

# WE USED TO OWN THAT TOWN

BY THOMAS HEGGEN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM PACHNER

The story of an infatuation from which Whalen's wife—or any other woman—was powerless to save him

**T**HE one thing Whalen didn't want was a scene; and now, as soon as he said it, he knew there was going to be one. All through supper he had worked hard to take the curse off his little surprise. He had tried to condition Marge, hoping somehow to make her accept it lightly. He talked volubly and gaily, and he even revived a private joke that had been funny when they were first married. And Marge was grateful; with a twinge of pain he saw that. She had risen to his mood and, flushed with pleasure and surprise, she had matched it. Sitting over cigarettes and coffee seemed as good a time as any. As casually as he could make a

thing that wasn't casual at all, he said, "I'm going down to San Francisco next week end. Next Friday."

Marge didn't say a word. She just looked steadily at him.

"I've got space on a plane," Whalen said. "Takes four hours. Then I'll come back Sunday night." He put out his cigarette and lightly met Marge's gaze. "I'm so damned sick of Seattle," he smiled, "I just want to see a good town for a little bit."

And still Marge didn't say anything, and that was how Whalen knew there'd be a scene. She just kept studying him. Then finally and still without a word, she picked up her cup and saucer from the table and carried

them to the sink. Whalen finished his own coffee in silence. He considered offering to help with the dishes, then decided not to. It would only add to the falsity of his position. He got up, walked into the living room of the apartment, settled down in the large chair, lighted a cigarette and waited for the trouble to begin.

He waited through a half hour of sounds. Sound of Marge washing dishes, of dishes being put away, of kitchen light clicked off, sound of jars and running water in the bathroom. Sound of Marge in the living-room, sitting down on the studio couch. Sound of lighting cigarette, sound of exhaling smoke.

Finally sound of Marge speaking quietly. "Will you talk with me?"

It was coming now. "Permission granted," Whalen said.

"I'm serious. Will you talk with me or not?"

"Go ahead," Whalen said.

Marge was quiet a moment, then she said, "Why are you going to San Francisco?"

"Why?" said Whalen. "Because I haven't seen the town for two years and I'd just like to see it again. That's all." He wondered how bad it was going to be. He knew he'd make the trip no matter how messy it got, but he didn't want it to be messy. He

(Continued on page 58)

We thought he was kidding at first. Then all of a sudden we realized he meant it and somebody stopped him right at the window. Even then it was so close the girl almost fell out



"Called on Account of Darkness" is the title of famed Cartoonist Dan Fitzpatrick's ironic commentary on the Paris Peace Conference

#### RADIOED FROM PARIS

**O**N THE street outside the great stone gate of the Luxembourg Palace, a very fat, violently blond woman stood and stared. She had bare white legs and wore a black cloak and, underneath, a black lace dress that was both dirty and tattered. She had no age and no obvious profession; if she were a housewife, she must be married to a ragpicker; or perhaps she had once been an opera singer and had fallen into poverty, but retained the black lace.

She looked very strange indeed, and she represented the Public, for no one else—out of the millions in Paris—seemed interested, or could spare the time, to come to this street. Movie stars would of course always draw a big crowd; inside the Luxembourg the attraction was nothing but the politicians of twenty-one nations who were setting the pattern of peace.

From the courtyard behind the gate a voice announced over the loud-speaker: "Car 28, Brazilian Delegation . . . Car 47, Russian Delegation . . ." Only the blonde, and the cops who guarded the gate, watched the shining black cars which bore the delegates of the Peace Conference away to lunch.

This was the recess between the morning and afternoon sessions. The automobiles looked magnificent, rich and certain; the delegates did not look different from most of the people you see nowadays in the streets of any European capital, a little shabby but respectable, pallid, tired, and not very happy. After a while, the astounding blonde shook her head—with wonder or with sorrow?—and walked away down the Rue de Seine.

At lunchtime, the enormous palace of the Luxembourg became like a theater when the curtain is down and the audience has left: the stagehands took over. I went upstairs to the Hall of Lost Footsteps where the big commissions on the Italian peace treaty held their meetings. At the doorway to this hall, I met two cops, for there were cops everywhere. The cops, who were proud of the Luxembourg Palace, offered to show me around.

The great conference hall is very grand, with much heavy gilt carving and a complete and depressing set of Gobelin tapestries around the walls, telling the story of the life of Orpheus in a million stitches. The cops extolled the beauty of the room and said it was a pity that the delegates did not like one another more, and have more pleasure, as it were, working in such a handsome place. "They don't like one another?" I said.

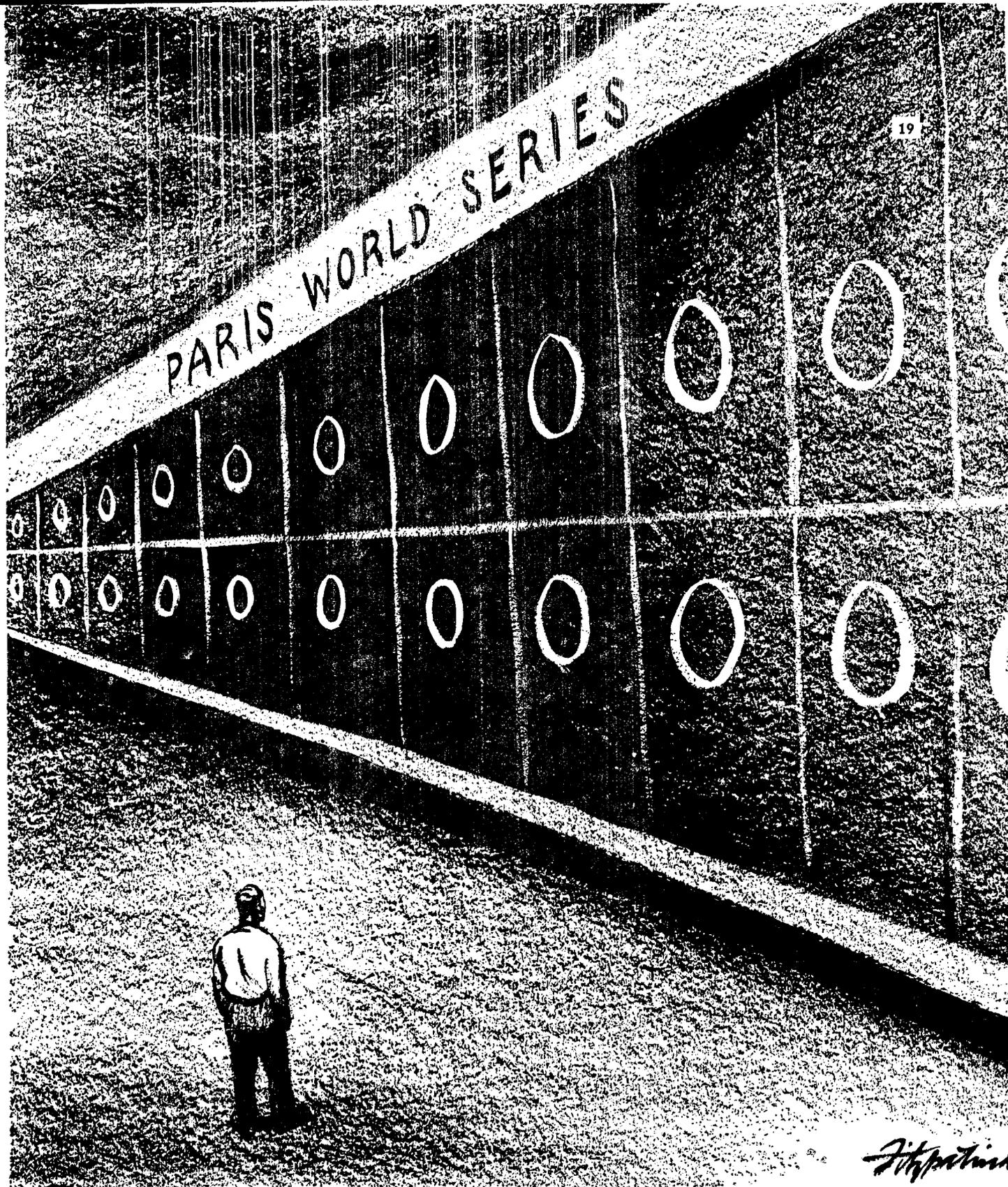
"Not at all," said the cops. "How do you expect them to like one another when they agree about nothing?"

"Ah," I said wisely.

"In all cases," said the youngest cop, "when there is another war, poor France will get it in the neck as usual."

The cops advised me to pick up some lunch in the journalists' bar, which was a small white and gold salon, once no doubt the boudoir of a princess, where now a loud-speaker relayed, in three languages, incomprehensibly, the proceedings of the peace commissions. There I met a lovely girl called Marie-Rose, with gay slanting eyes and black curly hair;

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# PEACE

BY MARTHA GELLHORN

The Paris Conference has come and gone—a warning that peace cannot be made by delegates, but only by all people everywhere

she was twenty-one and an interpreter. She remarked that the last conference she interpreted for, which was an international gathering of meteorologists, was better than this one, because the men were scientists and therefore naturally more honest and serious than politicians.

She said this peace conference was on the whole a droll affair; the delegates insulted one another, without the slightest embarrassment. Her

parents were stunned when she repeated the impoliteness of these peace gentlemen. There seemed no hope for the future at all, she said, but (for she was twenty-one and lovely and alive) perhaps all this cynicism and despair would finally lead to something good. How that was going to happen, she could not tell.

Presently the great sleek cars returned and the delegates clambered out of them. They gathered around

the vast table in the gilded conference room, and if you did not see the little cardboard plaques stating the names of their countries, you could not have distinguished the Belgians from the Norwegians, the Czechs from the Yugoslavs, the Canadians from the Americans; they just looked like men, any men at all. The moment they opened their mouths, you realized your mistake: All men are not  
(Continued on page 83)