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moose-head or a worn out oil stove or a rusty pair of bed springs. Yet Hastings had grown rich and then Hastings had died, suddenly and horribly. Humphrey looked back. Peyton was standing by the desk watching him go, but it was too dark to see much more than the outline of him.

Chapter Eight

FROM THE CUT RATE DRUG STORE on the corner of University and Titcomb Streets, Humphrey called June Foster.

"Hot, isn't it," said Humphrey.

"Not up here." Her voice was very nice on the telephone.

"Ever swim in a canal?"

"No."

"Want to?"

"We haven't any suits."

"They rent them," said Humphrey. "This place I know, you eat outside and after a while you jump into the canal and let the current carry you along. Say seven-thirty?"

"Shouldn't you—"

"Be working? I have to eat. So do you."

"Seven-thirty," June said.

He hung up, went out and headed into the sunset. The sky was saffron and way up there the wind was shoving the clouds around. There was no wind in the well of the Valley.

It was cooler now, though not much, and people were out sprinkling their lawns and being neighborly. In most of the houses the radios were on full blast. No need to worry about how your ordinary citizen would behave in a bombing, Humphrey thought. If they could stand that,

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they could stand anything. He crossed Beacon Street. Half a block farther on was a small redwood house with three silver birch trees holding hands on the lawn. He turned in, went up the steps and put his finger on the bell.

A handsome woman in her late thirties opened the door. "Yes?" she asked.

"Mrs. Hastings?" That was obvious, as this was her home, but he couldn't think of anything else to say. Looking at her, he was sorry he was too old for college. The teachers he remembered were gaunt, capable women with rats in their hair, and moles.

There were no rats in Mrs. Hastings' chestnut hair. She wore it up and there were reasons. Her ears were good and her neck was good, slim and white and graceful. She had on red hostess pajamas and red slippers with gold buckles, and there was a gold belt around her slim waist.

"Police department," Humphrey said.

Her eyes were big and dark and there were shadows under them. "Oh," she said.

"May I come in?"

"Yes." She stood aside and he walked past her into a fine room, long, low-ceilinged, redwood paneled, with a Van Gogh print over the fireplace. Plenty of bookshelves and plenty of books and a faint scent of lavender. Also a man with a highball in his hand, a trim, middle-aged man with a square jaw and graying black hair. Humphrey tried to place him, remembered he had seen him around the city hall.

"My name's Campbell."

"He's a police officer." Mrs. Hastings was poised in the center of the room, watching him with warm and thoughtful eyes.

"I hope this isn't upsetting your plans for the evening," said Humphrey.

The man flashed a thin smile at Humphrey.

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