

# THE LONG NAP

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## **"THE CASE OF THE MISSING GUY"**

*A Milo Farlow Tale*

### **1. Guy's Last Known Residence**

*Knock, Knock!*

I heaved the knockers but the brass wasn't having it,  
so I thumbed the squealer...

*Buzzzzz, Buzzzzz!*

"Who's there?"

"I want to see Guy."

"Who, who?"

"What are you, a deaf owl? Open the door!"

*The door gaped neatly framing a buttery-mannered butler, stiff as a plank  
- he'd stepped into a penguin suit and out of a drawing room comedy.*

"Where's Guy? He also goes by the handles of "The Fixer" and "Nowhere Man".

"Pardon me, sir, but there is no person or persons present at this domicile  
under those denominations."

"Skip the perfume, sweetheart, I'm feeling ripe."

"I am not in the habit of maintaining such indignant discourse, and if I indeed were privy to my master's private affairs, and I assure you that this function does not fall upon my responsibilities, I most certainly would not betray an entrusted confidence divulging his whereabouts haphazardly to a disheveled and disagreeable individual at the mere asking...I find you utterly distasteful."

"If this were another time I'd love to buttonhole carnations and powder our bottoms as we bandy witticisms and ride the dandy-horse to the fair, but if you don't stop with the soap bubbles I'm going to stuff you in a trash can."

"I'm afraid I must insist you vacate the premises – otherwise, I shall be forced to engage the authorities."

"Why don't you stick out your puss, Sylvester, we'll have a tidy Mexican divorce."

[Slams door, creamy footsteps gliding off...]

*It's okay, Guy, slugs always trail –  
I'll catch the tongue by the tail.*

## 2. Late Afternoon at The Tarantula Club

"Hiya, bird, what's the flap?"

"Jus' down to brass tax, baby."

"Hey, you know a sharper called *Guy*? Fancies himself a musician, fiddles the bow tie ...he wasn't wise with the ladies but he bedded down many a word."

"Wonder bread? I think I know the cat, Felix-type, I haven't jammed with that strange grain in a long while, but I'll spread it around."

"Do the soft-shoe number and there's a couple of C-notes if it dances."

"I'll roll out the yarn, he'll be meowing in no time...so, Milo, you still dickin' trouble?"

"Hell, if its got a bum it'll hum."

"You know, it's gonna get cloudy this weekend and plenty wet with mad sax – we got foggy weather blowin' in."

"Yeah? Good ole *Foghorn* from the old days, those hot house flights you could roost in, not too many of us yardbirds left."

"Man never preached a truer word."

"I'll see ya on the fly, Spider, I got a buzz to catch..."

*(Milo leaves...)*

"That sly cat better be a cheetah  
'cause this man here's a bad dog."

*peals off a long leisurely laugh...*

### **3. In the Alley Behind Benny's Pool Hall**

*I got a lead on a reliable snitch (and major operator):  
Peaches Brubaker, alias "Sawfish", "Nails", "Sticky Fingers".  
If there was a smell of scratch you can bet he had a whiff –  
there wasn't a spit on the sidewalk he didn't have action on,  
he had a finger on every pulse (and a few that didn't).*

"I dunno, Milo, I don't like to get involved..."

"Stop slinging the hash, I can pay."

"For you, Milo, I'd consider it a favor."

"Yeah, with interest....shoot."

"Sure, I knew the guy, we ran together for awhile, did a few jobs back West  
...dealt in ice mostly, till the temperature rose and we cooled back East."

"Know where I can smoke him out?"

"Nah, he's never shacked up in the same hooch, and I haven't sniffed  
one of his scores...tho' he promised me I'd be in on his next caper."

"Yeah, nothin' worse than a dishonest thief –  
can you bait me a squid who'll squawk where he flops?"

"Try a floozy, Brenda "The Barracuda" Marconi, now a Miss Juliette Dubois  
...runs a high class 'Gentleman's Club' on the Lower East Side  
but likes to rub ankles with heels."

"Yeah, I know the broad, picked up a French accent she murdered in the Bronx  
– any other grease pits?"

"There's also a stoolie, Peter Irish, goes by "The Sponge"  
on account of soakin' up information, but mostly 'cause he tilts the jug."

"No, too many jokers in gin rummys - any more skinny on the *fat man*  
..what kind of kettle am I fishin'?"

" Jus' that he's so many faces with as many names, he ain't never the same *guy*  
and he's got more juice than Edison, the man who beat *the man* - those are all  
the cards I'm holdin'...you got a slippery eel on your hands."

"Said the snake to the rat." (flashes a Jackson)

"Geez, Milo, you got me all wrong."

"Yeah, like a greasy mechanic." (snatches the bill)

*After I washed the oil off my hands,  
I goosed the old girl and made tracks  
on roads the past always leaves behind...*

#### 4. 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct, Lower Manhattan

*I went downtown to see Lt. McGinty,  
a stand-up flatfoot – he was a hard pill, didn't swallow much,  
a straight shooter on the square; soft spoken  
with a cool air about him  
but his smoke was wrapped  
in a hard pack.*

"Hi, Mack, still harassing the long-hairs?"

"Now Milo, that's an insensitive remark, and just as I convinced the Mayor to allow them to use the Ladies' john."

"You always had a soft spot for the opposite sex."

"And what brings you down here, perhaps you had an inkling to frequent a teahouse stirring up old memories of Chinatown during the last Tong Wars."

"Christ, I still can't sit in a chop suey joint without expecting one to pop out of the rice bowl."

"Now that's another disparaging accusation, lest we forget their contribution to the construction of our railroads."

"That's right, I remember Jesse James cutting them in on the loot – maybe you should give them your laundry business if you're going to be a stuffed shirt."

"What for? I've already had 3 ex-wives take me to the cleaners – Now what can I do you for?"

"Could you give me the rundown on this missing person I'm workin' on."

"Who's the interested party?"

"Some regal bird in a tall glass who doesn't spill much. She claims he's her ex-husband and concern over his prolonged absence, but my license tells me the only thing he divorced was her share - been walking in his steps with a left-footed shoehorn, it doesn't fit - all I could dig up from library records is when he stuck his head out long enough for his shot..."

*(hands over photo)*

[Only known photograph of "Guy" taken in Kansas City, 1935](#)



*"(laughs) Yeah, I know this guy."*

"Did you ever get a line on him? Is there a wrap sheet or any recent mug shots?"

"No, we never did fit him for bracelets, you can't print a ghost. I remember hearing about this guy way back at the academy, they had a secret file on him, but by the time I made Lieutenant it mysteriously vanished along with my predecessor."

"You got a mole I can use to stick to his rump?"

"Not a chance, he has more designations than the city's directory. Listen, there are crumbs and there are bad cookies, my advice to you is to let it sleep – he's a spook, a bedtime story you tell your kids... (pause, then in a low tone) Why don't you go see Gloria... she still asks about you."

"Nix, those memories went south of Broadway painting shadows on the boardwalks...(puts photo in coat pocket) and I still have this certified original I'd like to hang on your wall.

*(Milo gets up to leave)*

"Just keep cashing those checks, Milo – get a shave or buy yourself a new raincoat, you're starting to look like the flashers we pick up in Central Park."

*(Milo turns back)*

..

"Oh, you know the darkie you got shining your shoes in the lobby? Why don't you give him a leg up and let him do your housekeeping."

*(throws his coffee cup at Milo as he darts out the doorway)*

"Get the hell outta here, Milo!"

*chuckling all the way back to his desk...*



## **5. The Snake Pit**

I shuffled into the local watering hole for a chug of two-fingered poison.

"The usual song, Milo?"

"Yeah, and make it dance, Hank."

I was looking to detonate the peroxide bombshell at the end of the bar with another round of seismic proportions – she signaled me with her blinkers like a couple of brandy glasses.

She was new to the game – the pearl in a hard shell fresh out of the waters. The drink started to do its number and she had drums to beat the band.

As the troops filed in, I could feel those rushing waves of early warning, the dinghy knocking against the rocks. Soon the glass would smash ringing bells and we'd be juiced for the action like daylight robbery, a jail break.

We started with the usual loose talk, nothing like the soft soap for the lather. She was trying hard to keep up, too hard. Her buzz had no sting – she was hard bottled and labeled full-proof but she was Long Island in a teacup.

I figured she could use more than a few laughs, so I sent Hank to rustle up a hearty blue plate special, a chop of pie as sidekick – she ate for two while I suckled my wet-nurse. After she'd sponged the last of it, I peeled off a sawbuck to keep us honest and thanked Hank for not washing the glass.

We pranced arm in arm like a couple of truant school kids until we stopped at the bus depot.

"Hey, what's going on, Daddy!"

"Clam up and enough with the bubble gum! You're going back to the fold, kitty, lap up momma's milk and drop a litter and you'll serve up three squares without angles, this city will maul your insides and spew you out like a bad hangover and the morning mirrors will stare back at your 20 years looking 40."

"That's the first nice thing anyone's told me since I got here. Thank you, Milo, you're a good man...why don't you come with me?"

"Nope, too long on the whiskey and a dream short."

I floated her enough fins to swim out of the Hudson.

"I'll see you at the bottom of my glass, Brandy Eyes."

*As the bus shrank in the shadows, I thought about how you can't save them all, but one got away – and for a New York minute, I almost regretted it.*

But I had other things to think about, so I took my mind for a walk...

The fluffed up peacock made a bad investment with no return, this guy was bad coin and you can't change a penny. Yeah, she wasn't on the level about hiring me but she doesn't deserve this, whatever her reasons were.

So I decided to finish my report and close out the case – and get to the head of the line on my own dime.

*I rushed back to my office.*

As I cut down the alley behind my building, I was jumped by a couple of smoothies -  
I gave the *one* before they got to the *two*, I was never much for seconds  
so I load up on the first. I gave them the romance number complete with stars  
and they folded like accordions.

This had Guy's M.O. stapled to their lapels.

Of course, this could be some hood settling an old score,  
or maybe that librarian I checked out wasn't so single.  
Who knows, except I was sure it wasn't - memory leaves footprints  
and there weren't any.

Someone was getting nervous and this was a polite warning,  
they were light jelly-bellies but the next time they'd come heavy  
trying to fit me for a Chicago overcoat -

but this was New York,  
the steel sentinels of foul weather  
and long naps set to fast clocks  
and you don't sleep in a city  
with one eye opened and the lights on.

I returned to sender the wrinkled suits  
pinned with red ribbons and a message:

"I'd like to thank you in person, Guy,  
for stirring up the soft-filled doughnuts -  
but I don't take sweets with my coffee,  
I'm saving the sugar for the spoon."

## ***Epilogue – The Jugular Jungle***

*Sat in the frayed workhorse at the end of another 3-legged race  
and leaned back on old reliable – took a quick snort of Mr. JB  
and smacked a nail in my face, the smoke making chase  
through a lazy window...*

*Flicked on the recorder, kicked up my sleigh dogs and worked my gums -  
my final thoughts on a case gone nowhere, about a guy who stays gone...  
I lift my glass to him and to all the suckers in this blood bank,  
the phantoms of the jugular jungle:*

"He's the first and the last of the big-town wranglers: roustabout  
roundabout, the rumble in the rubble.

New York was his concrete canvas, chewed up the scenes  
and stuffed like tobacco in his back pocket:  
it was *his* town and always would be.

The original bite of the apple, shark-tooth sharpie; the only con-artist with a  
wanted poster at The Met –  
'The Greatest Chiseler Since Michaelangelo.'

All the signs were there for a street painter, or a thinker's sculptor,  
ideas as clay and diamonds by the rhinestone - playdoh for his plaything.

*The Gotham Godfather* swings all the rackets, even the Bowery Boys  
chimed in: 'This bunko could sell an angle to Archimedes!'

He was an angel in a mini-skirt, a priest & a pusher –  
the fiddler of rooftop dreams deals aces on the fly  
and you tip your hat in tribute at the church of the *Manhattan Minister*  
but his words don't come cheap –

with a shiv in his boot and stars up his sleeve,  
you'll see the sights when you hear the sound  
whispering through every manhole:  
the guy from the underground.”

*Flipped off the recorder, pinched another chalk stick  
and made nice with a tall one -*

*I thought about Brandy Eyes  
and if I'd taken her up on the offer...  
I imagine her in a sundress pruning roses  
in our little garden where the wind  
carries that scent reserved for the country,  
while I slouch on the porch swing  
slugging homemade corn in my overalls  
to see nightfall's sparkling necklace  
dimmed in the distance of city lights.*

*Slowly, I looked out at the moon  
yawning over the dead dark of sleep...*