

# LUST TO KILL

By JOSE VACA

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**C**OLLINS leaned against a ruined doorway and retched in the early Spanish dawn. His stomach was a ball of ice bouncing viciously, his nerves hot wires stretched taut, trembling, screaming. With shaking fingers he lifted the black velvet patch that covered the place where his right eye had once been, dabbed weakly at the empty socket. Ken Collins, soldier of fortune, had left that eye in the fastnesses of the Atlas ranges as the result of a comrade's desertion, but it still ached when desolation such as this came into being.

The little plaza of the ruined Spanish town was a shambles. Awnings hung in taunting, fingerlike tatters from twisted supports, shattered glass, bricks and mortar littered the streets. Every building bore its share of pockmarks, jagged bullet holes resulting from the merciless street fighting of the last two

days.

There were humans in that shattered square, but the one that breathed, the only one that would ever awaken to meet the cold magic of Spanish dawn was Collins, the Loyalist aviator, whose skill was for sale to the highest bidder, whose profession was death and destruction.

Now he leaned against the doorway and retched, his whipcord uniform and smart boots the only moving spot of color.

Except for the vultures.

They plodded like fat ducks from one delectable feast to another, their evil eyes glazed from the sating, their red necks like rings of blood on scrawny, dirty fingers.

Against the far wall lay the corpses of three boys, staring upward at the gray sky, faces twisted, contorted by the last pangs of life. But the black holes that peered owlishly

into the dawn were merely empty sockets. The vultures had seen to that.

**I**N A doorway across the street the brown, abused body of a young woman half lay, half sat. Clothes had been ripped from her. A bayonet still clung in the hideous wound between two cold breasts, the butt of the heavy rifle causing the body to sit half erect. *Rigor mortis* had set in long ago. The nude corpse swayed grotesquely.

Collins raised the canteen that hung at his side, gulped once, twice. The cognac was like water in his dry throat, but the alcohol warmed the icy coldness of his stomach. Collins' little car was parked a street away; he had driven in from the air field in the grey light to view the desolation of the town. He was morbidly fascinated, had been growing more and more so through the days of the vicious revolution.

As a matter of fact Collins was tired of slaughter, tired of the war that had filled his life since the days of the Great Push. But he didn't know it. He knew only that his nerves were on edge, that the stench of death, the sight of death sickened him, yet fascinated him irresistibly. He turned slowly away, trying not to see the mutilated corpses, the torn faces, the gorging vultures.

Something squeaked beneath his very feet. The blood drained from his face. A giant rat crouched away from him, beady eyes venomous, sharp teeth gleaming whitely although its mouth was filled with a great strip of purple flesh torn from a corpse.

Collins rocked with laughter and as the rat turned and hurdled carrion, drew his heavy automatic and shot the clip empty. The rat exploded, a surprised vulture *awked* even as its head flew from its body. Another tried to waddle away, too gorged to fly, and met fitting death instead of escape.

Trembling, Collins reloaded, the sweat dripping off his nose, his chin, his nervous

fingers refusing to answer the instructions of his brain. He had barely gotten the clip home, and was turning to go, when a car roared into the plaza, bumped two corpses and came to a stop.

Two men leaped from the front seat, men in civilian clothes, clutching automatic rifles. A third leaped from the rear, a man in uniform, an automatic in his hand. To Collins' hysterical brain they were simply something more at which to shoot. His first shot caught one of the civilians between the eyes; his automatic rifle clattered to the cobbles.

The little man in uniform leaped shrieking into the tonneau of the car: the second civilian raised his weapon.

"Kill, kill," screamed Collins. "Blood! Death you wanted, damn you! Death!" The automatic rifle clattered only a short burst, for the user sprawled to the pavement. Unscathed Collins leaped forward, Luger still blazing. The little officer in the tonneau of the car crouched, leveled his own gun across the door.

A corpse saved Collins' life, for as the man fired pointblank Collins stumbled, went to his knees. Coming up he threw his emptied gun in the officer's face, sprang into the tonneau and gripped a throat with sinewy fingers.

"Kill, kill," he screamed. His teeth closed on flesh. The man beneath him screamed as those relentless fingers demanded and received their toll.

**O**NLY when there was no movement beneath him did the crazed aviator release his victim. Stupidly he sat up, breathed deeply. The canteen again, a long drink. He spread his hands, gazed at iron fingers and giggled. His laugh was eerie, inane, the laughter of a demented one. Slaughter and horror had touched Collins' brain. He looked down at the man in the floor of the car and for the first time the light of

reason appeared in his one eye. He sprang up as if he had seen a ghost. “No! No!” he muttered. “*Christo!*”

The man who stared up at him was General Alfredo Gonzales, leader of the Loyalist troops in that sector. *Collins had killed his own superior officer.*

The wave of insanity swept over him again. He began to laugh. Slowly, he made his way across the square, still laughing, his demented mind rambling. “Kill me,” he screamed, “they’ll shoot me, torture me! I did it! I did it!”

Footsteps?

Blindly, blankly he ran, stumbling, falling to his knees, arising and running on. The black doorway of a large house. He missed it, hit the wall instead, fell back into the street and lay still beside the mutilated corpse of a girl of sixteen.

The sun was just peeping over the shattered rooftops. Collins’ twisted strangely grotesque in the early morning sunshine.

For long moments there was silence in the square broken only by the squeaking rats. A red necked vulture circled low, lit on a rock, eyed Collins’ still form. He lunged forward on six foot flapping wings, alighted on Collins’ left boot. Collins twitched. The bird withdrew a few feet, paused to eye the recumbent man hungrily.

**A** WOMAN ran from the large house, a broken chair in her hand. She cursed the vulture, frightened it from its intended prey, knelt beside the unconscious American. She wore a tattered evening gown, black in contrast to the olive of her flesh. The skirt, rent and torn exposed the smoothness of a full fleshed thigh as she knelt, the rise, and fall of olive breasts.

She called, “Come, Carlotta, it is the aviator, the one-eyed man of America. Help me, help me?”

Another woman appeared in the bleak doorway, cautiously peering up and down the square before approaching. Her solitary garment was a lacy *mantilla* that circled rounded shoulders, only half obscured trembling breasts and lyre-like hips. She leaned above the fallen man, said “*Madre de Dios*, Luisa, he has killed Gonzales! We dare not help him. Even now—”

“Take his feet, fool! We’ll need him, we can use him. He isn’t dead! Hurry!”

Scarcely had they disappeared with their sagging burden when a motorcycle shot into the plaza. The uniformed rider found the dead general, fled as if the devil pursued. But ten minutes later the place swarmed with Loyalist soldiers, enraged, blood thirsty, aching for revenge. Every ruin, every battered shop was searched. Trim Lieutenant Rosinante, a squad at his heels entered a certain black doorway to find a blonde woman calmly eating breakfast of hard bread and wine. The blonde woman’s only covering was a black lace mantilla, which she carelessly let remain the way it was. Breasts quivered as her arms moved. She smiled lazily, said, “Good morning, lieutenant. You come early. You wish to see Carlotta, Luisa?”

The lieutenant allowed his hot eyes to rove over exposed charms. Gallantly he said, “Senorita, I will undoubtedly return tonight! But now we search for the killer of *El General Gonzales*.” He launched into rapid Spanish describing the death of their leader. How one of the civilians accompanying him had only been wounded, how he had described the one eyed man in the aviator’s uniform who was undoubtedly that Americano turned traitor. Wide eyed the blonde Carlotta listened, shrugged shapely shoulders and pouted.

“You soldiers! Adventures, you have adventures! And little Carlotta lies sleeping while all this happens! Share a drink with me, lieutenant, and tell me you have caught the

murderers when you come again tonight.”

What could a gallant soldier do?

Behind the door, ear pressed to the wall, the woman, Luisa, sat tense and taut on a great Moorish chest. Her body ached, her breasts throbbed with the intensity of her fear and hope. For within the chest lay the six foot body of Ken Collins, soldier of fortune, whom this woman desired so greatly to save. Luisa had uses for an aviator, even though he was a little crazed, even though he had but one eye. She heard the lieutenant and his squad depart, leaped from the chest, threw back the lid. Her anxious fingers found a faint heartbeat in the great breast beneath her. She smiled contentedly.

**B**UT when the admiring lieutenant came that night he met not the alluring blonde, but the demure Luisa, radiant in a new dress that clung like a sheath to full hips, that exposed the upper slopes of olive breasts to admiring eyes. The lieutenant sat beside her on a divan, drank wine with her and boasted of his exploits.

These rebels, poof! They were nothing! These generals, Blanco, Mola and Cabenellas! Poof! The Loyalists, the Reds, would soon have them driven into the sea where fish would eat the carrion! Yes, war was cruel, but war was necessary to strong men! The *Senorita* Luisa was so sympathetic, so complimentary, that the pouter-pigeon lieutenant was quite enchanted. It was almost dawn when he took his departure, and the sloe eyed Luisa smiled grimly after him, pulled her disarrayed clothing about her body and went into another room.

A little later, following the lieutenant's orders, a soldier mounted guard at the door, for the *Senorita* Luisa was quite annoyed by the constant searching parties of Loyalists who persisted in scouring the city for the one eyed killer of their leader.

**C**OLLINS lay for two weeks in a small alcove off the kitchen on a bed of soft blankets. He raved incessantly, sometimes so noisily that he must be restrained by force. His huge body grew thinner as jangled nerves prevented the regaining of his strength. His solitary eye was a headlight of madness. His beard grew black, ragged, and still the woman Luisa persisted in protecting him, shielding him from the men who searched.

He awakened that morning weak but sane, heard the two woman talking over him, but he did not open his eye because he was afraid; he did not know where he was.

He heard Carlotta, the blonde one, saying, “You are a fool, Luisa, to keep this one when it is so dangerous. What good can he possibly do you?”

Luisa said, “He is an aviator. Sometime he will recover his strength. I have him hand and foot because we witnessed the murder of Gonzales. Now do you see?”

“Even if he recovers, how can you bend him to your will? He'll run away!”

“Sssssh! There is someone in the front. Listen, Carlotta, I have a face and a body. This American is strong, a pillar of strength! We need him! Little fool, I will make him love me so much he cannot be driven away! Now go! If it is that Major Cervantes, bleed him. Get all the information you can get for our messenger will soon be here.” The door slammed, footsteps diminished. Slowly, carefully, Collins risked a look, peered through his eyelashes. For the first time he saw Luisa in all her lush, dark beauty, for she wore only the briefest of tight panties, the thinnest of net brassieres. A transparent white mantilla covered her shoulders. He saw her kneel in the corner, saw the bowed, alluring line from full hip to thin ankle. She pried a stone, kneeled over a box. There came the rustle of paper,

then the box was replaced, the stone set back in place.

The woman came closer to him, peered down for a moment. Suddenly she leaned over so that the hollow between her breasts deepened and darkened. She smoothed the hair back from his forehead tenderly. Collins stirred, sighed. The fragrance of her was in his nostrils. Presently she, too, left.

Weakly Collins rolled from the blanket, listened at the door. From the front of the rambling house came the sounds of merriment, the clink of glasses, of voices raised in song. The door was locked. He wobbled to the corner, knelt where the woman had knelt. It required a little time, for his fingers were weak, but presently when he went back to the bed his mouth was set determinedly.

So the woman thought she had him, did she, thought she could make him love her! Thought she could make him do as she pleased! *Ha! She and the blonde Carlotta were Rebel spies!* The little box held proof of that, held military information carefully written on thin, onionskin paper, other implicating letters! Why, he had only to notify the authorities and—

But how could Collins talk without meeting the same end? He lay there on the blanket and pondered. He remembered all too vividly the killing of the Loyalist commander; after that, nothing. His beard showed that this woman had sheltered him for many days. Perhaps he owed her something for that, even if she meant to use him later on. Weak as he was he almost grinned. Well, if he owed her something, Collins always paid his debts.

**S**HE came in later with wine and warm soup. To her surprise she found him sitting upright on the pallet.

Her eyes gleamed, she smiled, finger at her lips. "We must be very quiet, *senor*. You are better, eh?"

She pulled a low bench close to him, set the tray and its lighted candle on it. "You must eat," she whispered, "and grow strong again."

His one eye continued to gaze at her steadily, unwavering. If she wanted a game she could have it! She flushed a bit beneath his prying gaze, pulled the scanty negligee closer about her shoulders, accenting more than ever the flare of impudent breasts. His voice was a little hoarse, with just a trace of mockery.

"Why did you do it?"

Her arched brows questioned his question.

He groped for her hand. "Why did you take me in and shelter me, hide me here? Don't you know how dangerous for you it is with the whole town in fever heat? Why did you do it, *senorita?*"

She laughed softly but he saw the masked shrewdness in her eyes. To himself he thought, "No matter what she says she'll be lying. She's saving me for some dirty work of her own! I'll play up!"

He listened to her say softly, "Perhaps it is because I have a weakness for *Americano* aviators who are real fighters! Who can say?"

He laughed depreciatingly. "But it was dangerous, and is dangerous." He tapped his forehead sadly. "I have seen too much of war and fighting. I am sick here. At any moment I may become violent, may attract attention to you."

She giggled. "Luisa can calm you, *Senor* Collins. Many times in the past two weeks you have raved and—"

"Then it wasn't all a dream! I thought I dreamed of Margo that I loved in Marseilles, thought I held her in my arms, kissed her and—"

Now he, too, paused.

Softly she answered, half demurely. "It was no dream, *senor*. It was the only way I could still you. Now you must be quiet and eat."

Instead the lean fingers on the olive wrist

pulled her closer, until she was beside him. His arm slid about her smooth shoulder, displaced the negligee, while his lips met tawny skin. Collins had meant the gesture sardonically, had meant it as part of his plan.

He had known many women in many lands, knew how to play on their emotions. But this woman was different. She fairly flamed beneath his caresses and the fire of her response leaped quickly into his own sinews until his muscles ached, yearned to crush her, to hurt her. Her mouth was a well of passion, her body a torch of love. Tremulous breasts, quivering thighs, an undulant body and writhing, flaming lips.

Carlotta, the blonde stood in the doorway, called Luisa's name softly. There was no answer. Half fearfully the blonde muttered, "*Verdad*, no good will come of this!" For a moment longer she stood there then closed the door and went slowly back, to where the Lieutenant Rosinante waited for Luisa, his light of love.

The waiting was long, that night.

**D**AY after day Collins grew stronger, but he allowed the two women to believe he was still a sick man. His brain was healed; he thought hard. He told himself that it was a game he played with the spy, Luisa, that he was making her love him with one end in mind—so that he could escape. But always the door was locked when he was alone; he was a prisoner as surely as if he lay in the dungeon the Loyalists wanted to put him in.

Collins was between the devil and the deep blue sea. The Rebels would like much to capture him, for he was hated and feared by them as a cruel and vicious bomber and machine gunner. And the Loyalists wanted him for the killing of Gonzales. Yes, his only chance lay in the woman. Two could play her game. He *must* make her care for him.

Often he wondered what she meant by

"using him." What plan did she have in mind wherein he fitted? Spies are notoriously treacherous; he knew he couldn't trust her. She would use him, then turn him over to his enemies. So in order to thwart this he must make her love him, make her unable to hurt him through love.

Collins began to think he was succeeding. She came to him every day, not only to nurse him, but to feel the strength of his arms, the caress of his lips. He came to know every soft curve and turn of her tawny body, every tender gesture, every burning sign of surrender. But he never succeeded in getting her to leave the door unlocked. Her excuse was that it was for his own protection.

Often he feigned sleep while the woman stood over him staring at his reposed features. And often he lifted the little tin box and read the accumulated contents. These always filled him with cold fear, for Luisa Gomez' papers proved her to be as ruthless as she was beautiful.

The game went on and eventually it was the woman who surprised the man. As she lay within the circle of his arms, soft body warm against his chest she murmured, "Will you be frightened if I leave your door unlocked tonight?"

He simply looked at her. Something within warned him that here it was, here was the way she meant to use him.

"You know," she went on coyly, "sometimes some of our—er—our visitors drink too much. They get crude and—"

She brushed his cheek with her lips.

"Tonight I am expecting a man who is angry with me. I have no one else to turn to but you. I will leave your door unlocked, leave you at watch. At midnight come to my door, listen. If there is no noise, go back to your room and soon I will be with you."

ALL evening he turned it over in his mind while the hands crept around on the face of the little watch she had given him. He knew the door was open, knew he could escape, but what then? Would he be recognized by a Loyalist? And if not, where could he go, what could he do? Better to play a waiting game, to see what she had up her sleeve.

He waited nervously till nearly midnight before swinging the thick door open, before tiptoeing down the corridor. A line of light gleamed beneath the last door to his left. He paused to listen. Beyond lay the *patio*, beyond the *patio*, the street. Dangerous, yes, but no more dangerous than this woman! Then the shrill, hysterical voice of little Lieutenant Rosinante came from behind the door.

"Damn you, you siren, you Circe, I'm going to kill you! You lead me on and on, you force me to betray my trusts with your sweet promises, and always when the bill is to be paid you put me off! Now I kill you, I throttle that pretty throat—"

A woman's scream of agony, the sound of blows. Unable to help himself, acting on impulse, Collins opened the door. Disheveled, mad with passionate rage, the lieutenant had the woman by the throat, had her bowed over the table. Clothes were tatters on her body, long scratches crossed her olive skin, her olive legs flailed fruitlessly at the torturer, soft flesh quivering.

Collins saw red. He took three hasty strides, his own fingers closed around the throat of Rosinante. Once again the killer lust awakened in him. Rosinante's eyes bulged, his tongue protruded, his face purpled. When his struggles ceased, Collins still held him suspended, shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat, his toes scarcely touching the floor. He cast him off like a rag doll. The Spaniard's skull crunched like an eggshell on the floor.

The woman crouched at the table,

breathing hard, breasts rising and falling. Collins glared at her, realizing he had ruined his chances to get away from her. She found a torn and tattered dress, got it about her shoulders without speaking.

A knock at the door, a voice, "Lieutenant, Lieutenant!"

The sentry! Collins laughed, picked up a chair, stepped aside, said, "*Pasa usted!*"

The door flew open, the chair arced, the sentry joined the lieutenant on the floor.

Collins grinned and his grin was not nice to see. "Now what?"

The woman moved quickly. "We've got to make Madrid, we'll be all right there. I have friends—"

He laughed. "I'd be recognized! There's not a chance! I've done your killing for you, now go on without me. I'll take my chances here."

"There's no time to argue," she snapped. "We'll take Rosinante's car and try it at least. But what of Carlotta?" She paused. "We can't wait for her. This is a dangerous game. She'll take care of herself."

She stooped over the corpse of Rosinante, extracted a sheaf of papers from his breast pocket and ran from the room. When she returned, she wore a capelike cloak, clutched something beneath it. Her eyes were hard as her hand moved to disclose a gun.

"You're driving me to Madrid, Ken Collins, whether you are afraid or not."

SHE sat grimly beside him in the car as he made the four hour run. The wind whipped the cloak aside, exposed the torn dress, revealed the olive breasts that rose and fell so alluringly. Bitterly Collins stepped down on the accelerator, fought the car over the rough back roads. "And after we get there, what?"

"You go your way, I go mine." There was a catch in her throat, she did not look at him. His voice was bitter.

“And all the past weeks have been but a game to you!” Again that laughter, a little mad. The car shot forward even faster.

They heard the sounds of rioting before they hit Madrid. At one place a barricaded highway caused them to detour while a peasant shot at them from behind a tree with a high-powered rifle. The car rocked along in the grey dawn. Ahead the sky was illuminated by burning buildings. They heard the sound of singing, the shouting of a mob. Collins wheeled, backed and turned in the narrow street, but before the car was completely turned the mob rounded the corner.

They were women! The dreaded, deadly women’s battalion of the Loyalists called *La Passionaria*, who asked no quarter and gave none. In the flickering torchlight, even as he fought the wheel of the car, Collins glimpsed the deadly rifles, the gleam of light on bare breasts, the fiery flare of passionate eyes glinting with death.

“*Quien es?*” screamed the leader of the Amazons but the car finally answered Collins hand, roared away. A blast of rifle fire shook the body. Luisa leaped in the seat, sank slowly down as if relaxing. Collins shouted, “Are you hit?” and whirled about the corner.

She was hit. It was blocks before Collins felt safe enough to open the cape, withdraw the bloodstained dress from her breasts and examine her wound. It was high on the gentle slope of an olive mound, ugly and bleeding. He stopped the blood, bound it tightly. She opened her eyes,

“I’ll find a doctor somehow,” he assured her hoarsely, but she shook her head.

“No, there isn’t time. I’ll be all right but you’ll have to help me now. There’ll be no parting. I need you more than ever!”

He glared at her, but his eyes softened at sight of her pain. She tried to raise her gun to cover him, but it dropped from her fingers.

Grimly he said, “I’ll help you, not from

fear of the gun, but because I love you, God help me. It means death for me in Madrid, and you know it, yet you forced me to bring you here. I’m a fool, Luisa, I know who you are, what you are, know you’re ruthless, that my life means nothing to you. I’ve known all along you meant merely to use me. But I can’t help myself, I love you.”

Somehow his arms were about her. Somehow in spite of her wounded shoulder she was pressing closer and closer to him, trembling like a leaf in the wind, shaken by passion. “Perhaps,” she murmured, “it wasn’t all play. Perhaps I meant it—a little.”

Presently she straightened, pushed him away. “If you know about me,” her voice grim, “you know I have work to do, work that I put ahead of everything else, even my love for you. Skirt the town to the north, Ken, if you love me. I’ve got to deliver my papers, my reports. Nothing else matters.”

**T**HE grey car skirted the town in the grey dawn. He took the age old highway leading south, veered into a sideroad as she directed and brought up before a ruined castle nestling in the hills. A road of broken cobblestones led to it, passed it. Half concealed in a small grove, behind the castle was a hangar. Before the hangar, a powerful plane squatted like a bird ready for flight.

She stopped him before reaching the hangar. Again she kissed him, her eyes starry.

“I’ll be back,” she whispered, “then we take our chances, you and I—together.”

Silently, almost glumly he waited while she ran toward the crumbling ruin. He smoked. Collins was in for it now. He knew his chances for escape were few, slim, even alone, and saddled with the woman he loved, a known spy, none at all. Death? Collins hated to die, but there was the girl—

He sat up straight. In the first rays of sunshine, far down the road he saw

approaching clouds of dust. For a long moment he sat there, then seized Luisa's fallen automatic and ran toward the ruined castle.

Hurry! Hurry!

Through one mouldering room after another he flew until at last the sound of voices off the patio drew him. He heard a thick, guttural voice saying, "You fool, we've got to go, and it's your fault. All our work for nothing because of you! You left that blonde vixen Carlotta and she talked, she told all! My radio has just given me code dispatches saying the Loyalists know I am a spy. Come, we'll leave the fool you brought, we'll—"

Collins opened the door just as two automobiles roared into the courtyard, automobiles filled with armed soldiers. A German in a Spanish Loyalist uniform glared at him, motioned toward his gun then ran for a balcony. Collins heard his guttural Spanish addressed to the new arrivals.

"What do you want, swine? You come for *Coronel* Schwartz, eh? You want me to come down? Wait, wait, my friends, I am coming."

**H**E DASHED back into the room, disregarded Collins, spoke viciously to the woman, "Now, fool, see what your dumbness has done! They have come to arrest me! Me, Schwartz!"

All the time he fumbled at a desk drawer, opened it, withdrew a grenade. His feet were catlike as he made the balcony. Collins' eyes burned as he listened, heard the great booming explosion in the courtyard below, the screams of agony that soon were stilled.

Flushed, triumphant, eyes beady with victory, *Coronel* Schwartz, the rebel spy returned. A gun was in his hand, his voice was filled with glee. "Arrest *Coronel* Schwartz? My dear, impossible! The plane awaits, we go. You and I but not your friend. The plane carries two, and two alone."

His smile was mocking, he raised the gun.

Collins said, "Schwartz, Schwartz, remember me?" The German peered closer, "Don't let the beard fool you, Schwartz! Remember the Atlas Ranges eight years ago when a plane crashed, when an unharmed observer left his wounded pilot because he was too yellow to stay and fight off the *Riffi*? And the pilot's name was Collins, and the observer's name was Schwartz! Remember, Schwartz, remember?"

Step by step he advanced, hands outstretched, fingers crooked like talons. Schwartz' voice was hoarse. "No! Not you! Keep away, Collins, keep away!"

The gun boomed. Collins swayed, half fell, then laughed. "They took my eye, Schwartz, on account of your cowardice! I've looked for you for a long time."

The gun boomed again, but Collins did not sway this time. Nervous fingers had missed, frightened nerves had failed. Collins' fingers closed around the thick Teutonic throat, his knee flew into an unprotected groin, his teeth sank into flesh. The red lust to kill grabbed him again.

He was conscious once of the woman clawing at his back, beating at his shoulders, saying, "He's dead! He's dead. You've killed him! Schwartz, the head of our Intelligence! Get up, get up!"

But the red lust to kill was heavy on him; he throbbed with it, raged with it. It was long moments before he arose from the thing that once had been Schwartz.

**H**OURS later the plane droned through the air, Collins at the controls. The woman, huddled beside him said softly, "San Sebastian and peace. These dispatches delivered, you and I together, together." He smiled grimly and headed the plane north. Presently she slept.

The plane hit the ground before she awakened. She sat up straight, fumbled for the

tin box of papers, glared at the man as the plane came to a halt in a cleaned field.

The box was gone.

Calmly he forced her out despite her protests, calmly he took her in his arms. His wound throbbed, her wound throbbed, but both pains were forgotten in the heat of their embrace. Bodies melted, lips flamed and were one. Eventually she moaned. "But if you threw the dispatches into the sea what will I tell my superiors at San Sebastian?"

He drew her close again. "San Sebastian? Miles away, dear. You won't tell them anything. We've crossed the Pyrenees now. We're on the outskirts of Hendaye, in French territory. The only orders you'll take from now on are mine."

She shuddered, trembled beneath his caresses. Again he sought her mouth. It was a long while before they caught a ride into Hendaye.