

On the Eighth Tee

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Chapter 1

Highway Robbery and Murder.

Chief of Police Fenton of the City of Pittville-in-the-Berkshires pawed through the batch of out-of-town posters which had accumulated during the past four weeks. He picked one out.

„Here’s a couple of hard-looking bozos from Frisco... Peter and Martin Carson... they were golf caddies... graduated into highway robbery and murder at one jump.

Brained a guy on the golf links with a mid-iron. Damn fool was carrying twelve grand around with him and these brothers found out about it. According to this, they were heading East—probably for New York.“

He passed the circular to Inspector Tim Kelleher. Over the inspector’s shoulder his brother-in-law, Lieutenant Jimmy Mersereau, scrutinized the pictures of the two wanted men.

„Might be coming here instead of New York,“ commented Jimmy. „Hot in New York—mighty cool and pleasant in the Berkshire Hills.“

Kelleher’s thoughtful silence attracted the chief’s attention. He asked, „What’s bitin’ you, Tim?“

„The mug on the older one reminds me a little of a guy I saw—let’s see when was it?—day before yesterday—in front of 441 Wyona Street where Tom Shaw is the super. Prob’ly just a resemblance... Tom was tellin’ me there’s a couple and a brother-in-law rented a furnished flat, and they stay indoors most of the time. Anyhow they’re strangers—won’t do no harm to ask them a few questions.“

Kelleher looked at his superior inquiringly.

„Yeah, that’s right—question them just because they’re strangers.“ Fenton’s tone was gently sarcastic. „Then they go to the mayor and complain, and he raises hell with the police. We’ve only got about fifteen thousand strangers out here for their vacations right now—you oughta make the rounds and question them all, Tim.“

Jimmy was reading the circular with bright black eyes. „Tough babies! They think it’s the same two shot a cop in Des Moines, stole a car in Hartford, and knocked off the owner of a gasoline station in Stamford.“

„When they get the killin’ habit...“ Fenton shook his head.

Kelleher rose, a grizzled giant of a man. „Come on, Jimmy, let’s get started. We’ll step at 441 Wyona Street first. Shaw said the name was Slade. If we’re wrong we’ll give ‘em a key to the city.“

Chapter 2

All Crooks are Yellow.

The apartment house was located in the middle of the block. Jimmy parked the car in front of it.

„What floor, Tim, do you know?“

„I think Shaw said third floor front.“

„Guess I'll go up with you.“ Jimmy's voice was casual, and he paid no attention to his brother-in-law's contemptuous sniff. According to Kelleher, all crooks were yellow.

The street was quiet. A wind from the hills rustled the trees; the sky was clear, except for a few gray clouds as thin as wafers. As he got out of the car, Jimmy glanced upward. He thought he saw a form at one of the windows on the third floor, but when he looked again, there was no one there.

The two officers went up in the self-service elevator and walked to the door marked „30“. Kelleher touched the buzzer.

A high, sing-song voice demanded, „Who's there?“

„Police checking up on licenses,“ called Kelleher, using an old gag whose vagueness usually made it effective.

During a moment of tense silence they waited for the door to open. As time passed, Kelleher glanced at Mersereau with pursed lips and raised eyebrows. Then he pressed the buzzer, once more—harder.

Without warning, a heavy slug tore through the thin wood and crashed into the wall behind Jimmy's head. Before the police officers could move, a second shot followed. It struck Kelleher and hurled him backward. He folded, slid to the floor in a sitting posture.

Shooting low and from different angles, Jimmy poured six shots through the door. Reloading, he stepped, to Kelleher's side and asked softly, „Where you hit, Tim?“

„Here!“ said Kelleher and swore weakly. He pointed to a spot above his right ribs. „Never mind me now—don't let them get away.“

Mersereau pulled Kelleher to one side. Voices had begun shouting questions, and there was the sound of feet in the hallways and on the stairs.

The lieutenant turned the knob and put his weight against the door. It remained closed. He braced his back against the wall and leveled a tremendous kick. The door crashed open.

As he stepped warily forward, Jimmy became aware that Tom Shaw was hurrying toward them from the head of the stairs. He waved the superintendent back, but Shaw's eyes were on his friend Kelleher.

Shaw called, „What's the matter, Tim? You hurt?“

„Telephone police headquarters!“ snapped Mersereau. „Get an ambulance out here quick! I'm going in!“

One swift stride brought him into the apartment, gun ready. He glanced around alertly, and saw a trail of what looked like blood leading toward a bedroom. He followed it, cat-like.

On the bed lay a still form. Two bullets in him, one through his throat. The bedclothes were a red mess.

Swiftly Jimmy ran through the other rooms. In the living-room he found a frightened, half-dressed girl, crouched close to the window as though tempted to jump out. She was shaking so hard he had to hold her up.

„Don't hurt me!“ she begged. „Please don't—don't—“

„Who else was in here?“ snapped Jimmy. „Where’s the other one?“

Wide gray eyes looked out at him from a paper-white face... a slim, scared little thing with disheveled, hemp-colored hair and a half smudge of lipstick across one cheek, she begged.

Mersereau shook her.

„Where’s the other brother? Was he in here?“

„Pete—he—down the dumbwaiter!“ she gasped.

Jimmy ran into the kitchen. The latch on the dumbwaiter was open. Looking down the shaft he could see the box at the bottom. He ran out of the apartment.

The hallway was full of men and women. Bending over Kelleher, now lying on his back with a pillow under his head, Shaw was trying to stop the flow of blood. Shaw looked up.

He said, „The ambulance is coming!“

Another voice stated, „I called the police!“

„There’s a girl in there—keep an eye on her—don’t let her get away!“ ordered Mersereau crisply;

He plunged through the crowd, got into the elevator, reached the basement. He ran through it; no one was there. Suddenly Mrs. Shaw opened the door of her apartment.

„He was here right after Tim went upstairs!“ she called.

„Who was here?“ snapped the lieutenant.

„The older brother—Peter Slade—ain’t that who you’re looking for?“

„Where’d he go?“

„He ran out into the backyard! He certainly looked wild—had a gun in his hand. What’s happened, Lieutenant? I always said—“

Mersereau didn’t hear what she always said. He was in the backyard, then over the fence and asking questions. No one had seen anything or anybody.

When the police car and the ambulance arrived, Mersereau got into his automobile and covered ground. He finally found a taxi driver in whose cab the fugitive had been driven to the eastern fringe of the town.

„He jumps in and tells me to get goin’ and keep goin’;“ related the driver. „So I ask him what’s the hurry? He pulls a rod! You bet I done just what he told me—wouldn’t you? He got out the block past the House of Mercy, handed me a buck and told me to keep my mouth shut if I didn’t want something to happen to me.“

„Where’d he go after he left you?“ demanded Jimmy.

„After he turned the corner from the hospital, I seen a car shoot down the road going east—it was a black sedan, going too fast for me to see the number. But I’m pretty sure he was in it—he musta had that car hidden somewhere near there.“

When Mersereau got back to the apartment, Kelleher had been taken to the hospital, and the body of the younger Carson had been removed. One of the officers had found a wallet containing four thousand dollars in a locked drawer of the dresser in the bedroom. Evidently Pete hadn’t had time to find the key and get it.

Remembering that only a short time ago the brothers had robbed a victim in Frisco of twelve thousand dollars, Mersereau was not satisfied. He made a further search—in vain. Then he thought of the girl, still waiting in the other room. He went to her.

„Where’s the rest of the money?“ he asked curtly.

She seemed too scared to talk, but she led him to the closet in the living-room. There, under a loose board in the floor, he found five thousand dollars in an oilskin wrapper.

When he reported to Chief Fenton, he turned over the entire amount, nine thousand dollars. But no one else knew of the second find, and when the story appeared in the papers, only the wallet containing the four thousand dollars was mentioned.

„That five grand may keep Peter Carson in the neighborhood, hoping he’ll get a chance to sneak in and cop it,“ was Jimmy’s idea, and Fenton agreed with him.

Chapter 3

Snow White in Disguise.

When he entered her cell, Mersereau found the girl incongruously dressed in a cocoa silk jersey hostess gown. She was reading a newspaper one of the matrons had brought her. It was two days after the shooting, a coroner’s inquest had taken place, and a judge had acceded to the district attorney’s request that the girl be held pending the outcome of Kelleher’s wound. The name she had given was Myra Dolliver.

„Well,“ said Mersereau, „you’re lucky, Myra—the inspector is going to get well.“

„I’m glad!“ She looked as though she meant it.

„So you won’t be tried as an accessory to his murder. But there’s the killing of that policeman in Des Moines—and the owner of the gas station in Stamford. You’d better help us find Pete—if you want a break.“

Her fingers gripped the newspaper convulsively.

„I don’t know where he is—really I don’t! Even if I knew, I’d be afraid to tell... I’m afraid of Pete. He’d kill anybody who crossed him.“

Her eyes became fixed.

„He’s crazy, Pete is—nobody knows it except me—Marty knew and he was afraid of him, too. You can never tell what Pete’ll do—never!“

„Crazy, is he?“ As he sat down next to her on the cot, she moved as far away from him as she could. She looked very young.

„I’m not the kind of girl you think I am—I’m not a gun-moll like the district attorney called me. I’d have left Pete long ago—but I was afraid. He was so queer—crazy!“ She repeated, „I’m not a gun-moll!“

„No, you’re Snow White in disguise,“ Mersereau said cynically.

„I didn’t know they were so bad,“ she protested. „I didn’t know they killed that man in San Francisco. Pete asked me to go with them... he said he was going to marry me. He wasn’t so queer then—he got that way after he killed the policeman in Iowa. I used to like him in Frisco—he took me to movies and nice restaurants...“

„How old are you?“ Mersereau’s tone was sharp.

„Seventeen.“

„Does Pete know anybody in town?“

„No, nobody! He made us keep to ourselves.“

„Where'd he be likely to go—if he left town?“

She said with conviction in her voice, „Oh, Pete wouldn't run away without me... he loves me and he's too crazy to be afraid of anybody... and besides he didn't have much money on him.“

There wasn't much more he could ask her... she'd been grilled several times during the past two days. As he sat studying her, her face broke into an ingratiating smile. She asked in a low voice, „Have you got a girl?“

Mersereau said, „No, only a headache—and I don't want another.“

Chapter 4

Pete Calls Fenton.

Chief Fenton was gloomy and exasperated. „He's as wise as we are, the rat—if he's still around. I've kept two men in the apartment on Wyona Street... not a sign of him, not even a peep.“

„The girl says he's crazy!“ Mersereau remarked. „You never can tell what he's likely to do.“

„Crazy as a fox!“ Fenton growled.

The telephone rang and Fenton picked it up. „Chief Fenton Speaking!“

A high voice snarled, „Whyn't you let that kid alone? She ain't got no more to do with it than Mary's aunt!“

„Who is this?“ Fenton was startled.

„This is Pete Slade, that's who this is. Now get this, Big Shot: If you know what's good for you—and for your wife and two kids—you turn my girl loose! I'm givin' you until Sunday—that's six days.“

Fenton glanced at Mersereau, and, his lips formed the words, „Pete Slade!“

The lieutenant got busy on another wire.

„So this is Pete Slade!“ Fenton's tone was jocular, even though his face was congested with rage. „Pete Carson you mean, don't you? How about coming up here for a talk, Pete? Maybe I'll turn Myra loose if you do.“

The high voice was queer and deadly.

„Foxy guy, ain'tcha? Think you'll keep me on this phone until some of your dumb dicks get here. Listen, Wise Guy: You live at 32 Fourth Street, right? I just got through talkin' to your wife over the telephone. You ask her what I said—and I mean it! You kin put fifty cops around your house—I'll get her, I'll get one, of those kids—yes and I'll get you, too. I'm declarin' war, see! You got till Sunday to turn my girl loose!“

Fenton barked, as the wire became silent, „Did you get it, Jimmy?“

„No. Is he gone? He was on a dial phone. What'd he say?“

„Threatened my wife and kids,“ said the chief slowly. „Knows where I live, too. Gave me until next Sunday to turn his girl loose.“

Mersereau whistled. „His girl said he was nutty! You'd better take precautions, Chief.“

„Yeah, take precautions!“ Fenton's tone was bitter. „The kids'll have to stay home from school—and that's bad enough. I can't help thinking what a desperate maniac like this one can do, even if I do put a guard around the

house. A crazy killer loose! Maybe I can protect my own family, but how about all the other families in town... he might get a notion... he said he was declaring war. We've got to find him!"

"And before Sunday!" Mersereau's tone was grim.

They fine-combed and dragnetted the town from end to end, length and breadth, cellars to roofs, without finding a sign of Pete. Monday and Tuesday passed, and each day Chief Fenton seemed to age ten years. Three policemen had been assigned to guard his house, night and day; his children and his wife stayed closely at home. And yet...

"If I ever meet him," growled Fenton, "he'll have bad luck!"

Chapter 5

That Fool Rookie.

Someone did have bad luck but it wasn't Pete Carson, it was a rookie policeman named "Chick" Haggerty.

Mersereau was upstairs in Apartment 30 of the Wyona Street building, having relieved the two detectives stationed there during the day in the hope that Pete Carson might come calling for the five thousand dollars.

Suddenly the lieutenant heard two shots in rapid succession. He ran to the window in time to see a black sedan go racing down the street. Rushing downstairs, Mersereau found Haggerty lying on the sidewalk.

"Saw him sneaking down the basement," mumbled Haggerty, "and I hollered to him. He turned around and shot me—twice."

That was all Mersereau waited to hear. He commandeered the nearest car and started in pursuit of the black sedan. A dozen informants had seen a dozen sedans, black, green, all colors. But of Pete Carson and his black sedan Mersereau could not find a trace—even with the assistance of a score of helpers, both policemen and citizens. They searched every garage, every parking-place, spent the entire night at it—all in vain.

When he heard of it, Fenton ripped the cigar out of his mouth and crushed it in a huge fist.

"He was coming for the money—you'd have gotten him! He was walking right into the trap. That fool rookie—that half-wit! After me sending out orders not to stop anybody going into that house!"

Fenton looked old, haggard; his face was a mottled gray. He was worrying himself sick.

"Haggerty forgot!" Mersereau explained gloomily. He added, "He'll be laid up quite a while—one bullet just missed his right lung."

"Too bad he wasn't killed!" growled Fenton.

Saturday morning came and found Fenton pacing up and down his office in restless desperation. He said Mersereau, "We'll have to get help—we can't handle this alone, Jimmy. We'll have to call in the Federal men—he committed crimes in other states, didn't he?"

"They're on the job and have been right along!" Mersereau's voice was frustrated, compassionate.

The telephone rang.

„My wife and my kids haven't stepped out of the house for days!“ Fenton picked up the telephone. „Chief Fenton speaking!“ he said mechanically. Then his eyes shot a swift glance to Mersereau. The lieutenant got busy instantly at another phone.

Pete's high, jeering voice assailed the chief's ear.

„The Big Shot himself, hey? How's the cop I plugged? Dead, I hope.“

Fenton's self-control was admirable. He said soothingly, „Now, now, Pete, that wasn't a policeman you shot, that was just a rookie beginner. What did you have against him, Pete? Tell you what: I'll meet you anywhere you say—alone—and you—“

The high voice broke in violently:

„What kind of a dope do you take me for? Say, how many cops you got hanging around your house? It won't do you no good, see! If I don't get one of your family, I'll get somebody else in town—and I'll keep killing until you turn Myra loose. Get me? That's what I'll do! You turn her loose—and give her that money you stole from me, too. You better, that's all I'm tellin' you!“

„Why you rat!“ Fenton gripped the phone as though he would crush it. „If you had the guts to meet me I'd bring you in by one of those long ears of yours—and lay you alongside your brother.“

He looked urgently toward Mersereau; the lieutenant was trying desperately to locate the call. On the wire there was a moment of pregnant silence. The voice that broke it was half-choked with maniacal rage.

„Long ears, hey! Make your will, Big Shot! I'll get you! I'll get your kids! I'll get your woman! I'll show you! And quit wastin' time tryin' to find me! Watchin' you and your dumb cops searchin' all over town made me laugh so hard I near swallowed my false teeth. Try kickin' snow off the moon— it's easier! I'm gettin' busy on Monday!“

When Fenton hung up, he was green under the eyes and actually shaking. „Where was he phoning from, Jimmy? Did you find out?“

„Crandall's drug store. Taylor and two men are on the way. I'm going, too!“

He came back two hours later, gloomy and baffled. „Nobody remembers seeing him. It's a busy corner. I suppose that's why he picked it.“

„Maybe he's crazy,“ muttered Fenton, „but he's foxy enough to fool us all.“ He sounded tired and discouraged. Days and nights he had spent searching, working harder than any of his men.

Chapter 6

Pete's Letter.

Late in the afternoon came a letter addressed to „Myra Delhver, Police Headquarters“, written carefully in a schoolboy hand. It contained a five-dollar bill. The letter read:

„Hello, kid, dont lose yore nerv I got the cops stymied. I know they will read this letter what the hell do I care. Before I get thurgh they will be only too glad to let you go. They got nothing on you beecus you did nothing this letter proves it. Im the one to blame, me and poor Marty. So why dont they come

after me, the rats. I am sending you a fin more later if you need it. I hope the cops dont steal it. Be seeing you soon. Pete.

Fenton was like a caged tiger. His nerves and temper were running wild.

„Of all the blistering gall! That letter was mailed yesterday afternoon, right here in town.“ He paused suddenly. „How about baiting a trap with the girl—put her back in the apartment and let the papers print it?“

Mersereau shook his head. „You couldn't get him that way—he isn't dumb by any means.“

„No, I suppose you couldn't!“

Fenton's fists were clenched.

„If I could only lay hands on him! The murdering rat! Who knows what he'll do next. A fine lot we are... he'll be coming around to take her to the movies next... and he'll get away with it, too!“ With sudden exasperation he shouted, „What the hell are you looking at? You've seen that poster before, haven't you?“

Jimmy was studying the California poster with the picture of the two brothers on it. He said thoughtfully, „Take it easy, Chief!“

As he was going out, Fenton said imploringly, „If you got any clue, Jimmy—tomorrow is Sunday!“

Chapter 7

Pennville Country Club.

The road over which Lieutenant Jimmy Mersereau drove wound past the House of Mercy, and there it made a hairpin turn. Half a mile further it left the city and ran parallel with the shores of a lake. On the opposite side of the lake lay the sloping grounds of a summer camp for children; beyond the camp was the only public golf-course in that section. At least, although it belonged to the Pennville Country Club, the public were permitted to play it for a green fee.

Behind Greylock's towering peak the sun had begun its descent in a huge vista of glorious colors. Mersereau figured it would be light for another hour at least, a particularly important hour for those golf addicts who count that day wasted in which they do not go around eighteen holes at least once. There was an apple smell from the orchards all around, and Jimmy remembered that Tim Kelleher, still in the hospital, had often filled this very automobile with apples to bring home.

Near the entrance to the golf course, he parked his car and got out. He walked through the rickety wooden gate that was part of the fence separating the golf links from the camp, and came to the caddy house. The young professional in charge was sandpapering a wooden club.

Mersereau said, „Hello, Clyde! Going to win the tournament?“

Clyde looked up with an engaging grin. „Hello, Lieutenant! No, not likely—but I'm aiming to give some of those big-timers something to worry about. Did you come for a lesson at last?“

„Maybe forty years from now when I'm chewing with my gums!“ Jimmy took out the California poster. „Have you seen this guy around?“ He pointed to Pete's likeness.

Clyde looked at it, shook his head. „No!“

„Look again!“ urged the lieutenant. „No one even resembling him?“ He shook his head again. „No, never saw anybody like that around here. That’s the guy you’re all after, isn’t it?“

Mersereau nodded, bitterly disappointed.

„Just the same, I’m coming over here tomorrow afternoon, when they’re all on the course. Who’s out playing now?“

„Couple of ladies and a fellow named Hartman.“

„Who’s he?“

„Not your man—doesn’t resemble him in the slightest—just a crippled Dutchman with a sour puss and a Kaiser Wilhelm mustache. He’s been staying over at Tecum Brook with old man Hickson.“

The sandpaper squeaked nerve rackingly.

„Hits some long ones off the tee, that bird! If you want to see good golf form, go and watch him.“

Mersereau shook his head unsmilingly.

„Not interested!“

Then, because he had come so far, he changed his mind.

„Here, give me a bag of clubs, Clyde... I’ll waste a little time!“

Near the end of the seventh fairway, he caught sight of a man hobbling along, favoring his left leg. Must be Hartman, thought Mersereau. He strolled across and climbed the squat knoll on which the eighth tee was set, and sat on the bench while Hartman holed out on a long putt. After that, Hartman came limping toward the eighth tee.

„Hello!“ greeted the lieutenant affably. „How’s it going?“

From behind gold-rimmed spectacles, light blue eyes appraised Jimmy without cordiality. The reply was a grunt.

„Mind if I go ‘round a couple of holes with you?“ Mersereau asked.

Hartman growled ungraciously, „If you want!“

He certainly did not look like the picture of Peter Carson. Limping over to the tee, he adjusted his ball, and bent a closely-cropped, bulletshaped head as he prepared to drive off. And yet... well, perhaps it was the line of the jaw or the high cheekbones... or, perhaps, thought Jimmy, I’m just imagining things.

Hartman’s left leg seemed shorter than his right. As he drove, he bent his right knee. Down the center of the fairway whistled the white sphere, a good two hundred yards.

„Swell!“ praised Mersereau, and the German’s surly features relaxed perceptibly. Even the points of his mustache wiggled with gratification.

„I think so! Now see vat you can do!“

The guttural tones were not at all like the high, singsong voice which had demanded, „Who’s there?“ through the door of the apartment at 441 Wyona Street. Still, that might have been Martin’s voice.

Mersereau had not heard Pete over the telephone.

Swinging his club, Mersereau stepped to the tee.

„I’m not much good at this,“ he apologized. He wiggled his stick as he had seen other golfers do. Out of the corner of his eye he glanced toward Hartman, who was watching him intently. The German frowned and remained silent.

Jimmy swung mightily. His driver topped the ball, and he followed through... followed through so completely that the head of the club came whistling straight for Hartman’s head.

Hartman cried, „Hey!“ and sprang back. The club missed him by about an inch. Rigidly erect, he stood and glared at Jimmy.

„You damn fool, you near brained me!“ he growled.

„Sorry!“ apologized Mersereau easily. „I told you I’m a punk golfer.“

He brought out a package of cigarettes and offered one to Hartman, who brusquely refused. Mersereau lit one for himself, took a couple of puffs and threw it away. His glance rested on Hartman’s legs, both now quite straight and even.

At once the German’s right knee bent.

„I go play by myself!“ he said curtly. He picked up his bag and slung it over his shoulder.

Mersereau called, „Wait a minute! You don’t recognize me, do you?“

„You? I nefer saw you before.“

„That’s right, you didn’t, come to think of it. You couldn’t see me over the telephone when you talked to Chief Fenton, could you?“

Hartman looked at him with bewilderment.

„Vat you talking about? Crazy!“

He started limping off.

„Now, now!“ Jimmy’s voice was full of gentle chiding. „Don’t be in such a hurry, Pete. You should have worn green whiskers... those specs and the mustache aren’t enough. Put your hands up—high!“

His gun pointed steadily at the golfer.

„I’m afraid you’re not going to finish this game—not ever. You’re coming with me.“

Hartman demanded „Vat is dis—a holdup?“

„Sure, you hold up your knee and quit faking—it won’t do you any good. You jumped fast enough when I swung that club at you!“ Jimmy was enjoying himself thoroughly, thinking of Kelleher, and Haggerty, and the men this fellow had murdered in cold blood, indignantly—„Hands out behind you, Pete—unless you want lead. Chief Fenton is waiting to finish those conversations you started over the telephone—you never did give him a chance to have the last word, did you?“

Slowly the man slid the bag off his shoulder to the ground. He said, „How’d you guess? Listen, give me a break, will ya? It’s worth a thousand—two thousand. How about it?“

„I’ll give you a break!“ Mersereau’s voice was bitter, hard. „The same kind of break you gave poor Tim Kelleher, and Haggerty, and the cop in Des Moines—and a lot of others probably. Come on, rat, turn around and put your hands back of you!“

Pete turned about slowly. Suddenly he stumbled over his bag of clubs—fell on his stomach. He rolled over. But Jimmy was watching closely, He caught a flash of the blue forty-five as Pete pulled it from inside his shirt.

A second’s hesitation and there would have been another murder for Pete to crow over. But Mersereau’s gun boomed once and again. One bullet struck Pete in the chest, one went through his face. Their force threw him over on his back. Still he clutched the gun. Jimmy stepped forward swiftly and took it away.

But life was strongly rooted in the killer. His body jerked and he clawed at the lieutenant’s face, drawing blood. Then he relaxed. His spectacles had fallen off, and his eyes were fast-glazing pits of hatred.

Chapter 8

Nobody'd Think of Looking There.

„What put me on the right track,“ Mersereau explained to Chief Fenton, „was that word *stymied* in Pete's letter—that and the statement in the poster that the brothers had been caddies. The Pennville course is the only one within miles that's open to the public, and right near town, too—he could walk it in half an hour—although he chose to use the sedan now and then. I found that sedan in the woods back of the golf-course. I was dumb not to think of it before—that a caddie would naturally gravitate toward a golf-course and nobody'd think of looking there.”

Fenton asked almost humbly, „If you're dumb, what would you call the rest of us?“ He added with a grin: „That girl Myra's been knitting you a sweater—she wants to be your girl.“

