

# DEALER IN HUMAN PARTS

By  
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**The Man Was Dead—  
But There Were Fresh  
Footprints of Ghastly  
Horror In the Snow!**

**T**HE street lights were burning early tonight. A moist snow drifted down through the gloom, but only in isolated spots did the prints of human feet break the white surface that covered the sidewalks of Iron City.

The courthouse reared upward, blackened with age. The clock in the tower was entirely lost in the falling snow, and only one window among the hundreds showed a light. Inside, the big building was deserted. The corridors were in darkness. The marble floor gleamed faintly.

But up on the fourth level, behind a door marked "Assistant District Attorney," Leonard Gault paced his office. He was not seeing the falling snow or the grayness of the sky outside. He was listening.

"There'll be another one before midnight," he muttered. "He hasn't passed up a night like this in three years." He stopped before his desk and lit a cigarette. Sometime between now and midnight he



"Just a moment, my boy"

would hear the siren. The ambulance would race by. Police headquarters would be deathly still, waiting for a patrolman to call.

“Shabbily dressed man found dead in the gutter,” would be the report, and the commissioner, with dull fear in his eyes, would call the morgue and ask for an immediate autopsy. That was the only way they could tell about the bodies.

One more would finish Leonard Gault. There would be no marriage to Julia at Christmas, for her father was the richest man in Iron City—and Leonard would be out of a job by Christmas. Julia would marry somebody else. Perhaps it would be the district attorney himself—W. L. Bishop, sleek, fat, prosperous.

Bishop had been smart. After these mutilated bodies had been turning up for two years and the entire city was afraid to go out after dark, Bishop had called Leonard into his office one day.

“Do you want to make a name for yourself?” he asked.

“You bet your life,” said Leonard eagerly.

“All right. I’m turning the Mad Mangler case over to you. It’s the kind of a case that can give a man a big reputation.” He smiled paternally. “Of course it could break you, too.”

“I’ll take it,” said Leonard. “I’m not afraid of it.”

He wished now he had been afraid.

Leonard suddenly stopped his pacing and stiffened. He heard the siren now, like the moan of a lost wind streaming down from the black mountains. It went by on the street below. He heard it die fast as the ambulance stopped. He walked to the telephone and waited. It rang.

The desk sergeant’s voice was husky. “I guess we’ve got another one,” he said.

“Call me as soon as you get a preliminary report from the medical

examiner,” said Leonard.

HE put the instrument back in the cradle and stood there a moment. He was just about through. His career was to be sacrificed to save the reputation of the district attorney. Somebody had to be the goat.

He phoned Julia.

“I won’t be out for dinner tonight,” he told her.

“Surely you won’t have to work late again, dear.” Julia’s soft voice was a little impatient.

“I’m terribly busy,” he told her.

“But everything is planned. It’s—”

“I’m sorry. I’ll call you later.”

“You don’t need to—ever,” she snapped, and hung up.

Leonard opened the door and went out to the hall for a drink of ice-water. It was almost dark now. Everyone else in the district attorney’s department had gone home early, glad to get away and leave him to fight it out alone.

Maybe he could find this Mad Mangler if he dressed like a bum and went wandering down Third Street as bait. Sometimes the murderer struck twice on the same night.

The phone jangled inside.

“I got a report on that last D. O. A.,” said the sergeant’s voice. “Both kidneys cut out.”

Leonard groaned. His face was pinched in the darkness.

“Here’s more,” the sergeant went on. “Two small boys reported seeing what looked like a ghost driving a car in the vicinity of Third Street and Harrison Avenue, where the body was found.”

“Listen, sergeant.” Leonard’s voice was pleading. “Do ghosts drive cars?”

“Don’t put me on the spot, Mr. Gault.” The sergeant’s voice was pleading, too. “I don’t know anything about this except

what I'm tellin' you."

"Did the boys give any description?"

"They said it looked like a wisp of snow behind the wheel."

"Okay. I'll—"

He stopped, twisted his body until he faced the door. An icy wave swept over him. He heard something that sounded like the rustle of sheets. He tiptoed to the door, jerked it open. There was movement in the hall, the gritty sound of something scraping on the marble, then a swirl of white at the far end.

"Stop! Come back here! I'll shoot!" But he had no weapon in his hand, and the thing was gone. He raced for a phone.

"Send a dozen men over here at once. The Mad Mangler is in the courthouse!"

"Good God," said the sergeant.

**T**HEY came within a moment, but it was too late. They searched the big building without finding anybody or anything.

"I guess," said Leonard heavily, "he got away. He could have slipped out."

"Yeah," said a cop. "Or maybe he don't have to slip out that way."

Leonard said nothing. He went back to his office. He stopped at the door to turn on his lights. He saw something on the floor. He reached down and picked it up in trembling fingers. It was a surgeon's scalpel, the short blade crusted with blood.

He held it by the edges of the blade and looked at it dully, then gave it to the sergeant and asked him to have it examined for fingerprints.

Putting on his coat and hat, he walked out into the night. He went to Harrison and Third, a shabby part of town. A knot of half a dozen persons huddled together in a doorway, watching Leonard's arrival with dark eyes staring from white faces. Three policemen formed a semi-circle on the sidewalk. A car drew up at a distance from

the curb; a man stepped out with a white bag.

Leonard did not need to look, then. The moulage expert from the department was on the case. That meant but one thing: footprints.

The snow here was an inch deep, and through it were the unmistakable prints of bare feet. Two lines of prints, one going to the spot where the body had lain, the other leaving. They showed plainly; the outer edges were well indented and faded away toward the inside. A human being had walked through this snow, on icy concrete, with bare feet. Or was it a human being? The question was in the eyes of the policemen around him.

He looked again, singled out the right foot, saw the huge, misshapen blotting where there should have been the print of a great toe.

The moulage man spoke.

"Not much use to try a cast," he said. "It's the same thing, Mr. Gault. I've examined them now for three years. It's the Mad Mangler's track again. You can't mistake that big toe."

This was the one damning feature that made Leonard's stomach go soggy and sent a dull coldness through his veins. It would bring personal shame to Leonard, and professional disgrace. That horrible, overgrown toe, like a monstrous fungus on a human foot.

**L**EONARD took a taxi to the morgue. The coroner was not in the office. Leonard heard voices and pushed open the thick door to the cold-room.

"Hello, Doctor," he said, and then he stopped. It didn't take two men to perform an autopsy. Murgala was running water over his hands. The sink was stained dark red. And Dr. Harris was there also, stripping rubber gloves from his long fingers.

"What are you doing here?" Leonard asked.

"Why—I—ah—" Harris floundered and stopped.

"I called him over from the hospital," Murgala said belligerently. "I wanted a witness."

"A witness to what?"

"To—well—" Now even Murgala seemed at a loss. "I wanted him to see what I knew I would find."

"You see," said Harris, suavely, "this is an unusual situation. Dr. Murgala didn't want to accept the responsibility by himself."

"What's unusual?" Leonard demanded.

"This body. You see, Leonard"—Harris spoke as an old friend—"the man was badly mutilated. Both kidneys removed, most of the liver, the heart—"

"Good Lord." Leonard sank weakly into a chair. "Why should anybody—"

"That isn't the really strange feature of this death. The man died on the operating table—before any of the parts were removed."

"How do you know that?"

"There was very little internal bleeding."

Leonard looked at what was left of the corpse on the slab. "But he was sewed up."

"He had been a dead man for some time before that," said Harris.

"Why did they—"

Harris avoided his gaze. He shook his head slowly. But Murgala spoke up, pugnacious again.

"Look here, Mr. Gault, let's quit beating about the bush. You know your father wasn't sane. If you'd face the facts you might get somewhere with this Mad Mangler business."

Leonard's face whitened.

"My father has been dead ten years,"

he said in a low voice.

"Sure, it's all right for you to say that, but what about these poor devils that come in here all cut up inside? What about the people in this town? Nobody knows who's going to be next."

"And my father wasn't crazy," Leonard said in a far-away voice. "Was he, Dr. Harris?"

Harris cleared his throat. "No, I don't think he was."

**M**URGALA glared at him. "You were partners with old Dr. Gault for fifteen years and you stand there and say he wasn't crazy?"

Harris drew a deep breath. "He was eccentric, but hardly a psychopath. We're all eccentric, you know, in different ways."

"Eccentric, hell. A man who operates in his bare feet is a nut."

Murgala was grim and intent. He spoke like a man driving home nails in a box.

"And do you know any other surgeon that ever went ahead and sewed up a patient that died on the operating table, just the same as if they were alive?"

"No." Harris shook his head miserably.

"And you examined the knots in that gut. Weren't they tied just the way old Dr. Gault used to tie them? He wouldn't let anybody tell him how. He had his own special knot."

"But—" said Harris.

"But hell. You know Gault was always experimenting with parts, trying to figure out ways to replace diseased ones with good ones. The only trouble was, he couldn't get the good ones when he wanted them. He had to wait till someone died in an accident or something." Murgala looked at Leonard's pinched face and turned defensive for a moment. "This is no time for monkeying around. We've

got to face facts. Somebody—a surgeon—is killing people and taking away their vital organs.”

“For what?” asked Leonard.

“We don’t know that yet. But your father was called the Mad Mangler behind his back for years. You know that as well as I do. I was an intern in the hospital then—”

“That doesn’t mean anything,” said Harris. “Most of us are called something like that.”

Leonard pushed himself out of his chair. “You both seem to forget that my father is dead.”

“There’s a lot I don’t understand about what happens to a man’s soul after he dies,” said Murgala hesitantly, “but I’m ready to swear to one thing: if that job of cutting on that corpse isn’t your father’s work, it was done by his ghost! And Harris will back me up.”

Harris studied his hands uncomfortably.

“And another thing,” Murgala said. “What does he do with the parts he takes out? They never turn up. There’s some gruesome business back of this.”

“The miners say it’s the ghost of old Dr. Gault,” said Harris.

“You’re just speculating,” Leonard told them bitterly, but he did not feel sure at all. They had proved all the things he had been denying to himself for two years. The evidence of his father’s work was so strong it seemed as if old Dr. Gault was there in the cold-room with them, unseen, waving bloody arms.

“You’re laying this horrible business onto a man who has no chance to defend himself,” said Leonard very bitterly.

“You’d better spend your time finding out what’s at the bottom of this, and stopping it—if you can,” said Murgala. “Me—I’m not going out by myself on any snowy night, I can tell you that.”

And very few others were out alone by themselves that cold, bleak night in Iron City, Leonard discovered. He cruised the streets in his own car, getting farther and farther into the residence district until finally he was near the edge of town.

The snow had ceased falling. There wasn’t a street light in this district, and even the kids didn’t play around the vacant houses, because no one knew when the entire district might fall into the earth and leave a gaping hole.

Leonard drove to the fence at the edge of the big open pit. There his car-lights shone over six hundred feet of space. But nowhere was there any sign of a ghostly white figure that walked in the snow with bare feet, one of which bore a monstrous growth on the great toe.

Old Dr. Gault had had much trouble with his feet. That was why they first started calling him eccentric—because he sat in his bare feet at the office. He put on loose slippers to make his calls, but in the operating room he kicked them off and worked without anything on his feet.

That hadn’t been so bad. Eccentricities were common in the operating room, but along toward the last, when Dr. Gault’s great toe had produced that nauseous growth and when his heart would no longer stand the shock of operation, he discarded all attempts to be conventional and walked the streets in his bare feet. It was then he had drawn more into himself and had pestered the morgue for the privilege of extracting the vital organs from fresh cadavers.

He never told what he did with them. His laboratory in the old Gault house across Cherry Street was secured with a big padlock, and Dr. Gault himself had refused to move out when the area was condemned. But the thing on his foot had poisoned his blood-stream soon after, and following his death the laboratory had

been sealed without inspection, as provided in his will.

Leonard turned the car and started back to town. Along here he had played, had been pointed out as "old Dr. Gault's boy." It was odd, how his father had seemed always old, but Leonard had not minded. There had been no mother in their home, but every afternoon old Dr. Gault had slipped away from his laboratory and gone fishing along the creek with Leonard or hiking over the mountain. Very few people knew about that, and Leonard had never told them. It was something between him and father, not for the public.

He threw on the brake. The dark out there was waiting for him, trying to speak to him. He jumped from the car and examined the snow-covered pavement in his lights. The tracks of a car. Not his own tracks. He hadn't come this way.

THE two trails came from the blackness back toward the pit. Leonard got back into the car. He started off in low, following the tracks. He passed block after block until in the distance he saw a dull glow on the snow that signified an automobile. He turned off his own lights and coasted to a stop. The car ahead stopped, also, and then the skin crawled on Leonard's neck when he saw the house—the old Gault home.

A door opened and a man alighted from the car ahead. A man who walked with a severe stoop. Leonard gasped. Julia's father, rich old Mr. Seymour, down here at this time of night, in this district, *entering the old Gault home!*

Mr. Seymour went through the sagging gate by himself and the car moved on. When it turned the next corner Leonard drove forward slowly, his lights off.

He went carefully to the front door and tried to look in. It was black inside. He tried to open the door. Mr. Seymour had

passed through it quickly, but now it was locked.

Leonard stood there a moment, the wind snatching at his overcoat. He tried to calm the jumping of his pulse. Old Mr. Seymour was practically an invalid. Some kind of stomach trouble. Julia thought it was cancer.

Leonard remembered this, then he went swiftly down the steps and started around to the back. But abruptly, under the living-room windows, he halted. Seymour was chairman of the mining company's board. It was his business if he chose to inspect his own property at midnight. Leonard suddenly felt very silly. He was over-dramatizing an old man's whim—and Seymour had never favored Leonard's suit with Julia, anyway. If he interfered in the old man's business now—

He went back to the car and drove off slowly. There was a drug store across Cherry Street. He stopped and telephoned the Seymour home, asked for Julia.

"How is your father tonight?" He was surprised at the shortness of his breath.

"Leonard, I'm so glad you called," she said. "Something is terribly wrong!"

"What?" His pulse jumped again.

"Father went out late tonight in the car, and I'm worried frantic. His stomach has been causing a lot of trouble lately and about a week ago he quit calling Dr. Harris to the house and started going out somewhere by himself. He refused to tell me anything about it, but I know something is wrong. I—"

"Has he had any unusual visitors in the last week?" Leonard waited tensely for the answer.

"ONLY Mr. Bishop—and I think he really came to see me."

Leonard hesitated.

"Is that so?" Leonard was bitter for an instant, but then he snapped another

question. "Who drove your father's car tonight—Paul?"

"No—but oh, Len, that's something else. This evening, after dark, Paul got a note by special delivery. He glanced through it and then turned white. He threw the letter into the fireplace and went out at once."

"Do you have any idea as to what was in the letter?"

"I found a scrap that fell on the floor after he left. I could make out two words, 'Gault house.' What do you think—"

"Nothing. Nothing. Call the police and send them to our old house across Cherry Street. Tell them it's an emergency! Something is happening out there—something terrible—and we've got to stop it!"

"Wait, Len!" Her voice trembled. "I'm coming, too. I—"

But the last words trickled into the void of the phone booth. Leonard had thrown the receiver at the hook and ran back to his car. An unearthly cold began to creep through his veins. He swung across the middle of the block and shot around a corner. Two blocks from the Gault house he turned off his lights and drove within a hundred yards.

Just as he stepped over the fence in front of the house, a car shot around the corner, its lights full on. They flooded the house and caught him, then swept past, stopped. A slim, dark figure jumped from the front seat, left the lights on. Leonard met her.

"You little idiot," he said harshly. "You've ruined everything. They'll know we're after them. I told you to call the cops."

"Len," she sobbed. "I knew you were coming here. I'm sorry, but dad and Paul and you—we've got to stop it some way, Len." Then she drew off a little. "But maybe you don't want—"

"Cut it," he said jerkily. "My feelings don't count in this. Whoever or whatever is behind this, I'll break it up. Now you go call the police."

"No, Len, I'm coming with you."

"You're crazy," he said through his teeth, and started for the rear. "I can't stand here and argue. There is no time to waste."

He left her. Still there was no light in the house, no sound around them but the soft purring of Julia's motor, hardly audible as far as the house. At the rear he drew his breath sharply. The open pit had caved in until now its edge was not over ten feet from the back door. He walked gingerly along the narrow concrete strip, went down a short flight of steps to the old basement door. It also was locked, but he got in with a knife. He started to close the door and heard a rustle at his back.

HE wheeled and threw up his arm with the pistol, but the movement brought him against the soft body of a girl.

"Julia," he groaned in a whisper.

"I had to come. I couldn't let you go alone. It's my father and brother, Len."

"Stay behind me. There's no chance to go back now. We'll have to do our best."

They climbed the stairs, reached the first-floor hall. Leonard stopped ahead of her and a violent chill started at the back of his scalp and shuddered down the length of his spine. He tiptoed forward, holding out his left hand to keep touch with Julia and to prevent her getting ahead of him.

He started up the stairs to the second floor. The boards were old and dry and creaky. It was impossible to walk quietly. But he couldn't go back.

He moved warily to the door of the laboratory that had been padlocked for ten years. A tiny streak of light came from underneath. The lock was there but

hanging loose. He grasped the knob.

"Just a moment, my boy."

Leonard froze. Julia screamed and fell against him. It was a man's voice at his side, and a gun made a hard round spot in his back. His own pistol was jerked from his hand. He was pushed ahead. The door swung open on old Dr. Gault's hidden laboratory. But it wasn't old and dusty and mouldy. It was scrubbed and clean, lined with shining instruments, flooded with brilliant light. He blinked his eyes. The door closed softly behind them, and Leonard turned to face an old man with pain-wrinkled face, a crazy light in his eyes. A surgeon's operating gown, blood-stained but dry.

THE muscles knotted in Leonard's cheeks. Slowly he followed the line of the gown, fighting against what he should see. The bare feet, with one great toe degenerated into a monstrous growth. Leonard choked. He tried to speak, but the pain in his throat was too great.

"You are shocked, Leonard, my boy," said old Dr. Gault. "You didn't expect to see me here, did you?"

Julia collapsed at that. From somewhere an attendant came forward and picked her up, laid her on a couch. He snapped a handcuff on her wrist and locked the other about the iron framework of the couch.

Leonard drew a deep, painful breath. He tried to face this man before him. He tried to speak, but gave it up. The pain was mounting in his chest until his throat throbbed with rawness.

The man before him began to talk slowly.

"They called me the Mad Mangler," he said. "Perhaps I was, but there was method in my insanity. I knew what I was doing all the time."

"You're dead," Leonard croaked at last.

"Far from that," said the man in the operating gown. "One dies, true, but if one's will is strong enough, one's body is quite unnecessary. The will itself can materialize, can carry on the work for which the puny body was too weak."

Leonard shook his head a little. He must be mad himself.

"You cut into them," he said. It was barely a whisper. "You took men's vital organs out of their bodies and left them dead in the gutters. You—"

The Mad Mangler laughed, a croaking, guttural sound.

"You're harsh, Leonard, my boy."

Leonard's eyes narrowed suddenly.

"You don't appreciate the value of my experiments to humanity," the Mad Mangler said. "You never did, as a matter of fact. But long before modern medical science announced successful transplanting of the cornea of the human eye, I had seen the possibilities of replacement of human parts. Eyes are an old story to me. I have a refrigerator filled with them. I have my own private stock of blood of the four types. I started saving this long before the Russians did. As a matter of fact, I am fifty years ahead of medical science itself."

"You're not my father," said Leonard hoarsely. "You can't be!"

The Mad Mangler laughed.

"What difference does it make? I was once, and you don't claim me now. But perhaps some day, when you are in need of a new liver, a new stomach, a new kidney, or even a new heart, I shall be able to take care of you. I have the only stock of live human parts in the world!" He chuckled, a ghostly sound. "And all guaranteed genuine."

"You're crazy."



“Oh, no, Leonard. Just progressive. Just look around you.”

Leonard stared in horror at the rows of jars that filled the shelves of the laboratory. He could make out forms now, of hearts, of kidneys, one of a dark mass that must have been a liver.

“**S**OME of these,” said the surgeon, “have been here for years. I have not as a rule been able to transplant directly because of differences in metabolism and blood, but I can keep an organ in my solution for a month or so, keep it aerated with my mechanical heart and toughen it up by gradually changing the constituents of the serum. Then I can transplant to any other person.”

“But who wants to sell his liver? A man can’t live without—”

The surgeon nodded. “That’s just it. I tried at first to devise a legal way of obtaining the parts. But it was too slow and uncertain. So I—borrowed, you might say.”

“You murdered!”

“Tsk, tsk. The men I operated on were all down and out, no good to themselves or to society.

“I have eighteen human hearts in stock just now, and I expect within a few months to use them in replacement. Take an old man with a weak heart. When my method has been worked out I shall be able to provide him with a brand new heart for, say a hundred thousand dollars. And what wealthy man would refuse to pay a hundred thousand for a new heart?”

“That’s impossible.”

“Not at all.”

“You couldn’t do it. The blood—”

“Quite simple. A number of different men have devised apparatus for switching the human blood-stream and running it through a mechanical pump and aerator instead of through the heart during the

course of a severe operation. While one is doing this, he could remove and replace the heart itself. It is merely a matter of perfecting the replacement process to the point where it can be accomplished in thirty minutes, so the new heart does not have time to deteriorate before the blood-stream is turned back into it. Already I can remove a heart in ten minutes, but the new heart must be placed and connected within twenty minutes, and that I have not quite achieved.”

“As soon as I get back to town,” Leonard said between stiff jaws, “I’ll have this place destroyed.”

“You’re not going back. You and Julia have learned too much to leave here alive.”

He pushed Leonard to the couch where Julia lay with wide, blankly staring eyes. A handcuff snapped on Leonard’s left wrist and the other cuff to the bed.

“I’ll keep you awhile. A very important operation is scheduled and I think I shall permit you to be my audience in this amphitheater. Later I can use your two fine young bodies to replenish my stock.”

Leonard could not answer. The cold was creeping around his heart. Julia was clinging to him, sobbing. He put his free arm around her. In a few hours her lovely body would be cut apart and installed in those horrible glass jars. They—

**T**HE surgeon had changed his gown and put on sterilized rubber gloves. An operating table was wheeled into the room. The surgeon put a gauze mask over his face. The form on the operating table was already anaesthetized. A second masked man seated himself at the head of the table and grasped the patient’s pulse. A cluster of lights was lowered from the ceiling. The patient’s midsection was bared, painted with iodoform. The surgeon

held the short-bladed knife posed an instant, made a swift slash near the breast-bone.

Leonard heard the cutting sound of a knife in gristle. Julia's fingers dug like claws into his arm.

"What are you going to take out now?" Leonard asked hoarsely.

The surgeon worked fast and deftly, pinning the edges of the cut with forceps and throwing them back away from the incision. He started talking as he worked, without looking up.

"This will be the first operation of its kind," he said. "I am about to provide this patient with a new stomach."

Julia's fingernails dug into Leonard's flesh. She stared at the figure on the table. Leonard watched the surgeon's bare feet, the malformed toe that made it almost impossible to wear a shoe. Then a thought came home to him with stunning force.

"You didn't take the stomach out of any of those bodies we found," he said. "Where—where are you going to get a new one?"

The surgeon grasped the knife and made a deeper cut.

"I discovered some time ago that a stomach was more difficult to preserve. So it is a matter of finding a subject and having him on hand at the proper time. That"—he snapped a pair of forceps on a blood-vessel—"I have provided for."

"But the blood and—"

"I have had occasion to type both these subjects, and since they are father and son—"

Julia shrieked. From the far door was wheeled a second table. The victim was not anaesthetized but he was strapped down securely. The twisting head and wild, staring eyes were those of Paul Seymour.

"Good God!" moaned Leonard. "Father and son! You can't do it. You

can't—"

"Why not? The old man Seymour doesn't know anything about it. I won't tell him until later, when I am sure the operation is a success."

The surgeon turned to Paul with the mad glitter in his eyes. "Too bad," he said. "I shall have to remove your stomach, but I can't spare a man to give you ether."

Paul cursed him but the surgeon grinned. He bared Paul's torso and reached for the knife.

LEONARD was numb. His senses shimmered but he saw one thing. The surgeon had only two helpers. Leonard surged to his feet. He reached high with his free arm and made a wild sweep at the shelf above. He caught the warm roundness of a glass jar in his fingers and pushed. The jar clinked against another and dropped heavily. It crashed. Liquid cascaded over the floor. A dark mass lay quivering among the ragged pieces of glass.

The surgeon started toward him with the short-bladed knife gleaming dully in his hand. His bare feet scuffed on the floor. Leonard tried to fight him off with his one arm, but he couldn't stand upright. He got to his feet on the couch, above Julia's head, and tried to pull the handcuff loose. Its edge cut into his wrist, but it didn't give. His head struck the shelf above. The surgeon's knife seared his arm, made a bloody arc toward his throat. He had backed as far as he could. This was the last—

But the second jar on the shelf above had been pushed close to the edge by Leonard's first movement. Now it teetered for an instant and then came down, thumping heavily on the side of the surgeon's head and then sliding to the floor. It broke with a muffled crash, and a red mass that had been a human heart lay

quivering on the floor.

The surgeon hesitated an instant, stunned just a little. His arm wavered. Leonard's hand shot out and snatched the knife. He drove it into the madman's breast as far as he could, again and again.

The man at old Mr. Seymour's head had hardly looked up. He was watching the bag, swelling and flattening as the patient breathed. The other helper came at a run as the surgeon sank to his knees, his mad eyes glassy. Leonard swung the knife—the second man turned and ran. The man at the ether tank looked up, jumped to his feet and followed. The cone was still on Mr. Seymour's face, the gas hissing into it.

Leonard seized the couch with both hands, pulled it across the floor in desperate jerks. He snatched the ether cone from Seymour's face, pushed the table away and fumbled at the straps that held Paul down.

"There's a car in front," he shouted at Paul. "Go get a surgeon!"

Fifteen minutes later a man who had had no time to put on a white robe was sewing up the cut in Mr. Seymour's body.

"He'll be all right," he said. "Some shock, I imagine, but I think not dangerous."

"How about his stomach?" asked Paul. "He won't live long anyway, will he?"

The physician hesitated.

"Why not? I see nothing wrong with his stomach. If he thought so, he was misinformed."

"It's strange," said Paul, "that I couldn't find Doctor Harris. He's father's regular—"

"That isn't surprising," Leonard said grimly. "Dr. Harris is there on the floor, dead. The man who used to be my father's partner made himself up to represent my father so his organ-snatching activities wouldn't be traced."

PAUL ripped off the mask from the features of Dr. Harris. They were suave no longer. It was the face of a mad, cornered rat, frozen into death. The makeup came loose from the great toe.

"I don't see—"

"I did," said Leonard, "when he started calling me Leonard. My dad"—he swallowed—"always called me Lenny."

"But Doctor Harris—"

"Doctor Harris has spent ten years capitalizing on the infirmities of rich old men in Iron City, and perhaps he had even developed transplanting to the point where he actually hoped for success. Perhaps this experiment would have proved it. Who knows? It may be that other old men have already had such work done on them. We'll never be able to ascertain. At any rate, Harris wanted money—a lot of it—and he was in a good way to get it. Whether or not these replacements would have been successful, everything was secret, and this laboratory would be convincing to any man who feared he had only a few years to live because of a bad liver or diseased organ of some kind."

"We never know where scientific development will lead," observed the physician from the operating table. "I wonder what happened to the two who were assisting Harris."

"I heard it on the car radio," said Paul, who had just come back in. "They were picked up at the bottom of the mine-pit—what was left of them."

"Which wouldn't be much at the end of a six-hundred-foot drop. They must have run in the wrong direction. Probably they were quacks that Harris got hold of somewhere. Well"—Leonard drew a deep breath—"Julia is waiting in the next room. I don't think anybody will object if I take her home now."