

A Post Novelette Complete in This Issue

Strange things happened to the one who wore . . .

THE MAGIC WHITE SUIT

By RAY BRADBURY

It was summer twilight in the city, and out front of the quiet-clicking poolhall three young Mexican-American men breathed the warm air and looked around at the world. Sometimes they talked and sometimes they said nothing at all, but watched the cars glide by like black panthers on the hot asphalt or saw trolleys loom up like thunderstorms, scatter lightning, and rumble away into silence.

"Hey," sighed Martinez, at last. He was the youngest, the most sweetly sad of the three. "It's a swell night, huh? Swell."

As he observed the world it moved very close and then drifted away and then came close again. People, brushing by, were suddenly across the street. Buildings five miles away suddenly leaned over him. But most of the time everything—people, cars and buildings—stayed way out on the edge of the world and could not be touched. On this quiet warm summer evening, Martinez' face was cold.

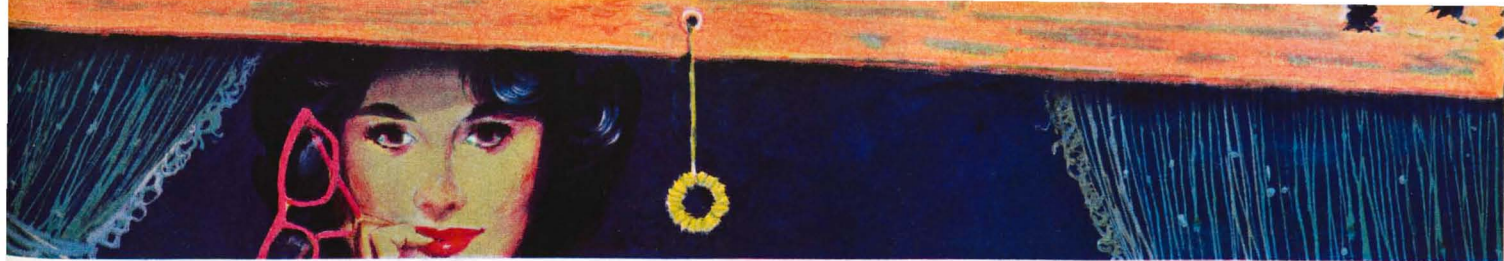
"Nights like this you wish—lots of things." "Wishing," said the second man, Villanazul, a man who shouted books out loud in his room, but spoke only in whispers on the street, "is the useless pastime of the unemployed."

"Unemployed?" cried Vamenos, the unshaven. "Listen to him! We got no jobs, no money!"

"So," said Martinez, "we got no friends." "True." Villanazul gazed off toward the green plaza where the palm trees swayed in

Illustrated by Thornton Utz





The beautiful girl looked out, her dark hair faintly stirred by the wind.

the soft night wind. "Do you know what I wish? I wish to go into that plaza and speak among the businessmen who gather there nights to talk big talk. But dressed as I am, poor as I am, who would listen? So, Martinez, we have each other. The friendship of the poor is real friendship. We —"

But now a handsome young Mexican with a fine thin mustache strolled by. And on each of his careless arms hung a laughing woman.

"*Madre mía!*" Martinez slapped his own brow. "How does that one rate two friends?"

"It's his nice new white suit." Vamenos chewed a black thumbnail. "He looks sharp."

Martinez leaned out to watch the three people moving away, and then at the tenement across the street, in one fourth-floor window of which, far above, a beautiful girl looked out, her dark hair faintly stirred by the wind. She had been there forever, which was to say, for six weeks. He had nodded, he had raised a hand, he had smiled, he had blinked rapidly; he had even bowed to her, on the street, in the hall when visiting friends, in the park, downtown. Even now, he put his hand up from his waist and moved his fingers. But all the lovely girl did was let the summer wind stir her dark hair. He did not exist. He was nothing.

"*Madre mía!*" He looked away and down the street where the man walked his two friends around a corner. "Oh, if just I had one suit, one! I wouldn't need money if I looked O.K."

"I hesitate to suggest," said Villanazul, "that you see Gomez. But he's been talking some crazy talk for a month now, about clothes. I keep on saying I'll be in on it to make him go away. That Gomez."

"Friend," said a quiet voice.

"Gomez!" Everyone turned to stare.

Smiling strangely, Gomez pulled forth an endless thin yellow ribbon which fluttered and swirled on the summer air.

"Gomez," said Martinez, "what you doing with that tape measure?"

Gomez beamed. "Measuring people's skeletons."

"Skeletons!"

"Hold on." Gomez squinted at Martinez. "Caramba! Where you been all my life! Let's try you!"

Martinez saw his arm seized and taped, his leg measured, his chest encircled.

"Hold still!" cried Gomez. "Arm—perfect. Leg—chest—*perfecto!* Now, quick, the height! There! Yes! Five-foot-five! You're in! Shake!" Pumping Martinez' hand he stopped suddenly. "Wait. You got—ten bucks?"

"I have!" Vamenos waved some grimy bills. "Gomez, measure me!"

"All I got left in the world is nine dollars and ninety-two cents." Martinez searched his pockets. "That's enough for a new suit? Why?"

"Why? Because you got the right skeleton, that's why!"

"Señor Gomez, I don't hardly know you —"

"Know me? You're going to live with me! Come on!"

Gomez vanished into the poolroom. Martinez, escorted by the polite Villanazul, pushed by an eager Vamenos, found himself inside.

"Dominguez!" said Gomez.

Dominguez, at a wall telephone, winked at them. A woman's voice squeaked on the receiver.

"Manulo!" said Gomez.

Manulo, a wine bottle tilted bubbling to his mouth, turned.

Gomez pointed at Martinez. "At last we found our fifth volunteer!"

Dominguez said, "I got a date, don't bother me —" and stopped. The receiver slipped from his fingers. His little black telephone book full of fine names and numbers went quickly back into his pocket. "Gomez, you —"

"Yes, yes! Your money, now! *Vamos!*"

The woman's voice sizzled on the dangling phone. Dominguez glanced at it uneasily.

Manulo considered the empty wine bottle in his hand and the liquor-store sign across the street.

Then, very reluctantly, both men laid ten dollars each on the green-velvet pool table.

Villanazul, amazed, did likewise, as did Gomez, nudging

(Continued on Page 47)

"No," said all five men on the sidewalk as they heard the impact.



The Magic White Suit

(Continued from Page 29)

Martinez. Martinez counted out his wrinkled bills and change. Gomez flourished the money like a royal flush.

"Fifty bucks! The suit costs sixty! All we need is ten bucks!"

"Wait," said Martinez. "Gomez, are we talking about one suit? *Uno?*"

"*Uno!*" Gomez raised a finger. "One wonderful white ice-cream summer suit! White, white as the August moon!"

"But who will own this one suit?"

"Men," said Gomez, "let's show him. Line up!"

Villanazul, Manulo, Dominguez and Gomez rushed to plant their backs against the poolroom wall.

"Martinez, you, too, the other end, line up! Now, Vamenos, lay that billiard cue across our heads!"

"Sure, Gomez; sure!"

The cue lay flat on all their heads, with no rise or fall, as Vamenos slid it, grinning, along.

"We're all the same height!" said Martinez.

"The same!" Everyone laughed.

"Sure!" Gomez said. "It took a month—four weeks, mind you—to find four guys the same size. But now, five of us, same shoulders, chests, waists, arms; and as for weight? Men!"

Manulo, Dominguez, Villanazul, Gomez and, at last, Martinez stepped onto the scales which flipped ink-stamped cards at them as Vamenos, still smiling, wildly fed pennies.

Heart pounding, Martinez read the cards.

"One hundred thirty-five pounds; one thirty-six; one thirty-three; one thirty-four; one thirty-seven. A miracle!"

"No," said Villanazul simply; "Gomez."

They all smiled upon that genius, who now circled them with his arms.

"Are we not fine?" he wondered. "All the same size, all the same dream—the suit. So each of us will look beautiful at least one night each week, eh?"

"I haven't looked beautiful in years," said Martinez. "The girls run away."

"They will run no more, they will freeze," said Gomez, "when they see you in the cool white summer ice-cream suit."

"Gomez," said Villanazul, "just let me ask one thing."

"Of course, *compadre.*"

"When we get this nice new white ice-cream summer suit, some night you're not going to put it on and walk down to the bus in it and go live in El Paso for a year in it, are you?"

"Villanazul, how can you say that?"

"My eye sees and my tongue moves," said Villanazul. "How about the Everybody Wins! Punchboard Lotteries you ran and you kept running when nobody won? How about the United Chili Con Carne and Frijole Company you were going to organize and all that ever happened was the rent ran out on a two-by-four office?"

"The errors of a child now grown," said Gomez. "Enough! In this hot weather, someone may buy the special suit that is made just for us that stands waiting in the window of SHUMWAY'S SUNSHINE SUITS! We have fifty dollars. Now we need just one more skeleton!"

Martinez saw the men peer around the poolhall. He looked where they looked. He felt his eyes hurry past Vamenos, then come reluctantly back to examine his dirty shirt, his huge nicotined fingers.

"Me!" Vamenos burst out, at last. "My skeleton, measure it, it's great! Sure, my hands are big, and my arms, from digging ditches! But —"

Just then Martinez heard passing on the sidewalk outside, that same terrible man with his two girls, all laughing and yelling together. He saw anguish move like the shadow of a summer cloud on the faces of the other men in this poolroom.

Slowly, Vamenos stepped onto the scales and dropped his penny. Eyes closed, he breathed a prayer.

"*Madre mia*, please."

The machinery whirred, the card fell out. Vamenos opened his eyes.

"Look! One hundred thirty-five pounds! Another miracle!"

The men stared at his right hand and the card; at his left hand and a soiled ten-dollar bill.

Gomez swayed. Sweating, he licked his lips. Then his hand shot out, seized the money.

"The clothing store! The suit! *Vamos!*"

Mr. Shumway, of SHUMWAY'S SUNSHINE SUITS, paused while adjusting a tie rack, aware of some subtle atmospheric change outside his establishment.

"Leo," he whispered to his assistant.

"Look."

Outside, one man, Gomez, strolled by, looking in. Two men, Manulo and Dominguez, hurried by, staring in. Three men, Villanazul, Martinez, and Vamenos, jostling shoulders, did the same.

"Leo." Mr. Shumway swallowed. "Call the police!"

Suddenly, six men filled the doorway.

Martinez, crushed among them, his stomach slightly upset, his face feeling feverish, smiled so wildly at Leo that Leo let go the telephone.

"Hey," breathed Martinez, eyes wide.

"There's a great suit, over there!"

"No." Manulo touched a lapel. "This one!"

"There is only one suit in all the world!" said Gomez coldly. "Mr. Shumway, the ice-cream white, size thirty-four, was in your window just an hour ago! It's gone! You didn't —"

"Sell it?" Mr. Shumway exhaled. "No, no. In the dressing room. It's still on the dummy. This way, gents. Now which of you —"

"All for one, one for all!" Martinez heard himself say, and laughed wildly. "We'll all try it on!"

"All?" Mr. Shumway stared.

That's it, thought Martinez, look at our smiles. Now, look at the skeletons behind our smiles! Measure here, there; up, down; yes, do you see?

Mr. Shumway saw. He nodded. He shrugged.

"All!" He jerked the curtain. "There! Buy it, and I'll throw in the dummy, free!"

Martinez peered quietly into the booth, his motion

(Continued on Page 51)

(Continued from Page 47) drawing the others to peer too. The suit was there. And it was white.

Martinez took a great trembling breath and exhaled, whispering, "Ai. Ai, caramba!"

"It puts out my eyes," murmured Gomez.

"Mr. Shumway," Martinez heard Leo hissing. "Ain't it dangerous precedent, to sell it? I mean, what if everybody bought one suit for six people?"

"Leo," said Mr. Shumway, "you ever hear one single fifty-nine-dollar suit make so many people happy at the same time before?"

"Angel's wings," murmured Martinez. "The wings of white angels."

Martinez felt Mr. Shumway peering over his shoulder into the booth. The pale glow filled his eyes.

"You know something, Leo?" he said, in awe. "That's a suit!"

Gomez, shouting, whistling, ran up to the third-floor landing and turned to wave on the others, who staggered, laughed, stopped and had to sit down on the steps below.

"Tonight!" cried Gomez. "Tonight you move in with me, eh? Save rent as well as clothes, eh? Sure! Martinez, you got the suit?"

If you're getting a big charge out of life, your wife and daughter have been shopping.

KEN SHIVELY

"Have I?" Martinez lifted the white gift-wrapped box high. "From us to us! Ai-hah!"

"Vamenos, you got the dummy?"

"Here!"

Vamenos, chewing an old cigar, scattering sparks, slipped. The dummy, falling, toppled, turned over twice, and banged down the stairs.

"Vamenos! Dumb! Clumsy!"

They seized the dummy from him. Stricken, Vamenos looked about as if he'd lost something.

Manulo snapped his fingers. "Hey, Vamenos, we got to celebrate! Go borrow some wine!"

Vamenos plunged downstairs in a whirl of sparks.

The others moved into the room with the suit, leaving Martinez in the hall to study Gomez's face.

"Gomez, you look sick."

"I am," said Gomez. "For what have I done?" He nodded to the shadows in the room working about the dummy. "I pick Dominguez, a devil with the women. All right. I pick Manulo, who drinks, yes, but who sings as sweet as a girl, eh? O.K. Villanazul reads books. You, you wash behind your ears. But then what do I do? Can I wait? No! I got to buy that suit! So the last guy I pick is a clumsy slob who has the right to wear my suit —" He stopped, confused. "Who gets to wear our suit one night a week, fall down in it, or not come in out of the rain in it! Why, why, why did I do it!"

"Gomez," whispered Villanazul from the room, "the suit is ready. Come, see if it looks as good using your light bulb."

Gomez and Martinez entered. And there on the dummy in the center of the room was the phosphorescent, the miraculously white-fired ghost with the incredible lapels, the precise stitching, the neat buttonholes. Standing with the white illumination of the suit upon his cheeks, Martinez suddenly felt he was in church. White! White! It was white as the whitest

vanilla ice cream, as the bottled milk in tenement halls at dawn. White as a winter cloud all alone in the moonlit sky late at night.

"White," murmured Villanazul. "White as the snow on that mountain near our town in Mexico which is called the Sleeping Woman."

"Say that again," said Gomez.

Villanazul, proud yet humble, was glad to repeat his tribute: "White as the snow on the mountain called —"

"I'm back!"

Shocked, the men whirled to see Vamenos in the door, wine bottles in each hand.

"A party! Here! Now tell us, who wears the suit first tonight? Me?"

"It's too late!" said Gomez.

"Late! It's only nine-fifteen!"

"Late?" said everyone, bristling.

"Late?"

Gomez edged away from these men who glared from him to the suit to the open window.

Outside and below, it was, after all, thought Martinez, a fine Saturday night in a summer month, and through the calm warm darkness the women drifted like flowers on a quiet stream. The men made a mournful sound.

"Gomez, a suggestion." Villanazul licked his pencil and drew a chart on a pad. "You wear the suit from nine-thirty to ten, Manulo till ten-thirty, Dominguez till eleven, myself till eleven-thirty, Martinez till midnight, and —"

"Why me last?" demanded Vamenos, scowling.

Martinez thought quickly and smiled.

"After midnight is the best time, friend."

"Hey," said Vamenos, "that's right. I never thought of that. O.K."

Gomez sighed. "All right. A half hour each. But from now on, remember, we each wear the suit just one night a week. Sundays we draw straws for who wears the suit the extra night."

"Me!" laughed Vamenos. "I'm lucky!"

Gomez held onto Martinez, tight.

"Gomez," urged Martinez, "you first. Dress."

Gomez could not tear his eyes from that disreputable Vamenos. At last, impulsively, he yanked his shirt off over his head. "Ai-yeah!" he howled. "Ai-yeah!"

Whisper, rustle—the clean shirt.

"Ah!"

How clean the new clothes felt, thought Martinez, holding the coat ready. How clean they sounded; how clean they smelled!

Whisper—the pants, the tie; rustle—the suspenders. Whisper. Now Martinez let loose the coat, which fell in place on flexing shoulders.

"Olé!"

Gomez turned like a matador in his wondrous suit-of-lights.

"Olé, Gomez; olé!"

Gomez bowed and went out the door.

Martinez fixed his eyes on his watch. At ten sharp he heard someone wandering about in the hall as if he had forgotten where to go. Martinez pulled the door open and looked out. Gomez was there, heading for nowhere.

He looks sick, thought Martinez. No; stunned, shook up, surprised, many things.

"Gomez! This is the place!"

Gomez turned around and found his way through the door.

"Oh, friends, friends," he said.

"Friends, what an experience! This suit! This suit!"

"Tell us, Gomez!" said Martinez.

"I can't; how can I say it!" He gazed at the heavens, arms spread, palms up.

"Tell us, Gomez!"

"I have no words, no words. You must see, yourself! Yes, you must see." And

Good earnings for the telephone company have a way of being good for the customer, too



Everybody has problems. One of ours is the rather widespread belief that the sure way to low telephone rates is to keep the company's earnings as low as possible.

Attractive as this may seem at the moment, it has distinct hazards for the telephone user. Handcuffing the company limits progress and long-range economies, and will lead to poorer service at a higher price than the customer would otherwise have to pay.

This fact is receiving increasing recognition by the commissions which regulate telephone rates and earnings. But it is not something that concerns the commissions alone. It needs your understanding, too.

Regulation can only work best in the interest of all when it is free to act in the interest of all on the basis of economic facts.

Authorizing good earnings for the telephone company requires wisdom and foresight and sometimes calls for a high degree of political courage. Such action, however, in the long run will return the greatest value to the public.

Fortunately, from the standpoint of the individual telephone user, our increased rate needs, where required, are small. They usually come to not more than a few cents a day on the average customer's bill.

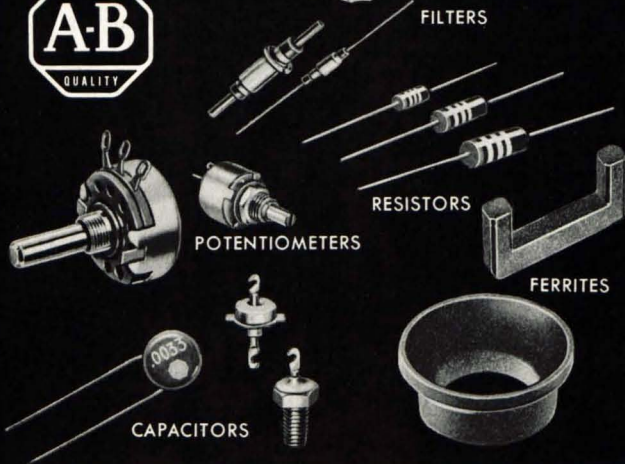
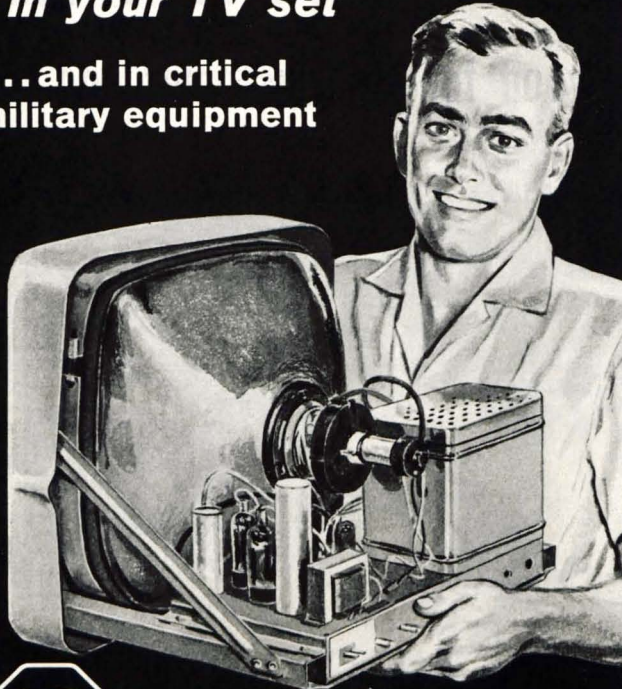
BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM



ALLEN-BRADLEY PARTS

prevent trouble
in your TV set

...and in critical
military equipment



You just can't match Allen-Bradley electronic parts for superior performance. Their stable characteristics and conservative ratings make them preferred throughout industry . . . and required in most critical military applications. Catastrophic failures have never been heard of in connection with Allen-Bradley quality electronic components. You cannot buy anything better! Allen-Bradley Co., 138 W. Greenfield Ave., Milwaukee 4, Wisconsin. In Canada: Allen-Bradley Canada Ltd., Galt, Ontario.

ALLEN-BRADLEY

QUALITY

ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS

here he lapsed into silence, shaking his head until at last he remembered they all stood watching him. "Who's next? Manulo?"

Manulo, stripped to his shorts, leaped forward.

"Ready!"

All laughed, shouted, whistled.

Manulo, ready, went out the door. He was gone twenty-nine minutes and thirty seconds. He came back holding to door-knobs, touching the wall, feeling his own elbows, putting the flat of his hand to his face.

"Oh, let me tell you," he said. "*Compadres*, I went to the bar, eh, to have a drink? But no, I did not go in the bar, do you hear? I did not drink. For as I walked I began to laugh and sing. Why, why? I listened to myself and asked this. Because. The suit made me feel better than wine ever did. The suit made me drunk, drunk! So I went to the *Guadalajara Refriteria* instead and played the guitar and sang four songs, very high! The suit, ah, the suit!"

Dominguez, next to be dressed, moved out through the world, came back from the world.

The black telephone book! thought Martinez. *He had it in his hands when he left! Now he returns, hands empty! What? What?*

"On the street," said Dominguez, seeing it all again, eyes wide, "on the street I walked, a woman cried, 'Dominguez, is that you?' Another said, 'Dominguez? No, Quetzalcoatl, the Great White God come from the East,' do you hear? And suddenly I didn't want to go with six women or eight, no, One, I thought, One! And to this one, who knows what I would say? 'Be mine!' Or 'Marry me!' *Caramba!* This suit is dangerous! But I did not care! I live, I live! Gomez, did it happen this way with you?"

Gomez, still dazed by the events of the evening, shook his head. "No, no talk. It's too much. Later. Villanazul?"

Villanazul moved shyly forward.

Villanazul went shyly out.

Villanazul came shyly home.

"Picture it," he said, not looking at them, looking at the floor, talking to the floor. "The Green Plaza, a group of elderly businessmen gathered under the stars and they are talking, nodding, talking. Now one of them whispers. All turn to stare. They move aside, they make a channel through which a white-hot light burns its way as through ice. At the center of the great light is this person. I take a deep breath. My stomach is jelly. My voice is very small, but it grows louder. And what do I say? I say, 'Friends. Do

you know Carlyle's Sartor Resartus? In that book we find his Philosophy of Suits.'"

And at last it was time for Martinez to let the suit float him out to haunt the darkness.

Four times he walked around the block. Four times he paused beneath the tenement porches, looking up at the window where the light was lit, a shadow moved, the beautiful girl was there, not there, away and gone, and on the fifth time, there she was, on the porch above, driven out by the summer heat, taking the cooler air. She glanced down. She made a gesture.

At first he thought she was waving to him. He felt like a white explosion that had riveted her attention. But she was not waving. Her hand gestured, and the next moment a pair of framed glasses sat upon her nose. She gazed at him.

Ah, ah, he thought, *so that's it! So! Even the blind may see this suit!* He smiled up at her. He did not have to wave. And at last, she smiled back. She did not have to wave either. Then, because he did not know what else to do, and he could not get rid of this smile that had fastened itself to his cheeks, he hurried, almost ran around the corner, feeling her stare after him.

When he looked back, she had taken off her glasses and gazed now with the look of the nearsighted at what, at most, must be a moving blob of light in the great darkness here. Then, for good measure he went around the block again, through a city so suddenly beautiful he wanted to yell, then laugh, then yell again.

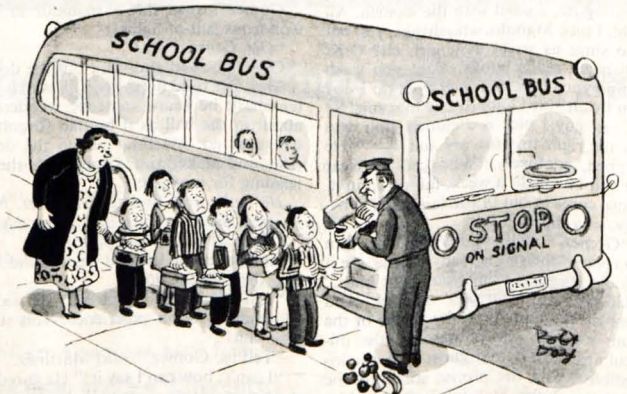
Returning, he drifted, oblivious, eyes half-closed, and seeing him in the door the others saw not Martinez, but themselves, come home. In that moment, they sensed that something had happened to them all.

"You're late!" cried Vamenos, but stopped. The spell could not be broken.

"Somebody tell me," said Martinez. "Who am I?"

He moved in a slow circle through the room.

Yes, he thought, yes, it was the suit; yes, it had to do with the suit and them all together in that store on this fine Saturday night and then here, laughing and feeling more drunk without drinking, as Manulo said himself, as the night ran and each slipped on the pants and held, toppling, to the others and, balanced, let the feeling get bigger and warmer and finer as each man departed and the next took his place in the suit until now here stood Martinez (Continued on Page 56)



"I demand you tell me! Why should he be frisking your lunch boxes for soft fruit?"

(Continued from Page 52) all splendid and white as one who gives orders and the world grows quiet and moves aside.

"Martinez, we borrowed three mirrors while you were gone. Look!"

The mirrors, set up as in the store, angled to reflect three Martinezes and the echoes and memories of those who had occupied this suit with him and known the bright world inside this thread and cloth. Now, in the shimmering mirror, Martinez saw the enormity of this thing they were living together, and his eyes grew wet. The others blinked. Martinez

touched the mirrors. They shifted. He saw a thousand, a million white-armored Martinezes march off into eternity, reflected, re-reflected forever, indomitable, and unending.

He held the white coat out on the air. In a trance, the others did not at first recognize the dirty hand that reached to take the coat. Then:

"Vamenos!"

"Pig!"

"You didn't wash!" cried Gomez. "Or even shave, while you waited! *Compadres*, the bath!"

"The bath!" said everyone.

"No!" Vamenos flailed. "The night air! I'm dead!"

They hustled him, yelling, out and down the hall.

Now here stood Vamenos, unbelievable in white suit, beard shaved, hair combed, nails scrubbed.

His friends scowled darkly at him. For was it not true, thought Martinez, that when Vamenos passed by, avalanches itched on mountain tops. If he walked under windows, people spat, dumped garbage, or worse. Tonight now, this night, he would stroll beneath ten thousand wide-opened windows, near balconies, past alleys. Suddenly the world absolutely sizzled with flies. And here was Vamenos, a fresh-frosted cake.

"You sure look keen in that suit, Vamenos," said Manulo sadly.

"Thanks." Vamenos twitched, trying to make his skeleton comfortable where all their skeletons had so recently been. In a small voice, Vamenos said, "Can I go now?"

"Villanazul!" said Gomez. "Copy down these rules."

Villanazul licked his pencil.

"First," said Gomez, "don't fall down in that suit, Vamenos!"

"I won't."

"Don't lean against buildings in that suit."

"No buildings."

"Don't walk under trees with birds in them, in that suit. Don't smoke. Don't drink —"

"Please," said Vamenos, "can I sit down in this suit?"

"When in doubt, take the pants off, fold them over a chair."

"Wish me luck," said Vamenos.

"Go with God, Vamenos."

He went out. He shut the door. There was a ripping sound.

"Vamenos!" cried Martinez. He whipped the door open.

Vamenos stood with two halves of a handkerchief torn in his hands, laughing.

"R-r-rip! Look at your faces! R-r-rip!" He tore the cloth again. "Oh, oh, your faces, your faces! Ha!"

Roaring, Vamenos slammed the door, leaving them stunned and alone.

Gomez put both hands on top of his head and turned away. "Stone me. Kill me. I have sold our souls to a demon!"

Villanazul dug in his pockets, took out a silver coin and studied it for a long while.

"Here is my last fifty cents. Who else will help me buy back Vamenos' share of the suit?"

"It's no use." Manulo showed them ten cents. "We got only enough to buy the lapels and the buttonholes."

Gomez, at the open window, suddenly leaned out and yelled, "Vamenos! No!"

Below on the street, Vamenos, shocked, blew out a match, and threw away an old cigar butt he had found somewhere. He made a strange gesture to all the men in the window above, then waved airily and sauntered on.

Somehow, the five men could not move away from the window. They were crushed together there.

"I bet he eats a hamburger in that suit," mused Villanazul. "I'm thinking of the mustard."

"Don't!" cried Gomez. "No, no!" Manulo was suddenly at the door. "I need a drink, bad."

"Manulo, there's wine here, that bottle, on the floor."

Manulo went out and shut the door.

A moment later, Villanazul stretched with great exaggeration and strolled about the room.

"I think I'll walk down to the plaza, friends."

He was not gone a minute when Dominguez turned the doorknob.

"Dominguez," said Gomez.

"Yes?"

"If you see Vamenos, by accident," said Gomez, "warn him away from Mickey Murillo's Red Rooster Café. They got fights not only on TV but out front of the TV too."

"He wouldn't go into Murillo's," said Dominguez. "That suit means too much to Vamenos. He wouldn't do anything to hurt it."

"He'd shoot his mother first," said Martinez.

"Sure he would."

Martinez and Gomez, alone, listened to Dominguez' footsteps hurry away down the stairs. They circled the undressed window dummy.

For a long while, biting his lips, Gomez stood at the window, looking out. He touched his shirt pocket twice, pulled his hand away, and then at last pulled something from the pocket. Without looking at it, he handed it to Martinez.

"Martinez, take this."

"What is it?"

Martinez looked at the piece of folded pink paper with print on it, with names and numbers. His eyes widened.

"A ticket on the bus to El Paso, three weeks from now!"

Conscience is what makes a small boy tell his dad before his sister does.

HERBERT V. PROCHNOW

Gomez nodded. He couldn't look at Martinez. He stared out into the summer night.

"Turn it in. Get the money," he said. "Buy us a nice white panama hat and a pale blue tie to go with the white ice-cream suit, Martinez. Do that."

Mickey Murillo's Red Rooster Café and Cocktail Lounge was squashed between two big brick buildings and, being narrow, had to be deep. Outside, serpents of red and sulphur-green neon fizzed and snapped. Inside, dim shapes loomed and swam away to lose themselves in a swarming night sea.

Martinez, on tiptoe, peeked through a flaked place on the red-painted front window. He felt a presence on his left, heard breathing on his right. He glanced in both directions.

"Manulo! Villanazul!"

"I decided I wasn't thirsty," said Manulo. "So I took a walk."

"I was just on my way to the plaza," said Villanazul, "and decided to go the long way around."

As if by agreement the three men shut up now and turned together to peer or tiptoe through various flaked spots on the window.

A moment later, all three felt a new very warm presence behind them and heard still faster breathing.

"Is our white suit in there?" asked Gomez' voice.

"Gomez!" said everybody, surprised.

"Hi!"

"Yes!" cried Dominguez, having just arrived to find his own peephole. "There's the suit! And, praise God, Vamenos is still in it!"

"I can't see!" Gomez squinted, shielding his eyes. "What's he doing?"

Martinez peered. Yes! There, way back in the shadows, was a big chunk of snow, and the idiot

(Continued on Page 58)



Captain L. J. Alexander, Executive Officer of the U. S. S. United States, U. S. Lines

Men who sail the seven seas
choose the protection of



Selected by the U. S. Government for showing at the World's Fair in Brussels

Old Spice
AFTER SHAVE LOTION

Now with extra emollients
to keep your skin healthy!

Follow the lead of the seafaring men who face winds and weather daily. Protect and refresh your face with Old Spice After Shave Lotion. Good for your skin: stimulates to a healthy glow, contains extra emollients to guard against loss of vital skin-moisture. It feels good! Clean, Fresh, Brisk. With that tangy Old Spice scent. Try it—happiest ending a shave ever had!

100 plus tax

S H U L T O N

Give
Sunbeam
and You Give the Finest!



Sunbeam Electric Tools
... the Modern Gift for Men

- Cuts 2" dressed lumber
- Ends arm-aching sawing
- Rips, crosscuts, cuts circles and scrolls
- Special blades cut iron, steel, plastics, etc.

It's rugged, precision built and lightweight... easy-to-use! Longer blade stroke cuts faster and smoother. Exclusive, patented Sunbeam construction. Quick change, self aligning blade—no tools needed. Complete with rip guide and blade. Only \$45.00

Made by **Sunbeam**

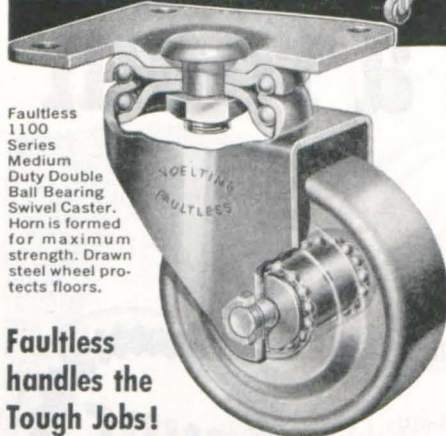
famous for Mixmaster, Shavemaster, etc.
Sunbeam Corporation, Dept. 84, Chicago 50, Ill.;
Canada: Toronto 18

D.S.C. SUNBEAM, MILLMASTER, SHAVEMASTER, SHAVEMASTER

NÖELTING

Faultless
Casters

DEFY 350° HEAT
to save Man-Hours!



Faultless 1100 Series Medium Duty Double Ball Bearing Swivel Caster. Horn is formed for maximum strength. Drawn steel wheel protects floors.

Faultless handles the Tough Jobs!

American Optical Company, Instrument Division, selected Faultless 1100 Series Swivel and 1700 Series Rigid Casters for use on steel drying racks which move newly painted parts into drying ovens where Faultless Caster bearings withstand 350° F. baking temperatures. There is no need to re-hang parts in oven... thousands of man-hours are saved each year. Faultless Casters can solve your materials handling problems too. See your Faultless Industrial Distributor. He is listed in your phone directory under "Casters."

Faultless Caster Corporation
Evansville 7, Indiana

(Continued from Page 56) smile of Vamenos winking above it, wreathed in smoke.

"He's smoking!" said Martinez.

"He's drinking!" said Dominguez.

"He's eating a taco!" reported Villanazul.

"A juicy taco," added Manulo.

"No," said Gomez. "No, no, no."

"Ruby Escudrillo's with him!"

"Let me see that!" Gomez pushed Martinez aside.

Yes, there was Ruby! Two hundred pounds of glittering sequins and tight black satin on the hoof, her scarlet fingernails clutching Vamenos' shoulder. Her cowl-like face, floured with powder, greasy with lipstick, hung over him!

"That hippo!" said Dominguez. "She's crushing the shoulder pads. Look, she's going to sit on his lap!"

"No, no; not with all that powder and lipstick!" said Gomez. "Manulo, inside! Grab that drink! Villanazul, the cigar, the taco! Dominguez, date Ruby Escudrillo, get her away. *Vamos, men!*"

The three vanished, leaving Gomez and Martinez to stare, gasping, through the peephole.

"Manulo, he's got the drink; he's drinking it!"

"*Olé!* There's Villanazul, he's got the cigar; he's eating the taco!"

"Hey, Dominguez, he's got Ruby! What a brave one!"

A shadow bulked through Murillo's front door, traveling fast.

"Gomez!" Martinez clutched Gomez' arm. "That was Ruby Escudrillo's boy friend, Toro Ruiz. If he finds her with Vamenos, the ice-cream suit will be covered with blood, covered with blood —"

"Don't make me nervous," said Gomez. "Quickly!"

Both ran. Inside, they reached Vamenos just as Toro Ruiz grabbed about two feet of the lapels of that wonderful ice-cream suit.

"Let go of Vamenos!" said Martinez.

"Let go that suit!" corrected Gomez.

Toro Ruiz, tap-dancing Vamenos, leered at these intruders.

Villanazul stepped up shyly. Villanazul smiled. "Don't hit him. Hit me."

Toro Ruiz hit Villanazul on the nose. Villanazul, holding his nose, tears stinging his eyes, wandered off.

Gomez grabbed one of Toro Ruiz's arms, Martinez the other.

"Drop him, let go, *coyote, vaca!*"

Toro Ruiz twisted the ice-cream-suit material until all six men screamed in mortal agony. Grunting, sweating, Toro Ruiz dislodged as many as climbed on. He was winding up to hit Vamenos when Villanazul wandered back, eyes streaming.

"Don't hit him. Hit me!"

As Toro Ruiz hit Villanazul on the nose, a chair crashed on Toro's head. A moment later Toro was ruins at their feet.

"*Compadres*, this way!"

They ran Vamenos outside and set him down, where he freed himself of their hands with injured dignity.

"O.K., O.K. My time ain't up. I still got two minutes and—ten seconds."

"What!" said everybody.

"Vamenos," said Gomez, "you let a Guadalajara cow climb on you, you pick fights, you smoke, you drink, you eat tacos, and now you have the nerve to say your time ain't up?"

"I got two minutes and one second left!"

"Hey, Vamenos, you sure look sharp!" Distantly, a woman's voice called from across the street.

Vamenos smiled and buttoned the coat. "It's Ramona Alvarez! Ramona, wait!" Vamenos stepped off the curb.

"Vamenos," pleaded Gomez, "what can you do in one minute and"—he checked his watch—"forty seconds!"

"Watch! Hey, Ramona!" Vamenos loped.

"Vamenos, look out!"

Vamenos, surprised, whirled, saw a car, heard the shriek of brakes.

"No," said all five men on the sidewalk.

Martinez heard the impact and flinched. His head moved up. Vamenos looked like white laundry, he thought, flying through the air. His head came down.

"I don't want to live," said Gomez quietly. "Kill me, someone."

Then, shuffling, Martinez looked down and told his feet to walk, stagger, follow one after the other. He collided with other men. Now they were trying to run. They ran at last and somehow crossed a street like a deep river through which they could only wade, to look down at Vamenos.

"Vamenos!" said Martinez. "You're alive!"

Strewn on his back, mouth open, eyes squeezed tight, tight, Vamenos motioned

... ..

Bay Windows

By John Robert Quinn

Bay windows, when I was a boy,

Were as much a part of life
As the parlor stove, the plush

Photograph album. Lush
Fountains of fringed ferns
Splashed in farmhouse bays;

There were gnarled
begonias with sprays
Of tiny pink butterflies.

At intervals, a pair
Of canaries would startle
the air

With rockets of golden song.
A genial bay window was
sort

Of a temporary port
Where time could pause,
and take

A breath for its own sweet
sake.

... ..

his head back and forth, back and forth, moaning.

"Tell me, tell me; oh, tell me, tell me."

"Tell you what, Vamenos?"

Vamenos clenched his fists, ground his teeth. "The suit, what have I done to the suit, the suit, the suit!"

The men crouched lower.

"Vamenos, it's — Why, it's O.K.!"

"You lie!" said Vamenos. "It's torn, it must be, it must be, it's torn, all around, underneath?"

"No," Martinez knelt and touched here and there. "Vamenos, all around, underneath even, it's O.K.!"

Vamenos opened his eyes to let the tears run free at last. "A miracle," he sobbed. "Praise the saints!" He quieted at last. "The car?"

"Hit and run." Gomez suddenly remembered and glared at the empty street. "It's good he didn't stop. We'd have —"

Everyone listened. Distantly, a siren wailed.

"Someone phoned for an ambulance."

"Quick!" said Vamenos, eyes rolling.

"Set me up! Take off our coat!"

"Vamenos —"

"Shut up, idiots!" cried Vamenos. "The coat, that's it! Now, the pants; the

pants, quick, quick, *peons!* Those doctors! You seen movies? They rip the pants with razors to get them off! They don't care! They're maniacs! Ah, quick, quick!"

The siren screamed. The men, panicking, all handled Vamenos at once.

"Right leg, easy; hurry, cows! Good! Left leg, now; left, you hear! There, easy, easy! Quick! Martinez, your pants, take them off!"

"What?" Martinez froze.

The siren shrieked.

"Fool!" wailed Vamenos. "All is lost! Your pants! Give me!"

Martinez jerked at his belt buckle.

"Close in, make a circle!"

Dark pants, light pants, flourished on the air.

"Quick, here come the maniacs with the razors! Right leg on, left leg, there!"

"The zipper, cows, zip my zipper!" babbled Vamenos.

The siren died.

"*Madre mia*, yes, just in time! They arrive." Vamenos lay back down and shut his eyes. "*Gracias.*"

Martinez turned, nonchalantly buckling on the white pants as the interns brushed past.

"Broken leg," said one intern as they moved Vamenos onto a stretcher.

"*Compadres*," said Vamenos, "don't be mad with me."

Gomez snorted. "Who's mad?"

In the ambulance, head tilted back, looking out at them upside down, Vamenos faltered.

"*Compadres*, when—when I come from the hospital, am I still in the bunch? You won't kick me out? Look, I'll give up smoking, keep away from Murillo's, swear off women —"

"Vamenos," said Martinez gently, "don't promise nothing."

Vamenos, upside down, eyes brimming wet, saw Martinez there, all white now against the stars.

"Oh, Martinez, you sure look great in that suit. *Compadres*, don't he look beautiful?"

Villanazul climbed in beside Vamenos. The door slammed. The four remaining men watched the ambulance drive away. Then, surrounded by his friends, inside the white suit, Martinez was carefully escorted back to the curb.

In the tenement, Martinez got out the cleaning fluid and the others stood around, telling him how to clean the suit and, later, how not to have the iron too hot and how to work the lapels and the crease and all. When the suit was cleaned and pressed so it looked like a fresh gardenia just opened, they fitted it to the dummy.

"Two o'clock," murmured Villanazul. "I hope Vamenos sleeps well. When I left him, he looked good."

Manulo cleared his throat. "Nobody else is going out with that suit tonight, huh?"

The others glared at him.

Manulo flushed. "I mean—it's late. We're tired. Maybe no one will use the suit for forty-eight hours, huh? Give it a rest. Sure. Well. Where do we sleep?"

The night being still hot and the room unbearable, they carried the suit on its dummy out and down the hall. They brought with them also some pillows and blankets. They climbed the stairs toward the roof of the tenement. There, thought Martinez, was the cooler wind, and sleep.

On the way, they passed a dozen doors that stood open, people still perspiring and awake, playing cards, drinking pop, fanning themselves with movie magazines.

I wonder, thought Martinez. I wonder if—yes!

On the fourth floor, a certain door stood open. (Continued on Page 62)

(Continued from Page 58) The beautiful girl looked up as the five men passed. She wore glasses and when she saw Martinez she snatched them off and hid them under her book.

The others went on, not knowing they had lost Martinez, who seemed stuck fast in the open door.

For a long moment he could say nothing. Then he said: "José Martinez."

And she said: "Celia Obregon."

And then both said nothing.

He heard the men moving up on the tenement roof. He moved to follow.

She said, quickly, "I saw you tonight!"

He came back. "The suit," he said.

"The suit," she said, and paused. "But not the suit."

"Eh?" he said.

She lifted the book to show the glasses lying in her lap. She touched the glasses.

"I do not see well. You would think I would wear my glasses, but no. I walk around for years now, hiding them, seeing nothing. But tonight, even without the glasses, I see. A great whiteness passes below in the dark. So white! And I put on my glasses quickly!"

"The suit, as I said," said Martinez.

"The suit for a little moment, yes; but there is another whiteness above the suit."

"Another?"

"Your teeth! Oh, such white teeth, and so many!"

Martinez put his hand over his mouth.

"So happy, Mr. Martinez," she said. "I have not often seen such a happy face and such a smile."

"Ah," he said, not able to look at her, his face flushing now.

"So, you see," she said quietly, "the suit caught my eye, yes, the whiteness filled the night, below. But the teeth were much whiter. Now, I have forgotten the suit."

Martinez flushed again. She, too, was overcome with what she had said. She looked at her hands and at the door above his head.

"May I —" he said, at last.

"May you —"

"May I call for you," he asked, "when next the suit is mine to wear?"

"You do not need the suit," she said.

"But —"

"If it were just the suit," she said, "anyone would be fine in it. But no, I watched. I saw many men in that suit, all different, this night. So again I say, you do not need to wait for the suit."

"*Madre mía, madre mía!*" he cried happily. And then, quieter, "I will need the suit for a little while. A month, six months, a year. I am uncertain. I am fearful of many things. I am young. The suit changes me, makes me strong."

"That is as it should be," she said.

"Good night, Miss —"

"Celia Obregon."

"Celia Obregon," he said, and was gone from the door.

The others were waiting on the roof of the tenement. A cooler night wind was blowing here, up in the sky.

Martinez stood alone by the white suit, smoothing the lapels, talking half to himself.

"Ai, *caramba*, what a night! Seems ten years since seven o'clock, when it all started and I had no friends. Two in the morning, I got all kinds of friends." He paused and thought, *Celia Obregon, Celia Obregon*. "All kinds of friends," he went on. "I got a room, I got clothes. You tell me. You know what?" He looked around at the men lying on the rooftop, surrounding the dummy and himself. "It's funny. When I wear this suit, I know I will win at pool, like Gomez. A woman will look at me like Dominguez. I will be able to sing like Manulo, sweetly. I will talk fine politics like Villanazul. I'm strong as Vamenos. So? So, tonight, I am more than Martinez. I am Gomez, Manulo, Dominguez, Villanazul, Vamenos. I am everyone. Ai. Ai." He stood a moment longer by this suit which could save all the ways they sat or stood or walked. This suit which could move fast and nervous like Gomez or slow and thoughtfully like Villanazul or drift like Dominguez who never touched ground, who always found a wind to take him somewhere. This suit which belonged to them, but which also owned them all. This suit that was— what? A parade.

"Martinez," said Gomez. "You going to sleep?"

"Sure. I'm just thinking."

"What?"

"If we ever get rich," said Martinez softly, "it'll be kind of sad. Then we'll all have suits. And there won't be no more nights like tonight. It'll break up the old gang. It'll never be the same, after that."

The men lay thinking of what had just been said.

Gomez nodded gently. "Yeah. It'll never be the same, after that."

Martinez lay down on his blanket. In darkness, with the others, he faced the middle of the roof and the dummy, which was the center of their lives.

And their eyes were bright, shining, and good to see in the dark as the neon lights from nearby buildings flicked on, flicked off, flicked on, flicked off, revealing and then vanishing, revealing and then vanishing, their wonderful white vanilla-ice-cream summer suit.