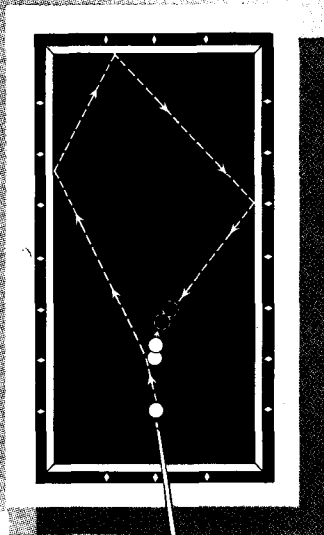


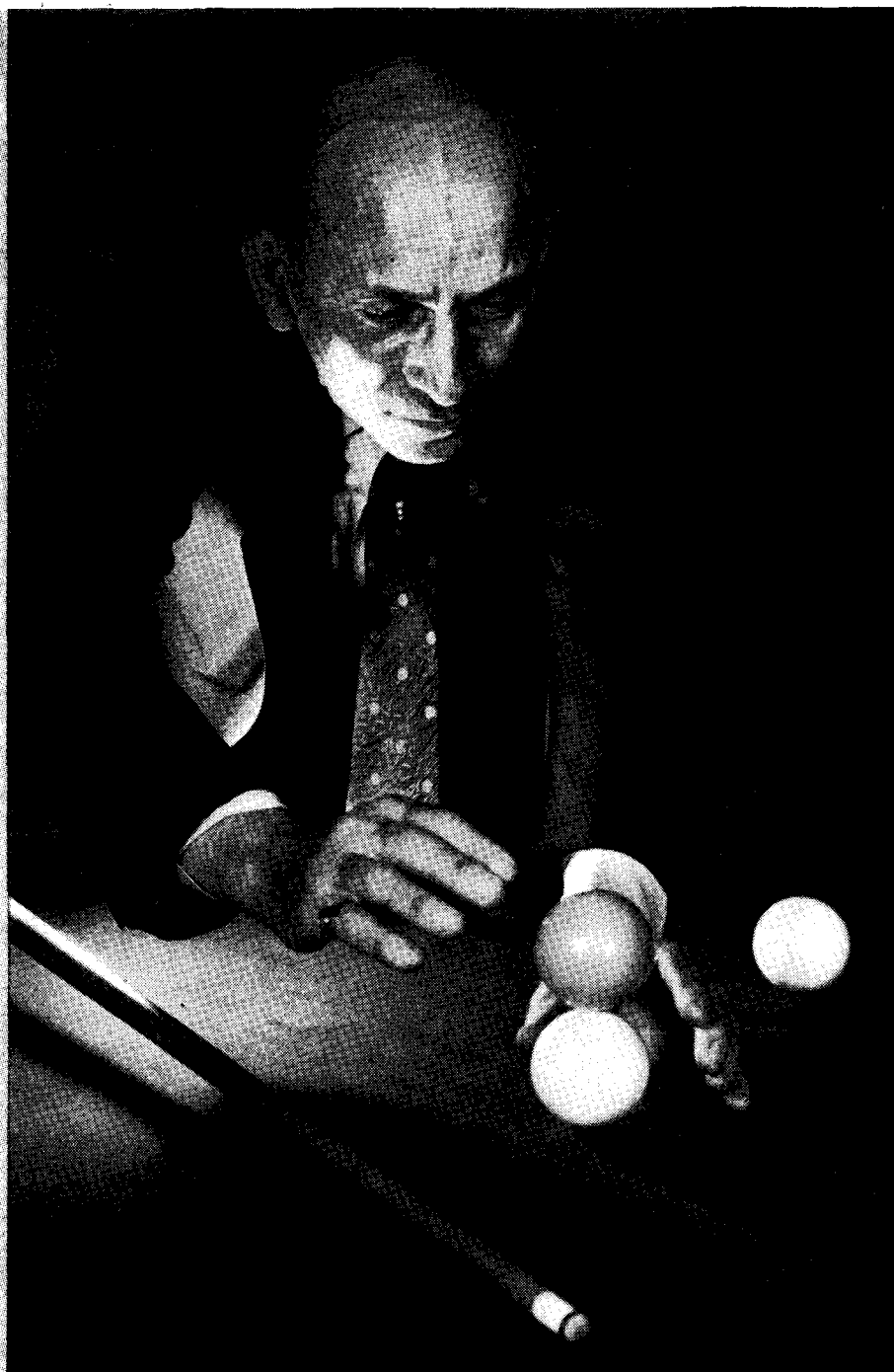
# Without Mirrors or Wires

By Quentin Reynolds

*"Show me," says Charley Peterson, "show me any shot I can't make." Billiard enthusiasts are still trying to find one, but without success. This is the story of the man whom an automobile accident turned into the most spectacular trick-shot billiard player in the world*



Charley Peterson demonstrating a difficult three-cushion shot. One object ball is balanced on the other. The cue ball, touching the lower lightly, displaces the upper. After hitting the three cushions, the cue ball hits the second object ball



VALENTINO SARRA

IT WAS 1910 and Charley Peterson was a confident young buckaroo who thought himself to be just about the greatest billiard player ever to bend his back across the green cloth of a billiard table. As a matter of fact young Peterson had a great deal of evidence to bolster up his contention. He was playing in rare form, averaging a hundred points an inning, and at that time only Willie Hoppe was performing in that style.

One day he was out riding in one of those newfangled automobiles which were just getting popular in St. Louis. He was driving along Gravois Street when there was a sudden blinding flash, vaguely heard screams, and Charley Peterson was just another hospital case over whom doctors bent gravely and said, "He may live, but . . ."

The automobile had hit a streetcar and Charley Peterson and the automobile had come off second best. Peterson spent seven months encased in plaster and then finally his broken bones had knitted and he was discharged—cured, but unsteady, shaky and apprehensive.

He hurried to the billiard rooms he was managing then in St. Louis. Nervously he took a cue in his long slender hands. The touch of it felt good and some of his confidence came back. He put three balls on the table. Did he still retain his wizardry? Were his nerves still under the firm control of his mind and did he still have that soft delicate touch so necessary to the playing of championship billiards?

He stroked the cue ball—and it went just where he wanted it to go. Again and again he stroked the balls, making difficult massés and easy ones—trying out every shot he knew.

"I'm as good as ever," he cried ecstatically, but he spoke too soon.

### A Blessing in Disguise

He was as good as ever on any one given shot, but where hitherto he had been able to practice by the hour and been able to put 150 points together, now he could play but a few minutes without tiring, and a run of five was the best he could do. His weariness would then communicate itself to his nerves, and the fine balance of strength and deftness which lay in his fingers would be destroyed. He realized sadly that his days as a competitive player were done and that his career which had just about begun to flourish had died.

"I didn't know it then, of course," Peterson laughs now, "but that accident turned out to be a blessing in disguise."

It did too, for he had an inspiration. He had always been good at trick shots—impossible shots that no one else could make. He had always mastered such shots merely for his own amusement—but why not make a specialty of it? The making of these shots didn't involve a sustained strain of tournament play. These he could do without being bothered by the legacy the accident had left him. So he concentrated solely on difficult shots.

Peterson has a one-word formula for his success: Practice. During his career he has diagrammed about 600 difficult shots, a great many of which only he can perform. After diagramming them and studying all of the angles he tries the shot out. Sometimes it takes months of practice to learn the shot, but once learned it is never forgotten.

Once he executed 100 billiards in 47 seconds and again he reeled off 1,000 in four minutes and 37 seconds. Both of these stand as world records. He has held the world's red ball title and in between times he has refereed more than 300 championship matches.

At the turn of the century Peterson and young Willie Hoppe, then fourteen, became great friends and Pete, touring the country competing in tournaments and giving exhibitions, sang the praises of the young sensation wherever he went. Years later Pete became Hoppe's coach and today Hoppe always gives much of the credit for his success to him.

By 1910 Pete had become one of the country's greatest billiardists. He had his eyes on the world crown and he ranked right up with Hoppe and two or three others as favorites. But then fate in the form of the trolley car came along to spoil everything—and eventually to make Peterson his fortune.

Peterson arrived in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during the oil boom and the city was knee-deep in money. He was scheduled to do this trick: He promised to place a silver dollar on edge between two cubes

of chalk, hit the dollar with his cue, send it rolling down the table where it would strike the cushion at the other end and, rolling back, pass between the two cubes of chalk without touching them.

When Peterson arrived at the billiard rooms that night an oil man named Davenport was there denouncing him as a faker.

"I'll bet you \$10,000 to \$100 that you can't do that trick with the silver dollar," he roared, taking out a roll of bills from his pocket.

"I never bet a nickel on anything in my life," the mild-mannered Peterson said.

"You are not only a faker but a four-flusher," the oil man roared.

Peterson just shrugged his shoulders, walked to the table and amid a profound silence set up the chalk cubes and the dollar. Then carelessly, nonchalantly, he hit the dollar and it did just what he said it would do.

The oil man stared popeyed. Peterson turned to him. "Mister," he said calmly, "let this teach you never to bet on another man's game."

In St. Louis, where he has had an academy for many years, Peterson has done a great deal for the game. He was the first, for instance, to interest women in billiards. His "ladies' nights" have long been a St. Louis feature.

"Billiards is a decent, fine game," he says. "And I've done my best to bring it to the fine people of my city. Look around my room and you'll agree that I have succeeded."



# The Heart Has Wings

By Faith Baldwin

## The Story Thus Far:

WHEN Gail Williams, noted Middle Western girl flyer, and Peter Harris, wealthy manufacturer of aircraft, meet at Harris' Long Island estate, it is a case of love at first sight. And forty-year-old Peter Harris has a wife, Hildreth.

Both deeply interested in aviation and madly infatuated with each other, Gail and Peter loathe the idea of divorce; but, weakening after a time, they tell Hildreth the truth; and Hildreth (a lovely woman who, hating everything pertaining to flying, yet adores her husband) agrees to make their way easy by going to Reno. She makes one proviso, however: she will not secure a divorce until after the birth of a child whom Dolly, her daughter—and Peter's—is expecting in Chicago. For she has been warned by the doctors that Dolly is not strong enough to endure a shock.

Accepting that verdict, Gail and Peter agree to wait. Meanwhile, another man—young Bill Jones, a radio expert—has fallen in love with Gail. Regarding him merely as an amusing young person whom she sincerely likes, Gail has introduced him to

Peter Harris, who is deeply interested in a remarkable radio device which Bill is perfecting. Unfortunately, however, Bill, still madly in love with Gail, suspects her of "playing" him so that Harris can gain control of his idea. So he disappears.

Gail's father (like Peter, in the aviation industry) finishes his second honeymoon and returns to his home in Lake Forest, near Chicago. Gail pays him a visit.

Dolly's baby arrives—a boy. But Peter Harris is not with his daughter at the time; he is hunting deep in the Canadian wilds. When he finally emerges, a telephone call sends him flying to Dolly's side. Before he arrives, Gail has left for New York. But Hildreth is awaiting him; Hildreth—and some shocking news: A remarkable new airplane with which he has been experimenting, which he has himself flown, has crashed, killing a noted pilot. With Hildreth, he boards a train and starts for New York. Hildreth wants to discuss the divorce. Peter brusquely declines to do so. Does he, or does he not, want a divorce? Strangely, he is far from sure!

X

Miss Stone said carelessly, "I ran off with your friend," and Peter said, "She saved my life"

PETER had been in town a full week before he telephoned Gail. That he dreaded seeing her, he was perfectly aware. It was all very well for Hildreth to assure him that Bedford's crack-up hadn't been his fault. Gerry told him so, too, over and over again, became angry, swore at him furiously, looked as if he would have liked to knock him down. Peter didn't mind. That was Gerry, loyal, fanatically loyal—but what was he *thinking* under all the profanity and bluster and name-calling?

He imagined—or was it imagination?—that some of the other men acted a little—Oh, he couldn't put his finger on it. Stromoff had been a friend of Bedford's . . . When he took Stromoff aside and said, "Look here . . . I can't tell you how I feel about this. . . . I give you my word that when I flew the ship there wasn't a thing wrong, not a thing," Stromoff had said, "Of course, Mr. Harris, we all know that."

But it wasn't very satisfactory. He did what he could for Bedford's little widow. He sent her a check . . . "from the company." The amount, which was a large one, came out of his personal account. There was also Bedford's pay and his insurance.

Mrs. Bedford came down to the plant to thank him personally. She was bewildered and sodden with grief but she bore no resentment against Peter Harris or the Harris Aircraft Company. She was the daughter of a barnstorming stunt flyer, the sort of man who crawled out on precarious wings and dropped off, at county fairs, and hoped his parachute would open. He had been killed at a fairground in Texas, landing on a live wire. No haystacks that time . . . Millie had known Bedford since she was fourteen and had married him last year when she was nineteen. She sat in the outer office and thought of him, spare and slow-spoken, gentle with her even when he was drunk, a good guy, a lot of fun, a lover . . .

He had said, "I haven't any business getting married, Baby. See? Sooner or later, I'll get mine. It isn't a long life . . ."

Well, she'd understood that. She felt no hatred of his profession. Bedford wouldn't have been Bedford otherwise.

In Peter's private office she stammered her gratitude, and shook her head to clear her large brown eyes and said, "I'll never forget you, Mr. Harris."

She wouldn't, either. Bedford had

