

Wait until dusk, Oley says, then we'll take her to the quarry.

Giovanni's voice broke on that word. Always the quarry, thought Gil. The boat circled inch by inch. The man's voice droned on.

They leave her in the lonely quarry. It's too late for Oley to join the dragger. Liv has no heart for his meeting. We'll pick up provisions in Rockland, hole up on one of the deserted islands, Oley decides. Liv slips back to Martha, tells her what's happened. If there are any questions, she must keep silent about the girl. Martha's not a woman to lie easily. Her conscience is in the keeping of her stern Protestant God. But she promises. The boat slips out of the cove, its light fades into the night.

Carrie Dyer's spirit light again. Today it's Liv struggling to get a girl to give up a ring and a roll of money. Yesterday it was Wyvern's hands around her throat. Gil shook his head to clear it of these fog-blurred scenes.

## COCKLEBUR

By ANNE G. SEKHON

My thistle bud, my cocklebur,  
Why did I love and love again  
Your angry eye, your fearful  
mouth  
More than those of other men?

My windy day, my hurricane,  
My drought, my flood and my  
disaster,  
Why did I love you, as I love  
Desert poppy and mountain  
aster?

And, frown me not, I love you  
better  
Than other milder, tamer men.  
Petals will rot and valleys  
founder  
But cockleburs spring up  
again.

Suddenly Giovanni shipped his oars, held up his wetted finger. "Wind's hauling around," he exclaimed, "shifting to nor'east."

"Fog's clearing," cried Gil.

Fogs of Penobscot Bay have a dramatic quality. They advance from the sea, shutting a thick white wall around the islands, blanketing all that stirs and breathes. As suddenly, when the fog changes, they soar upward to pass over like scudding clouds, while the islands reappear as if born again into a world of sun-flecked waves and spear-pointed firs.

"Look!" cried Gil. Through the gut between Green and Spruce a cabin cruiser plowed a white wake. "A thirty-foot job," said Gil, "neat, with plenty of speed in her engine. Wonder whose she is?"

Giovanni shaded his eyes from the glare of the westering sun. "Lively Lady!" he ex-

plained. His voice as he called to Gil was anxious. His round babyish face worried.

"What's the matter here? Anything happened to Martha?"

"This must be Liv," thought Gil as he hurried forward. "Wyvern was drowned yesterday. Men off the dragger brought the news last evening."

"Too bad," said Liv, but he looked relieved. "Poor kid, never had a chance at life. A fledgling dead before it tries its wings. I'm sorry, but why did you send for me?"

"It's rather a complicated story," said Gil.

"Come aboard and make yourself comfortable," the tall man in the peaked white cap standing on the afterdeck called to them.

"This is Mr. Stanton," Liv introduced him, "and you're —"

"Gil Donan, deputy sheriff for the islands."

"Sort of growing up in the law-enforcement business, hey?" Stanton's ruddy face wore a smile. "Come on, deputy, what's the idea of sending out a call for Liv? You interrupted a hot chess game."

"First," said Gil, "I'd like you to tell me, Liv, where you've been and what you've been doing these past four days."

"Official?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Well, four mornings ago Oley and I started out in his boat for Fox. I was going to catch the early boat for Rockland. Just as we pulled into the harbor we saw the Lively Lady passing the red channel buoy."

"I flagged them down, and glad I was to see them," Stanton took up the story. "Friend of mine from New Jersey had been cruising around Penobscot Bay, trying out his new cruiser. Well, his skipper came down with appendicitis the day they'd berthed at Rockland. So I was going over to Fox to see if I could pick him up a skipper. My friend offered Oley two hundred dollars and expenses back home if he'd take the boat to New Jersey. They left around eight o'clock that morning. That left me alone on Blueberry with only my old Norwegian cook for company, so I argued Liv into staying over with me."

"Didn't take much persuasion," said Liv. "He's got a freezer full of T-bone steaks, and enough drinking likker to float a man's tonsils. I figured I'd get more relaxation than I would chasing up to Augusta. Then that fog mull set in, so we had us a chess tournament."

"Whew!" exclaimed Gil. "That certainly relieves my mind. You've got an airtight alibi, Liv."

"So's Oley, if he's needing one too. But what's the mystery, deputy? Your turn now." Gil gave them the story.

"The poor old son of a gun!" exclaimed Liv. "Thinking Oley or me or the kid killed his girl. Why, the poor devil must have blown a gasket. Folks always thought he was a speck off, but I never believed it before."

"Giovanni?" said Stanton thoughtfully. "The chap I had working on my fireplace? Sort of a superior fellow. Had a real knack for stonework. Friend of yours, Liv?"

"No," said Liv slowly. "Not what you'd call a friend. One time I was going to kill Giovanni. That was when I was much younger. Glad I didn't. Now the island's practically deserted, I go over to visit with him now and then. Loneliness makes a man appreciate the company of his fellows. No, I'd not call him by the name of friend, nor by the name of enemy either. But I'm downright sorry to hear he's been in such a stew."



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