

By the time I came back out, Don had struck up a conversation with the two girls who had played behind us. It seemed they were from school too, so we gave them a lift back. So to put the crowning touch on my day, I had to grit my teeth and listen to those two give me advice on how to correct that slice of mine—me, who until today, hadn't sliced a golf ball in five years! It took a lot of self-control, and I knew then that this guy had really gotten under my skin if I were willing to take that for his sake.

Well, after that game, things weren't quite the same between Don and me. At first I thought it was just the aftermath of my own strain and my feeling of guilt at having deceived him. That's what I thought, that is, until one day I happened to drive by the golf course and saw that self-styled female golf expert giving Don some lessons. Now, she gives him his lessons with a big Delt pin on her sweater, which just goes to prove that no one, not even my grandmother, can be 100 per cent right about men all the time. There's always an unpredictable factor involved, and I guess a girl's just got to follow her own instincts once in a while.

P.S. I just won the citywide amateur golf championship, competing against you know who. You should have seen the look on Donald P. Easterman's face.

## The Muddled Mr. Middlesworth

Ronald M. Corn

JAMESON MIDDLESWORTH was a happy man. Although he had no friends or social recognition, his every wakeful moment was spent in reading and cultural inquiry. His keen and searching little mind had led him to muse in the ivoried sanctuaries of the arts. And more recently he had added still another facet of culture to his interests. He had presently begun to pursue the complexities of crime with all the zest of a Latin scholar enraptured with the discovery of a heretofore unknown Cato manuscript.

He had, quite naturally, initiated his research with a thorough analysis of Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment*. But not having the moral constitution to stomach such gloomy treatises, he soon diverted his efforts to the investigations of the more real and factual sources of law breaking. He read hungrily from that master of ratiocination, Dr. Doyle, down through the intolerable but Freudianly fascinating Mr. Spillane. It was at this juncture in his criminal quest that Mr. Middlesworth purchased a gun. This decision came with the realization that personal experience was necessary for further instruction.

Mr. Middlesworth's gun was no ordinary piece of persuasion; it was a derringer, whose petite size and slender, graceful lines had appealed to him far more than the crude and bulky shapes of the larger guns. And besides, its .44 calibration would be just as devastating in effect. With months of research now behind him and his quaint little gun fitted snugly in his lower right hand vest pocket, Mr. Middlesworth felt profoundly confident that he could successfully exploit his new knowledge.

It was quiet on Maple Street when Mr. Middlesworth left his favorite restaurant. He felt happy and refreshed after his dinner, and there was a slight tingle of excitement in his veins as he considered the possibilities of the next few minutes. He stood in front of the restaurant, teetering back and forth on his heels. He arched his back slightly and gulped at the spring-like evening air. His thumbs were hooked loosely inside the waist pockets of his vest, and his fingers appeared to be flapping out a tune upon the pudgy roundness of his belly. His tight little lips were pursed into a still tighter blotch of pink. From behind gold rimmed pince-nez, his sharp eyes rolled in satisfied contemplation of the street scene stretched before him. The conglomerated flickerings of neon signs flashed tints of red and yellow into the hollows of his cheeks; and once, when his lips parted in a slither of a smile, shades of the refracting lights glinted from a gold capped tooth.

From inside the restaurant, he had previously observed a movie theatre across the street and had noticed that no one had gone in or come out from the time he had started on his lime sherbet until now. Then, he said almost audibly, "Ah, but of course the theatre." He then sauntered confidently toward the glaring marquee. As he stood before the ticket window, the gum chewing girl behind its spindly barred glass was intent in polishing her fingernails. Mr. Middlesworth was, understandably, annoyed at being kept waiting and finally he cleared his voice with a loud "Harumph!" The girl looked up startled for a moment and then dully questioned:

"How many please?"

Mr. Middlesworth's right hand hesitated just above his lower right vest pocket as he replied without much conviction:

"You will please extend to me your cash reserves."

The girl blinked her eyes and again asked:

"How many please?"

Mr. Middlesworth fumbled at his vest, and with great effort his voice came pleadingly:

"Please, madam, you are being . . . er uh . . . robbed."

The girl's eyelids blinked in rhythmic time with her gum chewing jaws and she said almost laughingly:

"Are you nuts?"

"Please, madam, I . . ."

But by then a paying customer stood behind Mr. Middlesworth, and the girl unblinkingly and emphatically reproached:

"One side, please. You're holding up the line."

Mr. Middlesworth was befuddled. He jerked away from the window and nervously grabbed at his vest, but suddenly he was overcome with a great sense of futility, and he turned away from the theatre with his head hanging forward, pressing down upon the scratchy starchiness of his winged collar. He was, to say the least, dejected, for he had learned the severity of the maxim, "Crime does not pay."