

Paradoxically Speaking

by Tredor Rednaif (Robert Fiander)

Pretty nice, huh!

Yeah! D'ya suppose she ever did?

Not a chance! Mind you, she was tempted, but, in the end she'd always say: "Hands off!" You'll see it by the time you get your collar starched.

Hey! Getta load of that thatched roof, will ya!

Scalpun Peroxidun, I always say.

What's her name?

In our profession we call her "Mary." She doesn't have a last name.

Seriously? You wouldn't badger an old buddy now, would ya?

Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! Like hell!

What was that?

Er-r-r-, I mean, certainly not.

Gee willikers! Where'd you get all these wall pictures and Mickey Spillane books? Say, Joe!

How about trading me a Mickey Spillane for a "Holy Horror"?

Ah, Spillane! "From whence cometh my strength."

Listen, old buddy boy, are you going to Vespers?

Yeah ! I gotta sermonize on the new book, "Chastity: Belt, Buckle and Key."

Aw! That's a thriller.

I'm calling the talk, "Are college boys locksmiths by nature?"

Buddy boy! You've a dirty medieval mind. Yeah, but at least my conscience is modern!

Say, buddy boy, where'd you get all those candid shots of Mary Whatsername?

Who? With a ---- like that! You crazy, boy? That's Brigitte Bardot.

Who?

Bridgette Bardot! Man, if you haven't heard of her, your religious life has been sadly neglected.

That's funny! I'd have sworn it was Mary Whatsername!

Say, Joe, why d'ya think he died? Who died?

You know. The son of Mary Whatsername! Oh, him! I guess he just got tired of those smelly old fishermen.

No, I don't think so. I have a theory. D'ya wanna hear it?

Buddy boy, you've got the jawbone of an ass. Shoot!

I think he died because: 1. He couldn't face the truth—i.e. he couldn't admit he was wrong; and 2. Nobody had a claw hammer, so he died of blood poisoning. Watcha think?

Well, with the first part I agree. But I think you're over-emphasizing the claw hammer. In fact, I doubt that they even had claw hammer, in those days.

True! True! Good observation, Joe, good observation!

Look, buddy boy, let's drop this topic. What's on T.V. tonight?

A bunch of westerns. I like that one about the Roman cowboys.

Oh, you mean, "Have Nails—Will Hammer!" Yeah, so do I.

Hey, Joe, who wrote this idiotic poem? Hell, what idealistic drivel! Probably some Baal worshipper.

Yeah, an atheistic artsman! Throw it in the can and flush it down the sewer, will ya? No, wait! I'll use it as a bookmark for my Spillane novels. I have trouble remembering all the good pages.

Enough said. Let's go to Vespers. And buddy boy, don't forget your crucifix!

The bookmark:

The Grim Salvation

Though on his face the mask of twisting death

With stealthy lines did pencil its grim print,

Yet would he save the last.

The rasping throat of someone near his hand

With its coarse sound had cried as from the grave:

"Remember me!"

His tired eyes so slightly turned,

As sunlight on a tear-drop fell,

And glancing eastward met the face

That early had been doomed to hell.

The words of grim salvation

Through burning lips were sped:

A mother screamed beneath him

As thorns fell from his head.