



Modus Vivendi
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About Garrett:

Randall Garrett (December 16, 1927 - December 31, 1987) was an American science fiction and fantasy author. He was a prolific contributor to *Astounding* and other science fiction magazines of the 1950s and 1960s. He instructed Robert Silverberg in the techniques of selling large quantities of action-adventure sf, and collaborated with him on two novels about Earth bringing civilization to an alien planet. Source: Wikipedia

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By the time I got to the office, I was jittery as a new bride. The day started out all wrong. I woke up weak and washed out. I was pathetic when I worked out with the weights—they felt as heavy as the Pyramids. And when I walked from the subway to the building where Mike Renner and I have our offices, an obvious telepath tailed me all the way.

I was ready for a scrap. St. Francis himself would have irritated the hell out of me, and I'd have gone speechless with rage at the mere sight of sweet Alice Ben Bolt. The guy sitting with Mike in our law library didn't have a chance.

"What's this?" I growled, seeing Mike seated silent and staring at our caller across the big table. There wasn't a book or sheet of foolscap resting on the walnut. Work hadn't started. They were lying in wait for me. Well, I was lying in wait for the first guy who opened his mouth.

"The Grievance Committee!" Mike said in a tone of stifled fury. "This is Horace Dunn."

"*Carpe Diem*," I snarled at Horace, a hammered-down heavyweight. "What's Renner done now?"

"Me?" Renner demanded, letting his fat jowls quiver. He's one of those burly types who looks like he should be playing pro ball and instead thrives on showing clients how to keep two sets of books while staying out of jail.

"Not Renner," Horace said. "You, Maragon. The Bar Association gets upset when reputable attorneys successfully defend one of these Stigma cases."

"Forgive me my hobbies," I sneered, sitting down beside my partner. "But I try to win them all. You know I didn't seek that business—Judge Passarelli appointed me Public Defender when that Psi, Crescas, bleated that he was destitute."

Mike Renner apparently decided one of us had to be reasonable. "Coincidence, Dunn," he said. "Pure coincidence. You can't hold it against—"

"No coincidence," I snapped. It wasn't my day to agree with anybody. Renner's fat little eyes opened wide.

"Judge Passarelli *knew* I'd be in his courtroom," I said. "His Honor wanted to get my views on a point I'd made in that pleading the previous week."

"Passarelli *again!*" Horace breathed. "Well, well. What do you know? And two weeks ago he found a Stigma case named Mary Hall 'Not

Guilty' of bunco game against the 99th National Bank. You know the case?"

Renner was too upset for speech. He shook his head, looking over at me. I didn't give him the satisfaction. Mike hasn't any patience with my interest in keeping abreast of Psi developments anyway.

"This Mary Hall is a hallucinator," Horace said. He leaned forward and gave it to us in not much more than a whisper. "This witch used her HC to pass five dollar bills off as hundreds, getting change. But they caught her at it." He laughed harshly. "And tried her for it," he added. "Get the picture on that 'Not Guilty' verdict?"

"No," Renner admitted. I slouched down, scowling.

"She used HC on Judge Passarelli, too. Foozled his vision, whatever you want to call it. When the 'cutor handed him the evidence, the five dollar bill she had tried to pass for a hundred, all sealed up in plastic, Passarelli *saw* a *hundred*, thanks to her Psi powers."

"Get out of here," I told Horace, getting to my feet.

"Pete! For heaven's sake!" Mike protested. You didn't talk like that to the Grievance Committee. Did you ever see a guy wring his hands? Renner was pathetic.

"Can't you quit pussy-footing around, Renner?" I growled. "This comic isn't from the Grievance Committee!"

Horace Dunn paled on that one. "How do you know that?" he said. He sounded a lot more dangerous.

"Too polite," I sneered. "And it ill becomes you. What's going on?"

"So I level," Horace conceded. "So I'm *not* from the Grievance Committee, and I'm not all hot that Maragon defended Keys Crescas."

"Much better," I said, sitting down again.

"This guy Passarelli is coming up for re-election shortly," our caller said. A light began to dawn. "We're making sure he doesn't make it—and that *our* man does."

My laugh was more a bark. "He can't find Mary Hall," I told Renner.

Horace's lower jaw shot out at me. "I don't like guys who know what I'm thinking!" he snapped.

I had to laugh in his face. "Who needs TP? You want to tar Passarelli with the brush of Psi—and this hallucinator would be Exhibit 'A'."

He subsided. "So I can't find her. What then?"

I shook my head. "You say it," I suggested. "Too early to have to wash my mouth with soap."

Dunn made his big pitch to Renner. "Maragon has a connection with these Psis—it's all over town that he got Keys Crescas off. This Crescas

can find Mary Hall—you know how Psis stick together." Renner nodded rapt agreement. "And," Dunn added, finally sticking it in us, "it would be good politics for Maragon to do it—would kind of sweeten up the stench of his getting Crescas off, eh?"

Renner thought he had to sell me: "Pete," he insisted, "You've *got* to! Defending Crescas was sure to hurt our reputation. That girl has it coming for—"

I waved a hand in his face, shutting him up. "Why should I care what happens to the girl?" I said, getting up. "Just make sure Horace pays us a fat fee. After all, it's tax exempt."

"Tax exempt?" he asked, frowning.

"Sure," I said, walking out. "Religious contribution. Thirty pieces of silver."

Keyes Crescas is the kind of odd-ball you can't find till after dark. Good looking in a romantic, off-beat sort of way. No visible means of support—a typical Psi. Renner made one white-jowled attempt to read me the riot act for failing to plead him guilty when Passarelli had tapped me as Public Defender. I came close to throwing the meat-ball out of my private office.

What could I have done? Sure, Crescas has the Stigma—he doesn't try to hide it. It's only TK, though, and I don't suppose much of that. Just enough, the cops will tell you, to make him a good man at picking locks and earn his nickname—Keys.

People like Crescas run to a pattern. I left my number in about ten of the spots he might turn up, and around six o'clock one of them hit pay dirt.

I pressed the "Accept" key when the phone rang, and Keys Crescas' olive face and curly black hair filled the screen. His black eyes had that lively watchfulness you associate with Psis. He had the gain way down and the aperture wide, so that he wasn't in focus any farther back than his ears. And that scope setting hid from where he was calling as effectively as a veil. Did you ever know a Psi who didn't seem to be harboring a secret?

"Hi, Mouthpiece," he grinned, showing even white teeth. "How'd you know where to find me?"

"Best place for worms is under a manure pile," I said. "I used parallel logic."

That took that smug, Stigma grin off his puss. "What do you want?" he asked, sullen now.

"A lead to a Psi who's gone into hiding."

You know what he told me to do. "Mary Hall," I added. "She's got Stigma Troubles."

"Not even counting you, eh?" Crescas sneered. He made the same suggestion again. I let it ride. "Go on," he dared me. "Make your pitch. I'll laugh later."

"That 'Not Guilty' verdict doesn't mean a thing, Crescas," I told him. "That was a National Bank she tried to rob. There's a Federal rap still to be settled. She has big Stigma troubles and needs counsel—and not one of those shysters who hang around the Criminal Courts building sniffing for Psi business."

"She's in no trouble till they find her," he said accurately, and I could see his hand come up to cut the image. "For my dough they've given up trying to find her and are using you for a stalking horse," he added with fiendish accuracy.

"So don't trust me," I snarled. "You can send her saw blades baked in a cake." I reached up, too.

"Hold it."

I stopped, trying to keep my glower going.

"Passarelli would have to be in on it, too," he decided. "And I can't figure *him* for a louse. O.K., Maragon. I'll pick you up at your office at about eight o'clock."

With nearly two hours to kill, I went out to eat. I still felt glum and lousy. Part of it was the knifelike penetration of Crescas' intuition—his knowing that I was just a stalking horse so that the big guns could zero in on Mary Hall. And there was that little tremor of fear that comes from knowing that a Psi may think you've doublecrossed him. They have some powerful abilities when it comes to exacting vengeance. Well, if everything about the deal was as much screwed up as the part I had heard so far, I decided, I might get out with a whole skin at that.

That was my attempt at consolation—that and an order of sweetbreads, *Financiere*, which is a ridiculous dish for a sawed-off shyster tending toward overweight.

I was back in the law library by ten minutes of eight, trying to occupy my mind with the latest *Harvard Law Review*, when the 'phone rang. Keys' face, a little tight-lipped and bright-eyed, peered at me from the screen, which it completely filled. He must have darned near swallowed the 'scope.

"Ready?" he asked softly.

"Sure. You picking me up?"

His lip curled in half a smile. "What do I look like?" he sneered. "Grab a cab. You know a bar called the Moldy Fig?" I nodded. "That's where." He cut the image.

Well, this was more like it. You can't deal with Psis without the whole affair acting like something out of E. Phillips Oppenheim. I closed up the office, turned out the ceiling, and rode the elevator down to the street.

The night howled and shrieked with air-borne traffic. A hot-rodding kid gunned his fans up the street a way and ripped what silence might have remained to the night into shreds as he streaked past me. The jerk wasn't forty feet off the ground, and was pouring the coal to his turbine. The whine of his impellers sounded a strong down-Doppler as his ripped past me, nose dropped a good thirty degrees and dragging every knot he could get out of his 'copter.

I waved to a cab standing at the rank up the block a way and watched the skim-copter rise a couple inches off the ground as the hacker skimmed on the ground-cushion toward me. City grit cut at my ankles from the air blast before I could hop into the bubble and give him my destination. He looked the question at me hopefully, over his shoulder, his hand on the arm of his meter.

"Oh, what the hell," I said, still sore at the world, and a little worried about what I was trying to do. "Let's 'copter!" He grinned and swung the arm over to the "fly" position with its four-times-higher rate. His turbine screamed to a keener pitch with wide throttle, and he climbed full-bore into the down-town slow lane.

The swift ride down to the Village was long enough to induce that odd motion-hypnosis so common in night flight over a metropolitan area. The dizzy blur of red and green running lights from air-borne traffic at levels above and below us, the shapes of 'copters silhouetted beneath us against the lambent glow of the city's well-lit streets, all wove into a numbing pattern.

"Here's the *Fig*, Mac," the hacker said as we grounded. I stuck my credit card in the meter and hopped out, not fast enough to duck the fan-driven pin-pricks of sand as he pulled away.

Crescas appeared as if by magic—Psis act like that—and had me by the arm. "Quick!" he said, pushing me back into the spot he had appeared from. It was a doorway beside the Moldy Fig, opening on a flight of steps running to an apartment above the bar. As we climbed the clean and well-lit stairs, I reminded myself that I was probably entering a den

of Psis—and clamped down tight on my thoughts. There was plenty they had better not peep.

Keys didn't have to knock on the door—there's always a telepath hanging around these Stigma hideouts who knows who's coming. A husky young man, quite blond and pink of face, opened the door. A soft rustle of music spilled out around his big shoulders. He wore a T-shirt, and his powerful forearms were bare.

"Hey!" he said to Keys, spotting himself as a Southerner as surely as if he'd had the Stars and Bars tattooed on his forehead. We followed him down a short hall into a room furnished, with a couple of couches, an easy-chair, several small but delightful tables, and a piano. Here was the music. A blond bombshell was drumming box chords on the ivories, and grouped around her on side chairs were four young men, playing with her. It was jazz, if that's what you call the quiet racket that comes out of a wooden recorder, a very large pottery ocharina that hooted like a gallon jug, a steel guitar and a pair of bongo drums played discreetly with the fingertips.

My appearance stopped them right in the middle of a chorus of "Muskrat Ramble." I'd have liked to hear more—it was Dixieland times two—what the Psis call Psixieland. That's jazz played by a gang of telepaths. Each one knows what the others are about to play. The result is extemporaneous counterpoint, but without the clinkers we associate with jazz. Almost too perfect, yet untrammelled.

My eyes ran around the room as the four men who had been playing with the girl got up and prepared to leave. The place was spotless. Oh, the furnishings weren't costly, but they were chosen with that sense of fitness, of refinement of color and decor that is curiously Psi. I suppose that's one of the little things that annoys Normals so much. Stigma powers seem to go beyond telepathy, clairvoyance and telekinesis—they extend in some hard to define way into the aesthetic. A chaste kind of cleanliness is only part of it. *Taste*, I guess that's the word. Their attire, their homes, everything about Psis, seems tasteful.

In moments only Keys, the blond Southerner and the still blonder bomb on the piano bench were left to face me. Keys poked a finger at the plow-jockey in the T-shirt. "Elmer," he explained.

"Take off yo' hat, Yankee," Elmer grinned. I felt it tipped from my head by his TK.

I glowered at him. "Kid stuff!" I snorted. "So you can lift four ounces from six feet away. But you don't have any idea what incorporeal hereditaments are. Which is better?"

The pink of his face got red. He could have broken me in two.

"Just making a point," I said. "I'm stupid about TK. You're stupid about the law. I figure that makes us even."

He clamped his mouth shut. I turned back to Keys and the girl I was sure was Mary Hall. "What I came here for—"

"What we *got* you here for," Keys interrupted, "was to set you straight on something." I guess I looked as surprised as I felt. The impossibly blond girl giggled. "Over the phone, Maragon," Keys went on, sitting down on the bench beside the girl, "you said there was a Federal rap hanging over Mary's head on this 99th National Bank fracas."

I nodded.

"The theory being," he went on, "that the law doesn't let anybody with the Stigma get away with a thing, right?"

"Right."

"Then relax. Mary hasn't got the Stigma. Have you, Mary?"

"No," she said. I looked her over more carefully. She was closer to twenty than thirty, round-faced, with blue eyes that were about as impossibly bright as her hair was impossibly white. It could have been a corneal tattoo, but somehow I doubted it. Impossibly red lips made up the patriotic triad of colors—but that was lipstick, pure and simple.

"No Stigma?" I demanded. "I know Psixieland when I hear it, Miss Hall. Don't tell me that wasn't telepathic jazz."

She tossed her short hair-do around. "My side-men were TP's," she conceded. "Why do you think I was playing box chords? They knew what I was playing—I didn't know what they'd play."

Well, some of it was adding up. Still, I had to be sure. "I see. Tell me, Mary, where were your parents on the 19th of April in '75?"

She sat up straight beside Keys on the bench, and her fair face flushed pinkly. "Drop dead!" she told me.

I stood up. "See you in jail," I said, and started for the door.

Elmer had played tackle for Ol' Miss—he sure stopped me in my tracks. "I reckon we ain't through with you yet, Yankee," he grinned. He hurt me with his hands, big as country hams. My stiffened fingers jabbed his T-shirt where it covered his solar plexus, and he dropped back, gasping.

"You could learn a little about fighting, too, Psi," I growled. "And you're through with me if that bottle blonde won't answer my questions."

"Hey!" Keys protested. "Come on, relax. Everybody!" he snapped, as Elmer got his breath back and came in for another tackle. I signaled for a fair catch, and he eased up.

I peered over my shoulder at the girl at the piano. "Well?" I asked her. "Where *were* your parents on the 19th of April in '75?"

Her eyes sought out Keys'. He nodded, dropping his gaze to the floor. "About fifty miles from Logan, Iowa," she said.

"And you don't have the Stigma?" I scoffed.

"Not everybody inside the Logan Ring was affected," she reminded me. "Which is my tough luck. But I *am* being crucified because Mother and Dad *were* in the Ring the day the N-bomb went off, whether I have the Stigma or not."

I came back to stand in front of her. "I'm an attorney," I said. "I have an idea what can happen to you if the Courts get hold of you. Right now they can't find you—which must mean you've been hiding." She confirmed that with a nod, biting her red, red lips. "They *are* after you, and a Federal rap is just the start," I said. "You have only one chance, Mary, and I'm glad you claimed it. The only way you can keep them from putting you over a barrel is to prove you don't have the Stigma. I think I know a way to do it. Are you ready to let me help you?"

"Not *that* fast," she said, looking worried. "Oh, I trust Keys' judgment about you. Yes, I *do*," she said earnestly, turning to Crescas. "Yes, I *know* he got you off, Keys. But it doesn't sound right. Why should he take a chance helping a Psi—even if I really *don't* have the Stigma? What's his angle?"

"Fair enough," Keys said. "How about it, Maragon?"

"I knew it was a bum rap they were trying to pin on Mary as soon as I heard about it," I explained. "This business about Mary having HC. There just isn't any such Psi power as hallucination, and every one of you knows it—it's an old wives' tale. I wouldn't touch this little lady with a ten-foot pole if I really thought she had the Stigma. I have a living to make around this town—and you can't handle Stigma business and get any decent trade, too."

I looked back at Mary. "How *did* you work your swindle at the bank?" I asked quietly.

She sighed. "Sleight of hand," she said. "A damned fool stunt. I figured to put the money back in a day or so. If somebody else hadn't been

working the same racket, they'd never have caught me. But they had set a trap—"

"I *thought* it was some light-finger stuff," I grinned. "Well, it will take me a while to set up a real test of your Psi Powers. Where can I reach you—or are you spending the night here?"

"Certainly not!" she said, casting an annoyed glance at Elmer. She looked at her watch. "Would it be much longer than an hour? I might still be here, if Elmer—"

"Jes' fine," T-shirt said. "Unless yo' mine watching Keys and me practice." He grinned at me. "Keys is he'ping me build up mah TK," he explained.

"That'll make you popular," I sneered, as I wrote down Elmer's phone number. They let me out. It had been a pretty room, and in a way I hated to leave it. Still, by the time a cruising 'copter had taken me halfway back to my office up-town, I could relax the shield over my thoughts—and that was worth getting out of that Stigma hideaway.

It was a little after nine when I walked into the lobby and rang for the elevator. A man lounging against the wall over near the building directory raised a wrist-phone to his mouth and spoke quietly into it as I waited for the car to come. He didn't seem to be interested in me—but then, he wouldn't want to show it if he were. Fool around with the Stigma, would I?

The building was mostly dark—in our circle we make too much dough to be interested in overtime. I keyed myself into our waiting room, turned on the ceiling, and went into my private office. There was enough light leaking in from our foyer, so I added none.

I found Lindstrom at home—after all, he should have been by nine o'clock. "Maragon!" he said. "Kill your focus. I have guests!"

I reached up to twist the 'scope so that my image would be a blur on his screen. Nice beginning. I was as welcome as a thriving case of leprosy.

"I want you to make a test for me, Professor," I said. "Tonight."

He shook his head. "I told you I had guests. We're entertaining. No thanks, Maragon."

"A Normal is being crucified," I said quietly. "They've got her pegged as a Psi. I've got to get her off the hook."

"How could this happen?" he demanded.

"She hangs with a bunch of Stigma cases, for one thing," I said.

"Nobody forced her to associate with a gang of Psis," he said. "Serves her right."

"Nobody forced you to, either, Prof," I snarled. "But you have a steady stream of Stigma cases going through your laboratory."

"That's different!" he protested.

"Nuts. Now name a time when I can see you there."

"I don't want any part of it. If you're along, it will just mean trouble, Maragon. You got too much publicity on defending that TK locksmith. I've got a professional standing to maintain."

"You'd sure look silly if all the Psis in town blackballed you," I snarled at him. "Let me pass the word around—and you darned well know I've got the contacts to do it—and you've tested your last Stigma case. Then let's see what kind of a professional standing you've got."

He knew some pretty dirty words. "What time?" I pressed him, knowing the profanity was a confession of defeat.

"Not before eleven," he said glumly. "I won't forget this, Maragon."

"What the hell," I said. "I'm on every S-list in town already. You hardly count beside the other enemies I'm making." I cut the image.

As if at a signal, there was a tapping on the door to the corridor. I got out of my swivel, walked into the waiting room and opened up. The man who stood there was faintly familiar—but it was the gun in his fist that got most of my attention.

"Maragon?" he asked softly.

I spread my feet a little. "I knew I was making enemies pretty fast," I said to him. "But I didn't know how strongly. Listen," I snapped, "I'll bet one thing never occurred to you."

He was taken back. You're not supposed to snarl at a guy who pokes a gun at you. In theory it gives him the edge of any conversation. "Huh?" he said.

"The only thing that lousy pop-gun of yours is good for is shooting people. I don't think you came here to shoot me. Now what can you do?"

"Clown," he growled. "Where's Renner?"

"In bed, if he has any sense," I decided. "Make up your mind. Whom do you want?"

"For Pete's sake," he said. "Grammar at a time like this!" He looked down at his gun, decided I was right, and stuck it in a shoulder holster. Then his wrist came up in front of his mouth and I recognized him. It was the man who had lounged near the building directory when I had come in. "Come ahead," he said into the mike.

I turned my back on him and stomped into my office. Let them follow me.

But only one man came in, a minute or so later. "Does it have to be so dark?" he asked politely.

"Rheostat's by your elbow," I said. He reached for it and turned on the ceiling, closing the door that cut us off from the waiting room.

"Good evening, Counselor," he said, taking the seat across my desk from me. He looked different without his judicial robes, not quite as much my senior as I had thought. He wasn't any taller than I was, perhaps five feet nine, and thirty pounds lighter. Between us we had about an average forehead—his went up to the top of his head—my hairline starts about where my eyebrows leave off. Robes or no robes, there was something judicial about him, as though he'd been born with a gavel in his hand.

"Good evening, Your Honor," I said to Judge Passarelli. "You have a pretty active pipeline into Stigma circles, don't you?"

It didn't bother him. "As long as judgeships are elective offices, Maragon," he said. "Judges will play politics. Fill me in on this Mary Hall thing."

"Without violating professional ethics?" I asked.

"You'll try cases again, in front of judges," he snapped not very judicial. "Don't get me angry with you, Maragon."

I countered: "The shoe is on the other foot—I'm darned sore at you." He tried to find his receding hairline with his thin eyebrows. "Don't look so amazed—do you think I haven't figured out my defending that TK Crescas was no accident? You set me up for it."

"Set you up for a resoundingly successful defense," he observed.

"And a resoundingly bad press!" I said. "I have a living to make in this town—"

"Psis are still citizens," he said. "I'm tired of seeing them thrown to the wolves by the jackals who practice law from a phone booth. Psis deserve a decent defense. Without you, Crescas would be in prison."

"And without *you*," I growled at him, "I might still have a law practice."

"So you're helping them find Mary Hall—to embarrass me?"

"I've already found her," I said. "Feel embarrassed?"

"Not yet," he conceded. "What are you planning to do?"

"We've accepted a fee to turn her over to a client," I revealed. "I guess that's not unethical to tell you."

"And you'll do that?"

"After one more step."

"And that is?"

"Prove that she hasn't got the Stigma."

"*Hasn't* got it!" He hopped out of his chair and pressed his knuckles on my desk.

"You'd better do a little more research, if you're going to let your black heart bleed over these Stigma cases, Judge," I grinned at him. "All this talk about Mary Hall using HC on your vision. That will never embarrass you. There isn't such a thing as HC—hallucination is an old wives' tale. It was sleight of hand, in the bank and in your courtroom. Don't stand still for that noise about HC."

"I'll be switched," he said. "You're serious?"

"Sure."

He frowned at me. "She's still in trouble," he reminded me. "The Federal Grand Jury—"

"Restitution ought to cure that," I said. "Especially if we threaten a lawsuit for slander—I think it's libelous to claim a Normal has the Stigma. Mutual release all around."

"You'll represent her?" he asked.

"Would you consider it ethical? I don't see how my assignment to turn Mary Hall over to your political opponents will stop me from representing her in a lawsuit, do you?"

He shook his head, straightening up. "I don't see how," he agreed. "I hope you do defend her, Maragon. The Courts have had to be pretty tough on these pathetic people. If they had reputable representatives, I for one would be a lot more ready to suspend sentences and find other ways to help them out of the jams their weird powers get them into."

"I'll think about it," I said. "In the meantime—stay away from me."

"We're both poison right now," he agreed. "And thanks."

Mary Hall was still at T-shirted Elmer's when I dialed his phone, and she agreed to meet me on the street in front of the Moldy Fig. My 'copter had barely settled to the pavement when she came running from the doorway to the stairs and hopped into the bubble with me.

"Columbia University," I told the hacker. "Rhine Building."

Professor Lindstrom was waiting for us in his laboratory, in carpet slippers and without his tie. "Laboratory" is a perfectly silly term. The "apparatus" in any Psi lab is no more complicated than a folding screen, some playing cards, perhaps a deck of Rhine ESP cards and a slide rule. This place went so far as to sport a laboratory bench and a number of lab

stools, on which Lindstrom, Mary Hall and I perched. My egghead Psi expert was barely able to restrain himself—he had some bitter things to tell me.

I beat him to it. "Take that injured glower off your puss," I snapped. "Your business is testing people for their Psi powers. Why shouldn't I call on you for help? What are friends for?"

"For a friend I might," Lindstrom said. "You don't rate that well with me any more."

"I'll try to bear up under it," I told him. "In the meantime, this is Mary Hall, a reputed Psi. Her power is HC."

He was interested in spite of himself. "Hallucination?" he said. "We don't see much of that, Miss Hall. And you claim you can demonstrate this power under controlled conditions?" These eggheads all talk alike.

Mary shook her head. "No, I certainly do not. I'm as Normal as you are, Professor." He sagged slightly in disappointment.

"Well," Lindstrom said. "This is going to be difficult to prove, Miss Hall. Merely by withholding your HC ability, you can act Normal—but what would that prove?"

She turned to me. "I thought you said you had a way to get me off the hook," she protested. "How are we—?"

"Quiet," I told her. "I didn't come up here for a lecture in logic. Especially from a dumb blonde." She started to bristle, but thought better of it.

"It goes like this, Prof," I said. "This innocent looking piece of fluff was caught slipping a five-dollar bill to a teller at a bank down town, and asking for change for a hundred dollar bill. She says it was nothing more than sleight of hand. You are an experienced observer. I want you to watch her work her little trick. If she can fool us, and not use Psi, the legal position is that she didn't need Psi to fool the teller." I turned to her. "And the logical principle, Miss Aristotle," I told her, "is equally simple: Occam's Razor. Prefer the simpler explanation. Can you show us how you palmed the hundred and slipped the teller a five?"

"You'll be watching for it," Mary protested, letting those ripe lips pout.

"I suppose the teller wasn't? It's his business to watch the bills when he's making change." I took out my wallet and handed her a one and a five. "Hand me the one and make me think it's the five," I said.

Lindstrom leaned his elbows on the black composition top of the lab bench, watching her narrowly. Mary got down off her stool and came over closer to me, smoothing the two bills in her fingers. The five was on top.

"I'd like change for a five," she said, handing it to me. She worked it three times while we watched.

"Utterly smooth," Lindstrom said. "I didn't see her make the switch."

"Me, too," I agreed. I could see the tension drain from Mary's face. She was prettier when she wasn't worried. She was pretty all the time, when you got right down to it. No wonder she could fool a teller. He probably hadn't taken his eyes off that dazzling smile.

"Is that all?" Lindstrom asked.

"Would you certify that you saw her make these switches, and that Psi was not involved?" I asked him.

"Of course. I don't want to, but, if you call me as a witness, I'll testify to what I saw," he said glumly.

"It may not be necessary," I said. "I really ought to call you, just to teach you some manners, Prof. But then, we all have a right to be a little yellow."

Mary would have preferred to remain in silence as we rode a cab back to the Moldy Fig, and huddled over in her corner of the bubble. There wasn't enough light, that high over the city, to read her expression.

"Here's the strategy," I said, about midtown. "If we can get the Bank to agree to restitution, and to sign an admission that you did not use HC or any other Psi powers to work your theft, I think you'll be off the hook. I doubt the Federal Jury will listen to an information."

"I hope you're right."

"This is my business," I growled. "Do you want me to represent you?"

She didn't answer that until the 'copter had grounded in front of the Fig. "All right," she said. "I don't know what you're so mad at all the time, but it doesn't seem to be me. I'd like you to represent me."

I watched her scoot across the sidewalk and run up the stairs to Elmer's place. For some screwy reason I hoped she had another place to hole up for the night. I was getting as bad as Renner—looking lecherously at the raffish display of shapely leg as the blond bombshell beat it.

I directed my hacker to my apartment, and grabbed the phone in the bubble. The Mobile Operator got me Vito Passarelli at his home. He sounded as if he had already retired.

"This is you know who," I said. "It's late, I know, but we'd better talk before morning. My apartment is the safest spot I can think of. I'm in the Directory."

"Now?"

"Now."

I beat His Honor to my apartment by long enough to hang up my jacket, turn the ceiling on to a dim but friendly glow and get out a bottle of Scotch. Judges don't drink bourbon.

I let Passarelli in when the buzzer sounded. "I'm reasonably sure there are no microphones in this place," I said. "This Mary Hall thing is getting hot—we'd better start taking precautions."

"Always," he said, running a hand over his balding head. His eyes saw the bottle and asked me a question. I threw some of the Pinch Bottle over ice and handed it to him, taking mine neat.

"Here's to crime," he said, sipping the liquor. "What happened?"

I poked a finger at my favorite easy-chair, which Passarelli took. I stood in front of him, still holding my drink. "I got myself in a jam."

"You're talking to the wrong man," he said coldly. "Get yourself a lawyer—a *good* Lawyer."

"You're in it with me, Passarelli."

"Never met you," he said, getting up. "Thanks for the drink." He started for the door.

"That witch has the Stigma after all," I said to his back. That stopped him. He came back and poked his angry face into mine.

"You had her tested?"

"Professor Lindstrom, at Columbia," I told him. "She is slick as a whistle. Lindstrom fell for her yarn that it was sleight of hand—but it was HC. I'd have sworn it didn't exist."

"Well," he said. "Well, well. All right, Maragon. What's the jam you're in?"

"You suggested I should represent her, and I'm going to. But with the Stigma? That's more than I bargained for. You know no reputable attorney can afford to represent a Psi. Not if he wants any Normal business. Too much feeling."

"Going to duck out on her?"

"Damned if I'll welch!" I said, more hotly than I had meant to. "You sure don't seem very shaken up by the news."

"It's not any news to me," Passarelli said tightly. "You forget that I've had first-hand experience with that little lady. She gave me the business right in my courtroom. I'm no credulous egghead like Lindstrom. I know the difference between sleight of hand and an hallucination. She made me see just what she wanted me to see."

"Now you know why I think you're in the same jam, Judge," I said. "You'll look great running for office, with your opposition telling the public how a Psi fozzled your vision. They'll stomp on the loud pedal

about how you let her get away with it and wangle a 'Not Guilty' verdict when she was guilty as sin."

"Yes," he agreed. "It's a hot potato, all right."

"There's just one out," I insisted. "That girl would have made restitution long ago if the Bank would have permitted it. And I've been asking myself how come—why should the Bank get sniffy and not want its money back?" That was the right question. He went back to the easy-chair and sat down. His eyes came up to meet mine, and then he held out his glass. I splashed some more Pinch in it.

"Politics, politics," he mourned. "The social workers are after me on this thing. They *want* that girl to be in a jam. They've asked me to work on the Bank, asked that I make sure restitution can't be made. They want the threat of a Federal indictment to hang over her head."

"Why?"

"So she'll agree to my committing her to their care. You know what they try to do—it's the doctrine of sterilization. Remove young Psis from the Psi society—cut them loose from their natural contacts, force them to quit using their powers. It's the same technique they use on narcotic violators, if they aren't too deeply committed to drugs."

"And you are really resisting that?"

"Wouldn't you? Of course I had to tell the Bank to refuse restitution. But do you think Psi is a sickness, like narcotic addiction? Nonsense. Telepathy is no more sickness than the ability to discriminate colors, or hear the tones of a scale. This is equivalent to the color-blind and tone-deaf asking that the rest of us stop perceiving color or hearing the pitch of sound. Ridiculous."

"What is the cure?"

"We could argue all night," he said wearily. Then my buzzer sounded. "Expecting anybody else?" he said, alarmed in an instant.

"I can't think of anybody I'd like to find out that you were here," I said. "Get out of sight." He carried his drink into my bedroom.

Mike Renner was at the door. For a fat-faced bookkeeper with a law degree, he looked pretty grim and formidable.

"You rotten double-crosser," he greeted me. I was the darling of practically everybody in New York that night.

"It happens every time. Now what do you want, Renner?"

"To break your neck," he said. "You have found that Psi, Mary Hall, and you haven't turned her over to Dunn. That's a dirty double—"

"With good reason," I cut in on him. "Do we both have to be idiots? I've just finished having the girl tested. She hasn't got the Stigma, Mike. Dunn will look like a fool trying to pin anything on the Judge."

"That's not our business. Our fee depends on giving her to Dunn!" He shook a fist in my face when he said that. He just doesn't look the part.

"And the reputation of our firm can very well depend on my successfully representing her, and proving that she hasn't got the Stigma."

"You don't honestly mean you're going to represent that Psi!"

"I just *told* you she hasn't got the Stigma!"

"You are a rotten lair," Renner said, getting dangerously red in the face. "What kind of games are you playing with Passarelli? What has *he* got to do with the reputation of our firm? Don't try to lie," he said sharply. "I know he's here. He's been tailed all night."

That was enough for Passarelli. He came out of the bedroom and walked up to Renner. "Forgive me for saying this, Renner," he said. "But I just hope you have a case in my court. I'll find some way to pin one of your slippery tax frauds to you!"

Renner grew pale. He's conditioned to toady to judges. He didn't have the guts to answer Passarelli, and took it out on me, instead. "Our partnership is dissolved, as of right now," he seethed. He dragged some money out of his pocket and threw it on the rug. "There's your share of the rent. I'm throwing your stuff out in the hall in the morning. The auditors will be there at nine o'clock for an accounting. You won't need that address any longer—only reputable people come to our building." He stormed out.

Passarelli and I faced each other in silence. "Jerk!" I raged at him at last. "You couldn't check to see if you were being followed!"

"I regret that," he said. "But you invited me."

"Don't remind me," I snarled. "What now?"

"I don't know about you," Passarelli said. "But I'm going to start looking out for myself. You're too tricky, Maragon."

"And I suppose you think it's time I ditched Mary Hall, eh?"

"What for?" he said mildly. "You're just one more Criminal Court shyster now—Renner gave you the heave-ho. You might as well defend her, even if I can't work with you."

I could feel my belly tighten with rage. "I thought you'd welcome a reputable attorney who would represent Psis," I reminded him.

"Yes, I suppose I would. Very much."

"All of a sudden I'm not reputable?"

"Reputable?" he sneered. "You've been on every side of this thing. Would you like to explain why you told Renner one thing and me another?"

"Same reason you've been going through some contortions yourself—trying to save my profession and occupation."

"Too tricky for me," Passarelli said.

I measured him with my eyes. "That's not the reason you're walking out of here. What's bugging you?"

"Reading my mind?" he said coldly. It wasn't the first time I'd been accused of it. "But you're right. You lied to me."

"To you? Not so."

"Oh, yes. How do you know that Mary Hall used HC on you in Lindstrom's laboratory? Nothing but Psi could detect that. You had a TK there with you. Admit it."

"Never," I said. "How did you spot it in your courtroom? If I needed a TK, so did you. What about that?"

"That was different," he argued. "I had the—"

"Nuts," I told him. "Just because I have made as much of a study of Psi as you have, don't blackball me. You going to act the same way if I decide to specialize in Stigma cases?"

"Are you going to?"

"What else is left? I'll never get Normal trade after Renner finishes with me. I come back to it: A reputable attorney representing Psis."

Passarelli paused with his hand on the door. "It would have some interest, I guess," he conceded, "if I thought for a moment you could guarantee the behavior of your clients. But no Normal can, Maragon. That's the curse of the Logan Stigma. Normals are panicked by it. Look at the Bar Association and all the trouble that's gone to just to make sure no one with the Stigma is ever admitted to the Bar. Look at those pathetic social workers—trying to control what they can't even perceive. The color-blind man trying to make sure no one else sees red. No, only Psis will ever be able to make Psis behave. They will have to police themselves, and society is unwilling to give them any standing to do it. This I believe is called a dilemma."

"It's a mess, that's for sure," I said gloomily as he left.

Well, what do you do when the props have been pulled out from under your world? I like to believe that the reasonable man sits down and thinks. That's what I did, anyway. I was a guy with very little left to lose. It was time I bet the limit—shot my wad. There was one possibility... .

I looked at my watch. It was well after one in the morning. Still, I tried Elmer's place again. He came sleepily to the phone.

"Mary there?"

"Of course not."

"Keys?"

"What if he is?"

"Put him on."

There was a delay, but Keys' romantic good looks replaced Elmer's left-tackle belligerence. "What now?" he asked.

"Do you know where Mary is?" I started.

"Maybe."

"She tell you I'm her attorney?"

"Yes."

"I just found out that she's in twice the trouble I thought before. The kid's a pawn in a fight for power between political oppositions. They'll crucify her gladly, without respect to the merits of the case. Too much is riding on it for justice to wind up triumphant."

"That's what I thought," he said. "She stays under cover."

"Think it over," I suggested. "I'm going to bed, but I'm leaving my door unlocked—at my apartment. Dig her up, if you start making any sense, and both of you beat it over here. Before dawn. Do you hear me?"

"Oh, I hear you," he said sourly. "I just don't know whether to trust you."

"We all have the same trouble," I said, cutting the image.

They showed up about three o'clock. I hadn't been able to go back to sleep—feeling almost sure Keys would bring her there—and had spent the time with the weights. I was back to strength. The surprise was that Elmer came with them. Well, perhaps it was a help.

Nobody wanted a drink. Mary looked around the apartment a little—it is a nice place, restful and homey, if you can ever achieve that in an apartment fifty floors up.

"A Psi decorated this place," she said. Well, she was right, and I admitted it to her with a nod. "What couldn't wait until morning, Maragon?" she asked me.

"First, Mary, I want you to know that while you fooled Lindstrom, you didn't fool me. You have the Stigma. Wait," I said, raising my hand as she started to protest. "Lies won't do any longer. The chips are down. You wouldn't even be here if the Council of the Lodge hadn't decided it was time to protect you."

Keys took it away from her. "Lodge? What Lodge?"

"We'll come to that," I promised. "First, let's cut away the underbrush. Yes or no. Does she have the Stigma?"

He sought out her eyes, and the way they dropped to my rug I knew that the subterfuge was over. "Yes," he said in a strained, thin voice. "Mary has the Stigma."

"And it is HC?"

All three of them nodded, and Mary's head came up with an odd sort of pride. Well, she should have been proud—for all I could find out, she was unique.

"All right," I said. "And now you can get out of my easy-chair, Elmer. I'd like to sit there." He was obviously surprised by my bad manners. "Get out!" I growled. "It's time you pups got used to taking orders. You'll get your bellies full of it from now on."

"From you?" Elmer scoffed. "Ah reckon not, suh!" But he got out of the chair, and I sat in it.

"Oh, yes you will," I said. "The Lodge will see to that."

"The Lodge again," Keys protested.

"Never heard of it, did you?" I taunted him. "Proof positive that you're small potatoes in Stigma circles. Well, get set for a shock: I represent an organization of Psis—an organization devoted to protecting Stigma cases from Normal society, an organization devoted to establishing discipline among Psis so that our conflicts with Normals are kept to a reasonable minimum."

"And you call this a Lodge?" Mary Hall said. "What's its full name?"

"No other," I said. "It's ... well, it's a sort of benevolent and protective order. It's as secret as Psis can make anything—a select group."

"I'll bet," Keys sneered. "No TP's in it," he said, reminding me that telepaths can't close their minds to the peeping of other TP's.

"Unfortunately, none," I agreed. "We are getting ready, however, to extend membership beyond the TK's, CV's and HC's who are now enrolled."

"I don't believe it," Mary said. "There aren't any other hallucinators!"

"None foolish enough to reveal it," I conceded. "You had to louse us up there—I wonder if any other Stigma power is as feared by Normals? Certainly they're making a Roman circus over you."

Elmer stood up. "Ah've had enough," he said.

"One thing," I said to him. "The Lodge has a rule that no Psi may use his powers to the detriment of a Normal, or reveal the existence of the Lodge. Our discipline is formidable, Elmer. Remember what I say."

Keyes was frowning in thought. "Wait a minute, Elmer," he said. "Let me try this one on him for size." He turned to me. "Are you trying to tell me that you are a part of this Lodge, Maragon?"

"I'm their counsel," I said.

"A Normal?" he demanded. "It would make sense for Psis to get together—I've often wondered why it has never worked out more formally than it has. But to trust a Normal to represent them? Never!"

I grinned at him. "Know any attorneys with the Stigma?" I demanded. "I know darned well you don't. The Bar Association screens every would-be lawyer from the moment he enters law school. No, sir. The Lodge had no choice. They picked on me as an attorney sympathetic with Stigma Troubles, and trustworthy."

"You make it sound good," Keys admitted. "But then I know you are a liar." He looked over at Mary Hall. "Although you can prove different if you're able."

I raised an eyebrow at him.

"Tell me how you knew Mary hadn't used sleight of hand in Lindstrom's laboratory," he demanded.

There was nothing I could say. I bit down on my teeth. Well, I had decided to shoot the wad if I had to. He'd called my bet.

"I'll tell you, Maragon," he said. "I hate to admit it of a skunk like you, but you've got the Stigma. You kept a TK grip on those bills she shuffled. Her hallucination is too good for you not to think it was sleight of hand."

"No!" Mary shrieked.

"Not him!" Elmer said.

I stood up to face them. "Yes," I said. "I *do* have the Stigma. The only lie was that I was the Lodge's counsel. I'm not."

"What then?" Keys demanded.

"I'm Grand Master of the Manhattan Chapter," I told him. "And you, like every Psi who is made aware of the existence of the Lodge, are now subject to my orders."

"Not me," Elmer said. "You ain't got the Stigma."

I fired a lift at an ashtray on the table beside him, and it sailed in an arc toward the kitchen and crashed against the wall. My TK was certainly a lot better than it had been in the morning. Well, I'd spent an hour or so warming up before they had come in.

"*Who* hasn't got the Stigma?" I said.

He looked at Keys. "You didn't do that," he said. "You *couldn't*!"

Keys was openmouthed. "What a bruiser!" he marveled.

"So I've got the Stigma, Elmer," I said quietly. "Now why won't you do what I tell you?"

"Ah don't do what *anybody* tells me!"

"What do you hate and fear the most?" I asked him.

"Snakes, ah reckon," he decided.

"Show him a snake, Mary," I said. Her face twisted in indecision. I rammed a lift in under her heart—I know it hurt her. "Show him!" I snapped.

Elmer didn't jump more than three feet. Mary gave all of us the same hallucination. Her first try was a pretty sad kind of a snake, but it was bigger than the nine-by-twelve rug it squirmed on, and was making right for Elmer's legs, hissing in a horrible fashion.

"Enough," I said. "That's how, Elmer. And if that doesn't trouble you, how about this?" I gave him a sample of what TK means when it's clamped on the mitral valve. A heart attack is no joking matter, and just before he hit the deck I eased off.

"Now," I said, "will you do what I tell you, or do I have to kill you outright?"

He sank down to his knees, resting his palms on the carpet so recently vacant of illusory snake. "Yo' got me convinced, suh," he admitted. "No mo', you hear?"

"Any more protests?" I said. I got none. "Here's what we have to do," I went on, and spelled it out for them. At last they were ready to go, three shaken young people. "I repeat—absolute secrecy—none of you is a telepath, so only your lips can give you away if you keep your thoughts screened around TP's. Later that may change—the Lodge is preparing to come a little more into the open with Psis."

My whole membership nodded and left me. I was shaking from head to foot.

We had things to do in the forenoon, and I didn't try to see His Honor Judge Vito Passarelli until after lunch. But the docket was crowded, and there was no chance until after court had adjourned, which was well on toward four o'clock. His Honor was hanging his robes on a clothes-tree as I came into his Chambers, and he nodded me politely to a chair, just as if our last words hadn't been pretty heated.

"Mary Hall?" he asked, fumbling around to find his in-Chambers glasses. He's too vain to wear them on the bench.

I nodded an answer to his question as he came back to take a creaky horse-hair swivel, relic of more judges and years than I like to think about. "I'm here as her counsel," I said.

"What else?" he asked mildly, taking the lid off a big humidior on his desk and starting to fill a pipe.

"We'd like you to know that Mary has joined an organization that should do for her all that the social workers would like to see done for her. She's no longer a behavior problem for Normal society."

"Quite some organization," he said, showing interest. "What one?"

"It has no formal name," I said. "Being a secret organization. In point of fact, it's an organization of Psis that is revealing itself for the first time."

"Odd that I never heard of it," Passarelli said, looking at his fingernails. He puffed smoke around the stem of his pipe. His coolness bothered me. He should have been much more excited about what I was saying. I threw my high hard one.

"This organization exercises a formidable discipline over its members," I went on. "One of its firm rules is that no Psi may use his powers to the detriment of a Normal."

He chuckled softly. "You're taking advantage of what I told you yesterday, Maragon," he said calmly. "You know, and I know, that Psis have never done any such thing. And if they had, why would they pick you to run their errands? What Psi would ever trust a Normal?"

It was getting sticky. I was skating perilously close to the brink—once I revealed to a Normal that I had the Stigma, my days as an attorney were done. "This organization—I'll call it the Lodge, if I may—has to have an attorney to represent it in Court. And you know as well as I do they can't hire a Psi attorney—the Bar Association has taken care of that. They came to me because... ."

"Yes, yes," he interrupted, taking his eyes off his nails, and showing some real interest at last. "If you only knew how much I want to believe you, Maragon. But I will never believe that Psis would permit themselves to be represented by a Normal. Too bad, but the social workers, and not your mythical Lodge, will get Mary Hall. That or a Federal Grand Jury."

Well, this was the fork in the road, I had been kidding myself, and now I knew it. Persist in my masquerade as a Normal, and I'd never get Mary off the hook. But reveal myself as a Psi, and I was through as an attorney. It really wasn't much of a decision—I had made it when I revealed myself to Keys, Mary and Elmer.

I looked at the humidior of tobacco on his desk. Without changing expression, I aimed a lift at it. The container came up smoothly from the polished walnut and hovered in the air before us.

Passarelli looked at it blandly. I don't think anything in my life has ever been a greater shock than his unconcern. He should have dropped his teeth. Slowly I let the lift break, and lowered the humidior to his desk.

"Fairly good TK, if that's all you're capable of," Passarelli said. "Or can you do better, Maragon?"

"You slimy Normal!" I exploded. "You *tricked* me into exposing myself!"

"What am I, an idiot?" he snapped. "I had to know."

I stood up. "Until now, I never really hated Normals," I began.

"Oh, sit down, for Heaven's sake," he said testily. "Now don't get emotional and lose all your perspective. Doesn't it occur to you that there's been just too much coincidence in this whole thing?"

I think the word for it is "collapsed." I fell back into my chair. "You'll have to spell it out," I said.

Passarelli leaned forward, his face concentrated, almost angry. "You have the Stigma, you admit it?"

"Of course I admit it."

"You think any other attorney is a Psi?"

"No. I certainly do not. It's only a miracle that I ever got through the screening and made it."

"And yet you, the only attorney with the Stigma, gets tapped to be Public Defender for a Stigma case—Keys Crescas. Doesn't this strike you as more than coincidence can account for?"

"Now it does," I admitted. "Are you trying to tell me... ."

"I'm telling you I've been suspicious of you for a long time, Pete," Passarelli said. "Perhaps you didn't know it, but I was one of the young attorneys on the Committee from the Bar Association that checked your heredity. No, you were born in San Francisco. No, your parents didn't live in the Logan Ring—their home was in Sausalito. But—the day that neutron bomb was accidentally fired and started the rash of Psi mutations in the ring outside the fatal area centering on Logan, your parents were in a jet airliner. I found that out—and kept my mouth shut. I never told the rest of the Committee that on the 19th of April in '75 that jet was over Iowa, en route to San Francisco, and possibly close enough to Logan for its passengers to have been affected by the neutron spray. Even then I knew the law was painting itself into a corner with its attitude toward

Psi. I hoped. I hoped you *did* have the Stigma, and I've waited my time to force you into the open."

"Stinking Normal!"

"Stop acting like a child. I said I *hoped!*"

"Hoped?"

"Yes. I meant what I said about wishing there were a responsible organization of Psis we could turn to. Are you serious about this organization, this Lodge?"

"I guess I am," I said, shaken.

"How many members does it have?"

"It's a secret organization," I protested.

"How many members?"

"Four, including me."

He shrugged. "You start somewhere. Mostly with a man you can trust, and I trust you, Maragon. You can keep this girl in line?"

"Our discipline is formidable," I reminded him, trying a grin. It was pretty sick.

"I'll bet," he grinned back. "Well, it had better be, for I'm going to take a chance on you. Sooner or later the law will have to admit the existence of Psi. I know as well as you Stigma cases that this gene is dominant—that there'll be more Psis every generation. We've got to find some common ground between the two societies—some way to get along. Give me your personal surety in this Mary Hall thing. As an attorney, you're an officer of the Court, and I guess I have the right to make her your responsibility. I certainly don't want it getting out that I'm playing footsie with an organization of Psis—this is an elective office, after all."

"After all," I agreed. "But I am glad to hear you sounding like a politician again."

"We'll have to keep our dealings off the record," Passarelli insisted. "But if I thought I could call on you when we get one of these sticky Psi cases before the Courts... ."

You'd recruit for the Lodge, I thought to myself. "You've got yourself a deal, Your Honor!" I said fervently.

"Call it a *modus vivendi*," he smiled. "Now my big problem is to find a way to eat my words, and let the 99th National Bank accept restitution of what Mary Hall stole from them."

"No sweat," I grinned, beginning to feel better. "It's already been done."

"Done? How could it be? I told the bank not to... ."

"You told them," I conceded. "But they had no choice, Your Honor. Mary Hall went to the 99th National Bank this morning and asked for change of a five dollar bill."

"What!"

"And passed to the teller a hundred dollar bill. After all HC works both ways. They've got their money back. By noon they had half a dozen IBM technicians in there trying to figure why they were out of balance!"

THE END

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