

6999

# Sandwichery



Chopped SPAM and sweet pickles on sesame bun

**SPAM**

... us to the beach?"

"I came with a friend," I said on a rising note of uncertainty.

"Someone'll take her home—it is a her, isn't it?"

"Yes, but—"

"Once in a while, Ann Palmer, you have to hang loose," and he took my guitar case. I mumbled a hasty, apologetic explanation to Marcia and grabbed my new coat.

Bo drove Mother's big car recklessly yet easily, as if he had eminent domain over the Santa Monica Freeway.

He parked, walking me by the entry to the gaudily lit amusement pier, south along the sand-gritty cement broadwalk to the row of rundown beach stores. It was late, cold, and there were few people around: a pair of shuffling ancients huddled into outside topcoats and three skinny, exhilarated little boys playing tag. Old-fashioned looped wires of bulbs hung like heavy bracelets, and a haze of barbecuing smoke hung over red neon arrows shooting into the dark sky. Bo stopped at a shabby wooden stand.

"The most gourmet hot dogs. Want one?"

For a hesitating moment I saw the place as my parents would. Grease-spattered, unsanitary.

Then—"Everything on mine!"

Sauerkraut, chopped onions, chili, grated American cheese, heated mustard—it was delicious and I ate as quickly as I could. We were hypnotized by a saltwater taffy machine pulling fat, creamy ribbons, folding, pulling again. We peered into a narrow bar where everyone slumped on high stools watching *Bonanza*. Bo bought cotton candy to split, pulling off my share, offering me huge, bobbling mouthfuls that melted into empty sweetness.

Later, back in the Lincoln, he asked me to sing. He listened, holding one hand over the dark hair that covered his left ear. "For a camel's hair type," he said, "you really are good."

Before I dropped him off at Sunset and Beverly Drive he memorized my phone number; he owned neither pen nor little black book. I spent Saturday and Sunday on the pink chair next to my silent phone going over the idiot things I'd said and done which had probably alienated him forever.

Monday noon. I sat listlessly chewing a tuna sandwich on the sunny cafeteria patio. Marcia chugged over. Her books dropped onto the round metal tabletop and she pointed at me.

"Behold!" she cried. "The sly, shy one."

"What does that mean?"

"As if you didn't know what Bo McCarran does."

"He lives, he breathes, he—"

"Promotes records. Listen, you really don't know about him? Ann, those groups being discovered in their own garages—well! Bo thinks of himself as their dis-

... adjacent table looked up at me, gazing at me with interest. Grabbing her purse and books, I left the long flight of stairs. There's a grassy strip between the swimming pool building and a very few people go there for a solitary green shade. For a long time I sat for a long time.

That night during the doorbell chimed. Posy came for coffee. I answered. She was lounging easily against the jamb of our elaborately paneled front door, obviously my consternation.

"Looked up your address in the phone book," he said, "your own number, right?"

"Right," I agreed and stepped across the wide hall to the room. In a slightly dazed mood I introduced him to my mother, who smiled and said, "Pleased to meet you, some other boy might have mother's smile settled lines around her mouth. Her father examined him for a moment and then went to the apple pie."

When Bo and I were in the teak-paneled den, he said, "Why didn't you tell me in the music business?"

"The subject never came up."

"You let me make a name for myself."

Bo glanced at the record player—built-in hi-fi speaker, tv and bar. "People don't live in houses like this," he said. "I should never, never have been a fool of themselves."

"I hate it!" I burst out. "I hate it!" I burst out. "I hate it!" I burst out. "I hate it!" I burst out.

for show, not to live. *Things* are more important than people! Around here—my mother and me to be friendly with them they talk about is new. Can I get them coats? And they don't want cars." And they don't want cars.

"Okay, okay, I get it. Bo grinned at me and pulled off his sockless, moccasin-like shoes from the coffee table. "Look, you're a real singer yet, not by a long way, but you've got some talent, very important. A great talent, nobody's ever figured out for. Every big performer has it. And so do a lot of people. Without it, though, they don't have it. That's why they don't have it."

And he told me about the time he was one of the rare ones who liked piano lessons. He was paid for with six dollars a week. Money was scarce, so he went to Hollywood High. He was still earned his living as a musician. He realized he'd never get paid as a performer. Learning to play for him, but he wasn't in college. So he had to do a demo end, finding the right demo records to peddle to the recording companies.

Last year he'd clicked

Surefire lure to bring boys under your spell. p202 4/69