missing children. What can he answer? That, as a matter of policy, we don't like to bug

the place? You can't explain to a father whose teen-age daughter is missing that if a cop checks the Sanctuary for her, it might prevent hundreds of future runaways from going there. He doesn't give a hoot in Hades about future runaways. He wants every possible place his own daughter could be checked out, regardless of theoretical social consequences. So the chief finally ordered me to start making routine checks. I went round-and-round with him, and finally we reached a compromise."

"What kind?" Linc asked.

"When M.P. reports come in on local juveniles, we'll routinely suggest to parents that they personally check the Sanctuary. Hopefully that won't bug the other residents as much as police raids. I've informed the Reverend Zeus that we're doing this and that he'll just have to live with it."

"How about out-of-town beefs?" Linc asked. "You can't suggest that to some Oakland parent who thinks his kid may have headed for L.A."

"That's where you three come in. I'm going to give you a list of ten juveniles missing from communities some distance from L.A., but for various reasons believed to be in this area. You'll all check into the Sanctuary for a few days and look around. Any you spot, we'll write their parents."

"And tell them what?" Pete demanded.

The captain glanced at him with a slight frown at his tone. "I've drafted a form letter which reads to the effect that we have information that the missing kid is staying at the Sanctuary, but our policy is to give parents the opportunity of reunion with their kids without police intervention, so we would prefer them to come to L.A. instead of us arresting the kid and having it on his record. Of course any that can't or won't come here and insist on us picking their kids up, we'll have to do it."

Pete scowled at the captain. "You expect us to fink on kids who are doing pretty much the same thing we did at their ages?"

"There's no such word as *fink* in a cop's vocabulary," Adam Greer snapped at him. "I might point out that the alternative to sending you three in there under cover is to raid the place with uniformed cops, which would effective-

ly close down the whole operation. But I really don't have to point out anything, because you're cops and I'm your boss and this squad isn't being run by voice vote. You have your assignment and you'll carry it out to the best of your abilities, regardless of personal feelings."

After staring at him for a time, Pete said sourly, "Yes, sir. Who are these ten kids you want us to fink on?"

CHAPTER 3

UNTIL the congregation outgrew it and built a larger and more modern church farther downtown, the building housing the Sanctuary had been a Baptist Church. The Temple of Olympus had purchased it from the Baptists when the latter moved.

The pews in the chapel had been removed, a restroom with three shower stalls had been installed where the baptistery previously was, and the chapel had been converted into a boys' dormitory. A couple of Sunday-school rooms had been made into girls' dorms. As there had already been a kitchen and dining room in the basement, no modifications had been necessary there. An anteroom between the main entrance and the former chapel was used as the administrative office.

About two dozen young men and about a dozen girls were housed there at the moment, according to the information Captain Greer furnished the Mod Squad. There were bunks enough for about forty boys and twenty-five girls.

The trio staggered their arrivals at the Sanctuary, because they had decided to pretend to be unacquainted. Julie checked in first, about one P.M., Linc about an hour later, Pete at three. They had discussed all dressing as hippies, but had decided less attention-getting attire would be smarter. Julie wore a simple skirt and sweater, the two boys slacks and jackets. Julie's luggage consisted of a large

straw handbag, Linc carried a worn overnight bag, Pete had a small cardboard suitcase.

When Pete arrived, he found two girls in the anteroom office. A shapely black girl of about twenty was typing some kind of cards, and a plump Norwegian-looking blonde of about the same age sat behind a reception desk. The black girl glanced at him, then went back to typing.

The blonde smiled and said, "Hi."

Halting before her desk, Pete said tentatively, "I understand a guy who's broke can get a meal and a bed here."

"Sure," she said. "Sit down."

Pete set down his cardboard suitcase and took a chair before the desk. The blonde took a mimeographed form from a desk drawer and picked up a pencil.

"Name?" she asked.

"Peter Cochrane."

She wrote it down. "Do you have a permanent address?"

"Not really. I've been floating around. Do I need one?"

She smiled at him. "We don't insist that you tell us anything, so just answer the questions you wish to." She wrote down *N.P.A.*, which Pete interpreted as meaning *No Permanent Address* in the space for address. "Age?"

"Twenty." He usually posed as twenty or younger on undercover assignments.

"Were you referred here by an agency?"

Pete shook his head. "A guy I ran into at Pershing Square told me about you."

"I see. Are you just looking for a single night's lodging, or do you want to stay here long enough to find a job locally?"

He said cautiously, "Well, I don't know. I really hadn't thought about it."

The girl set down her pencil and rested both elbows on the desk. "How long you want to stay makes a difference on what else I ask you. Are you interested in finding a job?"

"Oh, sure."

"Would you like us to help you find one?"

"Well, that would be nice of you."

"All right, Pete," she said. "I'll explain our rules before I go any further. Incidentally, I'm Hulda."

"Hi, Hulda," he acknowledged.

"This is only a temporary shelter," Hulda said. "We don't have the funds to support freeloaders indefinitely. We allow you two weeks to get a job and find a permanent place to stay, and we have a placement service to help you find work. If you can't make it in that time, we refer you to Public Welfare. Unless you get assigned a full-time job here, that is, in which case you're allowed to continue to live here, if you want. I've been here six months, for example, and Nita here has been around for two."

The black girl looked up and nodded. "Hi, Pete."

"Hi, Nita," he said.

"We manage to place most kids who check in here within a week at most," Hulda continued. "So you don't have to worry if you really want a job. I'll take down your job qualifications in a minute. But first, we have some hard and fast rules. You agree to them before we allow you in."

"Shoot."

"Meals are at seven A.M., noon and six P.M. Five minutes late and you miss chow, unless you have a good excuse, such as having to make a job interview. You're responsible for making your own bunk and keeping the area around it policed. Also you must accept your fair share of other assigned chores. We run a duty roster on general housekeeping chores and kitchen duty. So you may be required to mop floors or wash dishes."

"Okay," Pete agreed.

"We have some definite don'ts. No liquor or drugs are allowed in the building, and if you're caught either drunk or high, out you go. No boys in the girls' dorms after nine P.M., and vice versa. If you are a fugitive from the law, you won't find any protection here. The moment we find it out, we'll let the police know where you are."

"Okay," Pete agreed again.

"Last but not least, you're required to shower daily."

Pete gave her a quizzical look. "You have to tell people that?"

"You would be surprised at how many kids are averse to water," Hulda said dryly. "And in the close quarters we live here, it's a problem. Yes, we have to tell them."

Grinning, Pete raised his right hand. "I solemnly swear

to start showering daily, to give up booze, pot and horse, to curb my carnal instincts for two weeks and to make my bed daily. Do I have to sign anything?"

The blonde made a face at him. "Verbal agreement to abide by the rules is sufficient." She picked up her pencil again. "Now for your job qualifications. What can you do?"

He shrugged. "Little of everything. No special talents."

"What have you done?"

He considered. Actually he had experience as a beachcomber and a police officer, but he suspected the former the girl would regard as useless and he didn't care to mention the latter. Then he thought of the summer jobs he had held in highschool.

"I've been a lifeguard several times," he said. "Otherwise I've just held odd jobs." He added in explanation, "I've been knocking about too much to hold any sort of decent job."

She nodded understanding, apparently used to similar lack of experience in her interviews. "Education?"

"Highschool."

After writing this down, she set down the pencil again, opened her top desk drawer and took out a large glassine sheet divided into numbered squares. With a yellow wax pencil she wrote *Peter Cochrane* in one of the squares.

"The boys' dormitory is in there," she said, pointing to the door into the former chapel. "You may take bunk number twelve. They're all numbered."

"Okay. Thanks."

He rose to his feet just as a tall, rangy man of about fifty came in through the street door. The man had a full head of curling, prematurely snow-white hair and his round, smooth face wore the most serene expression Pete Cochrane had ever seen. He was dressed in a black suit, white shirt and dark tie.

"Afternoon, Reverend Zeus," Hulda greeted him. "This is Pete Cochrane, a new boy who just checked in."

The man offered Pete a firm grip and his large, rather innocent-looking eyes twinkled with friendliness. In a deep, melodious voice he said, "How are you, young fellow?"

"Fine, sir," Pete said. Despite a preconceived notion that

the Reverend Zeus was probably a phony, he found himself instantly liking the man.

The minister turned his attention to the black typist, who had stopped working to smile at him. Her smile turned to a grin of pleasure when he said, "You're always working, Nita. Don't you ever rest?"

"You're not often here, Reverend," she said. "You'd be surprised how I loaf when you're not around."

"I'll bet," he said, grinning back at her. Then he became brisk. "I'm in something of a rush. I'll take my usual flying tour and be off again. Nice to have met you, Pete."

"Same to you, sir," Pete said.

The man opened a door at the end of the anteroom and disappeared down a flight of stairs.

"There's a wonderful man," Hulda said with sincerity. "He's the one who sponsors this place, Pete."

"Yeah?" he said, stooping to pick up his suitcase. "Well, thanks for everything."

He opened the dormitory door and went inside.

There were ten sets of double-decker bunks on each side of the room, their heads against the walls. A couple of boys were napping in upper bunks and Linc Hayes was stretched out awake on one of the lowers. Otherwise the room was empty.

Bunk number twelve was a lower across the room from Linc. Pete dropped his suitcase on it and glanced at Linc. The latter gestured toward the shower room, swung his feet to the floor and headed that way.

After a glance at the sleeping boys, Pete followed after Linc. No one else was in the shower room. Linc was leaning against a row of wash basins.

"I got lucky," Linc said.

"How's that?"

"You meet Nita, the typist out front?"

"Uh-huh."

"Seems she's got an invitation to Disneyland tomorrow. That Hulda gal asked if I could type. When I said yes, I got tagged to fill in for Nita tomorrow."

Pete looked puzzled. "So?"

"You're not very fast on the uptake," Linc said. "That gives me access to the files."

"Oh," Pete said. "Yeah, I see your point." He walked over to glance out the door. "Seen Julie since you checked in?"

The black youth shook his head. "I looked downstairs in the dining room a while back. They use it as a recreation room between meals. She must be in one of the girls' dorms."

"Let's look again," Pete suggested.

The dining room in the basement was nearly as empty as the boys' dorm. Two boys who looked about eighteen played cribbage in one corner. Across the room from them the Reverend Zeus stood next to a table at which Julie Barnes sat, talking to her.

The minister glanced over at them as the boys entered the room, smiled at Pete and beckoned him over. Linc trailed after Pete.

The Reverend Zeus must have practiced some memory-fixing technique for remembering names, because he had no difficulty recalling Pete's, even though he had heard it only once.

"This is Julie Barnes, Pete," he said. "Another new arrival. Pete Cochrane, Julie."

While the pair were acknowledging the introduction, Zeus offered his hand to Linc, introduced himself and then introduced Linc to Julie.

Then he said in a brisk tone, "Well, I have to run along. Expect the car about ten in the morning, Julie."

"Yes, sir," she said without much enthusiasm.

When Zeus had departed, Pete glanced over at the cribbage players, saw they were paying no attention to them and asked Julie, "What was that all about?"

"I've got a job waiting tables at the Temple of Olympus," Julie said ruefully. "I didn't know how to turn it down when he offered it to me. He's sending a car for me in the morning. That sort of louses things up, doesn't it?"

Pete shrugged. "Maybe we can polish off this assignment tonight. We'll get a look at all the residents together at dinnertime."

"But some of these missing kids may have been here and moved on again. I meant to sound out the other girls after I got to know them, but I can hardly form close friendships

between now and tomorrow morning. What should I do about tomorrow?"

Linc said, "Why don't you throw it in the captain's lap?"

Pete said, "Good idea. Let's go find a pay phone and set up a meeting with him for tonight."

CHAPTER 4

AT DINNER that evening the squad spotted one of the missing ten they were supposed to look for. He was a seventeen-year-old runaway from San Diego named Norman Barrister. He was using the name of Norman Brown, but Captain Greer had furnished them with photographs of all ten missing kids.

During dinner Julie also learned, inadvertently, that another of the missing ten had stayed at the Sanctuary about a month previously, but had moved on to the Temple of Olympus. This came out when Julie mentioned her new job at the Temple, and one of the girls casually remarked that a former resident of the Sanctuary named Elizabeth Turner had been given the same sort of job a month ago. A seventeen-year-old from Phoenix named Elizabeth Turner was on their list.

Later that evening, when the Mod Squad met with Captain Greer, the captain decided that Julie's job offer might be a break instead of a disaster. It would not only give her a chance to check out Elizabeth Turner, but if the Reverend Zeus made a regular habit of drawing employees from the Sanctuary, others of the missing ten might also be there. He instructed Julie to accept the job and hang onto it until further notice.

The next morning a chauffeured limousine arrived for Julie promptly at ten. The driver was a silent, chunky man of about forty with a beefy face and the formal manner of a major-domo. Julie, who didn't recognize social castes, would have preferred to sit in front with the driver, but he

didn't give her a chance. The manner in which he held open the rear door for her was deferential, but at the same time so glacially insistent, that she was intimidated into meekly climbing in back.

There were sliding glass panels between the front and rear seats, closed. In order to communicate with the driver from the rear seat, you had to use a phone which hung from the back of the front seat. This also was too intimidating for Julie to try. They made the trip in silence.

The driver took the Hollywood freeway to Mulholland Drive, then took Mulholland into the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Santa Monica Mountains start west of Cahuenga Pass in the Hollywood district of Los Angeles, arc north of Beverly Hills and run west clear to Pacific Palisades. They never even come close to their namesake town, Santa Monica, which is well south of them. It is a small but rugged range, and is unique in that a major part of it is within the corporate limits of a city. Los Angeles is the only city in the country which can boast of having its own mountain range within its city limits.

Mulholland Drive is the major east-west road through the Santa Monica Mountains, and numerous canyon roads run north and south off it. A couple of miles west of the area known as the Outpost Estates the limousine turned north on a narrow graveled road which deadened in a box canyon formed by three low mountains. The Temple of Olympus was situated at the end of the box canyon.

The four-hundred-year-old structure was square, with a round, three-story, flat-topped tower at each corner, connected by thick stone walls a good twenty feet high. The windows in the towers were high and narrow.

Centered in the front wall was an enormous arched gate, high and wide enough for a box car to pass through. Its massive oaken doors stood wide open.

The limousine drove through the gate, along a white shell driveway which went clear around the courtyard inside the walls, and halted before the tower situated at the right front corner of the castle as you faced it. The uniformed chauffeur got out and opened the rear door.

As Julie climbed from the car, the chauffeur preceded

her up three stone steps leading to an arched, metal-studded door into the tower, and held open the door for her. Julie half expected it to creak, but it opened silently and easily on oiled hinges. Carved in stone above the doorway were the words: TOWER OF ZEUS.

"You will find a reception desk right inside, Miss Barnes," the chauffeur said.

Julie suddenly tired of being intimidated. She deliberately let the man wait while she took time to study her surroundings.

The area enclosed by the four walls was about a hundred yards square. About ten yards out from the side wall nearest to them was a large swimming pool in the shape of a pentagon. A half dozen men and women in swimsuits lounged around the pool, one pair on a blanket on the grass, the rest at a couple of small round tables with beach umbrellas over them. Several other people were in the water. Between the white shell drive running along all four walls and the pool the grass was as flawless as a putting green.

Beyond the pool what looked like an archery class was in progress. Both the men and women were clad in simple, sleeveless tunics of about miniskirt length which Julie realized were meant to resemble the attire worn by the ancient Greeks. Like those in and around the pool, all but the man who seemed to be the instructor looked middle-aged or older. He was too far away for Julie to make out his features, but he had a bronzed, youthful body with the rippling muscles of a weight lifter.

Along the castle's rear wall a couple of dozen car ports had been built, and most of them had cars in them. A half dozen were Rolls-Royces and there was a sprinkling of Cadillacs and Lincolns among the others. Julie guessed that most of them belonged to guests rather than to the Temple, which suggested that the clientele was generally pretty wealthy.

A muscular black man of about thirty, bare chested and in shorts, was edging the grass along the driveway.

All the time she was studying the scene, the chunky chauffeur held open the door with faintly disapproving stoicism. Julie was a little ashamed of the emotion, but she

couldn't help feeling a tinge of triumph at putting him in his place. When she finished her examination of the surroundings, she clutched her oversized straw handbag, mounted the stone steps and gave him an imperious nod of dismissal as she swept by.

The door closed behind her and she found herself in what once must have been the tower's banquet hall. It was about fifty feet across, shaped like three-fourths of a circle. The other fourth of the circle was occupied by a counter similar to a hotel registration desk just inside the door, a wide staircase leading upward just beyond the counter, and a narrower flight leading downward just beyond it.

The decor of the room suggested that the decorator had been unable to decide whether he wanted it to look like a hotel lobby or an ancient Greek salon. Instead of sofas and chairs, there were carved stone benches, well padded with cushions. Grecian urns were strategically placed to serve as smoking stands, and a good deal of Grecian statuary lined the walls. Centered in a round pool containing goldfish in the middle of the room was a stone cherub lying on his back on a stone lily pad, hands behind his head. A narrow stream of water spouted upward from his mouth, turned to spray and showered prettily back into the pool.

No one was in the salon-lobby, but an attractive red-headed girl in her early twenties was behind the counter. She wore the same sort of miniskirted tunic that the people on the archery range had been wearing. She gave Julie a friendly smile.

"I'm Julie Barnes," Julie said, smiling back. "I'm supposed to have a job as a waitress here."

"I know," the redhead said. "Welcome to the Asylum. I'm Penny Chard. That all the luggage you have?"

Julie admitted that it was.

"Well, it's as much as most attendants arrive here with. We all come from the Sanctuary. I got here with the clothes on my back. Incidentally, although we menials around here refer to this joint as the Asylum and to ourselves as attendants, it's strictly an inside joke. Don't let any of the Greek gods or their worshippers hear you."

"All right," Julie said, grinning. "I'll be careful. But is the place really all that crazy?"

"Not really. They're all a little strange, but mostly in a nice way. The Reverend Zeus is a teddy bear. Hera has a thing about boys a lot younger than her, and Apollo makes routine passes at every new girl, but otherwise they're not too bad."

Julie looked puzzled. "Hera and Apollo?"

"Hera is Mrs. Zeus. In Greek mythology Apollo was her son, but in this case he's her brother. Zeus, Hera and Apollo are all the resident Greek gods we have. Mere employees like us continue to use their Christian names." The redhead looked her up and down estimatingly. "You wear about a seven dress?"

"That's right," Julie said.

Penny Chard disappeared into a room behind the counter, after a few moments reappeared with a pale green tunic similar to her own. "All paid employees wear this color," she said, handing it to Julie. "The gods wear white, the worshippers any colors they choose except green or white. It's a sort of caste system. Do you have any sandals in that bag?"

Julie shook her head.

"Then you go barefoot until you have a chance to get some. Or permanently, if you want to. The only rule is no modern shoes." The redhead checked a room chart and handed Julie a key. "You'll be in room 308 with another waitress named Audrey Hope. All residence rooms are in the Tower of Hera, which is the one directly behind this. Here the entire second floor is the dining room and the third floor is a ballroom. If you want to go check into your room, change into your tunic and come back, I'll take you up to introduce you to Andy the chef, who will be your boss."

"All right," Julie said.

She went outside and along the white shell driveway to the rear tower on this side. As she passed the swimming pool, the people around it all smiled and nodded to her. She smiled and nodded back.

The muscular archery instructor's tunic was white, she noted. He must be Apollo.

She also noted that the limousine was now parked in the farthest right car port.

Room 308 turned out to be on the third floor of the Tower of Hera, and there were no elevators. All three floors of the tower had been partitioned off into sleeping rooms. Julie's was about twelve by fifteen feet, with twin beds against opposite walls and twin dressers between them.

Some feminine undergarments lay on one bed. Julie dropped her handbag on the other, changed into the tunic and removed her shoes and stockings. On the way back to the Tower of Zeus she walked on the grass, because the crushed shell of the driveway was too hard on the feet.

Penny Chard came from behind the reception desk and led the way upstairs to the second floor. Here there was a spacious, high-ceilinged dining room. The Greek motif was continued to the extent of having Greek sculpture around the walls, but the tables were modern formica-topped ones and the chairs were of plastic and chrome-plated tubular steel. There was also wall-to-wall red carpeting.

"Not quite so ancient-Greek as downstairs," Julie commented.

Penny shrugged. "When you try to impose Greek decor on medieval Spanish architecture, you're beat before you start. So wherever practicality conflicts with Olympian tradition around here, practicality wins out."

Two waitresses, dressed in the inevitable miniskirted tunics, were setting tables for the noon meal. Penny introduced them as Audrey Hope and Dottie Wills. Audrey, who was to be Julie's roommate, was a pert little blonde. Dottie was a pretty, but slightly plump brunette. Both seemed to be about twenty or twenty-one.

Then Penny took Julie into the kitchen and introduced her to Andre Dumont, who presided over the kitchen staff. Andre was a fiercely mustached man of about sixty with a roly-poly figure and a menacing manner which was obviously a fraud.

The chef gave Julie a Gallic bow, then glanced at a wall clock.

"Eleven thirty," he said. "We start serving lunch at noon sharp. Go have Audrey or Dottie tell you what to do."

Lunch was served from noon until one thirty, and only about fifty customers showed. The three girls handled it easily without being in the least rushed. During a lull Audrey Hope told Julie that fifty was about average during the week, but that the number would double on Saturday and quadruple on Sunday.

"A lot of people check in just for the weekend," she explained. "Most arrive after the dinner hour Friday, so the rush doesn't start until breakfast on Saturday. Then on Sunday another bunch drops in for church and stays for lunch afterward."

The guests all wore thigh-length tunics of various pastel shades. The Reverend Zeus didn't appear for lunch, but Hera and Apollo did. They sat in Dottie Wills' station, but Julie knew who they were because of their snow-white tunics.

Hera was a slim, black-haired woman of about thirty with a still, classically beautiful face and milk-white skin. Her brother was perhaps a couple of years older, with a ruggedly handsome face and wavy blond hair worn moderately short. He was slightly over six feet tall and his muscular body probably weighed around two hundred pounds.

The Reverend Zeus hadn't impressed Julie as particularly godlike, but both Hera and Apollo fitted their roles perfectly, at least physically. She was surprised to discover how much younger Hera was than her husband.

During a lull Julie asked Audrey if she knew what the pair's real names were. Her blonde room-mate grinned.

"He's Philip Swartz and her maiden name was Myrtle Swartz. But don't ever make the mistake of calling either that. You'd be out of a job one second later."

Julie noticed both glancing her way a time or two. When they finished lunch, they stopped on the way out to introduce themselves.

Hera said graciously, "My husband told me the new girl was quite pretty, but he understated the case, my dear. Isn't she a lovely thing, Apollo?"

Apollo had already said the same thing with his eyes. He merely gave a preoccupied nod as he continued his visual inventory of Julie's assets.

Eventually he said in a caressing voice, "You should be finished here by two o'clock, Julie. I have a free hour then. I'll stop by and show you around the place."

There was overt sexual invitation in both his tone and expression, yet, curiously, Julie found herself not in the least offended. Because Penny Chard had told her that Apollo passed at every new girl who came along, Julie had decided in advance that she wouldn't like him. Yet despite the fact that the man was obviously a wolf, to her astonishment she was instantly attracted to him. She had never before encountered a man who exuded such animal magnetism and had such an aura of overpowering virility about him.

Like Casanova, who automatically appealed to women even when they knew his reputation, Apollo was one of those lucky philanderers who caused women's hearts to pound at first sight. To her dismay Julie realized hers was pounding now.

Penny hadn't mentioned what percentage of new girls succumbed to Apollo's passes, but Julie was willing to bet the figure was high. At the same time she resolved not to contribute to raising the percentage, she found herself looking forward with fascination to the contest.

CHAPTER 5

PETE COCHRANE drew a cleaning detail and was mopping the floor of the boys' dorm when the limousine came for Julie. Linc was on duty in the office all that morning. Pete and Linc had no opportunity to get together until after lunch.

Linc was supposed to be back on duty at 1:00 P.M. At 12:30, when they both finished eating lunch, he and Pete drifted outside together.

"That girl Elizabeth Turner has a card in the files all right," Linc said. "She gave her age as eighteen, though,

which is probably why they accepted her at the Temple. I doubt that the Reverend Zeus would risk hiring a girl who might be a runaway if he knew she was still a minor."

"You check the other names against the files?" Pete asked.

"Yeah. The only one there is the sixteen-year-old from Seattle, Julius Hart. He's listed as taking a job as a counter boy at a taco stand on Third and Hope after he left here."

"I can check that out this afternoon," Pete said.

Linc said, "There must be a couple of thousand cards in the file. I flipped through several hundred of them to see if I could spot any of the kids we're looking for who might have changed their names. On the principle that people usually keep the same first name and the same letter of the surname, you know. Like Norman Barrister changing himself to Norman Brown. I didn't find anything that seemed worth following up, but something else kind of bugged me."

"What's that?"

"I noticed a number of cards showed referrals to the Temple of Olympus. They have a cross-reference file on job placements, so I went to that instead of trying to sort through all two thousand name cards. In the last six months seven other kids aside from Elizabeth Turner, all girls, have been given jobs at the Temple."

Pete hiked his eyebrows. "All minors?"

"Oh, no. None of them. At least their ages are listed as anywhere from eighteen to twenty-five. I just thought it was kind of strange that they use so many young girls out there."

Pete shrugged. "Maybe they were all hired as waitresses, like Julie. Maybe they have a big dining room."

Pete was on the cleaning detail only for the morning. Having the afternoon free, he caught a bus downtown and visited the taco stand at Third and Hope. He checked the photograph of Julius Hart before walking up to the counter to order a cup of coffee.

The boy who waited on him was the boy in the picture.

It had depressed Pete Cochrane to have to turn in Norman Barrister, and it depressed him even more to have to turn in this boy, since the youngster seemed to be

self-supporting. He was out of his own teens a short enough time to remember his own desire to break parental ties, and he felt there must have been some reason for the boys to leave home. Nevertheless they were runaways and he was a cop, so he really had no choice if he was going to live up to the oath he took when he accepted his badge.

He caught a cab to Juvenile Division to report to Captain Greer.

After making his report, he casually mentioned to the captain Linc's discovery that seven girls from the Sanctuary other than Elizabeth Turner had been given jobs at the Temple of Olympus in recent months. He added that none seemed to be minors.

Captain Greer frowned. "Eight altogether? That's strange. I visited the place once, and the dining room couldn't possibly use more than three girls."

Pete shrugged. "Maybe there's other jobs aside from waitress work out there."

After considering, the captain shook his head. "Not that many. Tell Linc to make a list of the girls who have been sent out there. We'll have Julie check them out."

"Think something funny is going on there?" Pete asked with raised brows.

"Not really. I thoroughly checked out Zeus when he first showed here to discuss the Sanctuary, and he came up pretty clean. But one of the things you learn from police work is that following up off-beat matters you accidentally uncover sometimes puts you on the trail of something you never would have suspected otherwise."

"Just what is Zeus's background, Captain?"

"He was a highschool history teacher, believe it or not, before he founded the Temple of Olympus."

Adam Greer rose, went over to a file cabinet, checked a folder he took from it, replaced it again and returned to his seat.

"David Johnson is his real name. I think I said Jones the other day, but it's Johnson. He used to teach up north at San Mateo. About five years ago he inherited some money, bought this old castle in the Santa Monica Mountains and started his cult. The fact that it's been financially successful doesn't make him a crook. So is the Catholic Church. My

investigation convinced me he sincerely believes in the philosophy he teaches. As a matter of fact he once got in a little trouble with the San Mateo P.T.A. for expounding his beliefs to his class, and this was long before he actually established his cult."

Pete got to his feet. "Well, I'll get back to the Sanctuary and have Linc make out that list. Want me to phone you the names?"

"You can drop them by in the morning. Julie has already checked in by phone today, and won't call in again until tomorrow afternoon, so I couldn't get the names to her anyway."

"She find Elizabeth Turner there?"

The captain shook his head. "No sign of her. She wants to get to know the other girls a little better before she makes any inquiries."

"Okay," Pete said. "See you again tomorrow morning."

When he got back to the Sanctuary, Linc and Hulda were alone in the office.

Hulda said, "I've been having you paged, Pete. You've got a job."

"I have?" he said rather blankly.

"At the Temple. The Reverend Zeus stopped by a while ago and said their pool guard had quit. He asked if anyone here was a qualified lifeguard. He was delighted when I told him you were. He'll send a car for you at ten tomorrow morning."

Pete glanced at Linc, who gave an I-guess-I-can-carry-on-all-alone-if-I-have to sort of shrug. It was a good thing they had started out three strong, Pete thought, because the undercover force at the Sanctuary was rapidly being depleted.

At least he wouldn't have to drop that list of names off at Captain Greer's office the next morning. He could simply take it along with him to the Temple.

The next day was Friday, and Pete arrived at the Temple about eleven A.M. He was assigned a room on the same floor of the Tower of Hera as Julie's, that floor being reserved for employees. His was also a double room, but he had no roommate, as the other doubles were all full.

When he was settled and had changed into one of the

light green tunics he would be required to wear when not in swimming trunks, the Reverend Zeus explained his duties. They were pretty light. The pool was open only six hours a day, six days a week, so his work week would be only thirty-six hours. Tuesdays through Saturdays the pool was open from nine A.M. until noon and from two P.M. until six. On Sundays it was open from one P.M. until seven. It was closed for cleaning every Monday. The Reverend Zeus told him that in addition to acting as lifeguard, he was supposed to give swimming instruction to anyone who wanted it, but that he doubted there would be much call for such instruction.

By then it was noon and Zeus took Pete to the dining room for lunch. They sat with Hera and Apollo, and Julie waited on them.

When the Reverend Zeus introduced Pete to Hera, the woman made him a little uncomfortable by running her gaze up and down his muscular frame with the estimating look of a horsewoman judging a potential mount. But his attention was almost immediately distracted by the way the blond Apollo kept caressing Julie with his eyes every time she came near.

He couldn't decide which he liked less: the blond pseudo-god's expression or Julie's self-conscious reaction to it. Pete felt a sense of outrage when he realized she was enjoying Apollo's attention.

Pete didn't have to be on duty at the pool until two, and the dining room stopped serving at one thirty. He dropped back at a quarter of two, after the last customer had left, for a word with Julie. He had to wait until she had introduced him to her two co-workers, but then he drew her aside.

In a blunt tone he asked, "Why do you simper like a highschool freshman when that horny stud undresses you with his eyes?"

"Apollo?" Julie asked with raised eyebrows. "You sound like a jealous suitor. You're not the latter, so you have no right to be the former."

"It isn't jealousy," he growled. "I just don't want to see you ravished by an ancient lecher twice your age."

She examined him curiously, then confused him by

failing to become angry. He expected a hot rejoinder that Apollo was well within the age limit suitable for a girl her age, but instead she said meekly, "I know he's on the make, Pete, but it's not just for me. It's for every girl he sees. Don't worry, I can take care of myself."

He blinked. Prepared for battle, he didn't know how to react to instant submission. He covered by abruptly changing the subject. He asked if she had learned anything about Elizabeth Turner.

Julie nodded. "The girl who works on the reception desk says she was only here about a week. She left to take a waitress job somewhere in L.A., but the receptionist doesn't know just where. I'll bring it up again when I get a chance, but I didn't want to sound too eager."

Pete gave her the list of seven other girls who had been sent here from the Sanctuary to fill jobs.

He said, "You just introduced me to Audrey Hope and Dottie Wills, so we can scratch those. Any of the other five names ring a bell?"

After scanning the list, Julie said, "Penny Chard is the receptionist I mentioned. I never heard of the other four."

"Well, suppose you take two to check out and I'll take the other two."

He gave her the names Linda Forester and Therese Dean; he kept a pair named Martha Wright and Gladys Pender.

"What excuse did you use for asking about Elizabeth Turner?" he asked.

"I said some of her old friends at the Sanctuary had asked me to look her up."

He nodded. "Good as any, I guess. Let's use the same excuse for all of them."

By the time the pool closed at six Pete had discovered that both Martha Wright and Gladys Pender had stayed at the Temple for very short periods, one for about a week, the other for only about ten days. Meantime Julie had learned that Linda Forester and Therese Dean hadn't been there much longer. Linda had been around for about two weeks, Therese for three.

When they exchanged notes after dinner, they discovered that the four had another thing in common. No one

seemed to know specifically just where the girls had gone when they left the Temple. As a matter of fact, when either Pete or Julie pressed for more detailed information, they had discovered that none of the other employees had actually seen any of the girls leave. They all simply had suddenly no longer been around.

Pete's main source of information had been the grounds-keeper and handy man, a burly black man of about thirty named Gordon Pace. Pace roomed with chef Andre Dumont, and since the kitchen seemed to be the clearing house for all gossip at the Temple, he was abreast of everything going on there. The remarkable thing, to Pete, was that he knew so little about the girls in question. Beyond a vague notion that all had taken jobs somewhere else, he didn't seem to know why, or exactly when any of them had left the Temple of Olympus.

It seemed apparent that for any more detailed information, Pete and Julie were going to have to go to the psuedo-gods themselves. Pete decided to work on Hera and Julie volunteered to try to pump Apollo.

CHAPTER 6

WHEN Pete left Julie to finish her cleanup work in the dining room, he found Hera waiting for him downstairs. The woman announced that she was going to take him on a tour of the castle.

The two towers other than the Tower of Zeus and the Tower of Hera were called the Tower of Apollo and the Tower of Aphrodite, the former being the one at the rear of the castle diagonally across the courtyard from the Tower of Zeus, the latter being the other front tower.

The Temple of Olympus' imitation of the original Olympus was rather flexible. The Greek Apollo was the god of manly youth and beauty, which fitted the former Philip Swartz well enough, but the original was also the

god of light, poetry and music. However, the Tower of Apollo was devoted entirely to exercise and games. The first floor was a roller rink, the second a gymnasium, the top floor contained squash and handball courts.

Aphrodite was supposed to be the goddess of love, but the tower named after her was devoted to the arts. There was a library, a number of music rooms, including an acoustically designed auditorium for recitals, church services and little theater dramas, and the top floor consisted entirely of well-lighted and well-equipped studios for guests who liked to dabble in the pictorial arts. Hera explained to Pete that she presided over the Tower of Aphrodite, and modestly added that she was passably accomplished in painting, sculpture and music.

Pete was less puzzled about the nomenclature of the various towers when he learned they had been arbitrarily named before the complete program of the Temple of Olympus had been worked out by the Reverend Zeus, and their final uses had evolved later. Since the names of the towers were all carved in stone above their doors, it would have been too much trouble to rename them to better suit the activities conducted in them.

During the tour Pete became increasingly conscious that Hera was making a deliberate pitch for him. Some of the passages in the tower were rather narrow, which gave her repeated excuses to press close to him. He constantly found a soft shoulder being pressed against him, or her hand brushing his thigh, or a plump breast being pushed against his arm. Both were dressed in the usual tunics and both were barefoot, Pete because he had brought no sandals, Hera probably because she happened to have pretty feet. Periodically she managed to step lightly on one of his feet, probably, he suspected, simply because she got some kind of thrill from the contact of bare flesh against bare flesh.

The sidelong glances she kept throwing him left little doubt either. It must run in the family, he thought. Her brother had a thing about young girls; she was in heat for young men.

Hera was a particularly beautiful woman with her slim figure, long, gleaming black hair and milk-white complexion.

ion, Pete was no prude and the age difference didn't particularly bother him. But he had developed a liking for the Reverend Zeus and had no intention of cuckolding the minister. Even if he had been interested, he could hardly have responded to her hints then and there, because they were constantly running into other people during the tour. Any passionate embraces almost certainly would have been interrupted by strolling guests or employees.

Consequently Pete decided simply to ignore the provocative physical contacts. And every time the conversation got in the least personal, he steered it into some safer channel.

They toured the Tower of Aphrodite last. As they came down the staircase to the first floor, Pete noticed the narrower flight of stairs which continued on downward, and it occurred to him that there was a similar flight in each of the four towers.

Pausing, he gestured in the direction of the downward flight and asked, "What's down there, Hera?"

"Dungeons originally," she said. "Now it's simply storage space." Then a speculative look appeared in her eyes. "Would you like to see the cellars?"

He parried that one fast. "I don't think so. What's to see about storerooms?"

"The underground passages are rather interesting. The cellars of the four towers are all connected."

"Some other time, maybe," he said. "I think I've had enough sightseeing for now." He glanced at his watch. "It's pushing ten. We've been doing this for two hours."

"All right," she agreed with obvious disappointment.

As they walked back toward the Tower of Zeus, staying on the grass in order to avoid walking on the crushed shells of the driveway, Pete said casually, "By the way, you know Hulda at the Sanctuary, don't you?"

"The blonde receptionist? Yes."

"She asked me to check on a couple of girls she sent out here a while back. Martha Wright and Gladys Pender."

Hera gave him a sidelong glance. Did he only imagine that there was a tinge of caution in it?

"Neither of them are here any more," she said.

"I know. I asked some of the other employees about them. Do you know how to get in touch with them?"

Hera paused to frown at him and he halted also. "What's Hulda's interest?" she asked.

"They both owe her some money."

Hera's frown deepened. For some odd reason this news seemed to distress her. "Oh. Do you know how much?"

It occurred to him that his lie might have been a mistake. He had had no idea, of course, that the news that the two girls owed some money would distress Hera. But if she phoned Hulda to ask about the debts, the blonde wouldn't know what she was talking about. He decided it would be best to remove any reason for Hera to phone the girl by making up any details Hera wanted to know about.

"Only two bucks apiece," he improvised. "But Hulda could use the money. Where did they go to work from here?"

There was a bare hesitation, as though she were thinking over whether or not to answer, before the woman said, "A restaurant called the Garrison House in Santa Monica. I'm planning to run into Santa Monica tomorrow. If you call Hulda, tell her I'll stop by the Garrison House and tell the girls to get the money to her."

"All right," he agreed.

They continued on to the Tower of Zeus. As Pete held open the door for her to enter the building, Hera said, "There is dancing on the third floor here tonight, to a pretty good combo. Would you—"

She abruptly cut it off when she spotted the Reverend Zeus approaching from the salon-lobby. Pete stepped in behind her and let the door swing closed as the minister neared. Like Hera he wore a white tunic, but he also wore leather sandals. Considering that he must have been fifty, his body was in remarkably firm shape. Aside from slightly knobby knees, he cut a rather handsome figure.

"Hello, Pete," the Reverend Zeus said in a friendly voice. "Evening, my dear. Are we going to attend the dance?"

"Of course." She turned to give Pete a smile so impersonal, it astonished him. "You're welcome to drop in too, Pete. All the employees are. Probably some of the girl employees your age will be there."

"Maybe I'll check it out later," he said non-committally. "Thanks for the tour."

"You're quite welcome. Any further questions you have about the Temple, feel free to ask either me or my husband."

"Sure," he said.

The woman watched her behavior toward other men in front of her husband, he thought as the couple moved toward the stairs. He wondered if this indicated that some time in the past he had caught her passing at some younger man, or if she were merely too smart to let him even suspect her.

A little later he went upstairs to look into the ballroom. About twenty couples, most of them middle-aged and quite a number of them people Pete hadn't previously seen around that day, were either dancing or were seated at tables ringing the floor. The new faces must belong to people who had checked in for the weekend while he was being conducted on his tour, he decided.

Pete inventoried the crowd from the doorway. The Reverend Zeus and Hera sat at a table with two other couples. Julie's roommate and the other girl she worked with sat at another table with a young man who washed dishes in the kitchen. There was a bar at one side of the room, but the only person sitting at it was the redheaded desk clerk from downstairs, Penny Chard. The black groundskeeper, Gordon Pace, was doubling as bartender.

Penny smiled and waved when she saw him in the doorway. Pete waved back, but he didn't go over to the bar. As soon as he saw that Julie wasn't present, he turned and left again.

Julie also was not in her room. It wasn't until he made that discovery that it occurred to him Apollo hadn't been in the ballroom either.

He left the door to his own room open and lay on the bed reading a magazine. After a time he began to wonder why he didn't return to the ballroom and have a few dances with the redheaded Penny Chard instead of sitting up like a mother waiting for a teen-age daughter to come home from a date.

But he didn't stir. He was still lying there with his

magazine at ten after midnight when Julie finally came up the stairs alone. When she paused in the doorway, he tossed the magazine aside.

"Where in the devil have you been?" he growled.

"Roller skating."

He looked at her suspiciously. "You weren't at the rink when I looked it over about 9:15."

"We got there about nine thirty."

"*We?* Were you with the creaking god of youth and beauty?"

Julie put her hands on her hips. "You ask a lot of questions, mister. You a cop or something?"

He looked a little sheepish. "Sorry. I was just worried about you."

The girl's expression immediately softened. Brushing a wisp of her long hair from her eyes, she moved into the room and took a chair.

"Yes, I was with Apollo," she said. "The roller rink just closed at midnight, and I refused his invitation to continue the evening in various other ways because I wanted to talk to you. Do you know why they have a young people's thing like a roller rink here when the guests are mostly middle-aged?"

He shook his head. "I'm not particularly interested. What various other ways?"

"It's part of the Reverend Zeus' theory of how to stay young," she said, ignoring the question. "He says a good deal of the aging process is self-imposed, simply by people giving up recreations supposed to be reserved for the young and substituting the middle-aged recreations, such as golf and bowling. So he makes all his members skate and dance the new dances and get involved in amateur drama and such things. And they find they enjoy all of it."

Pete raised his voice. "What various things did this aging roue try to talk you into?"

Julie grinned. "First he suggested a drink in his little bachelor apartment down on the first floor. When I nixed that, he suggested a walk outside the walls in the moonlight. His final desperate suggestion was the dance they're having in the ballroom of the Tower of Zeus. I pled bedtime because Saturday is our big day."

"You stay away from that bachelor apartment," Pete told her.

"Yes, sir," she said so meekly he knew it was sarcasm.

"I mean it," he said crossly, then made a face at her when she merely grinned at him. "Okay, play with fire, but don't come crying to me when you get in trouble. What did you want to see me about?"

"To report my success. I pumped Apollo about all three girls and he came across like a lamb. Elizabeth Turner went back home to Phoenix. Linda Forester got a job as a script girl at Paramount Studios. Therese Dean is a ticket seller at the Yale Movie Theater in Beverly Hills."

"Good work," he said approvingly. "I got the dope on my two from Hera also. They're both waitresses at the Garrison House in Santa Monica. I'll phone the dope to Captain Greer in the morning."

CHAPTER 7

SATURDAY morning before the pool opened Pete phoned Captain Greer from a public phone in the salon-lobby of the Tower of Zeus.

When he had relayed the information he and Julie had collected on the five girls who had come from the Sanctuary and were no longer at the Temple, the captain said, "Linc is supposed to call in this morning too. I'll have him check out the four who are still in the area. You say the Elizabeth Turner kid went back to Phoenix?"

"That's what Apollo told Julie."

"Funny Phoenix never canceled the want. But then maybe her parents never reported that she'd come home. I'll send an inquiry."

"Is there any point in us continuing to stick around here?" Pete asked. "We've found out what we came here for."

"Better stand pat at least until Linc checks out these four girls," Captain Greer said. "I'll let you know."

Pete didn't see Hera around all that day until four in the afternoon, and then he realized she had been gone all day. A small red sports car came through the arched gate into the castle courtyard, drove around to the rear wall and into one of the car ports. The woman who got out and headed for the pool wore a smartly designed suit, a pert little hat, white gloves and high heels. It wasn't until she neared the pool that Pete recognized her. It was the first time he had seen Hera in anything other than a white tunic.

He got up from his folding canvas chair as she approached and said, "Hi."

Probably because there were a number of people in and around the pool, her smile was as impersonal as the one she had given him in front of her husband the previous night. "How are you, Pete?" she said. "I stopped at the Garrison House and saw Martha and Gladys. Will you be seeing Hulda soon?"

"Well, I'm off all day Monday," he said cautiously.

He had been mentally practicing for this moment ever since Hera announced that she would stop by the Garrison House to tell the two waitresses that Hulda wanted her money. Naturally he expected both girls to deny the debts, and for Hera to come to him for an explanation. The only out he had been able to think of was to tell Hera that Hulda had also mentioned some other girls who came here from the Sanctuary, and he must have gotten the names mixed. Since the excuse sounded pretty lame even to him, he had been wondering how Hera would take it.

She astonished him by drawing four one-dollar bills from her bag and handing them to him.

"They both paid me, so you can relay the money on to Hulda when you see her Monday," she said.

Had both girls thought they had actually borrowed the money and had forgotten it? he wondered. That seemed unlikely. Perhaps they had simply misunderstood Hera and thought they were being dunned for some fee they owed the Sanctuary for staying there.

He was on the verge of asking if she had encountered any objection to paying off when he decided he had better

let sleeping dogs lie. He merely silently accepted the money with the mental resolve to turn it over to Captain Greer and let him worry about getting it returned to the two girls.

Sunday morning services at the Temple of Olympus were held outdoors in the courtyard whenever the weather allowed, and in the auditorium in the Tower of Aphrodite when it didn't. This Sunday the weather was not only mild enough for the service to be held outdoors, but to bring out a large number of people who were not staying at the castle. Some of these were dressed in the usual tunics, but many of them wore ordinary street clothes. Apparently there was no rule on this for those who only came to church.

The influx of non-residents swelled the congregation to about two hundred. There were no chairs, the crowd sitting on the immaculately trimmed grass in a circle around the portable pulpit from which the Reverend Zeus spoke.

Pete and Julie attended service together.

Except for the setting the service followed the conventional format of most Protestant church services, but the philosophy expressed in the sermon was certainly different. Neither Pete nor Julie had really understood what the Temple of Olympus was all about prior to hearing the Reverend Zeus preach. They attended the service with the preconceived notion that they probably would be more amused than inspired.

They came away rather impressed.

The Reverend Zeus turned out to be a rather compelling orator, but it wasn't that alone which impressed them. To their surprise his teachings made good sense.

The founder of the Temple of Olympus believed that neither the ancient prophets of the Old Testament nor those who recorded the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament ever meant the worship of God to be the forbidding, joyless duty so many Christian denominations had made it. Religion should be enjoyed, he said, because if it wasn't a joyful experience, it had no meaning. And because your religion should mold your total life, and not just be practiced on Sundays, it followed that life itself should be joyful. The cardinal sin was failure to enjoy life.

Zeus seemingly was able to find authority for his teach-

ings in numerous places in both the Old and New Testaments. This particular Sunday his text was a portion of the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes, which he read aloud in his rolling, rather sonorous voice:

“Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thy lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Pleasure, while the true road to salvation, cannot be unbridled, the minister explained. Temperance was a must, the pleasures you enjoy should be healthful rather than self-indulgent, and it was wrong to seek pleasure at the expense of anyone else. At least part of the pleasure you obtain from life should be creative also, Zeus said. For there was as much joy in work well done as in purely recreational joys. The pleasures available at the Temple were planned with all these things in mind: there were sports to develop and tune the body, creative activities such as drama, music and the pictorial arts, plus purely sensuous pleasures such as dancing, fine food and good drinks.

Although he only touched briefly on the Greek mythology aspect of his religious philosophy, Pete and Julie gathered that he regarded the use of Greek names, the tunic costumes and Greek decor as purely symbolic and ritualistic. Apparently he had tied ancient Greece to Christianity only because the Greek gods took what he regarded as a healthy interest in physical pleasures.

Julie had to rush to work immediately after church, so she and Pete had no chance to discuss the service. But in mid-afternoon, when she had a break between lunch and dinner, she came out to the pool.

“What did you think of the Reverend Zeus’s sermon?” she asked.

“He’s quite an orator.”

“I mean the content.”

Pete shrugged. “He’s about got me sold. Believing that

you're taking one more step toward heaven every time you slug down a drink or kiss a girl beats feeling guilty about it."

"It is kind of a fun belief, isn't it?" Julie said. "Maybe I ought to give in to Apollo."

He regarded her sourly. "He said pleasures that hurt people are out."

"So who would that hurt?" she asked.

"You," he told her definitely. "I'd break both your legs."

At ten Monday morning Linc Hayes parked the Woody on Gower Street near Melrose.

The wall surrounding Paramount Studios ran for four blocks along Gower, and although there were a couple of gates in it for automobiles, they were guarded and no one could enter without a pass. The only place visitors could get in was through a glass door numbered 780, and that took you only into a small reception room.

To the left of the door was an enclosed booth somewhat resembling the ticket booth of a movie house. An extremely dark, middle-aged black man in the uniform of a security guard sat on a high stool behind the counter of the booth.

He gave Linc a pleasant smile and said, "Yes, young fellow?"

"Looking for Miss Linda Forester," Linc said.

"Where's she work?"

Linc cocked a quizzical eyebrow at him. "Here. She's a script girl."

The guard gave him a patient smile. "Dozens of TV and movie producers rent space here, brother. You have to know what outfit she works for."

"You mean with all your tough security measures you don't keep a list of everybody authorized on the grounds?" Linc demanded.

"Not consolidated. I'd have to check them all."

Linc leaned his elbows on the edge of the booth's window. "Well, suppose you do that, man. This is important."

"I haven't got all that time," the guard protested.

"Looks to me like you're just sitting there. You expect-

ing to be called to investigate some major crime in one of the studios?"

The guard frowned at him. "This girl white or black?"

"White."

The frown deepened. "What business you got with a white girl, boy?"

Linc smiled from the teeth out. "You prejudiced, Whitey?"

After staring at him for a moment, the guard burst into laughter. "All right, son. But it may take some time. What was that name again?"

"Linda Forester."

The guard wrote the name on a piece of paper. "You better have a seat. I've got lots of lists to go through."

It took the man an hour, because he kept being interrupted by other visitors who had appointments or wanted to see someone in one of the studios. Each time the guard had to phone to verify the appointment, or get authorization to admit the visitor if he had no appointment. When a visitor was okayed, the guard would press a button which would cause the electric lock of the door from the ante-room into the studio grounds to buzz, and hold it until the visitor had passed through.

At the end of the hour the guard scowled over to where Linc was seated. "You sure wasted my time, brother. There's no Linda Forester working here."

Linc got up and went over to the window. "You're sure?"

The man folded his arms and said with ominous control, "Look, brother, I checked every list we got. You think I'm going to recheck 'em, think again. I told you nobody named Linda Forester works here."

Linc scratched his head. "Well, thanks anyway."

He turned to leave, but in the doorway he paused to grin back over his shoulder. "Maybe it was Universal Studios, brother."

He ducked out quickly when he saw the guard reaching for an ash tray.

The Yale Movie Theater in Beverly Hills was a small neighborhood theater. Linc got there at a quarter of

twelve. A sign on the ticket window said the matinee started at 1:00 and the box office opened at a quarter to.

Linc found a nearby restaurant, had lunch and got back at 12:45.

A skinny strawberry blonde of about twenty was in the ticket booth. She bore no resemblance to the description Linc had of Therese Dean. He asked her when Therese came on duty.

"Who?" she asked blankly.

"Therese Dean. She works in the box office too."

"Not since I been here," the girl said. "Maybe that was the name of the girl before me. I've only been here a couple of weeks."

"Your manager around?" Linc asked.

"In the lobby. The guy taking tickets."

Linc went into the lobby. A tall, freckled, sandy-haired man of about thirty stood next to the ticket stub box. No one was going into the show at the moment, so he wasn't doing anything.

"You the manager?" Linc asked.

The man nodded. "That's right."

"I'm looking for a girl named Therese Dean who used to work here. Do you know where she went when she left here?"

The sandy-haired man looked as blank as the girl outside had. "Nobody named Therese Dean ever worked here."

Linc frowned. "How long you been manager?"

"Seven years."

Linc shrugged. "I guess you ought to know. Thanks a lot."

As he started away, the manager said, "Hey."

Linc stopped and turned. "Yeah?"

"We've never had *any* Negro girls working here. I mean, it's not prejudice, because one of my best friends is black, but I've just never had occasion to hire one. So the girl you're looking for couldn't have worked here, you see."

"Therese Dean isn't black," Linc said, "She's white."

The man's face blanked of expression. He didn't say anything, but Linc could see he was mentally asking the same question the black guard at Paramount had asked aloud. Linc decided to answer it.

"She's a spy for CORE," he said, and went on out.

The Garrison House was one of Santa Monica's most exclusive restaurants. A smartly dressed hostess met Linc at the door with a practiced and meaningless smile.

"Alone, sir?"

"I'm not going to eat," Linc said. "Is either Martha Wright or Gladys Pender on duty at the moment? I've got some money that belongs to them."

The hostess looked puzzled. "I'm afraid I don't know who you mean. No one by those names works here."

This time Linc was hardly surprised, but he went on anyway. "You're sure? They're supposed to be waitresses."

"I personally hire all the waitresses," the hostess said. "No Martha Wright or Gladys Pender have ever worked here since I have."

"How long's that?"

"Eighteen months."

"Okay," he said. "Thanks anyway."

CHAPTER 8

WHEN Linc checked in at Captain Greer's office in mid-afternoon, he found Pete and Julie there.

"I hope you guys didn't quit your jobs," he greeted them. "You've still got lots of work to do out there."

"Monday's our day off," Pete said. "If you can call a debriefing a day off." Then it belatedly registered on him what Linc had said and he straightened in his chair. "What do you mean, we've still got lots of work to do?"

Linc pulled a chair away from the wall, spun it around and straddled it, his arms lying along its back. He said, "None of those girls have ever worked where you said."

Pete, Julie and Captain Greer all looked at him blankly.

"Except, possibly, the one who was supposed to be at Paramount," Linc amended. "All I found out about her is that she's definitely not there now." He glanced at Captain

Greer. "You would have to get somebody to check the personnel records of all the companies that rent space there to find out if she ever worked there. I don't think they have any central record section."

Julie said in a high voice, "You mean *none* of those five have *ever* worked where we said?"

Linc grinned at her. "You heard right, madam."

Captain Greer said, "You checked them all out thoroughly, Linc?"

"Absolutely. Except, like I said, Linda Forester might have worked somewhere at Paramount in the past."

"We'll check it out," Adam Greer said in a slow voice. "But I have a hunch that'll come up blank too." He looked at Pete. "After I talked to you Saturday, I got off a wire to Phoenix. This morning an answer came back. Elizabeth Turner is still listed as missing there, and the relative who originally filed the M.P. hasn't heard from her. That was an aunt she lived with, incidentally. The kid is an orphan."

Linc lay four one-dollar bills on the captain's desk. "Here's that money I was supposed to refund to the girls at the Garrison House. You figure out what to do with it, Captain."

"That's easy," Greer said, pocketing the bills. "I advanced it without getting it from Pete first. I haven't seen him until now. I guess it's your problem, Pete."

Pete took out his wallet, extracted four ones from it and dropped them on the desk. "Thanks for reminding me, Captain. I just passed the problem to my superior officer."

Captain Greer scowled at the bills, but made no move to touch them. "I guess they get marked and held as evidence," he said finally. "But evidence of what, I don't know. You're supposed to have a crime, or at least a suspected crime, before you set up an evidence file, and I don't know what we've got."

"We must have something," Pete said. "Obviously Hera took that money from her own pocket, figuring if the debts were paid, I'd forget about the two girls."

Julie said excitedly, "That means she knows what happened to them! Probably to all five!"

Pete looked at her. "The rest of us caught that a couple

of minutes ago. Your horny boy friend has to know too. The fake dope on three of the girls came from him."

Julie frowned at him. "He's not my boy friend and I don't care for your choice of adjectives. He didn't necessarily know it was fake dope anyway. Maybe he was just repeating what his sister told him."

"Maybe she was just repeating what old Horny told her," Pete countered.

"That couldn't be," she said in the triumphant tone of one with an unanswerable argument. "Hera had to know her story about the two at the Garrison House was a fraud, because she pretended she went there to collect the money."

Captain Greer broke up the debate by saying, "If I may intrude a question, who the devil is old Horny?"

"He means Apollo," Julie sniffed. "I think he's jealous of his muscles."

Pete gave her a pained look. "Half his muscles are in his head."

Captain Greer said, "Let's cut the bickering. Pete, in view of these developments, I want you and Julie to hang onto your jobs out there until you find out what the hell is going on. *Five* missing girls with no M.P. reports smells too strong just to file and forget."

"What about me?" Linc asked.

"Do you still have access to the files at the Sanctuary?"

"Sure. I've gotten pretty chummy with Nita. I can always offer to help her out."

"Then pick all the information you can from the files on those five girls. Then work back from there until you learn everything there is to know about them. That'll mean getting off wires or making phone calls to the police at all their home towns, checking out any local friends and acquaintances you turn up, visiting or phoning previous employers, if any. You know the routine."

"Sure," Linc said with a nod. "I'll get on it soon as I get back to the Sanctuary."

The captain returned his attention to Pete and Julie. "I can't give you any tips on how to proceed, because I haven't the faintest idea of what we're looking for, if

anything. Just be careful not to blow your cover. I don't want either of you, or both, to turn up missing too."

"We'll watch it," Pete assured him.

Pete and Julie had been driven into town in the limousine by the silent chauffeur, whose name by then they had learned was Max. When Max dropped them downtown, Pete told him he wouldn't have to pick them up again, as they had another way back. As soon as Max drove away, they caught a cab to Pete's beach pad and picked up his station wagon. Pete planned to tell the people at the Temple that he had temporarily borrowed it from a friend.

While home he picked up a pair of beach sandals, then drove Julie by her apartment to pick some up too.

It was four P.M. when they returned to the Temple. Apollo was conducting an archery class of five women and two men on the side of the courtyard farthest from the pool when they drove through the arched gate.

As Pete swung right just inside the gate and drove alone the crushed shell driveway, Hera, barefooted as usual and in her white tunic, came hurrying from the Tower of Zeus. Pete braked to a halt.

Taking to the grass edging the driveway, Hera started in the direction of the archery class at a fast walk. But as she came abreast of the station wagon and saw who was in it, she halted.

In an obvious effort to conceal agitation, she said with forced interest, "Where'd you get that?"

"Borrowed it," Pete said briefly. "Where you headed in such a hurry?"

"To get my brother."

"Is something the matter?"

"Nothing you could help with," she said nervously. "Phil—Apollo can handle it. You can park that thing in car port number four. That's vacant at the moment."

She hurried on. Pete continued around to the car ports along the rear wall.

"She must really be upset," Julie said. "She never refers to Apollo as her brother, and certainly never as Phil."

"Yeah, she acted like trouble was chasing her."

Car port number four was the fourth from the left, which put it a good distance from the Tower of Hera,

where their rooms were. As Pete and Julie headed along the driveway for the residence building, Max drove the limousine through the gate and parked before the entrance to the Tower of Zeus. He got out, opened the back door and a slender girl with long, raven black hair stepped out. She wore a bright red dress and, even at that distance, gave an impression of gaudiness.

Max got back in the limousine and drove on. The girl stood on the bottom of the three stone steps, clutching her handbag and gazing after the limousine.

By then Pete and Julie had reached the Tower of Hera. They paused on the steps to gaze toward the girl in the red dress, who still stood motionlessly clutching her purse. The limousine turned left in front of them and drove into the nearest car port. Max glanced at them expressionlessly as he drove past.

"I've got a hunch that girl is the trouble Hera was running for her brother about," Pete said. "I'm going to check her out."

"I'm going with you," Julie said.

As they started along the drive in the girl's direction, she finally summoned the courage to move. They could see her back straighten as though she were bracing herself for some ordeal, then she marched up the steps and inside.

Meantime Hera and Apollo were hurrying across the grass toward the Tower of Zeus. Apollo still carried a bow in his hand and a quiver of arrows hung behind his left shoulder. As the girl disappeared into the tower, Apollo broke into a run and Hera started running behind him.

Pete and Julie started running too, although neither had the slightest idea of what they were running into.

Apollo reached the tower door first. He had so outdistanced his sister that Pete and Julie both beat Hera there. Pete caught the door before it closed behind Apollo and Julie scurried inside right behind Pete.

As its automatic closing device began to swing the door shut behind them, a single shot sounded from the salon-lobby. The red-haired Penny Chard, behind the reception desk, emitted a piercing scream. An instant later there was a sharp twang, a swishing noise and a thunk similar to the noise an axe makes when it is driven into a stump.

In the center of the lobby, about thirty feet from the door, the Reverend Zeus, clad in his white tunic, was just toppling to the floor. The girl in the red dress, no more than three feet from him and with her back to both the door and the reception desk, let a pistol drop from nerveless fingers. She started to turn to face the desk, but she never made it all the way around, because the feathered shaft of an arrow protruded from the center of her back and its bloody steel point extended from between her rather prominent breasts. She pitched forward on her face. Neither she nor Zeus emitted a single sound.

Pete's gaze swung to Apollo. With lightning speed the blond man had nocked a second arrow into his bow, had dropped to one knee and was preparing to speed another shaft on its way, if necessary.

"You won't need that!" Pete said sharply.

Apollo released the bow's tension, slowly rose to his feet and pushed the arrow back into its quiver.

"My God, I think I killed her!" he said in a stunned voice. "I—I didn't mean that. It was instinctive. When she shot Dave—" He let it trail off.

Hera, who by now was also inside, rushed over to kneel next to the Reverend Zeus. Pete went over too, and Apollo followed more slowly.

Zeus lay on his back, his eyes open and sightless. A small round blood stain was in the center of his chest. If the stain had been larger, Pete would have had more hope of it not being a fatal wound. There is little blood when a wound causes instant death, because the heart stops pumping blood through the veins.

The pistol lying on the floor, he noted, was a thirty-eight automatic.

Hera was kneeling next to her husband, not touching him, rocking back and forth and moaning. Pete turned his attention to the girl.

She had fallen on the point of the arrow, driving it partially backward again, so that now only the tip protruded from between her breasts, then had rolled on her left side. Her eyes too were wide open. She had been a pretty girl, except for too much makeup, with a seductive figure and even features. She looked about eighteen.

Meantime Julie had retreated to the reception desk. She said to Penny Chard, "What happened?"

The redhead said with a touch of hysteria. "She shot the Reverend Zeus. She walked right past me into the lobby and shot him without saying a word. I spoke to her when she went by. I knew her because she used to work here. But she didn't even answer. She just went on by and shot him."

Pete came over to the desk. "I think they're both dead," he announced. "But they could be just unconscious. Any doctors among the guests, Penny?"

The girl was so upset, she had to think for a minute. Then she said shakily, "Doctor Thomas in 207 is a pediatrician."

"Get him over here fast," Pete said.

Penny nervously pushed a plug into the switchboard and, after a moment, spoke briefly into the phone. Pulling out the plug again, she said, "He was in his room. He'll be right over."

Pete glanced into the lobby to see what Apollo and Hera were doing. Apollo had dropped his bow and quiver on the floor and had led Hera over to one of the cushioned stone benches. He had his arm around her and she was crying against his shoulder.

Pete returned his attention to Penny. "Better phone the police, Penny."

"All right," she said, and began to leaf through a phone book.

Either Pete or Julie could have told her the number, but they didn't want to chance the girl later wondering why it was so familiar to them. They waited while she located it, dialed and made her report.

"They said someone would be right here," she announced when she hung up.

Julie said, "You mentioned knowing the girl, Penny. Who is she?"

"A girl who used to be a waitress here." She paused and her eyes widened. "Why she was one of the girls you asked me about, Julie. Elizabeth Turner."

CHAPTER 9

THE first police to arrive were a pair of uniformed patrolmen in a radio car. By the time they got there Dr. Thomas, a pale, balding man in his fifties, had declared both victims dead. The cops looked at the two bodies without touching anything, ordered all those who were present when the action occurred to stick around, then stationed themselves so as to prevent anyone else from cluttering up the scene. One cop planted himself outside the door, the other in the center of the staircase to the second floor.

The former was the only one who had anything to do. The police car had naturally drawn rubberneckers who wanted to know what was going on, a question he sidetracked by refusing to say anything other than that there had been an accident. The man on the stairs had no such problem because no one came down from above. At this time of day no one was up there except the chef and his kitchen help—not even the waitresses, since they weren't due on duty until five. The sound of the shot must have been audible on the second floor, but almost nobody really believes they are hearing a pistol shot when one sounds. They automatically assume it was a backfire, a dropped board or, in recent years, a sonic boom.

Apollo had led Hera from the bench where they had been sitting in the lobby to one against the wall between the front door and the reception desk. From their former position the two bodies had been in plain view. But the goldfish pool and fountain in the center of the lobby screened them from the area around the desk. Pete and Julie seated themselves on the second step of the staircase. Penny remained behind the desk.

A homicide team arrived at 4:30. Sergeant Miguel (Mike) Martinez was a tall, handsome Mexican-American with a strong resemblance to Cesar Romero, except that he was considerably younger. Officer Lee Bidder was a gangling, slow-moving man with a deceptively vacant expression. Deceptive because he had a mind like a steel trap.

Both officers knew Pete and Julie, but they also knew

they were undercover cops and therefore must be on an undercover assignment. They gave no indication of ever seeing them before.

They examined the outfits worn by Apollo, Hera, Penny Chard, balding Dr. Thomas and the dead Reverend Zeus with veiled amusement, but made no comment. Pete was fervently thankful that he and Julie happened to be in their ordinary clothes. Although her tunic was particularly attractive on Julie, it had occurred to Pete that if the officers had caught him in one of the tunics, he would have been in for squadroom razzing for months.

After viewing the bodies and taking Dr. Thomas' statement, the homicide officers allowed the pediatrician to return to his room. None of the others had changed position since the two detectives arrived. Lee Bidder went over to lean his back against the desk with both elbows resting on it and looked as though he meant to take a nap standing up. Mike Martinez gazed around at the assembly before speaking.

"Okay," he said finally. "Which one of you wants to start explaining what happened?"

For a few moments no one said anything. Then Hera, red-eyed from crying but now in full control of herself, said quietly, "I probably know more about the whole situation than anyone else here, Sergeant."

"All right," Martinez said agreeably. "Let's start with who you are."

"I'm Hera. The man who was shot was my husband, the Reverend Zeus."

The sergeant examined her dubiously. "Those your real names?"

"Well, no. We adopted them for religious reasons. This is the Temple of Olympus, you know."

"Yeah, I know," Martinez said in a dry tone. "Afraid I'll have to have your real names, lady."

After a moment of hesitation she said in a low voice, "My husband's legal name was David Johnson." Her gaze flicked at Pete and she colored slightly before adding in an even lower voice, "Legally I'm Mrs. Myrtle Johnson."

Sergeant Martinez glanced over at Lee Bidder, who

lazily produced a small notebook and wrote the names down.

"All right, Mrs. Johnson," the sergeant said. "Who is the girl with the arrow through her?"

"Her name was Elizabeth Turner. She used to be employed here."

Lee Bidder wrote in the notebook again.

Sergeant Martinez said, "Now we come to the key question. Just what happened?"

The new widow licked her lips and swallowed a couple of times before saying huskily, "I can't explain it without telling something about my husband that is extremely embarrassing to me."

"I'm afraid you have no choice, Mrs. Johnson. Would you rather tell me in private?"

She glanced around the circle of faces, then gave a resigned shrug. "It's all bound to come out in the newspapers anyway. They may as well hear it now. My husband was a satyr, Sergeant. He has had a whole series of mistresses young enough to be his daughters. That dead girl in there was the latest, and she was only seventeen."

Martinez grunted. "How old was he?" he asked sourly.

"Fifty-one. Actually I have to admit he didn't know she was a minor until a few hours ago. We both thought she was eighteen. It was one of his shorter affairs. It only lasted about a week before he kicked her out."

"Kicked her out?"

"They always end that way. I don't know just what happened this time, but I suspect she became demanding. Maybe she thought she could force him to leave me and marry her." Her voice became bitter. "She wouldn't be the first one to try that. Even at his age my husband had tremendous physical appeal to women, and besides he was quite rich. But Zeus—David had no desire for scandal. His image to his parishioners was too important to him. Besides, in his way he was quite fond of me. At any rate about three weeks ago, after she'd only been here about a week, he sent her packing. As usual he announced she had taken a job somewhere else. Or, in her case, maybe he said she'd returned to her home town. I don't really recall what excuse he gave. I tended not to listen, because I always

knew what had really happened when one of his mistresses suddenly disappeared without saying good-by to anyone."

"What was that?"

"I knew that Max had driven her to the bus station and had put her on a bus out of town."

"Max?" Martinez asked.

"The chauffeur of the Temple's limousine. This place is so isolated, we have a regular limousine service into town. Zeu—David had a sure-fire method of getting rid of troublesome mistresses. He always talked them into posing for a few obscene photographs—never with him in the pictures, of course. If a girl started to give him trouble, he simply showed her the photographs and threatened to turn both them and her over to the police. Then he gave her enough money to soften the blow, had Max drive her to the bus station and make sure she left town."

"What brought Elizabeth Turner back?" the sergeant asked.

"She said she was pregnant."

There was a few seconds of silence before Lee Bidder drawled, "Said to who?"

Hera glanced at him. "To David. She phoned him about 1:00 P.M., told him she was at the bus station and wanted to see him. When he tried to brush her off, she said she was pregnant, and he would either send Max for her, or she would come here in a police car. That was when she announced she had lied about her age, and that actually she was only seventeen. She threatened to have him arrested for statutory rape."

Martinez said, "You overheard all this?"

"I was on the switchboard. I take it over from 12:30 to 1:30 so that Penny can go to lunch. My husband took the call in our apartment in another building."

Martinez nodded understanding. "Okay. You overheard the entire conversation?"

"Yes. My husband said Max wasn't here and wouldn't be back until about three. The girl said she could wait. So my husband told her he would send Max to the bus station as soon as he returned from town."

"And he did? It was Max who brought her here?"

"Yes. But first David and I had a terrible fight. When

Penny returned to relieve me, I went to our apartment and told him I had overheard the conversation. Instead of showing any guilt, he tried to turn the tables, as he always did when I thought I had him in a corner. He blew up and shouted that I had no business eavesdropping. He was also terribly angry at Elizabeth, and threatened to fix her so that she could never bother him again. That's why I went to get Apollo just before the girl arrived."

"Apollo?" Martinez asked.

"My brother here," she said, gesturing at the blond giant next to her.

Martinez and Bidder both looked at Apollo curiously, but neither said anything to him.

Hera went on, "When Max came back from town about three, my husband sent him after the girl. But then he kept getting angrier and angrier at her. He had come over here from our apartment, and I followed him. He was pacing up and down muttering about not letting a worthless little tramp blast a gold mine like this right from under him. I guess he meant the publicity of him being charged with statutory rape might wreck the Temple. I started to get frightened when he said he would stop her even if he had to wring her neck."

"Was he usually a violent man?" the sergeant asked.

"Oh, no. Quite the contrary. Most of the time he had iron control over his emotions and, like a really accomplished actor, could project any emotion he wanted to. Usually he showed a gentle, amiable facade in public. He wasn't either actually. He could generate considerable charm when he wanted to, but underneath he was one of the coldest, cruelest men I ever knew." After a beat she added, "But I still loved him."

"Do you mean this anger he was showing was feigned?" Martinez asked with a frown.

"Oh, no. On the rare occasions he did become angry, he slipped into blind rage. Maybe it was because he kept such a stopper on his emotions most of the time, that when it blew loose, all of his suppressed rages spurted out at once. Just before Elizabeth got here I became convinced that he might do something foolish such as strangling her if he

wasn't stopped. And I couldn't have stopped him, because he was strong as a bull. So I ran to get Apollo."

She stopped speaking. After a wait, Martinez said. "Go on."

"That's all there is," Hera said. "Well, no it isn't, but my brother can better tell you what happened next. He got here some seconds ahead of me."

The sergeant looked at the blond man. "What's your legal name, Apollo?"

"Philip Swartz," Apollo said reluctantly.

Lee Bidder wrote it down. A slight smile started to form on Mike Martinez's lips, but he suppressed it.

"Okay, Mr. Swartz," he said. "Shoot."

CHAPTER 10

"THERE isn't much to tell, Sergeant," Apollo said. "I was teaching an archery class on the other side of the courtyard. By the time my sister got over there and explained what was bothering her, the girl had already arrived in the limousine. Max dropped her off in front of this building and drove on back to put the car away. I ran most of the way here and came in just seconds after the girl entered. My intention was to protect her from Dave, but she pulled a gun from her bag and pumped a bullet into him just as I arrived. What I did next was instinctive."

When he paused, the sergeant prodded, "What was that?"

Apollo's voice became subdued. "I was still carrying my bow and had a quiver of arrows hanging from my shoulder. I had strung an arrow and had shot it at her before I really realized what I was doing. I don't know why, but I had the impression she was going to keep firing until the gun was empty if I didn't stop her."

Martinez glanced around the room. "Any of the rest of you witness this?"

Pete said, "We all did, Sergeant, except Hera. She came in a few seconds later. But I followed through the door right on Apollo's heels, and she was right on mine." He gestured toward Julie. "Penny was already here. It happened just as he said."

The sergeant grunted. Turning back to Apollo, he said, "Your bow must pack a lot of wallop to go all the way through her like that."

"It's a ninety-pound bow."

Martinez hiked his eyebrows. "Is that standard?"

"Well, actually it's a hunting bow. Forty-pounders are more common for target shooting. I just happen to prefer it."

Martinez grunted again. Turning his attention to the her-haired desk clerk, he said, "I gather that your first name is Penny. What's the rest of it, miss?"

"Chard. Penny Chard."

"Have you been here ever since you relieved Mrs. Johnson at 1:30?"

Penny nodded. "I haven't stepped from behind the desk."

"Then you witnessed all this pacing up and down Mr. Johnson—the Reverend Zeus—whatever—was doing?"

"Yes, sir. Like Hera said, he came over here about three P.M. and she came in about five minutes later. I had never seen the Reverend Zeus angry before—I didn't think he was capable of it—but he was actually pale with rage. He paced up and down the lobby for an hour while Hera followed after him, trying to calm him down. I kept thinking it was fortunate none of the guests saw him, because they would have been shocked. But the guests seldom come in this building except for meals, to pick up mail or when there's a dance. The residence rooms are all in another building, you know."

"I gathered that," the sergeant said. "Did you know why he was angry?"

The girl shook her head. "They were too far away for me to hear anything they said to each other, and besides their words were covered by the noise the water from the fountain makes when it showers back into the pool. It seemed apparent from the way the Reverend Zeus was

pacing up and down and periodically glancing at the door that he was waiting for someone, though.”

Sergeant Martinez brooded for a moment, then asked, “Were you aware of the Reverend Zeus’ series of mistresses?”

“Oh, no,” Penny said, wide-eyed. “That’s a complete shock. He certainly never made any passes at me.”

Martinez glanced from the girl to Apollo and back again. “Do you have any comments to make about Mr. Swartz’s story?”

“It happened just like he said,” Penny told him. “I kind of thought Elizabeth was going to keep shooting too. But I was afraid she was going to turn and start firing this way. I was all set to drop flat behind the desk.”

At that moment the sergeant suspended further questioning because a police photographer and a man from the crime lab arrived together. Martinez excused himself and took the men over to where the two bodies lay in order to explain just what he wanted them to do. He left them with the bodies and returned to the desk.

He said to his partner, “You have anything to ask, Lee?”

The gangling detective said, “Just one small question. Mr. Swartz, before today were you aware of your brother-in-law’s extramarital sex life?”

“I knew he cheated, because Hera—Myrtle had cried on my shoulder a couple of times. I never mentioned it to him.”

“Why not?”

“Because I was afraid he’d kick me out,” Apollo said candidly. “My job here is a snap and Dave has been paying me more than I ever before earned in my life. I didn’t like the way he treated my sister, but I wasn’t exactly in the position to play the avenging brother.”

Bidder shrugged. When Martinez gave him an inquiring look, he shook his head in indication that he had nothing more to ask.

Sergeant Martinez said to Hera, “I won’t need you any more at the moment, Mrs. Johnson. I know this has been an ordeal, so if you want to go to your apartment and take a couple of aspirin or something, it’s all right.”

“Thanks,” she said, getting to her feet.

The sergeant turned to Apollo. "You'd better go get dressed, Mr. Swartz. At first glance this looks like justifiable homicide insofar as you're concerned, but we still have to book you and make a thorough investigation. I imagine you'll be released on your own recognizance, but you'll have to come down to the Police Building."

"Of course," Apollo said, also rising. "I understand. I'll put on street clothes and be right back."

He and Hera went out together.

Obviously for the benefit of Penny Chard Sergeant Martinez said to Pete, "What's your name?"

"Pete Cochrane. I'm the pool lifeguard here."

"And you?" Martinez asked Julie.

"Julie Barnes. I'm a waitress in the dining room."

Lee Bidder dutifully entered both names in his notebook, just to keep up the pretence that they didn't know Pete and Julie.

The sergeant said, "What do you two know about this?"

Pete related how they had just returned from town when they saw Hera hurry from the Tower of Zeus, and how he had braked the car to talk to her. He recounted everything that had happened from then up until he and Julie rushed through the door right behind Apollo just in time to witness the double killing.

Julie confirmed his story and had nothing to add of her own.

Sergeant Martinez glanced at his partner. Lee Bidder said, "How come you aren't in the standard costume worn around here?"

Pete regarded him suspiciously, suspecting a veiled riding. His suspicion was confirmed. Bidder's sleepy eyes drooped half closed, but there was a subdued twinkle in them. Pete glanced at Martinez just as the sergeant emitted a slight snicker.

He said coldly, "I told you we had just returned from town. We haven't had time to change from our street clothes. Don't you clowns listen?"

Penny Chard gave him a startled glance. Martinez decided not to risk any repartee, lest the girl realize they all knew each other. He became all business again.

He said to Penny, "Where do we find this chauffeur, Max, Miss Chard?"

"He's in room 312 of the tower directly behind this one. But he has no phone. Only the guests' rooms and the two apartments have phones."

Martinez said to Pete and Julie, "You kids want to show my partner where Max's room is?"

"Sure," Pete said. He got up from the steps, offered his hand to Julie and pulled her to her feet.

"Oh, I'm going after the man?" Bidder inquired.

"Yeah. Bring him back here."

"Yes, Master," Bidder said with mock servility. "I speed to do your bidding."

He waited for Pete and Julie to precede him, then ambled on out.

Virtually every guest and employee other than the kitchen crew was gathered on the grass outside. Although the cop stationed in front of the door had steadfastly refused to answer any questions, someone, probably Dr. Thomas but possibly Hera or Apollo, obviously had told them the situation. At least Audrey Hope and Dottie Wills knew, because when they spotted Julie they both came over and began asking her the details.

"I can't talk now," Julie said. "We have to guide Officer Bidder somewhere."

"We're overdue upstairs," Julie's blonde room-mate said. "Andy will be having a fit."

Lee Bidder gave Julie an inquiring look. She said, "They're waitresses in the dining room. They're supposed to be on duty at five. They have to set up for dinner at five thirty."

Bidder glanced at his watch, then called to the cop guarding the door, "Tell Sergeant Martinez to step out and see these girls." To Audrey and Dottie he said, "Explain it to the sergeant and he'll probably let you by."

They moved on along the drive toward the Tower of Hera.

When they were beyond earshot of the crowd around the front tower, Bidder asked. "What are you two up to here?"

Pete briefly explained their assignment. "We've accom-

plished a fifth of our mission," he finished. "That dead girl inside is one of the five we were looking for."

"Hmm," Bidder said. "Looks to me like the mystery of all five is solved. Max put them all on busses."

"Maybe. Why don't you ask him?"

"All right," Bidder agreed. "What are their names?"

Pete reeled them off and the detective jotted them in his notebook.

"We'll pass on to Captain Greer whatever we get from Max," Bidder said.

Julie said, "May I make a suggestion?"

The detective glanced at her. "Sure."

"Instead of throwing all four remaining names at Max, why don't you just ask him to list the girls he's put on out-of-town busses? He might wonder who fed you the names. You can always ask about any specific girl he fails to mention."

Bidder said dryly, "You're a smart kid, but I was already planning that approach, Julie. I'm a smart kid too."

"Sorry," Julie said sheepishly. "I guess rookies shouldn't try to tell old pros their business."

He gave her a wounded look. "Don't make me sound so ancient. I'm only twenty-nine."

As they walked past the empty swimming pool, Bidder asked casually, "Either of you got any ideas about this double killing?"

"What do you mean?" Pete asked. "It seems pretty open and shut."

"Yeah, except for one thing."

"What's that?"

"This girl was supposed to be coming here with accusations that could blow this place apart if they were true. Right?"

Both Pete and Julie nodded.

"Then why did the Reverend Zeus arrange to meet with her in as public a place as that lobby? Why not in the privacy of his apartment?"

CHAPTER 11

BEFORE noon on Tuesday every guest at the Temple had either checked out or had announced intention to check out by that evening.

Some had been so shocked by the revelation of the Reverend Zeus' clay feet that they obviously intended to sever all future connection with the cult. But the majority seemed to take the matter in stride. Apparently most of them were leaving simply because the killings had put an impossible damper on all pleasure at the Temple for the time being, and since pursuit of pleasure was their reason for being there, they saw no point in staying. Both Pete and Julie overheard guest after guest assure Hera they would return for the Reverend Zeus' funeral, and that they also intended to return as paying guests after things settled down again, providing Hera planned to continue operating the place.

Hera's repeated answer to that implied question was that she would be unable even to think about the future until after the funeral, but all members would be informed of her plans for the Temple as soon as she knew them.

At breakfast Tuesday morning Hera announced that since all guests would be gone by that evening, she had decided temporarily to shut the place down completely and give all employees vacations until after the Reverend Zeus' funeral. She said that all could continue to live there if they wished, but after the noon meal that day they would have to eat elsewhere because the kitchen would be closed.

The exact date of the funeral could not yet be announced, incidentally, she said, because the coroner's office planned autopsies on both bodies.

Hera appeared in the dining room only long enough to make her announcement, and didn't stay for breakfast. Her face was pale, but she was entirely composed.

Apollo didn't seem too grief-stricken by his brother-in-law's death to lose either his appetite for food or sex, though. He not only put away his usual substantial break-

fast, but he irritated Pete by eyeing Julie with his usual lecherous interest every time she hove into view.

Apparently he had encountered no serious difficulty at headquarters the day before, because from his room window the previous evening Pete had seen him return from there about seven.

Pete hadn't exactly disliked Hera before her husband's death, but he had hardly been able to develop much respect for a seeming nympho who threw herself at men so much younger than she was. After learning of the Reverend Zeus' extra-marital activities, he tended to sympathize with her, though. Now that it seemed probable her peccadilloes stemmed more from a forlorn attempt to fight fire with fire than from nymphomania, she was more to be pitied than censored.

He decided to make amends for his previous poor opinion of her by volunteering to help out with funeral arrangements in any way he could.

After breakfast he headed for the Tower of Hera with the intention of dropping by Hera's apartment. The two long, narrow windows of her living room looked out over the courtyard, and it was necessary to walk right past them en route to the tower's entrance.

As he went by, he heard Hera's voice say in a tone of restrained anger, "What guarantee have I that you wouldn't keep coming back for more?"

Just beyond the second window Pete halted when he heard the reply. It was in the voice of grounds-keeper and handy-man Gordon Pace, but it was the words themselves, not the speaker, which brought Pete to a halt.

"Because I don't want trouble no more than you do, Hera. One flat payoff and you never see me no more. I'm tired of this scene and been planning to head back east anyway. You finance the trip and we're quits."

There was a large, freshly-trimmed night-blooming jasmine bush next to the window nearest the entrance to the tower. Pete stepped behind it so that he would be invisible to anyone who happened to cross the courtyard and might wonder why he was standing there listening outside an open window.

"What makes you think it's worth five-hundred dollars to me for you to clear out of here?" the woman asked.

"Well now, I have to admit I'm guessing," Pace said with sardonic assurance. "I don't have no idea what that fake phone call was all about. But I figure just knowing it was fake is worth something. Maybe five hundred ain't a proper figure. Maybe I should have said seven fifty."

There was a long silence before Hera said coldly, "I won't bicker with you. You get five hundred. If you ever come back for more, I'll have you arrested for extortion and swear you got this five hundred from me by threatening bodily harm. The evidence will be the canceled check."

"Oh, no. I want cash, lady."

"You get a check," Hera said in a definite tone. "Take it or leave it. If that isn't suitable, you tell the police whatever you please, I'll deny your story, countercharge attempted blackmail and we'll see who they believe."

There was another long silence, finally ending in a snicker from the black man. "Okay, Hera. But you know what? Wouldn't it be funny if somebody else was standing where I was when I overheard you, taking all this in? I think I'll look while you're writing that check."

Footsteps approached the window. Pete scurried for the entrance to the tower and inside.

The door to Hera's apartment was visible from the staircase leading upward. Pete climbed about a dozen steps, then turned around and waited. When, about five minutes later, Gordon Pace emerged from the apartment, Pete started down the stairs as though he were descending from an upper floor.

Gordon Pace, because of the outdoor nature of his work, was the only employee at the Temple not required to wear the standard costume. As usual he wore shorts, heavy work shoes and no shirt.

Pace started up the stairs. He gave Pete a friendly greeting as he passed and Pete said, "How's tricks, Gordie?"

The black man had disappeared up the stairs by the time Pete knocked on Hera's door. When she answered, she gave him a wan smile, but nevertheless one of pleased surprise.

"Why hello, Pete," she said, holding the door wide. "Come on in."

He moved into a moderately sized living room furnished with the usual Greek decor. The wall containing the two windows overlooking the courtyard was curved, conforming to the circular shape of the tower, so there were only two other walls instead of three. An archway in the left wall led to a hallway off which were the other rooms of the apartment.

Hera closed the door and came over to stand unnecessarily close to Pete and smile up into his face. "May I fix you a drink?"

"At eight in the morning?" he asked.

"I'm sorry," she said, blushing slightly. "I'm a little flustered that you dropped by. I sort of got the impression you've been avoiding me ever since last Friday night. I can make coffee."

"No thanks," he said. "I just finished breakfast. I just stopped to ask if I can do anything between now and the funeral."

"Why, that's nice of you thanks, but no. My brother—" She came to a halt as something occurred to her, then asked, "Are you going into town today?"

Since both Pete and Julie planned to take advantage of the announced vacation to run in for a meeting with Captain Greer, he nodded. "After lunch. Can I do something for you?"

"Would it be out of your way to run by the Sanctuary?"

"No, not at all."

"I'm going to need a new grounds-keeper and handyman," she said. "Gordon just quit."

"Oh?" Pete said with simulated surprise. "Why?"

She shrugged. "Says he wants to go back east, but it probably has something to do with yesterday's tragedy. I wouldn't be surprised if more employees gave their notices."

"Well, let's hope not," Pete told her. "Sure, I'll be glad to tell Hulda you need a replacement. I'll even bring him out when I come back this evening, if she has one handy, and save Max a trip into town."

She looked momentarily puzzled, then her face cleared.

"Oh, yes, you have that station wagon you borrowed. Don't you have to return it?"

"Not for a while. The owner's away on vacation for a couple of weeks."

"Well, I certainly appreciate this," she said, moving even closer to him and smiling upward into his face. "How can I ever reward you?"

She had crowded so close that her plump bosom was actually pushing against his chest. Apparently mourning attire was not part of the religion of the Temple of Olympus, because she still wore a snow-white tunic and was barefooted. He could tell by the feel of her breasts that she wore nothing under the tunic.

Her lips were invitingly raised to within inches of his. He no longer felt the moral restraint of not wanting to become entangled with the wife of a man he liked and admired, because he had lost both his liking and admiration for the Reverend Zeus, but it seemed equally unsavory to make love to a widow whose husband was hardly cold yet. He stepped back and casually moved over to one of the windows to glance out.

"How will your husband's death affect the Sanctuary?" he asked with his back to her. "Will you continue to support it?"

The subject sidetracked her amorous designs, at least momentarily. Her tone became a little cool. "Actually it was the Temple, not my husband personally, which supported the Sanctuary. It's supposed to be under the supervision of our board of directors, and our members have been asked to make special contributions for its support over and above what they give to the Temple itself. But the board consisted of my husband, me and Apollo, so I suppose it will be up to Apollo and me what we do now."

"What do you think you'll do?"

"Quite frankly, I've never been crazy about the project. But then I can hardly be blamed for prejudice when my husband used it primarily as a recruitment source for new mistresses."

Pete glanced over his shoulder, then out the open window again. "That was really his sole interest? He really didn't care about the kids?"

She emitted a bitter little laugh. "There wasn't a truly charitable valve in my husband's heart. That was his sole interest."

It seemed too bad that such a charlatan could project such an aura of sincerity, Pete thought. He had come across to Pete as a fine man, if perhaps a bit way-out, and he knew Julie had been similarly impressed. But apparently that had merely been part of his seduction technique. Probably his eye had been on Julie as his next conquest.

His brooding was interrupted by a warm breath tickling his back. He turned to find that Hera was practically on top of him again. She was so close, his arm brushed across her breasts when he turned.

She didn't move back. Rather she leaned forward slightly and smiled up into his face again. This time there was going to be no way to evade her gracefully, he realized. He was either going to have to succumb or reject her bluntly.

He was saved from having to make a decision by a quick knock on the door, followed by it immediately opening. Hera barely had time to step back so that there was a decent interval between them when Apollo was in the room.

"Don't you wait for an invitation after knocking?" she snapped at her brother.

Apollo looked from one to the other. "Sorry," he said, dead-panned. "Did I interrupt something?"

"No," Pete informed him. "I was just leaving anyway. I'll probably be back some time tonight, Hera. If it's not too late, I'll check in to let you know how I made out on the grounds-keeper."

He went out quickly.

CHAPTER 12

ON the way into town Pete told Julie about the overheard conversation between Gordon Pace and Hera. Julie was able to make no more out of it than Pete had been able to.

Late in the afternoon, when they met with Adam Greer and Linc in the captain's office, neither of them could hazard a guess as to what the conversation had meant either. Linc suggested, without much conviction, that possibly the conversation had nothing to do with the deaths of the Reverend Zeus and Elizabeth Turner.

"Don't be asinine," Captain Greer said irritably. "It would be extremely coincidental for a blackmailer to successfully shake down a woman the day after her husband was murdered, then have it turn out that what he had on her was totally unrelated to the murder."

"But possible," Linc insisted. "Are you suggesting that Hera and Elizabeth were somehow in cahoots to kill the Reverend Zeus?"

Captain Greer gave a frustrated pull at his left earlobe. "I don't know what the devil I'm suggesting. On the surface this is an open-and-shut case of murder by a scorned woman, plus a justifiable homicide. But there are so many loose ends, the whole thing is like a sand castle. It only looks solid until you poke at it a little, then it starts to fall apart." After a pause he added, "Homicide has asked that the squad be kept on the case. I wish you could get in out there too, Linc."

"He's in," Pete said. "The guy who blackmailed Hera quit, and she asked me to bring another grounds-keeper and handy-man from the Sanctuary."

Linc looked at Pete with a pleased grin. "Well now, we're all gonna be together again, huh? It gets lonesome working all alone."

"We missed you too," Julie said with a fond smile at the black youth. "It's like a three-cylinder engine only running on two cylinders."

Pete looked at her. "Where'd you ever hear of a three-cylinder engine?"

"Well, you know what I mean." She switched her attention to Captain Greer. "What have Martinez and Bidder come up with so far?"

"Quite a lot, but most of it so nebulous, it's like fighting a room full of feathers. First, the coroner's surgeon says the girl wasn't pregnant, which was about what Mike and Lee expected. She was sent to the Temple from the Sanctuary only a little over a month ago. Probably she was a few days late and panicked."

Pete asked, "The autopsies show anything else important?"

The captain shook his head. "The report boils down to the Reverend Zeus dying from a bullet in the heart and Elizabeth Turner having her spine severed by an arrow. That thirty-eight automatic isn't registered with the department, incidentally. The Crime Lab has already traced it to the original retail outlet by phoning the manufacturer, but it may take some time to follow its trail from there. The retailer got it fifteen years ago."

Julie said, "I assume Max the chauffeur verified that he had picked up the Turner girl at the bus depot."

"Max verified everything Hera said about all five girls," Greer said sourly. "Except he was remarkably vague about details. He says that on different occasions over the past few months he drove all five girls to the depot and, as instructed by Zeus, waited around to make sure they got on out-of-town busses. Only he can't recall any exact dates, or just where any of the busses were headed."

"That seems reasonable," Pete said. "He runs errands in that limousine all the time. It would be stranger if he did remember the exact date he drove each girl to the depot."

"Maybe," Adam Greer conceded. "Except there's no real evidence other than Max's word that any of the girls ever left the Temple." He turned to Linc. "Give us a résumé of what you turned on the five girls, Linc."

Linc took out a small notebook and flipped pages until he located the section he wanted. Looking up, he said, "This isn't very complete, because I only started checking twenty-four hours ago. I got most of the dope over the

phone." He grinned widely. "I ran a long-distance bill for the department of over a hundred dollars."

"We don't need a rundown on your methods," Greer said impatiently. "Get on with it."

Linc shrugged and dropped his eyes to the notebook again. "I'll give the vital statistics on all of them first. Elizabeth Turner: age 17, height 5 feet 6, weight 122, black hair, brown eyes; both parents dead; nearest living relative Mrs. Mona Trask, Phoenix, Arizona, maternal aunt and legal guardian. Linda Forester: age 19, height 5 feet 3, weight 108, brown hair and eyes; mother dead, father's whereabouts unknown; nearest living relative Arthur Forester, Utica, N.Y., older brother and former legal guardian." Linc momentarily looked up. "The Utica police say he's a wino and a skid-row bum."

He flipped a page and went on reading. "Therese Dean: age 23, 5 feet 7, 128 pounds, red hair, green eyes; parents unknown—abandoned as an infant and raised in an orphanage in Kansas City, Missouri; regards K.C. as her home town. Martha Wright: age 20, 5 feet 1, 120 pounds, light brown hair, blue eyes; father unknown, mother, a prostitute, abandoned her when she was four; raised in an orphanage at New Orleans, regards New Orleans as her home town. Gladys Pender: age 24, five feet 8, 118 pounds, blonde, blue eyes; parents divorced when she was six, whereabouts of neither known; raised by grandparents, now both dead, in Seattle, Washington; no known relatives other than parents, who may or may not be alive."

Linc snapped the notebook shut. After a period of silence, Julie said ruefully, "They all seem to have one thing in common with me: no relatives who give a hoot in Hades about them."

"That hit me while I was collecting the dope," Linc said. "They also had no local friends I could turn and no records of employment locally other than at the Temple of Zeus. All five show up as the kind of kids nobody's likely to go looking for if they drop out of sight."

"Yeah, they do at that, don't they?" Pete said thoughtfully. "Think the pattern means anything?"

Linc shrugged, "Probably just that the Reverend Zeus preferred to play around with girls who weren't likely to

have friends or relatives trying to track them down. But they all had another thing in common that bugs me more."

"What?"

"They haven't left any public records of their existence since their last payroll deductions as employees of the Temple of Olympus. And I really dug to find some. Neither the local State Employment office nor the ones in their home towns have any records on any of them. And I even phoned the Social Security people in Washington and had all five Social Security files checked. If any of them have held jobs since they left the Temple, they weren't covered by Social Security."

"Including Elizabeth Turner?" Julie asked.

Linc's expression became rueful. "That's what bugs me most. I had it all figured out that all five girls were buried in the cellars out at the Temple when she showed up out of nowhere. Since she was out in circulation somewhere, even though there weren't any public records of her existence, maybe the others are too."

Pete asked Captain Greer, "Where was Elizabeth coming from?"

The captain shrugged. "Martinez and Bidder haven't yet located a bus driver who recognizes her picture. And Max doesn't know, of course. He just picked her up at the bus depot. He says he never asked her what bus she came in on."

"I believe that," Julie said. "He isn't very talkative."

"I don't know if anything he says can be believed," Adam Greer said with a frown. "At least if he's anything like his distant cousin."

"Who's that?" Julie asked.

The captain raised his eyebrows. "Don't you know his last name?"

Julie shook her head. "I've never heard him called anything but Max."

"Well, I don't know if he's actually related to him," Captain Greer said dryly. "But he has the same last name as one of history's greatest liars. His name is Max Hitler."

When they left Captain Greer's office, Pete, Linc and Julie drove over to First and Los Angeles Streets in Pete's station wagon. On the third floor of the Police Building

they found both Mike Martinez and Lee Bidder in the Homicide squadroom.

The homicide officers had no new information on the case other than what Captain Greer had already told them, but they did have some background material on one of the principals. They had routinely run the names of Elizabeth Turner and the legal names of Hera, Apollo and Zeus through the Records and Identification Section. All had come up blank except Apollo, who had a package under his legal name of Philip Swartz.

Sergeant Martinez said, "It goes back a dozen years, to when he was a pre-med student at U.C.L.A. He was expelled over the incident as well as being arrested. The criminal charge was later dropped by the victim who had him arrested."

"What did he do?" Julie asked.

"Well, the charge was attempted rape, but it had an odd wrinkle. I guess in a way he was guilty, but when you read the package, you can't help feeling sorry for him."

"You feel sorry for a rapist?" Pete said indignantly.

"Wait till you hear how it happened. Seems Swartz was fooling around with hypnosis at the time and used to put people into trances at parties, then make them perform. You know the kind of stuff. Make them quack like ducks and so on."

Julie nodded. Pete said, "I've seen night club acts of that sort." Linc merely looked interested.

"Well, he had put this particular girl under at several parties. Seems that once a person has been hypnotized, thereafter the same hypnotist can put them back under very easily, sometimes merely by a single gesture."

Pete said, "Yeah. That's the way most stage hypnotists work. They pick their people from the audience before the show, put them under hypnosis and snap them out of it again. Then when the performance starts and the people from the audience are all lined up on the stage, all the hypnotist has to do is point at whoever he wants to put under."

Linc said, "Let the man tell the story, buddy-boy. You can lecture us on hypnosis later."

Pete made a face at him.

Martinez said, "One night Swartz met this girl at the school library and started to walk her home. Suddenly he made some kind of gesture, told her she was asleep and must obey his orders. When she dutifully went into a trance, he ordered her to follow him into some bushes. Then he ordered her to kiss him passionately and she complied. But when he started getting really personal, she suddenly woke up, yelled rape at the top of her voice and a campus cop came running. Swartz didn't get his pants buttoned in time and the cop arrested him at gunpoint."

After a period of silence, Pete said, "And you feel sorry for him? That's about the sneakiest stunt I ever heard of."

"Yeah, except the girl was pretending all along," Martinez said dryly. "He had never really put her under at parties. She went along just as a gag. Apparently she was attracted to him, because she followed him into the bushes willingly enough and obeyed his command to give him a passionate kiss. But when he carried it farther than she wanted to go, she got scared and yelled."

There was another period of silence before Julie said indignantly, "She was as bad as he was. She got what she deserved for leading him on."

Pete said, "You'd defend that blond ape even after you found out he was a rapist?"

Julie turned on him. "You consider that rape? She deliberately led him on. Anyway, even legally it was at most attempted rape."

Linc said, "You say the girl later dropped charges?"

"Uh-huh," Martinez said. "Initially, when she charged he had hypnotized her with the intention of making her submit to him sexually, the poor goop confessed because he thought he had. When she finally admitted she had merely pretended to be under hypnosis, and withdrew charges, it got him off the hook on the criminal charge, but the expulsion still stuck."

"How come that stuck?" Linc asked.

"Colleges used to be run a little more strictly than they are now," Lee Bidder put in sardonically. "Today probably the whole student body would go on strike in protest, but a

dozen years ago it was still customary to bounce students for such minor infractions as trying to seduce coeds in public. And he was guilty of that, even if he wasn't guilty of rape."

CHAPTER 13

By the time Pete had driven Linc to the Sanctuary to pick up his overnight bag, then the three of them had dined together in a restaurant, it was well after dark. They sat at their restaurant table for some time after dinner, sipping coffee and discussing strategy.

Linc said, "First thing we ought to do is find out where back east this Gordon Pace went, contact the cops there and have them ask him a few questions."

"He wouldn't talk," Pete said. "He couldn't without admitting to blackmail."

"It's worth the chance," Linc argued. "Where else do you suggest we start on this?"

Pete said, "I had in mind bugging Hera's and Apollo's apartments."

Linc gave him a quizzical look. "Illegal, buddy-boy."

"Only if you get caught. We couldn't use anything we overheard as evidence in court, but we can start worrying about collecting evidence after we figure out what it is we're investigating. Our first problem is to get ourselves clued in on that."

"Pete's right," Julie said. "At this point we don't even know for sure that any kind of crime has been committed. We're still groping in the dark."

They sat talking for so long that it was after ten P.M. when Pete drove the station wagon through the arched gate of the castle. There was light in Hera's front-room windows when they went past.

Julie went on up to her room and Pete took Linc to

Hera's apartment to introduce her to the new grounds-keeper and handy-man. They found Apollo there too.

After Apollo and Linc had shaken hands, Hera asked if Linc and Pete would like anything to drink.

"No thanks," Pete declined for both of them. "I just brought Linc by to meet you. I still have to show him where he'll stay and he'll want to get settled."

Hera didn't push it. She said, "Gordon was in with Andy the chef, so you can put Linc there too."

"I don't have a roommate," Pete said. "I thought I'd take him in with me."

"As you please," she said agreeably.

She gave Linc brief instructions on what his job would involve and told him he would find all necessary tools in a tool room in the cellar of the Tower of Zeus.

When they left, Hera escorted them to the door. In a low voice she murmured to Pete, "Apollo will be leaving in a few minutes."

He gave her a non-committal smile.

As Linc lugged his worn overnight bag up the stairs, he said to Pete, "What was that she whispered to you?"

"That Apollo would be leaving in a few minutes."

Linc looked at him. "She mean that as an invitation to come back?"

"I guess."

Linc continued to look at him, his expression speculative. "She's a pretty warm-looking gal. You got something going there?"

Pete gave him a disgusted look. "What kind of heel you think I am? She's a brand-new widow."

"I saw the look she gave you," Linc said, unfazed. "Her widowhood isn't going to put brakes on her, if you're willing to cooperate. Why don't you give in?"

"Why don't you boil your head?" Pete inquired.

The next morning the fiercely mustached Andre Dumont stuck his head in the door of Pete and Linc's room. After Pete had introduced Linc to the chef, Dumont announced that Hera had amended her instructions to close down the kitchen. No meals would be served, but because of the unexpected departure of all the guests, there was a large quantity of food on hand which eventually would spoil if it

wasn't used up. Therefore any employee who wanted to could fix his own meals, providing he cleaned up after himself.

As soon as Pete and Linc were dressed they routed out Julie and her room-mate and marched them over to the kitchen to make breakfast for them.

The only person in the dining room was chef Andre Dumont, who sat at a table eating bacon and eggs. In the kitchen Dottie Wills and Penny Chard were frying themselves similar breakfasts.

After introducing Linc to the two girls, Pete said to Julie, "That looks good to me. I'll have the same, with the eggs up."

"Yes, your majesty," she said sardonically, and gave Linc an inquiring look.

"Over easy," Linc said.

Audrey Hope said, "Why don't you two get out of our way and go sit in the dining room? We'll bring it to you."

Pete pushed through the swinging door out into the dining room and Linc trailed after him.

Glancing over at Andre Dumont, Linc said, "Didn't Hera mention that Gordon Pace roomed with him?"

"Uh-huh."

"Then he probably knows where he headed back east. He might even have a forwarding address."

"Yeah," Pete said. "Let's do a little pumping. Only let's keep it subtle, so he doesn't catch on that he's being pumped."

"I'm always subtle," Linc told him. "Lincoln Hayes with the tactful ways, they used to call me in Watts."

Pete winced. "Much more corny rhyme like that and you may come to be known as the missing Linc."

Linc winced even more.

They went over to the chef's table. Pete said, "Like company, Andy?"

"Sure," the older man said. "Sit down, kids."

The round table was designed to seat six. They took seats either side of Dumont.

After a little casual conversation, mainly about what Linc so far thought of the Temple, Linc said, "Understand I'm taking over your old room-mate's job, Andy."

The chef nodded. "Gordie quit yesterday."

"He went back east, didn't he?" Pete said.

Dumont chewed a piece of bacon and washed it down with coffee before saying, "That's what he told Hera, but he'd never leave this area. I don't know why he lied to her."

"Isn't he from back east?" Pete asked.

"Yeah, near Buffalo. But he'd never go back there."

"Why not?"

"He's got a girl friend in Watts."

No one said anything for a time. Finally Linc said, "That's where I'm from. Maybe I know her."

Dumont took a bite of egg. "Not likely, as many people as live in Watts."

"Well, I spent a lot of years there," Linc said. "Also I got ten brothers and sisters who was always bringing their friends around. Main reason I left home. I never could get in the bathroom."

The chef gave him a puzzled look.

"What I mean is I got to know most everybody in Watts," Linc explained. "What's this girl's name?"

The older man shrugged. "Sandra something-or-other. Gordie called her Sandy. He mentioned her last name a couple of times, but I don't remember."

Pete decided that subtlety wasn't going to get any information from the man. It was going to take frontal attack.

"Gordie leave a forwarding address?" he asked.

"Not with me."

"Too bad," Pete said ruefully. "I meant to catch him before he took off. I owe him a couple of bucks."

The chef considered this while he munched a piece of toast and took another swallow of coffee. Finally he said, "He's got a mother on Defiance Avenue. I don't know the address, but you could probably find it in the phone book or a city directory. She'd have the same last name."

Hera and Apollo came into the dining room just as Pete, Linc, Julie and Audrey were leaving. Hera gave Pete a look of veiled reproach, presumably for not returning to her apartment the previous night. He gave both her and

her brother polite greetings and pretended not to catch her look.

Outside Linc came to an abrupt halt and said, "Know what just hit me?"

The other three stopped too. "What?" Julie asked.

"I'm the only guy around here who has to go to work. The rest of you are all on paid vacation, but that grass is gonna keep growing, and drying out in the sun if it isn't watered, and weeds'll keep pushing up, and bushes getting ragged so they need trimming."

The blonde Audrey said, "For goodness sakes, this is your first day. Do you expect to start with a vacation?"

Linc gave her an aggrieved look. He couldn't very well explain that what was bugging him was that he was the only member of a three-person undercover squad who was going to have to go to work, while the other two were free to loll around all day. Both Pete and Julie knew what had prompted his comment, though. Julie's lips curved in faint amusement, and Pete deliberately aggravated the situation.

"Come on," he said generously. "I'll show you where the tool room is."

"Thanks," Linc said sourly.

Julie and Audrey continued on toward the Tower of Hera as Pete led Linc back into the Tower of Zeus.

"It's down there," Pete said, pointing to the narrow set of stairs leading down to the cellar just beyond the up staircase.

"I thought you were going to show me."

"You afraid of the dark?" Pete asked. "I've never been in the cellars. I'm just repeating Hera's directions."

"Maybe you should have looked down there long ago," Linc said. "Maybe you would have found four graves."

Pete cocked an eyebrow at him, then shrugged and led the way over to the stairwell. There was a wall switch at the top of the stairs. Pete flicked it on and a light went on at the bottom of the stairs.

They descended and found a narrow, arched doorway at the bottom of the flight. The door, of iron-studded oak, stood wide open and the light came from a ceiling bulb beyond it.

Straight ahead a long, narrow passageway angled off into

dimness. Another passageway doubled back alongside the stairwell. They realized that the bottom of the stairs was beyond the outer wall of the tower, and that the long passageway extended beneath the courtyard. The other one, which doubled back, led to the cellar beneath the Tower of Hera.

There were two light switches at the foot of the stairs. Pete flicked them both on. A number of ceiling lights went on in the passage directly ahead of them, and light also glowed from the passage which doubled back alongside the stairs.

They decided to investigate the latter first. The passage ran only a few feet before it turned right and started to curve. It was well lighted by periodic ceiling bulbs. Pete and Linc hadn't followed it very far when they both realized it circled beneath the tower's outer wall.

Narrow oaken doors with barred peepholes in them were spaced at intervals along the right side of the curving passageway. None of the doors were locked, and they looked into several of the rooms. They were all narrow cells, obviously once dungeon cells, each dimly illuminated by a single narrow window near the ceiling. There was also a ceiling light in each room with switches alongside each door, but it wasn't necessary to turn any of the lights on to see that the rooms were now simply being used as store-rooms. They contained everything from canned food to extra bed linen.

About a quarter of the way around the circle they came to an open door on the left side of the passageway. Pete, in the lead, stepped into a circular room the size of the salon-lobby upstairs. Linc crowded in after him.

Apparently the passageway completely circled the room, because there were two other doors off of it, both also standing open. One was right across from the one by which they had entered, the other halfway between the two at a point probably directly opposite the staircase.

Several sets of rusting iron rings were hanging from the stone walls. Pete looked them over and shuddered slightly.

"This must have been the torture chamber," he said. "Probably they hung people from those rings by their wrists. Or maybe by their ankles."

"It's still torture for me," Linc said morosely, examining the array of garden tools leaning against the wall and hanging from hooks.

In addition there was a workbench with a complete set of hand tools either on it or hanging over it. Linc also surveyed this glumly.

Interpreting the look, Pete grinned. "Yeah, they're for you too," he confirmed. "You're also the handy-man around here in case a toilet gets stopped up or somebody breaks a window."

CHAPTER 14

PETE and Linc checked the remaining dungeon cells, found nothing of interest and retraced their way to the long passage facing the stairway. Following it, they discovered that it ran diagonally beneath the courtyard from the Tower of Zeus to the Tower of Apollo.

They couldn't follow it all the way to the cellar of the Tower of Apollo, though, because halfway there they ran into a locked iron gate which blocked the passageway from floor to ceiling. At this point, which they judged to be beneath the exact center of the courtyard, the passageway was intersected by another passage running diagonally from the cellar of the Tower of Aphrodite to the cellar beneath the Tower of Hera. A similar barred iron gate was at the end of each of the other three passages, too, at the point of intersection.

Each gate was equipped with a heavy padlock with a combination lock, but only those blocking the ways to the Tower of Apollo and to the Tower of Aphrodite were locked.

Because it was the only gate they could get through, they settled for investigating the passageway leading to the Tower of Hera. The glow from the ceiling lights of the passage they had just emerged from was sufficient to

illuminate a wall switch, which, when turned on, lit similar ceiling lights in that passage.

At the end of the passageway they came to a stairway leading upward identical to the one they had descended in the Tower of Zeus. They switched on the ceiling lights of a curving corridor like the one circling beneath the walls of the other tower.

The underground setup here was the same as in the other cellar, with dungeon cells, now used for storage, surrounding a large central room. The central room here, however, was a furnace and laundry room. The furnace and steam boiler were huge, because they furnished heat for all four buildings. At the moment, because it was mid-July, the furnace was not in operation.

Along one wall were two large automatic washing machines and an oversized dryer of the type usually found in laundramats.

As they switched off lights and started back for the Tower of Zeus, Pete said, "Want to check the other two cellars from their other ends?"

"Later, maybe," Linc said. "I guess I ought to start to work now."

Back in the cellar of the Tower of Zeus they switched off all the lights and climbed back up to the lobby. They emerged from below just as Hera and Apollo came down the stairs from the dining room.

Hera paused to examine Linc from head to toe. As no one had offered Linc one of the usual tunics, he was wearing slacks and a sport shirt.

She said, "You can have a tunic if you want one, Linc, but our former grounds-keeper liked to work in shorts. It's up to you."

"I'd just as soon wear my regular clothes," he said. "Maybe take my shirt off if it gets too hot."

"All right," she said agreeably. "Come along and I'll show you what needs doing most around the grounds."

"Yes, ma'am," Linc said.

He trailed Hera outdoors. Apollo said to Pete, "Know where Julie is?"

"Probably in her room," Pete told him. "She and her roommate were heading that way last I saw of them."

Apollo followed after his sister and Linc, leaving Pete alone. Pete went over to the public phone booth in the lobby and checked the book to see if there was anyone named Pace listed on Defiance Avenue. There wasn't.

He left the building also. As he passed the swimming pool, Hera was explaining to Linc that it was to be cleaned every Monday and how she wanted it cleaned.

Instead of entering the Tower of Hera, Pete went on by, turned left to car port number four and unlocked the storage compartment of his station wagon. He lifted out a flat leather case about a foot wide, two feet long and six inches thick. The case had a carrying handle similar to a suitcase's.

As he climbed stairs to his room, he ran into Julie descending. She was dressed in the same skirt and sweater she had arrived in. Both halted. Julie eyed the leather case and he eyed her street clothes.

"Going to do some bugging, I take it," she said.

"Uh-huh. Where you bound?"

"Apollo asked me to go into town. He offered to advance me some money against my pay, in case I want to do some shopping."

"You don't have to borrow money from him," Pete said with a frown. "If you're short, I'll loan you some."

Julie gave him a pitying look. "You and I are both supposed to be destitute, remember? I'm not short. But I want a new dress, and if I wrote a check for it, it would blow my cover wide open. I have to borrow the money in order to stay in character."

"You could just postpone shopping until you got your first pay check."

Julie elevated her nose. "I could, but I don't intend to. I'm awfully tired of wearing nothing but that green tunic around here, and nothing but this skirt and sweater into town. I want a new dress."

"Women," he muttered. "They always want a new dress."

He continued on upstairs and Julie continued on down.

In his room Pete locked the door, set the leather case on his dresser and opened the lid. Inside was a compact radio receiver and a tape recorder. The receiver had four fre-

quency-control push buttons lettered A, B, C and D. There were two compartments at the front of the case. The larger held a headset with a single earphone. The smaller contained four small, transistorized bugging devices about the size of men's pocket watches. Each had a letter printed on its back to conform to the letters on the frequency-control push buttons.

Pete put the bugs lettered A and B in one of the pockets of his tunic.

Closing the case, he put it in the bottom drawer of his dresser. From the same drawer he took a set of master keys and a slim picklock. Unlocking the room door, he went out and locked it behind him again.

Downstairs he glanced outdoors just in time to see Apollo and Julie drive out the gate. Since the Temple maintained a rather fancy limousine and Apollo's sister drove a bright red sports car, he was rather surprised at the man's conservative taste in automobiles. He was driving a plain black Chevrolet sedan about two years old.

Pete glanced around the courtyard and spotted Linc and Hera clear over near the Tower of Apollo. She was pointing at a rambling bougainvillea bush against the castle wall which had become so overgrown that it was beginning to spill across the driveway. Pete decided she would probably remain occupied with Linc long enough for him to bug her apartment.

He went back down the hall and tried her door. He was pleasantly surprised to find it unlocked.

Before one of the front-room windows there was a writing desk with a telephone on it. Pete decided that would make a good location for the bug. He lay on his back beneath the table and used the screwdriver blade of his pocket knife to screw the bug lettered A to the underside of the table.

Altogether he had been in the apartment no more than five minutes when he reached for the doorknob to leave. It started to turn before his hand grasped it.

The door opened inward and its hinged side was toward the hallway leading to the other rooms. The door screened Pete from the newcomer long enough for him to dart down the hallway and into the first open doorway he saw.

It was a bedroom with a bath across the room from the entrance. The bedroom door opened inward, but the door was in a corner of the room so that it opened against the side wall, leaving no space to hide behind. Pete flattened himself against the wall on the other side of the doorway.

He heard the front door close and bare feet padded along the hallway. Hera turned into the room and walked right past him without seeing him. She tossed her handbag on the bed as she went by it and continued on into the bathroom.

The instant the door closed behind her, Pete was through the bedroom door and was tiptoeing up the hallway. He eased open the front door, glanced into the hall, let himself out and eased the door shut again.

Then he expelled the breath he had been holding ever since Hera closed the front door.

Apollo's apartment was beyond Hera's, at the end of the hallway leading from the front door past the two sets of stairs. Its windows overlooked the area outside the castle instead of the courtyard.

The door was locked. Pete tried several master keys before he realized it was not a simple spring lock, but was the type which has to be locked from the outside with a key. That made it impossible for him to open with the picklock if none of the master keys worked.

None of them worked.

He contemplated trying to get in via the windows, but immediately vetoed that thought. The ground sloped away rather steeply on that side of the castle, which meant a ladder would be required to reach the windows, even though they were on the first floor. And even if he managed to locate a ladder and carry it clear around the outside walls to beneath the windows of Apollo's apartment, there was too much chance of one of the other employees glancing out a window and spotting him.

He decided to table planting a bug in Apollo's apartment until sometime when the man left the place unlocked.

He went outside and found Linc, bare to the waist, trimming the bougainvillea bush. He was clipping off long, finger-width vinelike strands and gingerly tossing them into a growing pile. As Pete neared, the black youth lay down

his snippers and examined several scratches on the backs of his hands.

"These blamed things are full of stickers," he complained.

"I wouldn't know," Pete said. "We had bougainvillea at home, but I never had to trim it. We always hired menials to do that kind of work."

Linc gave him the fishy eye. "You should have an act. You'd kill vaudeville all over again." He took out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead. "Julie took off in a car with that Apollo stud."

"Yeah, I know. He's taking her shopping for a dress. I just bugged the front room of Hera's apartment and almost got caught."

"Oh? Well almost doesn't get you in trouble."

"No, but it was close. I can't get into Apollo's place. He's got a trick lock none of my keys fit."

"So you just going to sit around listening to Hera?" Linc asked. "With Apollo away, you won't hear much from her unless she talks to herself."

"I won't bother to monitor her until he gets back," Pete said.

"Good. Then you can help me with my gardening chores."

"Well, I would, except I want to start earning my cop's salary. I figured I'd run in to check with Captain Greer and with Martinez and Bidder to see if there have been any developments. Also I thought I'd check a city directory for Gordon Pace's mother. She's not listed in the phone book."

"Some deal," Linc said gloomily. "You and Julie knock around town while I work all day in the hot sun."

"You'll be in style," Pete said with a grin. "Sun tans are in this season."

Linc gave his head a pitying shake. "Your act is getting worse. Maybe comedy isn't your forte."

Pete started to walk away, then turned back. "Incidentally, if you decide to tune in Hera before I get back, the equipment is in the bottom drawer of my dresser and she's on channel A."

"Okay," Linc said. "Give my love to the captain."

He picked up the clippers again.

CHAPTER 15

LINC HAYES spent the day trimming, watering and policing the grounds. At five he quit, took a shower and changed clothes. Hera had said nothing about him wearing a tunic around the area when he was off duty, and he had no intention of bringing the matter up if she didn't. He preferred his own clothing.

Audrey Hope rapped on his door just as he finished dressing. She had lost a three-way toss and had to cook dinner for herself, Dottie Wills and Penny Chard, she said. One more wouldn't be any trouble, if Linc would like to join them.

"Sure," he said. "I'll help with the dishes."

After dinner the three girls got Max to drive them into town and drop them at a show. Mainly because he had nothing else to do, Linc decided to tune in on Hera's apartment. Locking the door of his room, he got out the leather case, set it on his bed, opened the lid and extended the radio's telescope antenna. Clamping on the headset with its single earpiece, he switched on the radio, but not the tape recorder, and pressed the push button lettered A.

The voice of a TV newscaster came to him. Linc adjusted a pillow to his back and settled back to listen to the news report from Hera's TV set.

The only sound from Hera's apartment all evening was the TV set, and without video Linc didn't find the programs overwhelmingly interesting. At nine thirty P.M. he was just starting to doze off when there was a rap on the door.

Instantly he came wide awake. Swinging his feet to the floor and removing the headset, he called, "Yeah?"

"It's me," Julie's voice said.

Linc went over to the door. "Alone?"

"Yes."

He unlocked the door, locked it behind her again when she came in. She was wearing a brand-new miniskirted dress of startling psychedelic colors and was carrying a dress box which Linc assumed held the outfit she had left

in. She looked at the equipment on the bed while Linc blinked at her new dress.

"Hera's apartment or Apollo's?" she asked.

"Hera's. Pete couldn't get into Apollo's."

"Where is Pete?"

"He ran in to see Captain Greer and also to check with Homicide. Guess he decided to have a little fun afterward. Pretty dress. May I borrow your sun glasses?"

She made a face at him. "I needed the lift. Is it too loud?"

"Not really. Looks good on you. Have a good time?"

"Kind of. Apollo isn't bad fun. Except he's awfully nosy. He asked so many questions about my background, I began to wonder if he suspected I was a cop."

She tossed her dress box on Pete's bed, took a chair, kicked off her shoes and wriggled her toes. "Shopper's feet," she said.

"What did you tell him?" Linc asked. "Apollo, I mean."

"The truth, except that I am a cop. I gave him the whole depressing story of my fatherless childhood. He didn't weep, but I nearly did."

"You were lucky," Linc said dryly. "I have a father."

He sat back on his bed and started to pick up the headset. The doorknob rattled, then there was the sound of a key sliding into the lock.

Almost in a single motion Linc pushed down the antenna, slammed the case lid without bothering to replace the headset in its compartment first, and heaved everything under his bed. It was out of sight before the door fully opened.

Pete came in and closed the door behind him.

"Why the devil don't you knock?" Linc growled as he stooped to pull the case from under his bed again.

"On the door of my own room?" Pete inquired. He examined Julie. "If it blinked on and off, you could rent yourself out as a neon sign."

"You don't like it?" she inquired with a slight pout.

"I love it, but it does make a little noise."

"It's supposed to. I'm tired of being conservative."

"Well, nobody will take you for a John Bircher in that

dress. Kidding aside, it's kind of a dream. Maybe an opium dream, but nevertheless a dream. I really like it."

"Well, thank you," she said, pleased.

Linc, who had re-extended the antenna and had clamped on the headset, said, "Hold it. I've got something."

He motioned Pete and Julie over to the bed and held the earphone away from his ear slightly. Both came over and bent to listen too.

Apollo's voice was saying, "—took her to dinner, we had a little after-dinner brandy, then she wanted to come home. Nothing happened."

Apparently Hera had switched off the TV when Apollo arrived, because it was no longer in the background.

"I'm glad nothing happened," Pete said sarcastically.

"Shh—" Julie said.

Hera's voice said, "You must be slipping." Her tone was as sarcastic as Pete's.

"A true connoisseur of love doesn't use the same approach with all women," Apollo said a trifle sententiously. "This one can't be rushed. I spent the day mainly getting thoroughly acquainted. She's had a hard life."

"She isn't old enough to have had a hard life," Hera said crossly. "It's barely started."

"Well, a hard childhood, then," Apollo amended. "She's all alone in the world. She has a mother, but hasn't the slightest idea where she is. She has nobody at all to worry about her."

Hera said sharply, "You're not getting those ideas again, are you?"

"Why not?" Apollo said reasonably. "Isn't it about time for a new goddess?"

"You and your damned goddesses," Hera said heatedly. "Can't you—"

She was interrupted by the phone ringing. They could hear her say, "Hello," then, after a pause, she said, "Just a minute."

Apparently she had placed a hand over the mouthpiece, because she made no attempt to lower her voice when she said, "It's one of the members of your Sunday-school class. Don't you dare arrange any meetings now."

After a short silence Apollo's voice said, "Hello," then, "Oh, hi, Chester. What's up?"

There was a pause, then, "Oh, no, Chester. Not until after the funeral. I wouldn't think of it."

After another pause he said, "We don't know yet. Depends on when the coroner's office releases the body to the funeral director. We'll have one as soon as the funeral is over, and maybe I'll have a surprise for all of you. Watch the paper for the funeral announcement."

Apparently he hung up, because after a few moments of silence, Hera's voice said, "Would you like a nightcap?"

"I think I'd rather have coffee."

"All right," she said. "I'll go make some."

She must have left the room, because there was dead silence. After a few moments Linc looked up and shrugged. Julie went back to her chair and Pete sat on his bed.

"Wish the phone hadn't interrupted just when it did," Pete said. "I would have liked to hear more about goddesses. What do you suppose that all was?"

"Just his name for women that interest him," Linc said. "Some guys say dames, some say broads. He's a poet. He calls them goddesses. You bring any news from headquarters?"

Pete shook his head. "No new developments. I did get the address of Gordon Pace's mother from the city directory, though."

He got up, crossed over and handed Linc a slip of paper. After glancing at it, Linc started to hand it back.

"Keep it," Pete said. "Gordon Pace is your baby. Those cats down in Watts wouldn't give me the time of day."

"Yeah, I guess you're right," Linc agreed. He glanced at the paper again. "Mrs. Beulah Pace." Then he looked at his watch. "Think I ought to look her up tonight? It's nearly ten."

"Well, you're supposed to work around here tomorrow, so if you don't hit her now, you won't be able to until tomorrow night. I think you ought to get on it."

Linc slipped off the headset and handed it to Pete. "Okay, buddy-boy," he said, rising. "Pass me the keys to the wagon."

The District of Watts in south Los Angeles would not be recognizable as a ghetto to a visitor from Harlem. Instead of being crowded into multi-story tenements, the majority of Watts residents live in small but neat and well-maintained individual houses. There are also apartment houses, but for the most part they are clean, their owners are required by the city to meet rigid health and safety standards, and rats are unknown.

Nevertheless the district is a black ghetto. Blacks, for the most part, are restricted to that area by the unspoken and unadmitted white conspiracy to keep them out of other residential areas. Actually there are black home owners in other sections of Los Angeles, and a few other smaller sections are predominantly black. But the District of Watts is the only large residential area of the city which is accepted unequivocally by both whites and black as the domain of the black race.

The Defiance Avenue address Pete had given Linc turned out to be the left half of a small pink stucco duplex which looked as though each unit contained no more than three rooms. It was past ten thirty when Linc parked the station wagon in front of it, but the front room on Beulah Pace's side was still lighted. The building was flush with the sidewalk and Linc could see into the room through lace curtains. A thin black woman in her fifties was watching a portable TV set.

The woman opened the door to his ring and regarded him with faint suspicion. "Yeah?"

Linc gave her his nicest smile. "Mrs. Pace?"

"Uh-huh."

"Sorry to disturb you so late, but I could see you were still up. I'm a friend of Gordie's and I'm trying to get in touch with him."

"Well, he don't live here," the woman sniffed. "That boy's got no use for a home with a God-fearing mother in it any more. He'd rather traipse around with low-down women who show their bare chests in public and I wouldn't allow in this house."

This left Linc completely at sea, but Andre Dumont had mentioned that Gordon Pace's girl friend was named Sandy, so he took a chance. "You mean Sandy?"

Beulah Pace scowled at him. "You a friend of that trash, you're not welcome around here either, young man."

"I've never even met her," Linc said hurriedly. "I've just heard Gordie mention her. He and I worked together at the Temple."

The woman's manner became even colder, if possible. "You mean that nut house where he worked and the minister got himself killed by a girl he wronged? That don't recommend you no higher to me, mister."

Linc made a desperate grab for something she might approve of. "I just work there," he said. "I'm really a Baptist. Our minister needs a caretaker for the church, and I thought maybe Gordie could use the job."

All of a sudden he was in. The woman's expression softened and she actually smiled. "Well now, I go to the Church of God myself, but the Baptists are good people. And if there's one thing my boy could use, it's the influence of a real church. Gordie's got a room at 110th and Wilmington. Know where that is?"

Linc nodded. "Used to live not too far from there myself."

"I forget the exact number—I got it wrote down somewhere, but you won't need it. It's upstairs over Blum's Delicatessen and the entranceway is between Blum's and the laundry next door. His room number is 21."

"Thanks a lot," Linc said. "I'll run by there now."

As he moved toward the station wagon she called after him, "You tell him he might stop by and see his mom some day, but not to bring that trashy woman along."

"Sure, Mrs. Pace," Linc said. "I'll tell him."

CHAPTER 16

It was nearly eleven when Linc arrived at Wilmington Avenue and 110th Street. A police car and an ambulance with *Central Receiving Hospital* lettered on its side were

parked in front of Blum's Delicatessen. About fifty bystanders, mostly black, crowded the sidewalk on that side of the street.

Linc was headed south on Wilmington Avenue. A uniformed cop waved him on by. There were no parking spots on Wilmington as far as he could see, so he made a left at 111th and found a spot in the middle of the block there. By the time he had walked back to the scene, it was past eleven.

"What happened?" he asked a black youth of about his own age who was accompanied by a teen-age black girl.

The youth shrugged. "They say somebody got shot, but we don't know who. The fuzz ain't handing out any bulletins."

Linc had a sinking feeling that he had arrived just a little too late, because it was apparent that whatever had happened had taken place in one of the rooms above Blum's Delicatessen. The partner of the cop directing traffic blocked the doorway to the stairs between the delicatessen and the laundry next to it. Linc could have gotten by him by flashing his badge, but there were too many onlookers, and he might have to work undercover in this area again some time. He contented himself with waiting to see what developed.

During the next few minutes nothing developed. About ten after eleven Linc's attention was distracted by a shapely black girl in a microskirt who came walking south on Wilmington on this side of the street. She was middling tall, about five feet seven, and about Linc's age of twenty-two. She had skin the texture of black satin, flashing black eyes and a wide, sensual mouth. But her figure was what caught his attention, along with the attention of every other male in the area, including the two cops. Her skirt was so short, her perfectly formed legs were in full view nearly to provocatively rounded hips which swayed back and forth delightfully as she walked, her waist was tiny and her bosom about twice the size of the average girl's her height and weight. Moreover it seemed to be unsupported by a brassiere, because it jiggled intriguingly every time she took a step.

As she neared, a young doctor carrying a medical bag

came clattering down the stairs followed by two attendants carrying a patient on a stretcher. The crowd divided as the doctor ran over to open the rear door of the ambulance.

The black man on the stretcher was covered to his chin by a blanket. He looked about thirty. His eyes were closed and his breathing was raspy.

The litter bearers reached the sidewalk just as the girl in the microskirt got there. She squealed, "Gordie!" and threw her arms about him.

The cop who had been guarding the doorway immediately grabbed her arm and pulled her away, gently but firmly. She jerked her arm free of his grip and ran over to the rear of the ambulance as the attendants began to load the stretcher inside.

"What's the matter with him?" she demanded of the young doctor.

"You a relative?" he countered.

"I'm his fiancée."

The doctor pursed his lips. "I guess that's a close enough relationship, miss," he decided. "You want to ride in the ambulance?"

Instead of answering, she scrambled inside. The doctor climbed in after her and pulled the door closed. The two attendants jumped in front from either side, the siren growled a low note and the vehicle took off. By the time it was a block away, the siren had risen to a scream.

Linc said to the youth he had spoken to before, "You know the guy on the stretcher?"

Both he and the teen-age girl with him shook their heads. The young man said, "I know his girl friend, though, man. I mean I don't know her personally, but I know who she is. She works topless over at the Black Velvet and, man, what a set!"

"Danny!" the girl said reproachfully.

"Her name Sandy?" Linc asked.

"That's right. You been to see her too?"

Linc gave his head a depressed shake. "I heard her call her boy friend by name and put two and two together. I was hoping it was coincidence, and that two people named Gordie lived upstairs, but it would be too much coincidence for both of them to have girl friends named Sandy."

"Eh?" the black youth asked.

"Just talking to myself," Linc said, and walked away.

When he got back to the station wagon, Linc drove the few blocks on south to Imperial Highway instead of heading north again, took that to the Harbor Freeway and took it north to the downtown area. It was eleven thirty when he reached the Central Receiving Hospital at Loma Drive and Sixth Street.

Just off the intake desk inside there was a little alcove furnished with chairs, sofas and smoking stands which served as a waiting room. As Linc went by he saw the girl with the microskirt and the oversized chest seated there. He turned his head away from her to prevent her getting a look at his face as he passed. The probability was that he would be looking her up eventually, and he wanted to avoid having to answer questions about what he was doing at the hospital.

The Hospital Division, which is a branch of the LAPD Detective Bureau, maintains a duty officer at Central Receiving Hospital around the clock. Linc went directly to the Hospital Division Room. He found a plump, freckled man of about forty on duty.

Showing his badge, he said, "Linc Hayes of Juvenile."

The plump man offered his hand. "Bud Grady." Then Linc's name rang a bell. "Hey, aren't you one of that Mod Squad outfit Adam Greer dreamed up?"

"Uh-huh," Linc said. "A black man named Gordon Pace was just brought in here."

Grady nodded. "Gunshot wound. He's in emergency now."

"You have any details on the case yet?"

"Not about the shooting. I know his condition. He's got bullets through both lungs and he's going out."

Linc made a face. "He have any conscious periods?"

"Not yet. Dutton and Looper, the Homicide cops on it, are in there with him now, in case he snaps out of it long enough to make a dying statement."

Linc said, "A girl named Sandy came in the ambulance with him. Told the attending doctor she was his fiancée. She's waiting out in the alcove next to intake now. Know anything about her?"

"No, but I can find out in a hurry."

"Appreciate it," Linc said.

Bud Grady left the room. He was gone approximately five minutes. When he returned, he had a lean, middle-aged, sleekly groomed black man with him. He introduced the man as Sergeant Dutton of Homicide.

"I've heard about your Mod Squad," the sergeant said. "Aren't you working on that screwy Zeus case with Martinez and Bidder?"

"That's what my interest in Pace is," Linc told him. "He used to work at the Temple and he shook down Zeus' wife for five hundred dollars the day after Zeus was shot and the girl was killed by an arrow."

Sergeant Dutton hiked his eyebrows. "You figure that's what got him killed?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," Linc said. "But in case there's a tie-in, I suggest you keep in touch with Martinez and Bidder and trade developments with each other. How's Pace doing?"

"He just passed away," the black detective said. "Never regained consciousness."

Linc gave his head a regretful shake. "That tear it, or you got something else to go on?"

"Damn little. The shooting was reported by a woman who lives across the hall from the victim. She fixes the time as twenty minutes to eleven. She heard the shots, but didn't see the assailant. So far we haven't turned anyone else who saw who it was either."

Linc glanced at Grady. "What about the girl?"

"Sandra Hatcher," the Hospital Division Officer said. "Age twenty-two, lives in a furnished room on 112th Street, about two blocks from the victim's place. That's the extent of what I got from her when Dutton here came out of emergency and called me over."

"We're going to question her now," Sergeant Dutton told Linc. "Want to sit in?"

Linc shook his head. "I don't want her to know I'm a cop, in case I have to move in on her later. Can I get a briefing tomorrow on how you made out?"

"Looper and I don't log in until five. We can leave the

case record in the message box for Martinez and Bidder, along with word that you'll check with them."

"Fine," Linc said. "Leave word that I'll check first thing in the morning."

It was twenty minutes after twelve when Linc got back to the Temple. The windows of Hera's apartment were dark, he noted as he entered the Tower of Hera.

Upstairs he found Julie still chatting with Pete in his and Pete's room, but the leather case was nowhere in sight.

"You didn't miss anything here," Pete greeted him. "Hera and Apollo sat around sipping coffee and talking about nothing until about a half hour ago, then he left and presumably she went to bed."

"I guess that leaves both of them in the clear then," Linc said. "They couldn't have been in Watts at twenty minutes to eleven."

He slipped out of his jacket and hung it in the closet. Pete and Julie examined him inquiringly.

"I don't think I follow that," Julie said eventually.

"Somebody pumped a pair of bullets into Gordon Pace before I got there," Linc explained. "He's dead. A couple of Homicide cops named Dutton and Looper are on the case. They're going to leave whatever dope they collect tonight with Martinez and Bidder, and I'm supposed to phone them in the morning."

Julie and Pete stared at him. Julie said blankly, "He was murdered?"

"Uh-huh. Shot through both lungs at twenty minutes to eleven. Which puts both Hera and Apollo in the clear. All the way home I've been thinking about this chauffeur, Max Hitler. A guy with that last name has to be an automatic suspect. You know if he's been gone tonight?"

Pete said, "We've had the door closed, because we were listening to the receiver. Anybody on the floor could have left and come back again without us knowing." He glanced at his watch. "It's 12:25 now. An hour and forty-five minutes since the shooting. Which means if Max was the killer, he couldn't have gotten back here more than an hour and fifteen minutes ago at the earliest."

"Why would Max be the killer?" Linc asked.

Pete stared at him. "You suggested him, knucklehead."

Linc shrugged. "Just because of his name. It was sort of a joke, buddy-boy."

"You ought to label them," Julie told him. "Otherwise we don't know when to laugh."

Linc grinned at her.

Pete said, "Joke or not, why couldn't Max be a suspect? He probably knew where Pace lived, and he probably told Hera. Maybe she hired him to burn Pace because he had blackmailed her."

In a complaining voice Julie said, "You're getting as hard to follow as Linc. Why would Max know where Pace lived?"

"Because he drove him into town in the limousine when he left here," Pete explained. "Pace didn't own a car."

Linc and Julie both considered this. Presently Julie said in a thoughtful tone. "If Max reported to Hera that Pace hadn't left town after all, she may have suspected he was going to hit her up for more money. Or maybe he actually phoned and made another demand. In either case she could have decided that a live blackmailer was more dangerous than a dead one. And maybe Max would kill for hire. He looks like a killer."

Pete got to his feet. "There's a way to settle it. Let's go do what I had in mind when I suggested the killer couldn't have gotten back here earlier than an hour and a quarter ago." He glanced at his watch again. "Hour and twenty minutes ago now."

He went out the door. After a puzzled glance at Julie, Linc shrugged and followed. Julie hurriedly pulled on her shoes and went after them.

Pete led the way downstairs, outside and into the first car port. Lifting the hood of the limousine, he unscrewed the radiator cap and thrust his index finger into the water, which came within an inch of the top. He gave a disappointed grunt and withdrew the finger again.

"I get it," Linc said. "It takes at least a couple of hours for radiator water to cool off completely after a car's been run any distance."

He thrust his finger into the water and also made a disappointed noise. When he stepped aside, Julie decided to make the test too.

"Why, it's quite cool," she said.

"Yeah," Pete said. "Guess Max is in the clear too."

He screwed the radiator cap back on and closed the hood as quietly as possible.

On the way back upstairs Julie said, "Of course Pace's murder might have nothing to do with what you overheard him saying to Hera, Pete. Maybe it was just a fight with some man over a girl, or maybe he was blackmailing somebody else about something."

"You're a help," Pete growled. "Never leave a case simple."

CHAPTER 17

THE next morning after breakfast Linc phoned Homicide from the pay phone in the lobby of the Tower of Zeus. He left the booth door open and held the receiver slightly away from his ear so that Pete and Julie could listen in.

He asked for either Martinez or Bidder, and it was Mike Martinez who came to the phone.

"Linc Hayes," Linc said. "Did Sergeant Dutton leave word to expect my call?"

"Oh, yeah, Linc. Just a minute while I get the case record on Pace."

Martinez was gone for only a few moments. When he returned to the phone, he said, "There isn't much to tell. There still haven't been any witnesses turned who saw Pace's killer, but the across-the-hall neighbor who heard the shots and went to investigate also heard footsteps running down the stairs. She says it was either a man or a woman in low-heeled shoes. Pace was killed by two forty-five slugs, incidentally. That's about the size of it except for a question Dutton attached to the case record."

"What's that?"

"Since Hera was blackmailed by Pace, he wondered if he and Looper should barge out there and start questioning

people, or if that would foul up whatever the Mod Squad is doing out there.”

Linc glanced at Pete and Julie. Julie frowned and Pete shook his head.

Linc said into the phone, “Since we’re on the scene, we could try to find out anything specific they want to know. Anyway, both Hera and Apollo have perfect alibis for the time of the murder. We have Hera’s apartment bugged, and Pete and Julie were monitoring it. Hera and Apollo were peacefully chatting over coffee when Pace got hit.”

Martinez grunted. “I guess that’s that. I’ll steer Dutton and Looper away from there unless something more develops.”

“What did they get from Sandy Hatcher?” Linc asked.

There was a momentary silence, probably because Martinez was checking the case record. Finally he said, “Looks like she’s clear. She’s a topless waitress at a night club on Wilmington near 107th. She got off work at eleven and was walking home. She lives on 112th, so Pace’s room was right en route. She has witnesses that she didn’t leave the club until eleven, and Pace was shot twenty minutes earlier than that.”

“She have any theories?” Linc asked.

“None she passed on to Dutton and Looper. According to her Gordon Pace had no enemies and everybody loved him. She couldn’t imagine why anyone would harm a hair of his sinless head. Of course that’s a love’s-eye view.”

“I’ll drop in on her tonight and see what I can get out of her as a friend of the family,” Linc said.

“You know somebody in her family?” the Homicide detective asked in surprise.

“I’m a bosom pal of her dead boy friend. Didn’t you know?”

“Oh. I keep forgetting how sneaky you Mod Squad guys play.”

Linc said, “Anything new on the deal out here?”

“Only negative stuff. We’ve been unable to turn a bus driver who recognizes the photo of Elizabeth Turner, and she wasn’t that forgettable. So now we’re inclined to believe she never came in on a bus, but merely used the terminal to make her phone call. It’s possible that she never left

town in the first place, despite Max Hitler's insistence that he put her on a bus three weeks before she showed up again. She could have had the bus driver let her out a block from the bus depot."

Linc grunted. "Anything else?"

"One more thing. We traced the gun Elizabeth used on Zeus to a man who bought it fifteen years ago and died a year later. It was sold a year after that at an auction of his estate and there's no record of who bought it. So the gun is a dead end."

"Everything in this case seems to dead-end, doesn't it?" Linc said.

"Maybe it's just what it looked like," Martinez suggested. "A killing by a scorned woman, plus a justifiable homicide. Maybe we're worrying at a rat hole where there's no rat."

"Fit Gordon Pace into that theory," Linc said.

After several seconds of silence, Martinez emitted a sigh. "Okay, let's keep worrying. You getting anywhere at all out there?"

"All I've personally got so far is blisters from pruning shears. We'll let you know if anything does develop."

"All right, Linc. Take care."

Linc hung up and stepped from the booth. "You hear it all?" he asked.

Both Julie and Pete nodded. Pete said, "Pace would fit into the no-rat theory if you accept Julie's suggestion that his murder had nothing to do with the people here. But if we are barking at an empty rat hole, at least we're getting a nice vacation out of it."

Linc gazed at him in outrage. "Maybe you and Julie are on vacation, but I've got a million chores facing me. Among other things, that expanse of lawn out there needs cutting, and there must be an acre of it."

"Roughly two, I understand," Pete said cheerfully.

Julie said, "You could help him instead of just joking about it, Pete."

Pete looked at her. "Thanks for volunteering my services."

"I accept the offer," Linc said, clapping Pete on the,

shoulder. "I think I spotted two power mowers in one of the car ports. Let's go check."

They emerged from the Tower of Zeus just as the limousine backed from its car port, turned around and headed their way. Max was driving and Apollo and Hera were in the back seat, both in street clothes. Max wore his usual garb. Except for a visored chauffeur's cap he wore while on duty, he never wore anything but slacks and a tan cloth jacket.

At Hera's order the limousine came to a stop alongside the three young people. Hera stuck her face out the window.

"Did any of you listen to the radio news this morning?" she asked.

When they all shook their heads, she said, "Gordon Pace, who used to work here, was shot to death last night. Somewhere down in Watts."

All three attempted to show surprise. Julie murmured something no one quite caught, but presumably was an expression of shock. Pete said, "He was the guy whose job you took, Linc," and Linc made his expression appropriately sympathetic and said, "I never knew him."

Julie, apparently deciding something more than an unintelligible murmur was expected of her, said, "Do they know who shot him?"

"According to the radio, it's all a mystery," Hera said.

"Is that what you're going into town about?" Pete asked.

"Oh, no. The police phoned that my husband's body has been released from the morgue, finally. We're going to the funeral home to make funeral arrangements. I imagine we'll lunch in town afterward, so don't expect us back until one or two."

"All right," Pete said. "We'll hold things down here."

When the limousine drove on, Julie said, "She sounded genuinely surprised by the news of Pace's death."

"Could be put-on," Linc said. "If she hadn't even mentioned it, it would practically be an admission of guilt."

They moved on toward the Tower of Hera. Pete said, "Let's see if Apollo left his apartment unlocked this time."

They went inside and tried the door to Apollo's apartment. Again it was locked.

Julie said, "Why don't you give me the bug? Apollo keeps inviting me to his apartment. Next time I'll accept and plant the bug somewhere while he's mixing drinks."

Pete frowned at her. "You know why he wants you in his apartment. You heard him brag to Hera about being a connoisseur of love."

Julie held out her hand. "I'm quite capable of taking care of myself, Mr. Cochrane," she said a trifle frigidly. "Give me the bug."

Reluctantly he removed it from his pocket and handed it to her. "Channel B, in case I'm not around when you want to tune in," he said glumly.

Julie placed it in her handbag.

Pete said to Linc, "With everybody away, this would be a good time to check the other two cellars."

"Except it'll take time," Linc said. "You going to help me cut the grass afterwards?"

"Julie volunteered me, didn't she? Sure."

"Okay," Linc said. "Let's go."

They had no trouble getting into the cellar of the Tower of Aphrodite, because the door at the bottom of the cellar stairs was unlocked. They found a few of the dungeon cells being used as storage rooms, the rest empty and the big central room being used for nothing. The gate at the end of the passageway beneath the center of the courtyard was still locked, and from behind it they could see that the one barring the passageway to the Tower of Apollo was also still locked.

They retraced their way to the stairs, climbed upward and walked over to the Tower of Apollo.

The oaken door at the bottom of the cellar steps there was locked. Pete tried all of his master keys on it without success.

"Same sort of lock as on Apollo's door," he said. "Now that I think of it, our room door has this same type too. They must be standard throughout all the buildings."

Julie said, "Yes, my room has that type of lock too. Makes it much less sinister, doesn't it?"

"I didn't think it was sinister anyway," Pete told her. "Probably both entrances to this cellar being locked has no more significance than one of those to the Tower of

Aphrodite being locked. I suspect that most of the time none of the cellar entrances are locked, and that these three are just because somebody got absentminded."

"Maybe," Linc said in an unsatisfied tone. "Maybe not."

Pete looked at him. "You don't seriously believe we'd find four graves in there if we could get in, do you?"

"Well, those girls have to be somewhere."

"Sure, and Elizabeth Turner, who disappeared as mysteriously as the rest of them, three weeks later showed up alive in downtown Los Angeles. If Zeus was burying his discarded mistresses in the cellar, how'd she escape?"

"Okay, okay," Linc said. "Let's go start on that grass."

CHAPTER 18

LINC had been correct in thinking he saw two power mowers in one of the car ports. Both were self-propelled mowers with twenty-four-inch rotary blades. But the grassed area was so large, even with both Pete and Linc mowing, it took them until 12:30 P.M. to finish the job.

Julie spent the morning lolling by the pool with Audrey Hope, Dottie Wills and Penny Chard. The girls went inside to make sandwiches and coffee for lunch and brought them out to the pool just as Linc and Pete were putting the mowers away.

At one P.M. Pete and Linc were lying on the grass by the pool alone, the girls having carried the dishes inside to wash them.

"Getting hotter," Linc said.

Pete sat up and stretched. "How about a dip?"

"You're not supposed to go in until an hour after eating."

"That's an old wive's tale," Pete told him. "Twenty minutes. It's already been fifteen, and it'll be closer to thirty by the time we get our trunks on and get back here."

Linc bounced to his feet. "Then let's get moving, buddy-boy."

They went up to their room to change into their trunks and got downstairs again just as the limousine returned. Max had already parked it in the car port and he, Hera and Apollo were getting out of the car when Pete and Linc emerged from the building.

Max and Apollo merely nodded to them as they went by and continued on inside. Hera paused to look at them and said, "Going for a swim?"

Pete nodded and Linc said, "I'm still on my lunch hour."

"I wasn't objecting, Linc," Hera said quickly. "So long as you get your work done, you can set your own schedule. Use the pool any time you want."

"Well, thanks, ma'am."

"Call me Hera," she instructed. "Everyone else does." She glanced around the courtyard. "I notice you cut the grass. You must work fast. It used to take Gordie all day."

"Pete helped me," Linc said.

"Well, that was nice of him." She ran her gaze up and down Pete's muscular frame. "When you finish your swim, why don't you stop by and see me, Pete?"

"Sure," he said, then, because she began to make him uncomfortable by continuing to examine his body with almost openly lecherous appraisal, he deliberately changed the subject by asking, "When's the funeral?"

Her eyes jumped back to his face. "Saturday afternoon at two. It will be from here, but the body will be on view at the funeral home starting at seven o'clock tonight. The announcement will be in tonight's paper."

"The funeral itself will be from here?" Pete said.

"Yes. Apollo will conduct it. We've decided to continue to operate the Temple, and Apollo is the logical successor to my husband."

Linc said, "When's the other funeral? The girl's, I mean. The one who—" He let it trail off.

"Shot my husband?" Hera finished for him with no indication of resentment. "That won't be local. I asked about her when the police phoned that my husband's body had been released, and they said an aunt in Phoenix had requested the body be shipped back there."

The four girls emerged from the Tower of Zeus and headed back toward the pool. When he saw Julie looking their way, Pete waved in signal that they would be over to the pool in a moment.

He said to Hera, "If there's anything any of us can do between now and the funeral, just let us know."

"There's really nothing except to generally watch out for the place. Starting at seven tonight Apollo and I will both be at the funeral parlor to receive friends and relatives practically day and night until the funeral."

"We'll mind the store for you," Pete told her.

They started to move on and Hera continued on up the three stone steps to the tower entrance. In the doorway she turned and called, "Don't forget to stop by after your swim, Pete."

Pete merely waved acknowledgment that he had heard her.

"That gal's got the hots for you," Linc said. "You going to accept her invitation?"

Pete shrugged. "Why not? I'm a big boy."

Linc gave him a wicked grin. "Channel A, isn't it?"

Pete halted and looked at him. Linc came to a halt also and continued to grin.

"You wouldn't," Pete said. "You're not that much of a louse."

Linc allowed his grin to turn into a reassuring smile. "Of course I wouldn't, buddy-boy. I've got a full-time job, remember? Even if I was that much of a louse, I wouldn't have time to eavesdrop on your technique."

They started on. Linc added casually, "I'll just give Julie my room key and suggest she monitor Hera's apartment for a while."

Pete halted again and glared at him. Linc grinned widely.

"You know I wouldn't really, man. But you have to consider that Julie might decide that with both Hera and Apollo back, the receiver ought to be monitored. What do I say if she asks for my room key?"

Pete's glare faded into a thoughtful frown. As they continued on toward the pool, he mulled the matter over.

He thought about it all the time he and Linc were swimming.

He finally had an inspiration which effectively solved the problem. He simply took Julie with him when he stopped by Hera's apartment after his swim. They both went to their rooms and changed from their wet suits to tunics first, then went downstairs together.

Hera seemed slightly taken aback when she opened the door and saw Julie with Pete. But if she was disappointed, she concealed it well. She politely invited both in and served them coffee. It seemed apparent that she hadn't invited Pete by to tell him anything, however, because she made only meaningless conversation. Which merely confirmed his suspicion that her intentions had been amorous.

Pete and Julie stayed a polite twenty minutes, then made their excuses and left.

"What was that all about?" Julie asked when they got outside. "It seemed kind of pointless."

"Sometimes there is more in things than meets the eye," Pete quoted enigmatically.

During their conversation over coffee Hera had mentioned that she and Apollo planned to go back into town early enough to have dinner at a restaurant before they went to the funeral parlor. At five Linc came upstairs and announced that the two had just left in the limousine, chauffeured by Max.

A moment later Julie stuck her head into Linc's and Pete's room to announce that she and the other girls were going over to the kitchen to start dinner, and it would be ready promptly at six.

After dinner Linc drove the station wagon down to Watts to look up Sandy Hatcher. He suspected she wouldn't be at work so soon after her fiance's death, but he stopped by the Black Velvet Club anyway because it was en route to her place.

The night club was so dimly lit, Linc stood in the doorway for some seconds allowing his vision to adjust to it. There was a piano bar in addition to the regular bar and a tiny dance floor surrounded by tables. The girl at the

piano, who was also a vocalist, was singing an old-fashioned torch song in a huskily seductive voice. When Linc's vision adjusted sufficiently for him to be able to see her dimly, his first impression was that she was nude. But then a waitress approached him and, when the girl got near enough for him to see what she was wearing, he decided that probably the girl at the piano was similarly attired.

The waitress's costume met the Los Angeles County ordinance requiring the bosoms of waitresses and entertainers to be completely covered, without concealing a thing. As in most so-called "topless" bars and restaurants, the law was being strictly observed. The girl wore a blouse with a high neck and with sleeves clear to her wrists. But it was made of gauze nearly as transparent as Cellophane, and she wore absolutely nothing under it. Skimpy black velvet panties, which against her black skin gave a first startling impression of nakedness, net stockings and high heels completed her costume.

When the girl reached him, she said, "Table or bar, sir?"

"Just looking for somebody," Linc said, trying to keep his eyes on the girl's face. "Is Sandy Hatcher working tonight?"

"Oh, no. Don't you know about the tragedy?"

"Yeah, I know," Linc said. "I thought she'd probably be off, but I was passing by so I took a chance. When you expect her back?"

"Not until Saturday night. The boss gave her tonight and tomorrow off."

"Okay, thanks," Linc said, turning to leave.

He was rather proud of himself that his gaze had strayed downward from the girl's face only once.

The place where Sandra Hatcher had a room was a two-story rooming house on 112th Street a block east of Wilmington Avenue. A fat black woman of about sixty came to the door.

"Sandy Hatcher in?" Linc asked.

"No, she's gone until Saturday," the woman said.

"Oh. You the landlady?"

"That's right, son."

"You know where I can find her?"

The woman examined him with pursed lips. "You a friend or just some kind of salesman?"

"A friend," Linc said. "Not of Sandy's, but of Gordie Pace's. I just want to offer condolences and ask what I can do."

"Oh," the fat woman said, mellowing. "Wasn't that a shame? Them planning to get married and all. Course they been planning it for two years now, and it didn't look to me any closer, but I guess that was nobody's but Sandy's business." She examined Linc contemplatively. "How close a friend was you of this Gordie fellow?"

"Pretty close," Linc said cautiously, wondering what he was getting into.

"Well, no offense to your friend, because I don't like to speak ill of the dead, but sometimes I wondered if he was just leading her on."

Linc made a non-committal noise.

"Was he?" the woman asked bluntly.

Still cautiously, Linc said, "He never said anything to me suggesting he didn't want to marry her."

"But two whole years," the landlady said. "That's a long time to keep a girl dangling. He had a good job too, until he quit it a few days back. I wouldn't say anything to Sandy now that he's gone, but many's the time I told her in the past two years, 'Sandy, that man's got no intention of putting a ring on your finger. All he wants is to put something else in another part of you.' You don't think I'm right, huh?"

"Well, it doesn't matter any more now, I guess," Linc said. "Where can I get in touch with Sandy?"

"She went to visit her mother in Bakersfield. Probably best you wait until she gets back Saturday. Who shall I say called?"

"Linc Hayes. But she won't know my name unless Gordie happened to mention me. Just say a friend of Gordie's. What time you expecting her back Saturday?"

"I'm not expecting her here at all. She'll come in on the three P.M. bus and she has to be at work at four. One of the other girls lives here is going to pick her up and run her right to the club. She'll just have time to dress for work and get on the floor."

Then her face split into a grin and she emitted an odd little cackle. "Or undress for work, rather. She works at the Black Velvet Club."

"Yesh, I know," Linc said. "Gordie told me. Tell her I'll stop by the club to see her Saturday night."

"You'll get an cycful," the landlady told him. "She's 40-24-35."

CHAPTER 19

EXCEPT for Linc's grounds-keeper's chores, the Mod Squad had little to do except mark time until after the funeral, because both Hera and Apollo were gone all the time. They were at the funeral parlor all day Friday and all of Saturday morning. They didn't return to the Temple until noon on Saturday and the funeral was at two P.M.

Meantime there were no new developments on the Gordon Pace murder, and although the investigations into the deaths of the Reverend Zeus and Elizabeth Turner had never been officially closed, in actuality Martinez and Bidder had come to a dead end and had shelved them. Captain Greer passed down the word that if the Mod Squad hadn't come up with anything either on one or more of the killings or about the missing girls by Monday, they would be taken off of the case.

About 150 people attended the funeral, which was held outdoors in the courtyard. Most of them were parishioners and, in honor of the deceased, the majority wore their tunics. As nearly as the Mod Squad could determine, only three relatives of Zeus were there: a younger brother and his wife from Chicago and a male cousin from San Francisco. All of them were dressed conventionally.

Apollo and Hera wore their usual white tunics and all of the attending employees wore their usual green ones, even Linc. Up until an hour before the funeral no one had yet mentioned to Linc that his ordinary clothing wasn't suita-

ble around the grounds when he was off duty, but then Hera sent for him and asked him to go get a tunic from Penny Chard and wear it to the funeral.

Except for the Greek costumes of most of the crowd, the ceremony differed little from standard Protestant funeral services. Apollo's eulogy was a little strange in that it extolled nothing but the Reverend Zeus' philosophical teachings and mentioned none of his other earthly accomplishments nor anything about his character. But this was probably more a matter of tact than of denominational policy. Since there had been wide publicity that the deceased died at the hands of an underage girl whom he had seduced and then cast aside, it would have been a little ridiculous for Apollo to laud him as a loving husband and an example of upright living.

While all of the employees attended the service, few rode in the funeral procession to the cemetery afterward. None of the Mod Squad went. Pete and Linc stood with Julie and her three girl friends, watching the line of cars pass through the arched gate.

When the last car had disappeared, Pete said, "Anybody feel like a swim?"

"I have to go to work," Penny Chard said.

Everybody looked at her. Plump Dottie Wills said, "What's there for you to do? There's no guests."

"There's going to be," the redheaded desk clerk said. "Apollo just told me a half dozen guests want to check in as soon as they get back from the cemetery. The kitchen will reopen tonight, too, incidentally, but Apollo said one waitress should be enough to handle the few guests he expects. Any volunteers?"

There was a period of silence before Dottie Wills said, "Will any more guests be checking in tomorrow?"

"I don't think this weekend," Penny said. "At least Apollo didn't mention it, and I think he would have."

The plump girl said to Julie and Audrey Hope, "One of us will have to work each meal. I'll volunteer to take the dinners."

Both girls agreed. Julie said she would take breakfasts and her blonde roommate took lunches.

Penny walked off toward the Tower of Zeus. Pete looked after her contemplatively, then said to Julie and Linc, "It'll be some time before anybody gets back from the cemetery. Let's go keep her company. Maybe we can play a game of bridge."

"Bridge?" Linc said. "Pinochle is my speed. You don't learn the same games in Watts as you do in Beverly Hills."

"I like hearts," Julie said.

"Maybe we'll just play old maid," Pete said in a disgusted voice. "Let's go see if Penny knows that."

Audrey Hope and Dottie Wills decided to have a swim. They headed toward the Tower of Hera for their suits as the Mod Squad made for the Tower of Zeus.

"You got something in mind?" Linc asked Pete. "Or are you really interested in cards?"

"Not particularly. I just thought we'd take a look at who checks in. Mainly because we've got nothing else to do. Seems odd people would be checking in now, doesn't it?"

"Well, Hera told us they were going to reopen the Temple."

"But only minutes after her husband is buried?"

"Yeah, that does seem to be pushing it," Linc agreed. "But what do you expect to learn by watching people check in?"

"Probably nothing," Pete said irritably. "I just thought we should at least pretend to be investigating something in order to justify our sticking around here."

When they got inside, Penny was talking on the phone to chef Andre Dumont, telling him that Apollo wanted the dining room reopened for the evening meal, and that he could expect six guests in addition to the Temple personnel. When she hung up, Pete asked if she would like to play a little cards until the guests started arriving.

Penny said she couldn't because she had some book work to do. Pete, Linc and Julie drifted into the lobby, took seats and watched the cherub in the center of the goldfish pond spout water into the air. Shortly afterward Andre Dumont and his kitchen crew hurried into the building and went upstairs.

About forty-five minutes passed before the first guests

arrived. They were both middle-aged men and were already wearing tunics and sandals because they had worn them to the funeral.

Pete drifted over near the desk in time to hear Penny greet them as Mr. Gresset and Mr. Drom. Gresset was a sturdily built man of about fifty with rather handsome features and a body he had kept in firm shape. Drom, perhaps five years younger, was not in nearly as good physical condition. His arms and legs were lean and tan, but he was starting to develop a prominent paunch.

"Your usual rooms all right?" Penny asked as the men registered.

When both indicated that they would be fine, she gave them each keys. There was no bellhop service at the Temple of Olympus. Guests carried their own baggage to their rooms.

Gresset and Drom had hardly left when a second pair came in. Again they were both men and again they wore sandals. This time Linc wandered over to listen to their names.

Penny greeted them as Mr. Lake and Mr. Donaldson. Both were in their mid-thirties and seemed to be in pretty good physical shape, except that Lake was starting to thicken around the middle.

Another fifteen minutes passed before the third pair came in. Again they were both men and again they wore tunics. Julie meandered over to get their names.

Penny called them Mr. Forward and Mr. Ross. Forward was perhaps fifty-five, nearly bald, thick-bodied and thick-necked, with a bulging but solid-looking stomach. Ross wasn't more than thirty, with wide shoulders, an athletic build and ruggedly handsome features.

As they walked out of the building, Julie continued on over to the desk and said to Penny, "That was six. That's all you expect, isn't it?"

"That's all Apollo said."

"How come they're all men?"

Penny shrugged. "Beats me. All but that last pair have wives. The younger man is a bachelor and the older one is divorced, but the first four who checked in are all married.

They always show up alone, though. I guess their wives don't go for this religion."

Apollo came in, crossed over to the desk, gave Julie a cordial greeting and said to Penny, "They all check in yet?"

"Mr. Gresset, Mr. Drom, Mr. Lake, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Forward and Mr. Ross have. Is that the six you expected?"

Apollo nodded. "There won't be any more. Did you tell Andy to reopen the dining room?"

"Yes, sir. He and his crew are up there now. I also put a waitress on duty, like you said."

Apollo turned to Julie and said, "I hope it wasn't you. I was going to ask you to dine with me tonight at my table."

"Until more guests check in, we're each taking one meal a day," Julie told him. "Dottie Wills volunteered to serve dinners and I drew breakfasts."

"Good," he said in a pleased voice. He glanced at his watch. "It's five of four now. Want to meet me in the dining room about six?"

"All right," she agreed.

He went on out and Julie returned to where Pete and Linc still sat in the lobby.

"The last two are named Forward and Ross," she announced. "Ross was the good-looking one."

"What was old Horny bending your ear about?" Pete asked.

She frowned at the nickname. "*Apollo* wants me to sit at his table at dinner tonight."

Pete frowned also. "You accept?"

"Why not? We're here as undercover cops, and worming whatever I can out of Apollo is part of my job."

"I guess," Pete said grudgingly.

Linc said, "Another part of our job is to monitor the receiver. Hera's probably back from the funeral too, and she and Apollo may be in her apartment talking right now."

Pete got to his feet. "Let's go check."

When the three of them arrived at Linc's and Pete's room, Pete got the leather case from his bottom dresser drawer, set it on his bed and extended the antenna. He sat

on the bed, put on the headset and switched on the receiver.

After a few moments he checked to make sure the channel A push button was depressed, then shrugged.

"Nothing," he said. "Not even the TV set."

Julie took a chair and Linc reclined on his bed. Several minutes passed in idle conversation.

Linc was just commenting that Sandy Hatcher must have arrived back in town by now when Pete said, "Hold it. The doorbell just rang."

Julie and Linc both rose and came over. Pete pulled the earphone away from his ear and they bent their heads close to listen in.

There was the sound of a door opening, then Apollo's voice said, "Hi, Sis. As they say in the backwoods, I guess we laid him away in fine style, eh?"

They could hear the door close. Hera's voice said, "Don't be disgusting, Philip. Why are those three extra cars in car ports?"

"Because a few members of my Sunday-school class have checked in. Six, to be precise. They came two in each car."

"Are you crazy?" she inquired. "You're certainly not planning anything at this point!"

"Just a Sunday-school lesson," he said in a smug voice. "Don't worry. No one else around here will be awake when it starts. It won't begin until the usual time of midnight."

"You must be out of your mind!" Hera's voice spat at him. "The evening of David's funeral!"

"None of this group could care less about respecting the memory of the good Reverend Zeus," Apollo said reasonably. "They have only one interest. And so have I, but a different one. Mine's the money."

"Well, the money is of no interest to me anymore," Hera said crossly. "Don't you realize how much I'll inherit from David?"

"Sure, but that's your money, not mine. I'm still just a salaried minister, although I suppose I could ask for a raise now that I'm the big cheese instead of just an assistant minister. Are you going to raise my salary, sister dear?"

"Stop it, Philip. I'm in no mood for sarcasm."

"Then I'll drop it and just be blunt. Who you trying to kid, Sis? It never was the money that interested you. David wasn't that much of a pinchpenny. He would have given you anything within reason you asked for. But I have to concede you're no gold-digger. You never really asked for much."

"Thank you for that small compliment," Hera said coldly.

"I didn't mean it as a compliment," Apollo said with a snicker. "I was just pointing out what really motivates you. You simply enjoy the lessons."

"You pig!" she said.

"Oh, come on, Sis. You know you do. I have to admit it isn't entirely the money with me either. But it is mostly. If things work out as I plan tonight, there may be a big bonus."

"Well, I won't help you earn it!" Hera flared. "I won't be there!"

"Bill Ross is one of the students tonight."

There was a short period of silence. Then Hera said, less angrily, "I don't care who's going to be there."

"Oh, yes you do," Apollo said confidently. "Jack Gresset will be present too. You'll be there, all right. You won't be able to stay away when the time comes, with your religious fervor."

"I won't even be here at the Temple!" Hera yelled at him. "I'm going into town for dinner. Go get Pete Cochrane for me!"

"Cochrane? What for?"

"Never mind what for!" Hera raged. "Just go do as I say! And right now, or I may decide to blow your goddamned Sunday-school class wide open!"

"Take it easy, Sis," Apollo said soothingly. "I'll go get him. See, I'm going right now."

They could hear the door open and close again. Pete switched off the radio, depressed the antenna, fitted the headset into its compartment and closed the leather case. He put it back in the bottom drawer of his dresser.

"He might wonder what you're doing in here," he said to Julie. "You better leave."

He went over to unlock the door and hold it open for her. Julie scooted down the hall to her own room.

Pete left the door open. He and Linc were both lying on their beds reading magazines when Apollo appeared in the doorway.

CHAPTER 20

WHEN Pete rang Hera's bell, the door opened immediately.

"Come in," she invited in a grim tone.

He walked into the front room and she closed the door. Her usually full lips were clamped into a thin line. She was so obviously upset, Pete decided that if he didn't comment on it, she might later wonder why he showed no surprise.

"You sore about something?" he asked.

She made an effort at control and managed a wan smile. "Not at you, Pete. These last few days have been such a strain, now that the funeral is over, I guess I'm having a nervous reaction. I have to unwind. Would you think I was awful for wanting to go out somewhere for dinner only hours after I buried my husband?"

"Why no. People have to eat."

"I want to do a little more than just have dinner. I want to relax. After dinner I want to sit in some quiet barroom and have a few drinks, or maybe even go somewhere and dance."

He saw what was coming. He said warily, "Well, I don't see much wrong with that. I mean, wearing widows weeds for a full year went out with the Repeal of Prohibition, didn't it?"

"Then you'll take me?"

He had already devised a parry for that. "It's a pleasant thought, Hera, but I'm broke."

"I wouldn't expect you to pay," she said. "I know you don't have any money. Since I'm inviting you, of course the evening will be on me."

She went over to the table where the telephone sat, picked up her handbag and took out a wallet. Removing a twenty and a ten from the wallet, she replaced it in her bag and carried the bills over to Pete.

"Here's thirty dollars to start," she said. "If that runs out, I'll give you more."

He regarded the bills in his hand dubiously. "I'd feel like a gigolo, Hera. I can't take money from a woman."

"I'm asking you as a favor, Pete. I think I'll go out of my mind if I don't get away from here for a few hours. Just look at it in the light that your employer has invited you out to dinner. Please."

There was no graceful way he could ignore this plea. "All right," he capitulated. Then he remembered that tonight was when Linc was supposed to look up Sandy Hatcher. "Except I promised Linc he could use the station wagon. He has a date in Watts."

"That's no problem," Hera said. "We'll use my car. Go change your clothes. I have to shower and dress, so come by for me in about forty-five minutes."

"All right," he agreed.

Upstairs again he found that Julie had returned to his and Linc's room.

He closed the door behind him and said to her, "You're not the only one with a dinner date. Hera practically ordered me to take her into town." He showed the two bills. "Expense money. I had to accept it, because I'm supposed to be flat."

"How do I get into Watts, then?" Linc asked.

Pete tossed him the station wagon keys. "Same way you planned. We're taking Hera's sports car."

Julie said, "What did you make of that conversation between Apollo and Hera? They weren't actually discussing a Sunday-school class, were they? I mean it was a joke name, wasn't it, like calling a beer opener a church key?"

Linc and Pete both looked at her, then at each other. Linc said solemnly, "She caught on. This gal's going to make it as a cop yet."

"Oh, stop making fun all the time," Julie said. "Let's try to figure out what they were really talking about."

Pete said, "Something Apollo makes money at and Hera

does too, but she's interested in more for the fun than the money, and he's involved in more for the money than the fun."

"A pot session?" Julie hazarded. "Or maybe LSD?"

"How about a sex orgy?" Pete suggested.

"With seven guys and no women?" Linc said.

"Well, there are that kind—" He looked at Julie and let it trail off. "Anyway, Hera's attended previous meetings, apparently. It's possible to have a sex orgy with seven guys and only one woman."

"With her own brother one of the men?" Julie said, wide-eyed.

"Nuts," Linc said. "You know she's not going to be there tonight. And none of those guys looked to me like the kind who go in for womenless orgies. It's got to be something else."

"Okay, brain," Pete said. "What?"

Linc rubbed his forehead and frowned thoughtfully. All at once his eyes widened as a thought struck him.

He said slowly, "Six guests, Apollo and Hera make eight. Just the right number."

"For what?" Julie asked.

"A poker game."

The other two stared at him.

"Four of the guys are married, yet never bring their wives. Who ever takes his wife to a poker game? I should have caught it the minute Apollo started talking about Sunday-school lessons. That's poker player talk. I couldn't count the times guys have phoned to invite me to a prayer meeting, or a church session, when they meant a poker game. I never heard Sunday-school lesson used before, but it's the same idea."

Julie said puzzledly, "But why would Hera get so upset over just a poker game?"

"Because it probably isn't just a run-of-the-mill poker game. I'll bet it's sky-high stakes and crooked as a witch's index finger. The members of this congregation are all loaded, and probably are easy pickings for a real pro."

"I still can't see why Hera would get all that upset," Julie said doubtfully.

"A crooked poker game run by a church?" Linc said.

"Suppose the suckers caught on? Remember what happened to the Friar's Club? Multiply that scandal by about fifty times if the Friar's Club had been a church. It would blow this place sky high and ruin the whole money-making racket."

The other two thought this over. Eventually Pete said, "Apollo mentioned two guests he thought would influence Hera to show. Do poker players have favorite opponents?"

"That's such a dumb question, I'd sure like to get you in a poker game," Linc said scornfully. "Of course they do. Those guys must be the fattest pigeons."

Julie said, "It sounds to me as though Linc has hit it."

"Me too," Pete agreed. "So let's plan to look in on the game."

"You won't be here," Julie said. "You're taking Hera out for the evening, remember?"

"I'll make a point of being back before midnight. I'll steal one of your feminine tricks and get a headache."

"I'll make a point of getting back before then too," Linc said.

"Suppose I get a chance to bug Apollo's apartment while you're both gone?" Julie asked. "How do I get in here to monitor the receiver?"

"That's simple," Linc said. "We'll leave the door unlocked. I don't think anyone will search our room."

Pete said to Julie, "You'd better get out of here now. I have to get dressed for my date."

When Linc entered the dining room, the six men who had checked in were all seated together at one of the round tables for six. At another table two girls he recognized as cleaning maids sat with the man who served as janitor for all four buildings. Julie and Apollo were together in one corner at one of the small tables for two. Penny Chard and Audrey Hope sat together at one of the large tables, a good distance from all the others.

Audrey looked up as Linc entered the room and waved him over.

Neither had yet been served, he noted as he took a seat between them. Audrey said, "We just got here and we

haven't even ordered yet. Look at my roommate over there."

Linc glanced that way. "What about her?"

"I mean dining alone with Apollo, with his reputation."

"What can happen in a dining room?" Linc inquired. "If you saw her entering a bedroom with him, then you could worry."

"That comes next," Penny said, "Of course it's Julie's own business, but we told her all about how Apollo operates. Every new female attendant who comes to work in this Asylum gets the pitch. First an innocent daytime outing—a shopping trip, Disneyland, Marineland maybe. Then a tete-a-tete dinner here, then a suggestion that they have brandy and coffee in his apartment. That's when he pounces."

Plump Dottie Wills interrupted by bringing them water and saying, "Roast chicken or steak tonight, folks. The soup is onion."

They all ordered steak.

When Dottie had walked away, Linc said, "What do you mean, he pounces?"

"You know," Audrey said. "Gets all hands. Though I must admit that in my case he behaved as soon as I got mad, and even apologized." After a beat she added wistfully, "He never invited me back either."

"I should have gotten mad, I guess," Penny said. "I tried to fend him off without hurting his feelings. It's all kind of confused now, but I think at the time I thought I might get fired if I didn't handle it tactfully. Then I ended up biting his wrist and running out of the apartment when he really got out of hand." She grinned. "I never got invited back either."

"Did you get the questionnaire treatment during your daytime outing?" Audrey asked. "He wanted to know everything that happened to me from birth on."

Penny nodded. "That was kind of strange. When I told him I had three older brothers, my immediate impression was that he lost interest in me. As a matter of fact I was surprised when he asked me to have dinner with him here a few nights later. I kind of think now it was just because I happened to be around and he decided to make a routine

pass. I actually don't think he was too disappointed at not scoring."

"That's odd," Julie's blonde roommate said. "I got the same impression when I told him my parents lived in Van Nuys. Maybe he's like the Reverend Zeus, and is interested only in girls who aren't likely to have relatives coming around to avenge their ruin."

Dottie Wills interrupted the conversation again by bringing their soup.

CHAPTER 21

LINC arrived at the Black Velvet Club a few minutes after nine. The same waitress who had approached him on his previous visit came over while he was allowing his eyes to adjust to the dim lighting.

"Hi," she said with a smile. "You're the fellow who was looking for Sandy the other night, aren't you?"

"Uh-huh," Linc said, a little flattered that she had remembered him. "She get back from Bakersfield all right?"

"Yes, she's here. All her tables are filled, but she's also working the piano bar tonight, so if you sit there you'll be on her station."

"Thanks," he said, and made his way toward the piano bar.

The place was packed. He spotted only a couple of vacant tables in the whole club, and while there were a number of vacant stools at the main bar, there were only two at the piano bar. They were either side of a large black woman with an enormous bust who was wearing a low-cut white evening gown. She looked about forty and must have weighed two hundred pounds. The stool on her right was against the wall, and Linc took that.

The woman glanced at him, smiled and said, "Hi, honey."

"Hi," Linc said, smiling back.

He glanced around for Sandy Hatcher, but in the dim light it was impossible to tell one waitress from another if they were as much as a dozen feet away. He faced around again and looked at the piano player.

She wasn't playing at the moment. She was having a drink and chatting with a customer. She was a rather buxom but well-built woman in her mid-twenties and she wore the same transparent blouse and skimpy black velvet panties that the waitresses wore.

Linc was unaware that the direction of his gaze was so obvious until the big woman next to him chuckled and said, "This must be your first visit here, honey. Tuck your eyeballs back in. You'll see bigger ones in a moment."

Linc gave her an embarrassed glance, then grinned and said, "Bigger eyes, you mean? I was admiring her eyes."

The woman went into a paroxysm of laughter.

A voice behind Linc said, "Yes, sir?"

He swung around on his stool, then blinked when he was confronted by the most magnificent bare bosom he had ever seen. Or bare for all practical purposes. It was covered by the usual highly transparent gauze blouse.

It wasn't the biggest bosom he had ever seen; the woman seated next to him obviously had a bigger. But it was the most magnificent by far. For its size it was incredibly firm. The large globes thrust straight out, and even a little upward, instead of sagging as most mammae that size inevitably do.

Linc wrenched his gaze upward to her mechanical, customer-greeting smile.

"Hi, Sandy," he said. "You are Sandy, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir. What would you like to drink?"

"Just a beer. I stopped by your rooming house to see you the other night. Your landlady tell you?"

Her smile became less mechanical. "Oh, you're the friend of Gordie? She couldn't remember your name."

"Linc Hayes," he said.

"Glad to know you, Linc." She examined him a little more closely, then said in an apologetic voice, "I'll have to see your I.D. before I can bring you a beer, Linc."

He was used to that. One of the reasons he had been

chosen for the Mod Squad was that he looked under twenty-one. He took out his driver's license and handed it to her. She had to light a match to read it.

When she handed it back, she said, "Sorry, but you don't look your age. But don't knock it. In a few more years you'll be glad you don't."

"You got time to talk a little?" he asked.

"Maybe for a minute after I get your beer. I have a couple of other orders to pick up too."

She went away. The big woman said, "Told you you'd see some bigger ones. I can beat her for size, but they hit my knees when I take my bra off." She went into another gale of laughter at her own joke.

Linc merely grinned at her and made no comment.

Sandy delivered a couple of highballs to a nearby table, then came over with Linc's beer on a tray. When she gave him two quarters change out of a dollar bill, he dropped one quarter on the tray.

She said, "Thanks," lifted the beer from the tray and set it on the bar.

This involved momentarily squeezing between Linc and the oversized woman in the white gown, which thrust her bosom nearly into his face. She didn't seem to notice it, so he pretended not to either.

When she had deposited the beer and had stepped back, she said, "I can only talk for a minute. How'd you know Gordie?"

"We worked together at the Temple of Olympus. Matter of fact I got moved up into his job when he left. Didn't he ever mention me?"

She shook her head. "Not that I remember."

His gaze instinctively started to wander and he forced it upward to her face again. "We were pretty good buddies," he said. "I'd sure like to put my hands on the guy who hit him. You got any ideas?"

"If I had, I'd tell the fuzz," she said. "Listen, I can't talk any more now, but I get off at eleven. Can you stick around that long?"

"Sure."

"You got a car?"

"Uh-huh."

"Then you can drive me home and we'll talk then. Okay?"

"Fine," he said. "I'll be right here when you're ready."

Julie and Apollo lingered at their table, talking, until everyone else had left the dining room. When Dottie finally came over to ask if they wanted second cups of coffee Apollo said no without giving Julie a chance to refuse for herself. She looked at him quizzically as Dottie walked away.

"I didn't mean to make up your mind for you," he said, smiling at her. "I thought we could have a second cup in my apartment. I have some Martel to go with it there."

"Martel?" she said.

"Cognac. Do you like cognac and coffee?"

She didn't want to admit she had never tried it. She said, "Oh, yes."

"Then let's go," he said, rising.

As they went down the stairs, she said, "I'd like to go to my room and freshen up a bit first. What time is it?"

He glanced at his watch. "Nearly seven."

"Suppose we meet at your apartment at seven thirty?"

"All right," he agreed. "I'll be making coffee meantime. It takes twenty minutes anyway."

They parted at the foot of the stairs leading upward in the Tower of Hera, Apollo continuing down the hall to his apartment and Julie going upstairs.

When she entered her room, her blonde roommate was writing a letter. Audrey looked at Julie in surprise.

"I didn't expect you back so soon," she said. "I thought you'd be having coffee and cognac in Apollo's apartment."

"I'm going to," Julie said. "I just came up to freshen up a bit first."

The blonde girl lay down her pen. "After what we all told you about the guy?" she said reproachfully. "You know he'll get out of hand."

Julie gave her head a disagreeing shake. "I have the perfect defense against wolves, Audrey. Better even than your technique of getting mad."

"Yeah? What's that?"

"Laughter. When they get too amorous, I start laughing

my head off. You'd be surprised how fast that cools ardor. Sometimes they get sore, but they sure forget about love in a hurry."

After considering this, Audrey said with grudging admiration, "Yeah, I can see how it would work. Thanks for the tip. I'll try it next time I get backed into a corner. But you still take care."

"Oh, I intend to," Julie assured her. "Don't worry your little head about a thing."

At twenty-five minutes after seven Julie let herself into Linc's and Pete's room. She got out the leather case and set it on top of Pete's dresser. Opening it, she extended the antenna and switched on the radio. Taking the watch-sized bug from her purse, she turned it over to glance at the letter imprinted on its back, then pressed the frequency control push button lettered B. She also switched on the tape recorder, then dropped the bug into one of her two tunic pockets instead of returning it to her purse.

She started for the door, then halted and frowned back at the receiver, so openly in view in case someone happened to open the room's door. After glancing around, she went over and opened the closet door.

In their roles as drifters Pete and Linc had brought along so few clothes that it was nearly empty. Julie set the receiver on the floor of the closet and closed the door.

Downstairs the door to Apollo's apartment stood wide open. She paused in the doorway, saw him standing by a small, portable bar in the far corner, and went on in.

"Hi," he said with a smile. "The coffee's all made and I'm just trying to find the brandy glasses. Sit there," He pointed to a small sofa in the center of the room with its back to the bar. Before the sofa was a cocktail table containing two cups and saucers, two spoons, napkins and a sugar bowl.

Julie glanced around. Apollo hadn't bothered to carry out the Greek decor in his own apartment. It was comfortable furnished with masculine leather furniture and with book shelves along one wall. The front room was smaller than in Hera's apartment, and through an archway to the left which led into a short hallway, she could see that there were only two other rooms. She could see at an angle

through the door of the nearer one into a tiny kitchenette. The other she assumed was a bedroom. An open door at the end of the short hall led into a bathroom.

Instead of obeying his instruction to sit, Julie walked over to examine the book titles on the shelves. It wasn't interest in Apollo's literary tastes that sent her over there, though. The moment she walked in she had made a quick inventory of the room in order to pick an appropriate place to plant the bug. The bookcase had immediately struck her as the most feasible spot.

At random she pulled a book from the center shelf and opened it to the title page. She was rather surprised to see it was a *Materia Medica*. Then she remembered that Apollo had been a second-year pre-med student at UCLA when he was expelled.

She glanced over her shoulder to see Apollo holding up to the light two fragile-looking stemmed glasses he had just located on the bottom shelf of the portable bar. Apparently he was checking their cleanness. He wasn't looking her way.

Casually she brought the bug from her pocket, lay it in the space left by the book, then pushed the *Materia Medica* back into place.

She went over and sat on the left side of the sofa.

Behind her she heard the gurgle of liquid, a moment later Apollo set two glasses of clear amber fluid on the cocktail table.

"I left the coffeepot plugged in until you got here," he said. "Be right back."

He went into the kitchenette and immediately returned with an electric coffeepot. Sitting next to Julie, he poured both cups about three-fourths full.

"Do you like to sip your brandy and use coffee as a chaser, or pour it right in the coffee?" he asked.

Being an inexperienced drinker, Julie didn't have the slightest idea which way she liked it. She temporized by saying, "I thought it was cognac."

"It is," Apollo said with a smile. "Cognac is brandy. Brandy is the genus, cognac the species." He lifted her glass. "In your coffee?"

"All right," she said.

He tipped it into her coffee and emptied the other glass into his own cup.

"You won't need sugar drinking it that way," he said.

He picked up a spoon and stirred both cups. Then he lifted his cup and said, "Cheers."

Julie raised her cup in acknowledgment and took a sip.

CHAPTER 22

THE door into the apartment had remained open all this time, but as Julie finished her coffee, Apollo got up and closed it.

"More coffee?" he asked.

Julie shook her head.

"Just brandy by itself?"

"No thanks," she said. "I feel a little fuzzy around the edges on just one."

She was feeling a strange and extremely pleasant lassitude. She wasn't exactly drowsy. As a matter of fact her perceptions seemed to be heightened, yet she had a peculiarly detached feeling about what was going on around her, as though suddenly nothing really mattered very much. Apollo, standing just across the cocktail table from her, looking down at her, somehow seemed smaller and farther away, as though she were seeing him through reversed binoculars.

A single drink had never affected her so much before, she thought idly. Then a thought intruded into her euphoria. A single drink *couldn't* affect her like this.

With effort she rose to her feet. It didn't require physical effort, because she seemed to be in full control of her movements. It was the mental effort she had to exert, because it didn't seem all that important. It would have been so much more pleasant just to sit there. But one tiny corner of her brain was sending a faint, almost ignored

signal of alarm which prodded her just enough to decide she ought to get out of there.

It wasn't an urgent enough message to make her struggle when Apollo caught her halfway to the door. Taking her arm, he led her over to a deep leather chair with a floor lamp next to it. She made no resistance when he pushed her down into it.

She started to get up again when he left her to switch off the two other lighted lamps in the room, but he was back before she came all the way erect. At a gentle push on her shoulder she sat again and blinked up at him.

The lamp next to her chair, now the only light in the room, had an opaque shade and a covered top, so that all the light from its single dim bulb focused downward on her. Apollo was merely a shadowy form at the edge of the circle of light.

A small silver ball, about a half inch in diameter, attached to a six-inch silver chain, appeared in his hand. Letting the ball dangle about two feet in front of her face, he began to swing it rhythmically back and forth like a pendulum. Her gaze fixed on it.

"What did you put in my drink?" she asked almost indifferently. The question wasn't prompted by concern, but only by a vague and not very consuming curiosity.

In a soothing voice he said, "You don't really care, do you, my dear? Just watch the little ball and concentrate on my voice. Do you really care what I put in your drink, Julie?"

"No," she said, not dully, but in a strangely empty voice.

In the same soothing, singsong voice he said, "Then I can tell you now, because it doesn't really matter what I say to you from here on. All that matters is my tone and your concentration on the sound and your visual attention on the little swinging ball. Keep your eyes fixed on the ball and I'll tell you what I put in your drink, even though you don't care. Are you going to keep your eyes on the pretty ball, Julie?"

"Yes," she said in the same empty voice.

"That's a good girl. I gave you a little scopolamine, my dear, probably better known to you as Twilight Sleep. It won't hurt you any, but it helps enormously in hypnosis.

You are becoming a little sleepy now, aren't you, Julie? Are you becoming sleepy?"

"Yes."

"You will not go to sleep, though, Julie. Your body will remain awake and your mind will remain attuned to mine. You will obey all orders I give you. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

He stopped the ball from swinging and dropped it in his tunic pocket. When he passed his right palm before Julie's face, she stared straight ahead, unblinking.

"Arise," he said, stepping back.

Julie obediently rose from the chair.

"Get down on your knees."

She sank to her knees before him.

"Repeat after me: you are my master and I am your slave."

"You are my master and I am your slave," she said tonelessly.

"I will obey all orders you give me, no matter what, without question."

"I will obey all orders you give me, no matter what, without question," she repeated.

His tone changed slightly. "All right, Julie. You may rise."

She came to her feet and stood looking sightlessly straight ahead. Apollo went over to the door, cracked it and glanced out into the hall. Then he opened it the rest of the way and said to Julie, "Come here."

Obediently she went over to him. He had her wait in the hall while he locked the apartment door from outside. Then he said, "Follow me," and led her to the steps descending to the cellar.

He went down the steps with Julie behind him, switched on the lights of the passageway beneath the courtyard and led her to the locked gate barring the passage to the cellar of the Tower of Apollo. She stood in a zombie-like trance as he worked the combination of the padlock, opened the gate and told her to go through. She waited again while he switched on the lights in this passage and turned them off in the other one.

After locking the gate from inside, he said again, "Fol-

low me," and walked toward the cellar beneath the Tower of Apollo.

Linc dawdled over his beer until ten o'clock, then made a second last him until eleven. Meantime he became better acquainted with the hefty woman next to him, who was also drinking beer, though not so slowly. He bought her several drinks. He had no desire to extend the relationship beyond barroom conversation, however. When the pianist finished her drink and resumed playing, the woman asked if he would like to dance.

Linc told a lie. He said he didn't know how.

At eleven exactly Sandy Hatcher appeared dressed to go home. She was wearing the same microskirt outfit he had seen her in the night Gordon Pace died.

"I'm all ready," she announced.

"Thanks for the drinks, honey," the large woman in white called after him as he escorted Sandy to the door.

"Am I breaking something up?" Sandy asked with an amused grin.

"Probably the romance of the century," he said with mock resignation. "But I can always come back another time and hope she hasn't been picked off by some other stud."

As he held the door for the girl to climb in the station wagon, he said, "Hey, don't you have luggage? Didn't you come straight to work from the bus depot?"

"The girl friend who picked me up ran it home for me," Sandy said.

"Oh." He closed the door, rounded to the other one and got in. "Straight home?" he asked.

"Well, I've had a long day, Linc. And I'm really not in the mood for celebrating. Gordie's funeral is the day after tomorrow. The morgue didn't release him until today."

"I understand," he said. "I'll take you home."

It was only a few blocks to her rooming house. He parked in front and cut the engine and lights.

"Did you know Gordie real well?" she asked.

He felt a little ashamed of himself for deluding her, but the arrest of a murderer might depend on the deception. "Sure," he said. "I told you we were buddies."

"Did he talk much about me?" she asked wistfully.

Gordie had talked to Andre Dumont about her, so it wasn't exactly a lie when he said, "Sure. How do you think I knew about you?"

"What did he say about me?"

"Well, he thought a lot of you."

Her tone became a little hesitant. "Ma Rooney—my landlady—always said he was making a fool of me, that he never really intended to marry me. Because we postponed the wedding so many times, you know. But it was because he kept losing his job every time we got ready. He did really want to marry me, didn't he?"

It didn't hurt to tell a white lie, and besides it might not be a lie. "Ma Rooney is nuts," he said with assurance. "Of course he wanted to marry you."

She emitted a little sigh. "Gee, I'm glad you came to see me, Linc. I was really crazy about Gordie."

That succeeded in making him feel like a heel. Maybe he wasn't cut out to be a cop after all, he thought. But as long as he was already up to his ears in deceit, he decided he might as well go the rest of the way.

He said, "Gordie tell you about the five hundred he knocked down from Hera?"

She gave him a surprised look. "Did he tell *you* about it too?"

Pay dirt, he thought. He said casually. "Sure. Gordie and I didn't have any secrets."

"He was going to put it away and we were going to use it for a honeymoon as soon as he got another job," she said.

"He tell you the details of how he got it?"

She nodded.

As though the thought had just occurred to him, he said, "Hey, you think that might have something to do with him getting shot?"

For several seconds she didn't say anything. Then she said, "You mean Hera—"

When she let it hang, he said, "Or somebody hired by her, maybe. After all, he did have something on her."

"But not all that much, Linc. He really didn't know what it meant. He just took a chance that it was something she

wouldn't want the fuzz to know, and she bit. He bluffed her out of that five hundred."

"Sure, but Hera didn't know it was a bluff. How much did he tell you about it?"

"Why, all he knew, I guess."

"Let's compare notes. Tell me everything he told you, then I'll tell you what he told me."

"All right," she agreed. "You know how he overheard the call, don't you?"

Linc knew that much from what Pete had told him. "Uh-huh. He was outside her window."

She nodded. "Trimming a jasmine bush, he said. It was about 2:30—an hour and a half before that girl shot him—that the Reverend Zeus came storming past him. Gordie didn't see where he came from, because he didn't notice him until he was already past, but he could see he was mad as a hornet. He went into the tower and Gordie heard him slam the door of his apartment. Then, through the window, he heard him tell Hera to come into the bedroom because he wanted to talk to her. Gordie suspected from his tone that he'd noticed Gordie outside the window and didn't want him to overhear. Apparently, from what happened later, he never mentioned to Hera that Gordie was there, though. Did he tell you all this too?"

"Not in such detail," Linc said. "Go on."

"Gordie couldn't hear anything said in the bedroom, but finally he heard them walk back in the living room. Hera said, 'No, I'd better make the call. You're too upset to make yourself understood.' Gordie got the impression from her tone that Zeus hadn't been mad at her, but had merely been telling her whatever it was that made him blow his lid. I guess you know about the phone call."

"Tell me anyway," Linc said. "There may be parts he left out when he told me."

"Well, you know where her phone is, on that table right by the window?"

"Uh-huh."

"Hera sat down there, directly facing the window, and Gordie ducked to one side so she wouldn't see him. He could still see the phone in her hands from where he was, though. Her back was to the room, blocking Zeus' view."

Gordie saw her depress the cut-off buttons as she dialed *O*. She pretended to ask the operator for the police, then pretended to be talking to a desk sergeant. She explained who she was, said her husband had discovered something of interest to the police and asked that a police car be sent immediately. When she hung up, she said to Zeus that the police would come to the reception desk, so they ought to go over there and wait for them. That's in another tower, but I forget what it's called."

"The Tower of Zeus," Linc said.

"Yes, that's it. Now what did Gordie tell you?"

"Nothing he didn't tell you," Linc said truthfully. "I can't add a thing."

"Do you have any more idea than Gordie did of what it was all about?"

Linc did have a vague idea, but he didn't want to take the time to discuss it. He said, "No, but it seems to me to give Hera a motive."

Suddenly the girl's eyes widened, she turned and clutched Linc's arm. "Something just hit me."

"What?"

"I forgot all about it until just now. I don't know how I could have, except I was running my legs off when Gordie told me and was only half listening, and then him dying was such a shock, I just couldn't think about anything."

"What is it?" Linc asked.

"A little after nine Wednesday evening—just about an hour and a half before he was shot—he stopped by the club for a minute. I was so busy, I didn't have time to talk, but he said our honeymoon fund was going to grow even bigger. He said he had to go home and wait for a delivery."

"He didn't explain what he meant?"

She shook her head. "As I said, I was running so hard at the time, I only half listened, and I never thought of it again until just now. But do you suppose he phoned Hera and upped the ante?"

Linc took several seconds to answer. Then he said slowly, "It fits. Maybe she promised to send him more money, and sent a couple of bullets instead."

CHAPTER 23

It was ten minutes before midnight when Linc got back to the Temple. Hera's red sports car, with Pete driving, half the distance to the rear of the courtyard. Hera's car port was only the second one from the Tower of Apollo. came through the arched gate when Linc had driven about By the time Linc had parked and had walked back to the entrance of the Tower of Hera, Pete and Hera had been inside for some time and her front-room lights were on.

As Linc entered the building, Pete was tiptoeing past the closed door of Hera's apartment from the direction of Apollo's apartment. He motioned Linc to be silent, took him by the arm and led him outside again. He urged him over into the first car port, where the limousine was parked, and back into the shadowed rear of the port.

"You slipping your mooring, man?" Linc inquired. "Where were you coming from in there?"

"I was listening at the door of Apollo's flat, just to make sure the Sunday-school lesson wasn't taking place there. There isn't a sound from it. I'm pretty sure it's in the basement of the Tower of Apollo."

"So what are we doing here?"

"Waiting for Hera to go by, so we can follow her. She's going to the Sunday-school meeting."

"You mean she told you?" Linc asked in surprise.

"Of course not. But all evening she's been looking at her watch and jittering like a bride kept waiting at the church. The later it got, the more she fidgeted, and finally she developed the headache I was going to and had me bring her home. Apollo was right. She just can't stay away from these meetings. Incidentally, I think you're wrong. I don't think they're poker games."

"I don't either any more," Linc said. "But what made you decide?"

Before answering, Pete walked to the front of the car port to glance out, then returned to the rear. "Just checking her front-room lights," he said. "They're still on. The

reason I figure it's no poker game is that I can't imagine Hera having such a compulsion to get back just for that. You should have seen her. She was going through such a mental struggle, I almost felt sorry for her."

"There's such a thing as a compulsive gambler."

Pete shook his head. "Compulsive gamblers subconsciously like to lose. According to what we overheard, Hera makes a profit out of whatever this is. Anyway, both she and Apollo agreed it wasn't just the money that interested her. Some more powerful attraction draws her to these so-called Sunday-school meetings. Maybe Julie's guess was right. Maybe they're some kind of junkie parties, and Hera was just having withdrawal pains tonight."

"I don't think so," Linc disagreed. "I've got it figured out that these meetings have something to do with those missing girls. I think they *are* in the cellar of the Tower of Apollo, but I don't think they're buried. I think they're being kept prisoner."

Pete stared at him in the darkness. "Who'd you say was slipping his mooring?"

"I figured it all out on the way home, buddy-boy. Gordie Pace told his girl friend what it was he had on Hera, and tonight she told me. It adds up real weird."

"What did Gordie overhear?"

Linc repeated the tale Sandy Hatcher had told him. When he finished, he said, "Here's how I reasoned it out on the way home. The thing that upset Zeus was that he found the girls locked up in the cellar of the Tower of Apollo."

"If you reasoned that from the data you just gave me, your computer's broken," Pete interrupted.

"You'll see how I figured it out in a minute. For the sake of argument, let's just assume it right now. Okay?"

"All right," Pete agreed. "For the sake of argument."

"I figure that somehow Zeus got in the cellar and found the girls in dungeon cells, but that he didn't have keys to the cells. Otherwise he would have let them out before calling the cops. Logical?"

"Extremely," Pete agreed with pointed sarcasm.

"I don't pretend to know why Apollo has a cellar full of female prisoners, but obviously Hera is in on the plot. Zeus didn't know that, though. He came to her to blow his lid

about her brother holding the girls prisoner and announced he was calling the police. We already know how Hera handled that. On the way home I figured out why. By holding those girls prisoner, she and Apollo are guilty of kidnapping. She decided her husband had to be shut up fast. So all the time he had her in the bedroom, telling her what he'd discovered, her wheels were turning. And she came up with a fast plot. Remember Penny Chard testified that Hera came over to the Tower of Zeus five minutes after her husband arrived?"

"Uh-huh."

"She used that five minutes to run see Apollo and tell him what he had to do. Apollo in turn briefed Max. He's in on this too, you know."

"In on what?"

"Everything. You certainly must realize it was Max who hit Gordie Pace. Gordie phoned Hera and upped the ante. Hera told him she'd send Max with the payoff, only she told Max to pay off with his gun. It had to be Max. The bug in Hera's apartment clears both her and Apollo."

"How about the limousine's radiator being cold?"

"I figured that out. What dope would use wheels as attention-getting as that limousine on a hit assignment? Max would want a car nobody would notice or remember, which rules out Hera's red sports car too. My guess is he used Apollo's black Chevy sedan. We should have checked its radiator."

After thinking this over, Pete nodded. "I'll buy that. Okay, so Max is a hired heavy. To get back to the afternoon Zeus and the Turner girl died, Apollo briefed Max about what?"

"About the story to give the cops when he was questioned. Max never picked up Elizabeth Turner at the bus depot, because she had never been away from here. My guess is they did something like stuff her in a laundry bag or roll her in a rug and stow her in the trunk of the limousine. Max drove down the road a way, unwrapped her, put her in the back seat, handed her that thirty-eight automatic, turned around and drove her back here. Apollo timed things so that he arrived on the scene just in time to shut up the girl after she shot the Reverend Zeus. They set

the thing up in the Tower of Zeus because they knew Penny would be there as a witness. You and Julie arriving as additional witnesses was an unexpected bonus. Zeus, of course, was not expecting the girl. He was waiting for the cops who had never really been called to arrive."

When Linc finished, Pete examined him with wonder. "There's a minor hole in that theory about the size of the gate in the front wall."

"What?"

"How did Apollo induce Elizabeth to commit this little murder for him?"

"Well, there may be a few loose ends," Linc conceded. "But my reconstruction of what happened fits the evidence."

"The question I just asked is the only loose end I can see," Pete said. "But that's loose enough to blow your whole case apart. If Elizabeth was held captive here for three weeks, it couldn't have endeared her captors to her, could it?"

"Well, I don't think I'd be very fond of anybody who did it to me."

"Now, after caging her up in a dark dungeon for all that time, they hand her a gun and tell her to go shoot Zeus. You know what she would have done with that gun?"

Linc rubbed his forehead. "Well, I know what I'd have done with it," he admitted reluctantly.

"You're damned right. She would have leveled it at Max and ordered him to drive her to the nearest precinct station."

"I thought of that," Linc said. "It still has to have happened roughly the way I said, give or take a few details, because nothing else fits. I don't know what pressure Apollo used to force the girl to act, but I'm convinced he somehow made her do what he wanted. Maybe he had something on her that would send her to prison. Maybe he had her boy friend down in that cellar too, and threatened to kill him unless she obeyed orders. It could be any of a number of things."

Pete shook his head, still unconvinced. "One other minor detail, Linc. Where's your evidence that the other girls are being held prisoner down there?"

"No evidence, buddy-boy, just applied logic. They all disappeared in the same mysterious manner, didn't they? And now that we know where Max stands, his testimony that he drove all of them to the bus depot at different times is meaningless. I'll twist your question around and bounce it back at you. If Elizabeth *was* a prisoner here, what makes you think the other girls aren't?"

"Well, if I become convinced that Elizabeth was a prisoner. I'd be inclined to suspect the others are down in that cellar. But for cripes sake, Linc, some of them turned up missing as long as six months ago."

"So they've been down there six months."

Pete gave his head another unbelieving shake, then walked to the front of the car port again.

"Hey, her lights are out," he called softly.

He remained there watching, ready to draw back into the shadows the moment Hera appeared. When about a minute had passed with nothing happening, he said in a disgusted voice, **"You know what? I'm dumb."**

Linc moved forward too, and peered around him at the darkened windows. **"Yeah, Julie and I noticed that, but we never mentioned it because we thought you might be sensitive."**

Ignoring the comment, Pete said, **"She's obviously not coming this way. I'll bet she took the passage beneath the courtyard."**

Linc lightly slapped his own forehead with the heel of his hand. **"I'm dumb too. I didn't think of that either."**

"Well, we can take the underground route too," Pete said. **"Maybe Hera left the gate unlocked. If she didn't, maybe we can find something in your tool room to crack the lock with."**

"There is something," Linc told him. **"There's a bolt cutter with three-foot handles. It ought to snip through that lock like cutting spaghetti with a scissors."**

They took a final look at Hera's darkened windows, then left the car port and went back inside the tower. As they started to pass the staircase leading upward en route to the cellar stairs just beyond it, Linc came to a halt.

"Hey, we told Julie we'd be back before midnight to

check out the Sunday-school meeting. She's probably waiting up for us. Don't you think we ought to include her in?"

Pete glanced at his watch. "Well, it's only two minutes after twelve, so things are just starting. I guess we've got time to get her."

He changed direction and started to mount the stairs. Linc followed after him.

CHAPTER 24

A MINUTE or two passed after Pete rapped on the door of Julie's and Audrey's room before it cracked open about six inches. Audrey's face appeared in the opening, but the rest of her remained behind the door. Her blonde hair was mussed and her eyes were only half open.

"What do you want?" she asked sleepily. "You can't come in. I'm in my nightgown."

"Sorry we woke you up," Pete said. "We wanted Julie."

Audrey switched on the light switch next to the door and her face disappeared from the opening as she turned to glance toward Julie's bed. Then it reappeared again and suddenly she was wide awake.

"Oh, my goodness, she still isn't back," she said. "I don't like that."

"Why?" Linc asked sharply.

"Because she went to Apollo's apartment after dinner for brandy and coffee. I hope he hasn't talked her into what I hope he hasn't talked her into."

Pete and Linc looked at each other, then Linc had a sudden thought and glanced along the hallway at the closed door to their own room. Pete caught what he was thinking: it would be pretty silly if Julie were waiting for them in their room.

Pete said to Audrey, "Don't worry about it. They're probably just watching TV or something."

"TV I wouldn't worry about. It's the something that gets

me nervous. I've got a good mind to go down there and see what's going on."

The last thing they wanted was Audrey running about the halls raising an alarm, particularly if Julie were waiting in their room, because it would be difficult to explain her presence there.

To quiet her down Pete said, "Linc and I will check it out, Audrey. We'll drop downstairs to pay Apollo a social call. It's after midnight, but if Julie's still there, he'll still be up." After a pause he added, "I hope."

The blonde's worried look cleared. "Will you do that? I'll sleep better."

"Sure," Pete said. "Go on back to bed. Sorry we woke you up."

"It's all right. Goodnight, fellows."

Her door closed and Pete and Linc hurried on to their room. Linc made the door first and threw it open. Pete crowded in behind him. The light was on but the room was empty.

"Maybe she left a note," Linc said. "She's been here, or at least somebody has, because I didn't leave the light on."

They looked on top of both dressers and on the small writing table. There was no note.

"I don't like this," Linc said. "Let's hit that underground passage."

"Better take along a flashlight," Pete said. "I don't think we ought to switch on any lights down there."

He opened the bottom drawer of his dresser and took out a flashlight. On the verge of closing the drawer again, he halted and stared into it.

"Hey, the receiver is missing!"

Linc went over to peer into the drawer. He glanced around the room, then stooped to look under each bed. Pete walked over to the closet and opened the door.

"Here it is," he announced. "With the antenna up and set to channel B. The tape recorder is on too, and the tape's run all the way out. She must have turned it on before she went to Apollo's apartment, because it's a two-hour tape."

Pete lifted the machine from the closet floor, put it on his dresser and ran the tape back to its beginning. He

switched it to playback, turned the speed control knob to as fast as it would go and let it run at that speed until there was the garbled sound of conversation too rapid-paced to be understandable. He stopped the tape then, backed it up a little and replayed it at normal speed.

Apollo's voice said, "Hi. The coffee's all made and I'm just trying to find the brandy glasses. Sit there."

There was no reply. As the silence lengthened, Linc said, "She must be wandering around looking the place over. We'll be here all night if we listen to a replay of the whole evening. Speed it up, then slow down to catch a word or two now and then until you hit something interesting."

Pete adjusted the speed to fast again. He let a couple of speeded up exchanges of conversation go by, the voices again too rapid to comprehend, then slowed the speed to normal again.

Apollo's voice said, "Just brandy by itself?"

"No thanks," Julie's voice said. "I feel a little fuzzy around the edges on just one."

Pete turned up the speed for a few moments, then reduced it again.

Apollo's voice, low-toned and persuasive, was saying "—eyes on the pretty ball, Julie?"

"Yes," Julie's voice said in an oddly empty tone.

"That's a good girl. I gave you a little scopolamine, my dear, probably better known to you as Twilight Sleep. It won't hurt you any, but it helps enormously in hypnosis. You are becoming a little sleepy now, aren't you, Julie? Are you becoming sleepy?"

Pete and Linc listened with a mixture of fascination and growing rage to the rest of the tape. The last sound on it was the door closing as Apollo and Julie left the apartment.

Pete switched off the recorder and headed for the door. Linc was right behind him. As they went down the stairs three at a time, Linc said, "Now do you understand how Apollo got that girl to kill for him?"

"Don't talk, just run!" Pete said.

At the bottom of the stairs Pete grabbed the stair post, swung himself around it to the top of the cellar stairs and headed down them without even breaking stride. Linc made a similar dirt-track turn right behind him.

The oaken door at the bottom of the stairs was closed but not locked. Pete banged it back against the wall and kept going. He switched on the flashlight because the passageway lights weren't on.

The gate at the end of this passage was standing open, but the one blocking the way to the cellar of the Tower of Apollo was closed and locked. The gate guarding the way to the Tower of Zeus was open, however. After pausing only long enough to make sure the gate they were interested in was securely padlocked, they raced toward the cellar of the Tower of Zeus.

In the tool room under the upstairs lobby Linc snapped on the overhead light, then ran over to the tool bench. Jerking open its bottom drawer, he lifted out a peculiar looking contrivance. The cutting jaws weren't much larger than those of a large pair of pliers, but the handles were nearly a yard long.

Leaving the drawer wide open and the light on, they raced back the way they had come. When they got to the locked gate, Pete held the flashlight on the combination padlock.

Linc pushed the tip of one of the bolt-cutter's blades inside the loop made by the shackle of the lock. With his other hand he pressed the handles together just enough to grip the shackle with the blades just above the barrel. Then he transferred his first hand to the handles also, gripping one handle in each hand near its very end. Slowly he squeezed both handles together.

The blades of the bolt-cutter were made of cobalt steel, ground to a knife edge. They were geared to the handles so that enormous pressure was exerted when the handles were squeezed together. They were designed to cut the relatively soft steel of bolts, however, not hardened steel such as padlock shackles are made of. Linc's neck muscles bunched with strain and sweat popped out on his forehead.

Then, all at once, the handles closed together and the blades bit through the steel. Linc dropped the cutters on the floor, turned the severed shackle, jerked the lock loose and tossed it aside. Pete swung the gate open and they both headed along the passageway at a dead run.

Halfway along the passageway they slowed to a walk

and Pete switched off the flashlight when they saw the glow of light ahead.

The light proved to come from the curving corridor which circled the central room of the cellar. Its ceiling lights were on.

Seeing no one and hearing nothing, Pete and Linc warily kept going. They passed two dungeon cells on the right, both with their doors partially open. Pete flashed his light inside each. Both were empty.

Then they came to the first door on the left leading into the large central room. It was closed. Both boys put their ears to the door, but at first heard nothing. Pete was going to try the latch when a muffled, singsong voice filtered through the door. The words were too muted by the thick wood for either Pete or Linc to make them out.

Pete glanced up at the ceiling lights of the passageway. In a low voice he said, "Those ought to be off before we try to peek in."

Linc started back toward the light switches, but Pete grabbed his arm. "Maybe one of the other two doors is open," he whispered. "From inside they could see the passage lights go out and they'd know somebody was out here."

"Let's circle around and check," Linc whispered back.

Pete glanced at the ceiling again. "Dousing one either side of the door would do it," he said. "Just give me a piggy-back ride."

Shrugging, Linc turned his back and crouched. Pete vaulted onto his shoulders. Linc straightened again and walked back a few paces until he was directly beneath a light. Pete reached up and unscrewed the bulb just enough to darken it.

Link moved over beneath the first light the other side of the door. When Pete had unscrewed that, the portion of the hall near the door was in almost complete darkness because the nearest bulbs still lighted were around the curves in either direction and out of sight.

Linc crouched again and Pete dropped from his shoulders.

Pete kneeled in front of the door and Linc leaned over him from behind, ready to peer into the room also when

Pete cracked open the door. Pete slowly depressed the latch until there was a barely audible click, then pulled the door open about an inch.

He instantly closed it again when he saw the candlelit face of Apollo looking straight at him from the center of the room.

The only lighting in the room had been from two huge candles, and the glimpse the boys got had been too brief for them to make out very much other than Apollo's face. But they had gotten an impression of a number of kneeling female figures with their backs to them, and of a number of kneeling male figures aligned either side of Apollo, facing them. They had also gotten an impression of a slightly raised platform between the two groups, with something shaped like a daybed at one side of it.

Pete whispered, "Doesn't look as though they're doing anything very drastic yet. Let's go around and try the door opposite this one. The backs of Apollo and all those other guys will be to us then."

Linc nodded silent agreement.

They continued along the curving corridor. They passed one more dungeon cell, also empty. Then, just before they came to the second door into the central room, located halfway around the circle between the door they had peeked into and the one they were heading for, they came to a cell which had been startlingly renovated.

It looked like a Hollywood version of a harem room. There was a thick oriental rug on the floor. The stone walls were hidden by heavy silken drapes. Colorful cushions were strewn about and there was a low, oriental style table with a number of magazines on it. There was a soft-looking sleeping pad with an eiderdown quilt.

There were also a couple of western touches. In one corner was a portable TV set. In another was a small, doored commode with a towel rack on one side of it and an old-fashioned basin and water pitcher on top of it. Linc went over to open the door and look inside.

It contained a chamber pot.

"I apologize for ever doubting your deductive genius," Pete whispered to Linc. "He has been keeping them prisoner down here, but kind of in luxury."

There were two more cells between the second door into the central room and the last door into it, another two cells beyond that. They looked into all of them and found them furnished in the same exotic fashion.

✱

CHAPTER 25

WHEN they had looked into the last room, Pete gestured toward the ceiling and whispered, "Time to play horsey again."

Linc crouched and again Pete mounted his shoulders. When Pete had darkened the bulbs either side of the door, Linc stooped again and let him down.

As before Pete knelt next to the edge of the door and Linc stood just behind him. Pete carefully pressed down on the latch until it released, then cracked the door open an inch.

What they were looking in on, both boys realized after studying the scene for a few moments, was a black mass.

Their glimpse through the other door had been too brief to take in any details, but now they saw that a set of small, satanic horns were fixed to Apollo's temples. His only garment was a pair of tight, skimpy black shorts with a stubby black tail ending in a barb protruding from the rear.

Apollo was the only person in the room standing erect. The six men who had checked in that afternoon knelt alongside of him, three on either side. At first glance in the dim light the boys got the startling impression that they were naked, but now they saw that each wore a brief loin cloth.

Facing the men from a dozen feet away were six kneeling women in gauzy, semi-transparent robes through which the white of their flesh and the soft contours of their bodies could be dimly seen.

The girl farthest left was small, slim, with brown hair, and was only about nineteen. From the descriptions they

had of the missing girls, she had to be Linda Forester. Next to her was a much taller and more solidly built girl with red hair and green eyes. Therese Dean was the only redhead on the list of missing girls.

Hera was next to her and Julie knelt next to Hera.

Then came a girl even shorter than Linda Forester, with light brown hair and a plump, rounded figure. She had to be Martha Wright. That left only Gladys Pender, and the last girl fitted her description. Blonde and blue-eyed and the tallest one there, at perhaps five feet eight, she was also the oldest and slimmest. According to her description she was twenty-four and weighed only a hundred and eight pounds.

Five of the women, including Julie, were staring at Apollo with trancelike expressions on their faces. Hera's gaze was roaming lecherously over the nearly nude bodies of the six men. It seemed to linger longest on two of them, between whom she equally divided her attention.

One was the man named Jack Gresset, the sturdily-built, rather handsome fifty-year-old who had impressed the boys as so well preserved when they first saw him. The other was Bill Ross, the youngest and best looking man in the group.

The platform between the two groups was about eight feet square and was raised about a foot from the floor. The thing on one side of it which was shaped like a day bed, they could now see was a low altar about six feet long. Both it and the platform were covered with black material, and on the front of the altar was painted a large phallic symbol in crimson.

At either end of the altar was a huge silver candlestick about two and a half feet high, decorated with blood-red stones. A tall red candle four inches thick burned in each, furnishing the room's only illumination.

By the flickering light of the candles the boys could see that the stone walls of the room were covered by heavy drapes of black silk on which were painted in deep crimson numerous lewd symbols. Spaced around the walls at intervals were sleeping pads similar to those in the harem rooms.

At the moment the six kneeling men were passing a

heavy silver goblet which must have held at least a quart of liquid from hand to hand, each quaffing from it deeply before passing it on. When the last man, who happened to be the thick-bodied and thick-necked Forward, had drunk from it, he rose, carried it to Apollo, then returned to kneel again in his former place.

Apollo barely touched the goblet to his own lips in a symbolic gesture of joining in the toast which obviously put little or none of the fluid down his throat. Then, extending the goblet before him at arms' length, he walked slowly forward, mounted the platform and set the goblet before the altar with a gesture of ritualistic formality. He returned to his place just as slowly, turned around to face the women again and raised both arms upward at a forty-five-degree angle, palms down.

"Noble Prince of Darkness, King of Evil, come forth from Hell to join us in our revel," he intoned. "Grace us with your Satanic presence, or if that is not possible, at least imbue us with your spirit, so that in spirit we may plunge to the depths of your domain."

Apollo paused, as though waiting for the devil to appear, when he failed to materialize, spread his arms sidewise over the heads of the men kneeling either side of him, as though offering them a satanic benediction.

He said, "Let us now offer up together the secret mystic prayer of the dead which has been handed down from black priest to black priest since his Satanic Majesty first appointed his emissaries of Hell on this earth."

In unison, with Apollo leading, the men recited a cabalistic chant which may have had some meaning to the worshippers of the black mass, but was totally meaningless to Pete and Linc. It went on for perhaps a minute, recited in a deep, singsong tone which had a vaguely hypnotic effect. Then the chant ended and Apollo dropped his arms to his sides.

In a commanding tone he said, "Julie Barnes!"

"Yes, master," Julie said with toneless subservience.

"Rise, initiate into the cult of Satan."

Julie rose to her feet.

"Step forward and face the altar."

Moving like a robot, Julie walked forward, mounted the platform and did a right face toward the altar.

"Are you ready to offer yourself in sacrifice?" Apollo asked.

"Yes, master."

"Place yourself upon the altar."

Julie approached the altar and lay down upon it on her back, legs stretched out straight and with her arms at her sides.

Apollo again raised his arms high. Sonorously he intoned, "Let there be a sign to denote which of these worshippers shall be designated for the honor of initiating this new goddess of love into the cult of Satan."

A sign immediately came. The paunchy man named Drom said in a husky voice, "Two hundred dollars."

The man named Lake instantly said, "Three hundred."

One of the other men started to offer a bid, but the paunchy Drom, apparently tired of fooling around, beat him to it by saying in a challenging voice, "Seven hundred!"

Pete turned his head to glance upward at Linc. The latter nodded in indication that he had heard enough and thought it time to go into action. Pete rose to his feet, gripped the edge of the door and jerked it wide open so hard that it crashed against the outer wall with a bang which swung every male head in the room around their way.

At that moment the beam of a flashlight was directed over them from behind. Both boys looked over their shoulders.

Max Hitler stood six feet away, the flashlight in his left hand, a forty-five army automatic in his right. Moving toward them, he used the gun to gesture them ahead of him into the room.

When Max halted in the doorway, Pete and Linc halted too, about three feet in front of him.

Apollo hissed at Max, "You damned fool, don't bring them in here! Get them out of here and I'll deal with them later."

Pete said, "Better take a look at our wallets before you brush us off, Swartz. You're not just fooling with a couple of drifters. You've netted a pair of cops."

Apollo stared at them. For several seconds there was no sound or movement in the room. None of the women except Hera had moved anyway, the four kneeling with her continuing to gaze straight ahead in hypnotic trances and Julie remaining quietly on her back on the altar. Hera had come to her feet, however, and the men had also all risen to theirs and were gawking at the uninvited guests.

Now Hera ran over to the wall and flipped the switch which turned on the overhead light. In the sudden glare the six men looked at each other uneasily, all at once self-conscious about their near nudity. As yet they didn't seem to fully comprehend what was going on, however. The silver goblet must have contained some kind of drug, because their eyes all had a faint glassiness about them.

Apollo was also spurred to action by the light going on. He strode over behind Pete and Linc, being careful not to get between them and Max's gun. He plucked the wallet from Pete's hip pocket first, then withdrew Linc's. He backed away from them a few feet before opening the wallets.

When he saw the badges pinned inside both, he flung them to the floor and glared at the two police officers in outrage.

"Julie's a cop too," Pete announced cheerfully. "Not the poor friendless kid you thought she was."

Apollo turned his glare toward the motionless girl lying on the altar.

"You really blew it this time, Swartz," Pete continued in the same cheerful voice. "You thought you had another homeless and friendless nobody who no one would ever come looking for if she dropped out of sight. But some five thousand members of LAPD are going to come looking for Julie if she doesn't reappear damned fast. They're going to come looking for all of us."

Apollo turned to the six men in loin cloths, who still stood gaping around uneasily. "The party's over for tonight," he snapped. "Go back to your rooms as quietly as possible."

Before any of the men could react to this, Pete drawled, "I don't think you gentlemen would be wise just to walk off and try to forget this situation. As of this moment I suspect

none of you are guilty of anything more serious than participating in sex orgies, or, by the appearance of your eyes, possibly being under the influence of illegal drugs. But if you walk out of here and leave us with Apollo, Hera and Max, you're quite likely to end up defending yourselves in court as accessory to the murder of three cops."

The situation began to penetrate their drugged minds, and one or two looked frightened.

The bald, thick-necked Forward said, "Look here, Apollo, what do you intend to do?"

Apollo suddenly blew his stack. In a roaring voice he bawled, "Never mind what I'm going to do! Get out of here and go back to your rooms! Now!"

From the corner of his vision Linc, who was closest to Max, saw that this outburst had momentarily diverted the chauffeur's attention. Spinning, he took one step and punted the gun from Max's hand.

CHAPTER 26

THE gun flew high in the air, arced toward the center of the room and landed just this side of the raised platform.

Apollo reacted first. The gun was still in the air when he started a dash for where it was going to come down. Pete thrust out a leg, Apollo tripped over it, grabbed Pete's ankle as he went down and jerked Pete off balance too.

Meantime Max was swinging a roundhouse right at Linc, who bent his knees to duck under it. His own momentum spun Max clear around to expose his back to Linc.

Linc took unfair advantage by smashing a hard rabbit punch behind the man's right ear. Max dropped face down with a crash.

Pete and Apollo simultaneously bounced erect. Apollo came in swinging.

Pete wasn't about to stand toe-to-toe and slug it out with a man who outweighed him forty pounds. He ducked two

wild swings, then sneaked out both hands to get a grip on Apollo's right wrist, swung his back to him and heaved him over his shoulder.

Apollo made a whooshing noise as his back hit the floor and the wind was driven from him.

Linc, watching Pete's maneuver, noticed Hera scrambling toward the fallen gun a fraction of a second too late. He made a dive for it too, but she got there first.

Pete swung in that direction as Hera came to her feet no more than a yard from him, clutching the gun in her hand. The muzzle centered on Linc's stomach and the black youth instinctively braced himself for the bullet.

Pete took one long step and threw a left hook that didn't travel more than a foot. It caught Hera flush on the edge of the jaw and knocked her cold.

Pete grabbed up the gun and swung his gaze about the room. The six men in loin cloths had all scattered out of the way when the action started, and were spaced around the room near the walls. The four kneeling girls were still in hypnotic trances, impervious to all the violence going on about them, and Julie still lay unmoving on the altar. Max lay unconscious, face down, and Hera sprawled ungracefully on her back.

Apollo had groggily rolled over on his stomach and had pushed himself to hands and knees. Pete went over and leveled the gun at his left ear.

In a deadly voice Pete said, "Now snap these girls out of their trances or I'll blow your head off!"

Apollo climbed the rest of the way to his feet and looked at Pete blearily. What he saw in Pete's face decided him to obey instantly.

Clapping his hands together, he said in a sharp tone, "Awake! Everyone awake!"

The kneeling girls blinked, gazed around and slowly climbed to their feet. Apparently the sensation of awakening in these surroundings was depressingly familiar to them, for none of them seemed surprised. Their reactions varied from mere stoical resignation on the part of Gladys Pender, the oldest girl there, to tears from Linda Forester, the youngest of the group. None of them immediately

grasped that this time the circumstances were quite different from previous awakenings.

Linda Forester bowed her head into her hands, moaned, "Oh, God, not again!" and began to sob.

Julie rose from the altar and gazed around in confusion. A relieved expression crossed her face when she spotted Pete and Linc, then she glanced down at the nearly transparent garment she was wearing and looked horrified. She clapped her arms across her bosom.

"Here, try this," Linc said, slipping from his jacket and tossing it to her.

Linc Hayes was the last one to arrive at the staff meeting. Throwing Captain Greer a lazy salute, he smiled at Pete and Julie, pulled a chair away from the wall, turned it around and straddled it, his arms lying across its back.

"Sorry I'm late, Captain," he said. "Mike Martinez had me on the phone."

Adam Greer said, "About the Tower of Olympus affair?"

"Uh-huh. He phoned to tell me that they just showed Max Hitler the match on his gun with the slugs taken from Gordie Pace, and he busted. He confessed killing Pace."

Pete said, "That makes it unanimous. Probably he figured he might as well get in the act, with Apollo and Hera both singing their heads off."

"Do you think Hera's and Apollo's insanity pleas will stick, Captain?" Julie asked.

The captain shrugged. "Apollo's right. The department psychiatrist says he's a dangerous paranoiac who should have been institutionalized years ago. It's not likely for Hera, though. There's no question about her being a nymphomaniac, but that doesn't make you legally insane."

Julie said, "I still don't quite understand how the two of them got involved in this thing."

"It started with just Apollo," Captain Greer said. "And he fell into it more or less by accident. According to his own statement, it all began by him pulling the same stunt on Gladys Pender that he had been expelled from college for trying on another girl. Only to make sure his hypnosis worked this time, he first drugged her with scopolamine,

which made hypnosis easy. His initial intention was merely seduction, but when he woke her up, Gladys threatened to charge him with rape. He became frightened and put her back under again. I understand that once a hypnotist has had a person under hypnosis, it's relatively easy to put the subject back under again, even if the subject resists."

Linc said, "That's right. Pete lectured us about hypnosis over in the Homicide squadroom the other day."

The captain said, "Apollo kept her in his apartment under a combination of hypnosis and drugs for several days while he tried to figure out what to do with her. But every time he snapped her out of it, he found he had a hysterical woman on his hands. Finally, with Max Hitler's help, he fitted out one of the dungeons in the cellar of the Tower of Apollo as a bedroom and moved her there."

"Apollo shouldn't have any trouble proving he's nuts," Pete said. "Nobody but a nut would pull a stunt like that. But what made Max go along?"

Linc said, "Max has no imagination. He's a born follower conditioned to obey whoever his leader is without question. If he'd lived in Nazi Germany, he'd have been a storm trooper."

"That characterizes Max pretty well," Adam Greer agreed. "At that point Apollo still didn't know what he was going to do with the Pender girl eventually, but meantime, on the theory that you can only be hanged once, he continued to seduce her regularly. In partial payment for his assistance, and also, probably, to make sure Max kept his mouth shut, he began to allow Max the privilege too. Then one of the male parishioners at the Temple hinted to Apollo that the pleasures offered there were a little mild. Apollo carefully felt the man out, then let him enjoy his dungeon captive for a fee. That started it. The man had friends who liked that sort of thing too, but he suggested more girls would make the thing jollier, and that perhaps the whole thing should be ritualized. With a perverse kind of loyalty Apollo refuses to tell which of the parishioners made these lovely suggestions, but this is when Hera entered the picture. Apollo took the problem to her."

Julie said, "I'll never understand her involvement. Apollo you can understand, if not excuse, because he's crazy.

But Hera had to be aware that eventually the whole thing would come to a head. They couldn't keep the girls in that cellar forever."

"She's a nymphomaniac, Julie," Pete said. "She simply couldn't resist the idea of all that sex, no matter what the eventual consequences."

"I think that explains it," Greer agreed. "Although there was never any incestuous relationship between Apollo and Hera, he was aware that she was a nympho and correctly figured that she would jump at the chance to become a second member of his basement harem. She realized that the situation was fraught with possible catastrophe, because eventually some decision would have to be made about the captive girl, but meantime she was so obsessed by sex that she couldn't resist Apollo's offer. Actually it was Hera who dreamed up the ritual of the black mass."

Julie said, "Even if she was a nympho, you would think she would have objected to Apollo continuing to add more captives to his cellar harem."

"Oh, she did," Greer told her. "They fought about that all the time. But the membership of Apollo's Sunday-school class kept growing, and with it the necessity for more female participants in the black masses. As nearly as we can figure, Apollo eventually recruited a membership of about two dozen males, which put quite a strain on the girls when they all attended the same mass. By this time Hera was so involved that she had no choice but to put up with her brother's periodic additions to the harem."

Linc said, "What'll they do to the members involved in those orgies?"

"Well, the six involved in the last one have been booked on morals charges. They dropped the narcotics charges because that stuff in the silver goblet turned out to be merely wine laced with a mixture of a common tranquilizer available without prescription and an aphrodisiac. I guess the mixture was potent enough to turn the average guy into a sex maniac, but it wasn't a narcotic within the legal definition."

"Couldn't those guys all be charged with rape?" Pete asked.

"They all claim they had no idea the so-called goddesses

were under the influence of drugs and hypnosis and weren't willing partners. Both Apollo and Hera back them up by insisting they never revealed this to the worshippers. Possibly the D.A. could make rape stick on the six caught redhanded, but since that's only a fourth of the total number we figure must have been involved, and neither Apollo nor Hera will give us the names of any of the others, he's decided to drop it. It hardly seems fair to make examples of six and let three times that many who are equally guilty get off scot free."

Julie said, "I guess this scandal will end the Temple of Olympus too, won't it?"

"I hardly think any of the parishioners who weren't involved in the black masses will want to continue their association with it," Captain Greer said dryly. "If you hear of anyone looking for a medieval Spanish castle, it will probably go cheap."

THE MOD SQUAD

A sullen rich boy—a girl drifter—a bitter black rebel—the kind of kids who run wild in the streets, sworn enemies to law and order....

But Pete, Julie and Linc are in reality the most bizarre special agents a police force ever used—they can go where other cops can't because they speak the language of today's turbulent youth... so much that sometimes they're not sure whose side they're on....

This Mod Squad adventure—first of a thrilling new series—takes them behind the scenes of a weird California cult—to chilling peril and an incredible climax!

Follow **THE MOD SQUAD** on ABC/TV

Starring **MICHAEL COLE,**
CLARENCE WILLIAMS III and
PEGGY LIPTON
A Thomas/Spelling Production

A PYRAMID BOOK 60¢

COVER DESIGN: LEMBIT RAUK

PRINTED IN U.S.A.