

ENDOWMENT POLICY

When Denny Holt checked in at the telephone box, there was a call for him. Denny wasn't enthusiastic. On a rainy night like this it was easy to pick up fares, and now he'd have to edge his cab uptown to Columbus Circle.

"Nuts," he said into the mouthpiece. 'Why me? Send one of the other boys; the guy won't know the difference. I'm way down in the Village."

"He wants you, Holt. Asked for you by name and number. Probably a friend of yours. He'll be at the monument-black overcoat and a cane."

"Who is he?"

"How should I know? He didn't say. Now get going."

Holt disconsolately hung up and went back to his cab. Water trickled from the visor of his cap; rain streaked the windshield. Through the dimout he could see faintly lighted doorways and hear jukebox music. It was a good night to be indoors. Holt considered the advisability of dropping into the Cellar for a quick rye. Oh, well. He meshed the gears and headed up Greenwich Avenue, feeling low.

Pedestrians were difficult to avoid these days; New Yorkers never paid any attention to traffic signals, anyway, and the dimout made the streets dark, shadowy canyons. Holt drove uptown, ignoring cries of "Taxi." The street was wet and slippery. His tires weren't too good, either.

The damp cold seeped into Holt's bones. The rattling in the engine wasn't comforting. Some time soon the old bus would break down completely. After that-well, it was easy to get jobs, but Holt had an aversion to hard work. Defense factories-hm-m-m-m.

Brooding, he swung slowly around the traffic circle at Columbus, keeping an eye open for his fare. There he was-the only figure standing motionless in the rain. Other pedestrians were scuttling across the Street in a hurry, dodging the trolleys and automobiles.

Holt pulled in and opened the door. The man came forward. He had a cane but no umbrella, and water glistened on his dark overcoat. A shapeless slouch hat shielded his head, and keen dark eyes peered sharply at Holt.

The man was old-rather surprisingly old. His features were obscured by wrinkles and folds of sagging, tallowy skin.

"Dennis Holt?" he asked harshly.

"That's me, buddy. Hop in and dry off."

The old man complied. Holt said, "Where to?"

Go through the park."

"Up to Harlem?"

"Why-yes, yes."

Shrugging, Holt turned the taxicab into Central Park. A screwball. And nobody he'd ever seen before. In the rear mirror he stole a glance at his fare. The man was intently examining Holt's photograph and number on the card. Apparently satisfied, he leaned back and took a copy of the Times from his pocket.

"Want the light, mister?" Holt asked.

"The light? Yes, thank you." But he did not use it for long. A glance at the paper satisfied him, and the man settled back, switched off the panel lamp and studied his wristwatch.

"What time is it?" he inquired.

"Seven, about."

"Seven. And this is January ro, 1943."

Holt didn't answer. His fare turned and peered out of the rear window. He kept doing that. After a time he leaned forward and spoke to Holt again.

"Would you like to earn a thousand dollars?"

"Are you joking?"

"This is no joke," the man said, and Holt realized abruptly that his accent was odd—a soft slurring of consonants, as in Castilian Spanish. "I have the money—your current currency. There is some danger involved, so I will not be overpaying you."

Holt kept his eyes straight ahead. "Yeah?"

"I need a bodyguard, that is all. Some men are trying to abduct or even kill me."

"Count me out," Holt said. "I'll drive you to the police station. That's what you need, mister."

Something fell softly on the front seat. Looking down, Holt felt his back tighten. Driving with one hand, he picked up the bundle of banknotes and thumbed through them. A thousand bucks—one grand.

They smelled musty.

The old man said, "Believe me, Denny, it is your help I need. I can't tell you the story—you'd think me insane—but I'll pay you that amount for your services tonight."

"Including murder?" Holt hazarded. "Where do you get off calling me Denny? I never saw you before in my life."

"I have investigated you—I know a great deal about you. That's why I chose you for this task. And nothing illegal is involved. If you have reason to think differently, you are free to withdraw at any time, keeping the money."

Holt thought that over. It sounded fishy but enticing. Anyhow, it gave him an out. And a thousand bucks— "Well, spill it. What am I supposed to do?"

The old man said, "I am trying to evade certain enemies of mine. I need your help for that. You are young and strong."

"Somebody's trying to rub you out?"

"Rub me. . . oh. I don't think it will come to that. Murder is frowned upon, except as a last resort. But they have followed me here; I saw them. I believe I shook them off my trail. No cabs are following us--"

"Wrong," Holt said.

There was a silence. The old man looked out the rear window again.

Holt grinned crookedly. "If you're trying to duck, Central Park isn't the place. I can lose your friends in traffic easier. O.K., mister, I'm taking the job. But I got the privilege of stepping out if I don't like the smell."

"Very well, Denny."

Holt cut left at the level of Seventy-second, "You know me 'but I don't know you. What's the angle, checking up on me? You a detective?"

"No. My name's Smith."

"Naturally."

"And you-Denny-are twenty years old, and unavailable for military duty in this war because of cardiac trouble."

Holt grunted. "What about it?"

"I do not want you to drop dead."

"I won't. My heart's O.K. for most things. The medical examiner just didn't think so."

Smith nodded. "I know that. Now, Denny--"

"Well?"

"We must be sure we aren't followed."

Holt said slowly, "Suppose I stopped at F.B.I. headquarters? They don't like spies."

"As you like. I can prove to them I am not an enemy agent. My business has nothing to do with this war, Denny. I merely wish to prevent a crime. Unless I can stop it, a house will be burned tonight and a valuable formula destroyed."

"That's a job for the fire department."

"You and I are the only ones who can perform this task. I can't tell you why. A thousand dollars, remember."

Holt was remembering. A thousand dollars meant a lot to him at the moment. He had never had that much money in his life. It meant a stake;

capital on which to build. He hadn't had a real education. Until now, he'd figured he'd continue in a dull, plodding job forever. But with a stake-well, he had ideas. These were boom times. He could go in business for himself; that was the way to make dough. One grand. Yeah. It might mean a future.

He emerged from the park at Seventy-second Street and turned south on Central Park West. From the corner of his eye he saw another taxi swing toward him. It was trying to pocket his cab. Holt heard his passenger gasp and cry something. He jammed on the brakes, saw the other car go by and swung the steering wheel hard, pushing his foot down on the accelerator. He made a U-turn, fast, and was headed north.

"Take it easy," he said to Smith.

There had been four men in the other taxicab; he had got only a brief glimpse. They were clean-shaven and wore dark clothes. They might have been holding weapons; Holt couldn't be certain of that. They were swinging around, too, now, having difficulties with the traffic but intent on pursuit.

At the first convenient street Holt turned left, crossed Broadway, took the cloverleaf into the Henry Hudson Parkway, and then, instead of heading south on the drive, made a complete circle and returned his route as far as West End Avenue. He went south on West End, cutting across to Eighth Avenue presently. There was more traffic now. The following cab wasn't visible.

"What now?" he asked Smith.

"I . . . I don't know. We must be sure we're not followed."

"O.K.," Holt said. "They'll be cruising around looking for us. We'd better get off the street. I'll show you." He turned into a parking garage, got a ticket and hurried Smith out of the cab. "We kill time now, till it's safe to start again."

"Where-"

"What about a quiet bar? I could stand a drink. It's a lousy night."

Smith seemed to have put himself completely in Holt's hands. They turned into Forty-second Street, with its dimly lit honky tonks, burlesque shows, dark theater marquees and penny arcades. Holt shouldered his way through the crowd, dragging Smith with him. They went through swinging doors into a gin mill, but it wasn't especially quiet. A jukebox was going full blast in a corner.

An unoccupied booth near the back attracted Holt. Seated there, he signaled the waiter and demanded a rye. Smith, after hesitating, took the same.

"I know this place," Holt said. "There's a back door. If we're traced, we can go out fast."

Smith shivered.

"Forget it," Holt comforted. He exhibited a set of brass knuckles. "I carry these with me, just in case. So relax. Here's our liquor." He downed the rye at a gulp and asked for another. Since Smith made no attempt to pay, Holt did. He could afford it, with a thousand bucks in his pocket.

Now, shielding the bills with his body, he took them out for a closer examination. They looked all right. They weren't counterfeit; the serial numbers were O.K.; and they had the same odd musty smell Holt had noticed before.

"You must have been hoarding these," he hazarded.

Smith said absently, "They've been on exhibit for sixty years-" He caught himself and drank rye.

Holt scowled. These weren't the old-fashioned large-sized bills. Sixty years, nuts! Not but what Smith looked that old; his wrinkled, sexless face might have been that of a nonagenarian. Holt wondered what the guy had looked like when he was young. When would that have been? During the Civil War, most likely!

He stowed the money away again, conscious of a glow of pleasure that wasn't due entirely to the liquor. This was the beginning for Denny Holt. With a thousand dollars he'd buy in somewhere and go to town. No more cabbing, that was certain.

On the postage-stamp floor dancers swayed and jitterbugged. The din was constant, loud conversation from the bar vying with the jukebox music. Holt, with a paper napkin, idly swabbed a beer stain on the table before him.

"You wouldn't like to tell me what this is all about, would you?" he said finally.

Smith's incredibly old face might have held some expression; it was difficult to tell. "I can't, Denny. You wouldn't believe me. What time is it now?"

"Nearly eight."

"Eastern Standard Time, old reckoning-and January tenth. We must be at our destination before eleven."

"MThere's that?"

Smith took out a map, unfolded it and gave an address in Brooklyn. Holt located it.

"Near the beach. Pretty lonely place, isn't it?"

"I don't know. I've never been there."

"What's going to happen at eleven?"

Smith shook his head but did not answer directly. He unfolded a paper napkin.

"Do you have a stylo?"

Holt hesitated and then extended a pack of cigarettes.

"No, a . . . a pencil. Thank you. I want you to study this plan, Denny. It's the ground floor of the house we're going to in Brooklyn. Keaton's laboratory is in the basement."

"Keaton?"

"Yes," Smith said, after a pause. "He's a physicist. He's working on a rather important invention. It's supposed to be a secret."

"O.K. What now?"

Smith sketched hastily. "There should be spacious grounds around the house, which has three stories. Here's the library. You can get into it by these windows, and the safe should be beneath a curtain about- here." The pencil point stabbed down.

Holt's brows drew together. "I'm starting to smell fish."

"Eh?" Smith's hand clenched nervously. "Wait till I've finished. That safe will be unlocked. In it you will find a brown notebook. I want you to get that notebook-"

"-and send it air mail to Hitler," Holt finished, his mouth twisting in a sneer.

"-and turn it over to the War Department," Smith said imperturbably. "Does that satisfy you?"

"Well-that sounds more like it. But why don't you do the job yourself?"

"I can't," Smith said. "Don't ask me why; I simply can't. My hands are tied." The sharp eyes were glistening. "That notebook, Denny, contains a tremendously important secret."

"Military?"

"It isn't written in code; it's easy to read. And apply. That's the beauty of it. Any man could-"

"You said a guy named Keaton owned that place in Brooklyn. What~s happened to him?"

"Nothing," Smith said, "yet." He covered up hastily. "The formula mustn't be lost, that's why we've got to get there just before eleven."

"If it's that important, why don't we go out there now and get the notebook?"

"The formula won't be completed until a few minutes before eleven. Keaton is working out the final stages now."

"It's screwy," Holt complained. He had another rye. "Is this Keaton a Nazi?"

"Well, isn't he the one who needs a bodyguard, not you?"

Smith shook his head. "It doesn't work out that way, Denny. Believe me, I know what I'm doing. It's vitally, intensely important that you get that formula."

"There's a danger. My-enemies-may be waiting for us there. But I'll draw them off and give you a chance to enter the house."

"You said they might kill you."

"They might, but I doubt it. Murder is the last recourse, though euthanasia is always available. But I'm not a candidate for that."

Holt didn't try to understand Smith's viewpoint on euthanasia; he decided it was a place name and implied taking a powder.

"For a thousand bucks," he said, "I'll risk my skin."

"How long will it take us to get to Brooklyn?"

"Say an hour, in the dimout." Holt got up quickly. "Come on. Your friends are here."

Panic showed in Smith's dark eyes. He seemed to shrink into the capacious overcoat. "What'll we do?"

"The back way. They haven't seen us yet. If we're separated, go to the garage where I left the cab."

"Y-yes. All right."

They pushed through the dancers and into the kitchen, past that into a bare corridor. Opening a door, Smith came Out ~fl an alley. A tall figure loomed before him, nebulous in the dark. Smith gave a shrill, frightened squeak.

"Beat it," Holt ordered. He pushed the old man away. The dark figure made some movement, and Holt struck swiftly at a half-seen jaw. His fist didn't connect. His opponent had shifted rapidly.

Smith was scuttling off, already lost in shadows. The sound of his racing footsteps died.

Holt, his heart pounding reasonlessly, took a step forward. "Get out of my way," he said, so deep in his throat that the words came out as a purring snarl.

"Sorry," his antagonist said. "You mustn't go to Brooklyn tonight."

"Why not?" Holt was listening for sounds that would mean more of the enemy. But as yet he heard nothing, only distant honking of automobile horns and the low mingled tumult from Times Square, a half block away.

"I'm afraid you wouldn't believe me if I told you."

There was the same accent, the same Castilian slurring of consonants that Holt had noticed when Smith spoke. He strained to make out the other

man's face. But it was too dark.

Surreptitiously, Holt slipped his hand into his pocket and felt the comforting coldness of the brass knuckles. He said, "If you pull a gun on me-

"We do not use guns. Listen, Dennis Holt. Keaton's formula must be destroyed with him."

'Why, you-" Holt struck without warning. This time he didn't miss. He felt the brass knuckles hit solidly and then slide, slippery on bloody, torn flesh. The half-seen figure went down, a shout muffled in his throat. Holt looked around, saw no one and went at a loping run along the alley. Good enough, so far.

Five minutes later he was at the parking garage. Smith was waiting for him, a withered crow in a huge overcoat. The old man's fingers were tapping nervously on the cane.

"Come on," Holt said. "We'd better move fast now."

"Did you-"

"I knocked him cold. He didn't have a gun-or else he didn't want to use it. Lucky for me."

Smith grimaced. Holt recovered his taxi and maneuvered down the ramp, handling the car gingerly and keeping on the alert. A cab was plenty easy to spot. The dimout helped.

He kept south and east to the Bowery, but at Essex Street, by the subway station, the pursuers caught up. Holt swung into a side street. His left elbow, resting on the window frame, went numb and icy cold.

He steered with his right hand until the feeling wore off. The Williamsburg Bridge took him into Kings, and he dodged and alternately speeded and backtracked until he'd lost the shadows again. That took time. And there was still a long distance to go, by this circuitous route.

Holt, turning right, worked his way south to Prospect Park and then east, toward the lonely beach section between Brighton Beach and Canarsie. Smith, huddled in back, had made no sound.

"So far, so good," Holt said over his shoulder. "My arm's in shape again, anyhow."

'What happened to it?"

"Must have hit my funny-bone."

"No," Smith said, "that was a paralyzer. Like this." He exhibited the cane.

Holt didn't get it. He kept driving until they were nearly at their destination. He pulled up around the corner from a liquor Store.

"I'm getting a bottle," he said. "It's too cold and rainy without a shot of something to pep me up."

'We haven't time.'

"Sure we have."

Smith bit his lip but made no further objection. Holt bought a pint of rye and, back in the cab, took a swig, after offering his fare a drink and getting a shake of the head for answer.

The rye definitely helped. The night was intensely cold and miserable; squalls of rain swept across the street, sluicing down the windshield. The worn wipers didn't help much. The wind screamed like a banshee.

'We're close enough,' Smith suggested. "Better stop here. Find a place to hide the taxicab."

'Where? These are all private houses.'

"A driveway . . .

"O.K.," Holt said, and found one shielded by overhanging trees and rank bushes. He turned off lights and motor and got out, hunching his chin down and turning up the collar of his slicker. The rain instantly drenched him. It came down with a steady, torrential pour, pattering noisily staccato in the puddles. Underfoot was sandy, slippery mud.

"Wait a sec," Holt said, and returned to the cab for his flashlight. "All set. Now what?"

"Keaton's house." Smith was shivering convulsively. "It 'isn't eleven yet. We'll have to wait."

They waited, concealed in the bushes on Keaton's grounds. The house was a looming shadow against the fluctuating curtain of drenched darkness. A lighted window on the ground floor showed part of what seemed to be a library. The sound of breakers, throbbing heavily, came from their left.

Water trickled down inside Holt's collar. He cursed quietly. He was earning his thousand bucks, all right. But Smith was going through the same discomfort and not complaining about it.

"Isn't it-

"Sh-h!" Smith warned. "The-others-may be here."

Obediently, Holt lowered his voice. "Then they'll be drowned, too. Are they after the notebook? Why don't they go in and get it?"

Smith bit his nails. "They want it destroyed."

"That's what the guy in the alley said, come to think of it." Holt nodded, startled. "Who are they, anyhow?"

"Never mind. They don't belong here. Do you remember what I told you, Denny?"

"About getting the notebook? What'll I do if the safe isn't open?"

"It will be," Smith said confidently. "Soon, now. Keaton is in his cellar laboratory, finishing his experiment."

Through the lighted window a shadow flickered. Holt leaned forward; he felt Smith go tense as wire beside him. A tiny gasp ripped from the old man's throat.

A man had entered the library. He went to the wall, swung aside a curtain, and stood there, his back to Holt. Presently he stepped back, opening the door of a safe.

"Ready!" Smith said. "This is it! He's writing down the final step of the formula. The explosion will come in a minute now. When it does, Denny, give me a minute to get away and cause a disturbance, if the others are here."

"I don't think they are."

Smith shook his head. "Do as I say. Run for the house and get the notebook."

"Then what?"

"Then get out of here as fast as you can. Don't let them catch you, whatever you do."

"What about you?"

Smith's eyes blazed with intense, violent conunand, shining out of the windy dark. "Forget me, Denny! I'll be safe."

"You hired me as a bodyguard."

"I'm discharging you, then. This is vitally important, more important than my life. That notebook must be in your hands-"

"For the War Department?"

"For. . . oh yes. You'll do that, now, Denny?"

Holt hesitated. "If it's that important-"

"It is. It is!"

"O.K., then."

The man in the house was at a desk, writing. Suddenly the window blew out. The sound of the blast was muffled, as though its source was underground, but Holt felt the ground shake beneath him. He saw Keaton spring up, take a half step away and return, snatching up the notebook. The physicist ran to the wall safe, threw the book into it, swung the door shut and paused there briefly, his back to Holt. Then he darted out of Holt's range of vision and was gone.

Smith said, his voice coming out in excited spurts, "He didn't have time to lock it. Wait till you hear me, Denny, and then get that notebook!"

Holt said, "O.K.," but Smith was already gone, running through the bushes. A yell from the house heralded red flames sweeping out a dis-

tant, ground-floor window. Something fell crashingly-masonry, Holt thought,

He heard Smith's voice. He could not see the man in the rain, but there was the noise of a scuffle. Briefly Holt hesitated. Blue pencils of light streaked through the rain, wan and vague in the distance.

He ought to help Smith- He'd promised, though, and there was the notebook. The pursuers

had wanted it destroyed. And now, quite obviously, the house was going up in flames. Of Keaton there was no trace.

He ran for the lighted window. There was plenty of time to get the notebook before the fire became dangerous.

From the corner of his eye he saw a dark figure cutting in toward him. Holt slipped on his brass knuckles. If the guy had a gun it would be unfortunate; otherwise, fair enough.

The man-the same one Holt had encountered in the Forty-second Street alley-raised a cane and aimed it. A wan blue pencil of light streaked out. Holt felt his legs go dead and crashed down heavily.

The other man kept running. Holt, struggling to his feet, threw himself desperately forward. No use.

The flames were brightening the night now. The tall, dark figure loomed for an instant against the library window; then the man had clambered over the sill. Holt, his legs stiff, managed to keep his balance and lurch forward. It was agony: like pins and needles a thousand times intensified.

He made it to the window, and, clinging to the sill, stared into the room. His opponent was busy at the safe. Holt swung himself through the window and hobbled toward the man.

His brass-knuckled fist was ready.

The unknown sprang lightly away, swinging his cane. Dried blood stained his chin.

"I've locked the safe," he said. "Better get out of here before the fire catches you, Denny."

Holt mouthed a curse. He tried to reach the man but could not. Before he had covered more than two halting steps, the tall figure was gone, springing lightly out through the window and racing away into the rain.

Holt turned to the safe. He could hear the crackling of flames. Smoke was pouring through a doorway on his left.

He tested the safe; it was locked. He didn't know the combination- so he couldn't open it.

But Holt tried. He searched the desk, hoping Keaton might have scribbled the key on a paper somewhere. He fought his way to the

laboratory steps and stood looking down into the inferno of the cellar, where Keaton's burning, motionless body lay. Yes, Holt tried. And he failed.

Finally the heat drove him from the house. Fire trucks were screaming closer. There was no sign of Smith or anyone else.

Holt stayed, amid the crowds, to search, but Smith and his trackers had disappeared as though they had vanished into thin air.

"We caught him, Administrator," said the tall man with the dried blood on his chin. "I came here directly on our return to inform you."

The administrator blew out his breath in a sigh of deep relief.

"Any trouble, Jorus?"

"Not to speak of."

"Well, bring him in," the administrator said. "I suppose we'd better get this over with."

Smith entered the office. His heavy overcoat looked incongruous against the celoflex garments of the others.

He kept his eyes cast down.

The administrator picked up a memo roll and read: "Sol 25, in the year of our Lord 2016. Subject: interference with probability factors. The accused has been detected in the act of attempting to tamper with the current probability-present by altering the past, thus creating a variable alternative present. Use of time machines is forbidden except by authorized officials. Accused will answer."

Smith mumbled, "I wasn't trying to change things, Administrator-" Jorus looked up and said, "Objection. Certain key time-place periods are forbidden. Brooklyn, especially the area about Keaton's house, in the time near is p.M., January 10, 1943, is absolutely forbidden to time travellers. The prisoner knows why."

"I knew nothing about it, Ser Jorus. You must believe me."

Jorus went on relentlessly, "Administrator, here are the facts. The accused, having stolen a time traveller, set the controls manually for a forbidden space-time sector. Such sectors are restricted, as you know, because they are keys to the future; interference with such key spots will automatically alter the future and create a different line of probability. Keaton, in 5943, in his cellar laboratory, succeeded in working out the formula for what we know now as M-Power. He hurried upstairs, opened his safe, and noted down the formula in his book, in such a form that it could very easily have been deciphered and applied even by a layman. At that time there was an explosion in Keaton's laboratory and he replaced the notebook in the safe and went downstairs, neglecting, however, to relock the safe. Keaton was killed; he had

not known the necessity of keeping M-Power away from radium, and the atomic synthesis caused the explosion. The subsequent fire destroyed Keaton's notebook, even though it had been within the safe. It was charred into illegibility, nor was its value suspected. Not until the first year of the twenty-first century was M-Power rediscovered."

Smith said, "I didn't know all that, Ser Jorus."

"You are lying. Our organization does not make mistakes. You found a key spot in the past and decided to change it, thus altering our present. Had you succeeded, Dennis Holt of 1943 would have taken Keaton's notebook out of the burning house and read it. His curiosity would have made him open the notebook. He would have found the key to M-Power. And, because of the very nature of M-Power, Dennis Holt would have become the most powerful man in his world 'time. According to the variant probability line you were aiming at, Dennis Holt, had he got that notebook, would have been dictator of the world now. This world, as we know it, would not exist, though its equivalent would-a brutal, ruthless civilization ruled by an autocratic Dennis Holt, the sole possessor of M-Power. In striving for that end, the prisoner has committed a serious crime."

Smith lifted his head. "I demand euthanasia," he said. "If you want to blame me for trying to get out of this damned routine life of mine, very well. I never had a chance, that's all."

The administrator raised his eyebrows. "Your record shows you have had many chances. You are incapable of succeeding through your own abilities; you are in the only job you can do well. But your crime is, as Jorus says, serious. You have tried to create a new probability-present, destroying this one by tampering with a key spot in the past. And, had you succeeded, Dennis Holt would now be dictator of a race of slaves. Euthanasia is no longer your privilege; your crime is too serious. You must continue to live, at your appointed task, until the day of your natural death."

Smith choked. "It was his fault-if he'd got that notebook in time-" Jorus looked quizzical. "His? Dennis Holt, at the age of twenty, in '943 . . . his fault? No, it is yours, I think-for trying to change your past and your present."

The administrator said, "Sentence has been passed. It is ended."

And Dennis Holt, at the age of ninety-three, in the year of our Lord 2056, turned obediently and went slowly back to his job, the same one he would fill now until he died.

And Dennis Holt, at the age of twenty, in the year of our Lord 5943, drove his taxi home from Brooklyn, wondering what it had all been about. The veils of rain swept slanting across the windshield. Denny

took another drink out of the bottle and felt the rye steal comfortingly through his body.

What had it all been about?

Banknotes rustled crisply in his pocket. Denny grinned. A thousand

smackeroos! His stake. His capital. With that, now, he could do plenty- and he would, too. All a guy needed was a little ready money, and he could go places.

"You bet!" Dennis Holt said emphatically. "I'm not going to hold down the same dull job all my life. Not with a thousand bucks-not me!"