

JANE RICE

(1913–2003)

The Refugee

THE trouble with the war, Milli Cushman thought as she stared sulkily through streaming French windows into her rain-drenched garden, was that it was so frightfully boring. There weren't any men, any more. Interesting ones, that is. Or parties. Or little pink cocktails. Or café royale. Or long-stemmed roses wrapped in crackly green wax paper. There wasn't even a decent hairdresser left.

She had been a fool to stay on. But it had seemed so exciting. Everyone listening to the radio broadcasts; the streets blossoming with uniforms; an air of feverish gaiety, heady as Moselle wine, over all the city; the conversations that made one feel so important—so in the thick of things. Would the Maginot Line hold? Would the British come? Would the Low Countries be invaded? Was it true America had issued an ultimatum? Subjects that, now, were outdated as Gatling guns.

It had been terrifically stimulating being asked for her opinion, as an American. Of course, she hadn't been home for a number of years and considered herself a true cosmopolite freed from the provincialities of her own country—but, still, it had been nice, in those first flurried jack-in-the-box days of the war to be able to discourse so intelligently on Americana. It had been such *fun*.

Momentarily, Milli's eyes sparkled—remembering. The sparkle faded and died.

Then, unexpectedly, the city had become a gaunt, gray ghost. No, not a ghost, a cat. A gaunt gray cat with its bones showing through, as it crouched on silent haunches and stared unwinkingly before it. Like one of those cats that hung around the alley barrels of the better hotels. Or used to hang. Cooked, a cat bore a striking resemblance to a rabbit.

Overnight, a hush had fallen on everything. It was as though the city had gasped in one long, last, labored, dying breath.

And had held it. One could feel it in the atmosphere. Almost like a desperate pounding.

For some inexplicable reason, it reminded her of her childhood when she had played a game as the street lights began to bloom in the gathering dusk. "If I can hold my eyes open without blinking," she would tell herself, "until the last one is lighted, I'll get a new doll"—or a new muff—or a new hair ribbon—or whatever it might be she wanted. She could still recall that exhausted sense of time running out as the final lights went on. Most always she had won. Sometimes she hadn't, but most always she had. By the skin of her teeth.

It would be perfectly horrid, if this was one of the times when she *didn't* win. If she had to stay on and on, trotting back and forth seeing about that idiotic visa, and saving her hairpins and soap ends and things, it was going to be too utterly stultifying. It was fortunate she had had the perception to realize, before it was too late, who were the "right people" to know. It helped. Although, in these days, the right people didn't fare much better than the "wrong" ones.

Milli used "fare" in its strictest interpretation. Often, of late, she found herself dwelling, with an aching nostalgia, on her father's butcher shop in Pittsburgh. That had been before he'd invented a new deboner, or meat cleaver, or something, and had amassed an unbelievable amount of money before he strangled to death on a loose gold filling at Tim O'Toole's clambake.

Milli's recollection of her father was but a dim blur of red face and handlebar mustaches and a deep booming voice that Milli had associated with the line "the curfew tolls the knell of parting day," which she had been forced to learn and recite at P.S. 46. Her mother she didn't remember at all, as she had been called to pastures greener than anything Pittsburgh had to offer while Milli was yet wearing swaddling clothes in a perpetual state of dampness.

However, sharpened by adversity, Milli's recollections of the butcher shop were crystal clear. The refrigerator with whole sides of beef hanging from hooks, legs of lamb like fat tallow candles, plump chickens with thick drumsticks and their heads wrapped in brown paper, slabs of pork and veal, and, at Thanks-

giving and Christmas, short-legged ducks, and high-breasted turkeys, and big, yellow geese. In the showcase had been chops, and steaks, and huge roasts, and all sorts of sausages and spiced meats laid out in white enamel trays with carrot tops in between for “dressing.”

It was hopeless to dream of these things, but practically impossible to stop. The main topics of conversation no longer were of “major developments” but of where one could buy an extra ration of tea of questionable ingredients, or a grisly chop of dubious origin, or a few eggs of doubtful age—if one could pay the whopping price.

Well, as long as she had liqueur-filled chocolates, and she had had enough foresight to lay in quite a supply, she could be assured of her “share.” They were better than money, at the present exchange.

The clock on the mantelpiece tinkled out the hours and Milli sighed. She should bathe and dress for dinner. But what was the use of keeping up appearances when there wasn’t anyone to see. And it was dreadful curling the ends of one’s hair on an iron. It was tedious and it didn’t really *do* a great deal for one. And it had an unmistakable scent of burning shoe leather about it. The water would be tepid, if not actually cold. The soap wouldn’t lather. The bathroom would be clammy, and the dinner, when it was forthcoming, would be a ragout of God knew what, a potato that had gouged-out areas in it, a limp salad, and a compote of dried fruit. And Maria grumbled so about serving it in courses. It was positively useless to diagram for her the jumbled up indecencies of a table d’hote. Maria was almost worse than no help at all. Definitely a bourgeois.

Milli yawned and stretched her arms above her head. She arose and, going over to the windows, stood looking out. A shaft of sunlight broke through the clouds and angered the tiny charms that dangled from her “war bracelet.” An airplane studded with rhinestones, a miniature cannon with gold-leaf wheels, a toy soldier whose diamond chip eyes winked red and blue and green in the sun as he twirled helplessly on his silver chain. Ten or twelve of these baubles hung from the bracelet and it is indicative of Milli’s character that she had bought them as a gift to herself to “celebrate” the last Bastille Day.

The sun's watery radiance turned the slackening rain into shining strings of quicksilver and made a drowned seascape of the garden. The faun that once had been a fountain, gleamed wetly in the pale, unearthly light and about its feet in the cracked basin, the pelting raindrops danced and bubbled like antiphonic memories of long-gone grace notes. The flower heads were heavy with sodden, brown-edged petals and their stalks bent wearily as if cognizant of the fact that their lives were held by a tenuous thread that was soon to be snapped between the chill, biting teeth of an early frost.

Milli looked at the rain intermingled with sun and thought, the devil is beating his wife. That was what Savannah used to say, back in Pittsburgh. "The devil's beatin' his wife, sho nuff." Savannah, who made such luscious mince pies and cherry tarts, and whose baked hams were always brown and crunchy on top and stuck with cloves and crisscrossed with a knife so that the juice ran down in between the cracks and— Milli's culinary recollections suffered a complete collapse and her eyes opened very wide as they alighted on a head poking out inquisitively from the leafy seclusion of the tall hedge that bounded the garden.

Two brown hands pushed aside the foliage to allow a pair of broad, brown shoulders to come through.

Milli gave an infinitesimal gasp. A man was in her garden! A man who, judging from the visible portion of his excellent anatomy, had—literally—lost his shirt.

Instinctively, she opened her mouth to make some sort of an outcry. Whether she meant to call for aid, or to scare the interloper away, or merely to give vent to a belated exclamation of surprise, will forever be debatable for the object of her scrutiny chose that moment to turn his extraordinarily well-shaped head and his glance fixed itself on Milli. Milli's outcry died a-borning.

To begin with, it wasn't a man. It was a youth. And to end with, there was something about him, some queer, indefinable quality, that was absolutely fascinating.

He was, Milli thought, rather like a young panther, or a half-awakened leopard. He was, Milli admitted, entranced, beautiful. Perfectly *beautiful*. As an animal is beautiful and, automatically, she raised her chin so that the almost unnoticeable pouch under it became one with the line of her throat.

The youth was unabashed. If the discovery of his presence in a private garden left him in a difficult position, he effectively concealed his embarrassment. He regarded Milli steadfastly, and unwaveringly, and admiringly, and Milli, like a mesmerized bird, watched the rippling play of his muscles beneath his skin as he shoved the hedge apart still farther to obtain a better view of his erstwhile hostess.

Confusedly, Milli thought that it was lucky the windows were locked and, in the same mental breath, what a pity that they were.

The two peered at one another. Milli knew only that his hair was pasted flat to his head with the rain, and that his arms shone like sepia satin, and his eyes were tawny and filled with a flickering inward fire that made suet pudding of her knees.

For a long moment they remained so—their eyes locked. Milli's like those of an amazed china doll's; his like those of an untamed animal that was slightly underfed and resented the resulting gastric disturbances. The kitchen door banged and Milli could hear Maria calling a neighborly greeting to someone, as she emptied a bucket of water in the yard. At that instant the last vestiges of sun began to sink behind the horizon, and the youth was gone. There was just the garden, and the rain, and the hedge.

Dimly, as through a fog, Milli heard Maria come in, heard the latch shoot home, the metallic clatter of the bucket as she set it down under the sink and, from somewhere outside, the long, diminishingly mournful howl of a dog.

Milli shook herself out of her trance. She brushed a hand across her eyelids as if to clear them of cobwebs and, unbolting one of the windows, went out into the garden. There was no one. Only a footprint by the hedge, a bare footprint filling in with water.

She went back into the house. Maria was there, turning on the lamps. She looked at Milli curiously and Milli realized she must be an odd sight, indeed, her hair liberally besprinkled with raindrops, her shoes muddy, her dress streaked with moisture.

"I thought I saw someone out there, just now," she explained. "Someone looking in."

"The police, probably," Maria said dourly. "The police have no notions of privacy."

"No," Milli said. "No, it wasn't the police. Didn't I hear you go out a few moments ago?"

"I wasn't looking in," Maria said in a peevish voice. "For why should I look in? I have other things to do besides looking in the windows." She drew herself up to list vocally and with accompanying gestures the numberless things she had to do.

"Did you see anyone?" Milli asked quickly.

"Old Phillipe," Maria answered. "I saw old Phillipe. On his way to the inn in the pouring rain and he with a cough since last April. When one has a cough and it is raining, one does not look in windows. Anyway, Phillipe is too old. When one is as old as Phillipe one is no longer interested. Anyhow, his son was killed at Avignon. Phillipe would not look in the windows."

"You saw no one else?"

Maria's eyes narrowed. "Madame was expecting someone, no?"

"No," Milli said. "No, I just thought . . . it was nothing."

"If madame is expecting someone, perhaps it would be well to save the beverage for later in the evening?"

"I am expecting no one."

It was, Milli thought as she let the curling iron rest in the gaseous flame, next to impossible to tell which side of the fence Maria was on. She could easily be reporting things to *both* sides. One had to be careful. So very careful.

This chap in the garden, for example. He must have escaped from somewhere. That would account for the absence of clothes. He was a refugee of some sort. And refugees of any sort were dangerous. It was best to stick to the beaten path and those who trod thereon. But he was so beautiful. Like a stripling god. No more than twenty, surely. It was delightful to see again someone as young as twenty. It was—Milli swore fluently as the iron began to smoke; she waved it in the air to cool it and, testing it gingerly with a moistened forefinger, applied it to her coiffure—it was not only delightful, it was heavenly. It was, really, rather like one of those little, long ago, pink cocktails. It *did* something for one.

A faint aroma of singeing hair made itself manifest in the damp, wallpapery smelling room.

Milli considered the refugee from every angle as she ate her solitary dinner and, afterward, as she reclined on her chaise longue idly turning the pages of a book selected at random, and while she was disrobing for bed, and even when she was giving the underpart of her chin the regulation number of backhanded slaps, a ritual that as a rule occupied her entire attention.

Slipping into her dressing gown, she opened her window and leaned out, chin in hands, elbows on the sill. The moon rode in the sky—a hunted thing dodging behind wisps of tattered cloud, and the air was heavy and wet and redolent of dying leaves.

“The moon was a ghostly galleon,” Milli quoted, feeling, somehow frail and immensely poetic. She smiled a sad, fragile smile in keeping with her mood and wondered if the refugee also was having a lonely rendezvous with the moon. Lying on his back in some hidden spot thinking, possibly, of— Her reverie was broken sharply by Maria’s voice, shattering the stillness of the night. It was followed by a cascade of water.

“What on earth are you *doing!*” Milli called down exasperatedly.

“There was an animal out here,” Maria yelled back, equally as exasperated. “Trampling in my mulch pile.”

Milli started to say, “Don’t be ridiculous, go to bed,” but the sentence froze on her lips as she remembered the refugee. He had come back! Maria had thrown water on him! He had returned full of . . . of—well, hope for refuge, maybe, and Maria, the dolt, had chased him away!

“Wait,” she called frenziedly into the darkness. “Wait! Oh, please, wait!”

Maria, thinking the command was for her, had waited, although the “please” had astonished her somewhat. Muttering under her breath, she had led her strangely overwrought mistress into the kitchen garden and had pointed out with pardonable pride the footprints in her mulch pile. Padded footprints. With claws.

“I saw the eyes,” she said, “great, gleaming, yellow ones shining in the light when I started to pull the scullery blinds. Luckily I had a pot of water handy and I jerked open the door and—”

But her mistress wasn't listening. In truth, for one originally so upset, she had regained her composure with remarkable rapidity.

"Undoubtedly, the Trudeau's dog," she said with a total lack of interest.

"The Trudeau's dog is a Pomeranian," Maria said determinedly.

"No matter," Milli said. "Go to bed, Maria."

Maria went, mumbling to herself a querulous litany in which the word Pomeranian was, ever and anon, distinguishable—and pronounced with expletive force.

Milli awakened to find her room bright with sun, which was regrettable as it drew attention to the pattern of the rug and the well-worn condition of the curtains. It, likewise, did various things to Milli Cushman's face, which were little short of libelous. Libelous, that is, after Milli had painted herself a new one with painstaking care and the touch of an inspired, if jaded, master.

Downstairs, she found her breakfast ready and, because of its readiness, a trifle cold. She also found Maria, while not openly weeping, puffy as to eyes, and pink as to nose, and quite snuffly—a state that Milli found deplorable in servants.

A series of sharp questions brought to light the fact that old Phillipe was dead. Old Phillipe, it seemed, was not only dead but a bit mangled. To make a long story short, old Phillipe had been discovered in a condition that bordered on the skeletal. Identification had been made through particles of clothing and a pair of broken spectacles.

"You mean to say he was *eaten!*" Milli cried, which caused Maria to go off into a paroxysm of near hysterics from which Milli gathered, obscurely, that Maria blamed herself for old Phillipe's untimely demise.

By degrees, Milli drew it out of her. The footprints in the mulch pile. The kettle of water. The withdrawal of the animal to more congenial surroundings. Surroundings, doubtless, that were adjacent to the inn from whence old Phillipe, subsequently, plodded homeward. The stealthy pad of marauding feet. The encounter. The shriek. The awful ensuing silence.

Maria's detail was so graphic that it made Milli slightly ill,

although it didn't prevent her from being firm about the matter of the wolf.

"Nonsense," Milli said. "Ridiculous. A *wolf*. Preposterous."

Maria explained about the bloody footprints leading away from the scene of slaughter. Footprints much too large for a dog. *Enormous* footprints.

"No doubt it was an enormous dog," Milli said coldly. "The natural habitat of a wolf is a forest, not a paved street."

Maria opened her mouth to go even further into detail, but Milli effectively shut it for her by a reprimand that, like the porridge of the smallest of the three bears, was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right.

After all, Milli thought, old Phillippe was better off. In all probability, he hadn't suffered a great deal. Most likely he had died of shock first. One more, one less, what difference did it make. Especially when one was as old as old Phillippe. At least he had lived his life while *she*, with so much life yet to be lived, was embalmed in a wretched sort of a flypaper existence that adhered to every inch of her no matter how hard she pulled. That visa. She would have to see about it again tomorrow. And the tea supply was disastrously low. And this horrible toast made of horrible bread that was crumbly and dry and tasted of sawdust. And her last bottle of eau de cologne practically *gone*, and she *couldn't* eat this mess in front of her.

Milli got up and went into the parlor. She flung wide the French windows and petulantly surveyed the garden. She had rented the place *because* of the garden—such a lovely setting for informal teas, she had thought, and impromptu chafing-dish suppers on the flagstones with candlelight and thin, graceful-stemmed glasses. She had pictured herself in appropriate attire, cutting flowers and doing whatever it was one did with peat moss, and now look at the thing. Just *look* at it!

Milli looked at it. Her breath went out of her. She drew it in again with an unbecoming wheeze. One hand flew to her throat.

In the garden, fast asleep, curled up in a ball under the hedge, was the refugee, all dappled with shadows and naked as the day he was born.

This time, it must be noted in all fairness, Milli didn't open her chops. If an outcry was in her, it wasn't strong enough to register on her reflexes. Her eyes blinked rapidly, as they

always did when Milli was thinking fast and, when she recrossed the parlor and walked down the hallway into the kitchen, her heels made hard staccato sounds on the flooring, as they always did when Milli had reached a decision.

Milli's decision made Maria as happy as could be, under the circumstances, and ten minutes later, reticule in hand, Maria departed for the domicile of her married niece's husband's aunt who was a friend of old Phillipe's widow and, consequently, would be in possession of all the particulars and would more than appreciate a helping hand and an attentive ear over the week end.

Milli turned the key behind her. Lightly, she ran to the scullery closet and took down from a nail a pair of grass-stained pants that had belonged to a gardener who had been liquidated before he had had a chance to return for his garment. Carrying the trousers over her arm, she retraced her steps to the parlor and through the double French windows.

Quiet as she was, her unbidden guest was awake as soon as her foot touched the first flagstone. He didn't move a muscle. He just opened his eyes and watched her with the easy assurance of one who knows he can leave whenever he wants to and several jumps ahead of the nearest competitor.

Milli stopped. She held out the pants.

"For you," she said. She gave them a toss. The boy, his queer, light eyes watching her every movement, made no attempt to catch them.

"Put them on," Milli said. She hesitated. "Please," she said, adding, "I am your friend."

The boy sat up. Milli hastily turned her back.

"Tell me when you get them on," she ordered.

She waited, and waited, and waited and, hearing not the faintest rustle, cautiously swiveled her head around. Once again she drew in her breath and the wheeze was very nearly an eek for, not six inches away, was her visitor—his lips pulled over his teeth in a rather disconcerting smile, his eyes like glittering nuggets of amber.

The thought raced through Milli's head that he was going to "spring" at her, a thought tinged with relief as she subcon-

sciously noted that he *had* donned the ex-gardener's pants—tinged, too, with a thrilling sense of her own charms as the boy's eyes enumerated them one by one. She promptly elevated her chin and tried to keep her consternation from becoming obvious.

The boy laughed softly. A laugh that, somehow, was like a musical sort of a snarl. He stepped back. He bowed. Mockingly.

"What are you doing in my garden?" Milli asked, thinking it best to put him in his place, first and foremost. It wouldn't do to let him get out of hand. So soon, anyway.

"Sleeping," the boy said.

"Don't you have any place to sleep?"

"Yes. Many places. But I like this place."

"What happened to your clothes?"

The boy shrugged. He didn't answer.

"Are you a refugee?"

"In a way, I suppose, yes."

"You're hiding, aren't you?"

"Until you came out, I was simply sleeping. After I have eaten I sleep until a short while before sundown."

"You're not hungry?" Milli elevated her eyebrows in surprise.

"Not now." The boy let his glance rove fleetingly over his hostess' neck. "I will be later."

"What do you mean 'until a short while before sundown'? Have you been traveling by night?"

"Yes."

Milli made an ineffectual motion toward the trousers. "Wasn't it . . . I mean, going around without any . . . that is. I should think— Weren't you cold?"

"No."

"It's a wonder you didn't catch pneumonia."

The boy grinned. He patted his flat stomach. "Not pneumonia," he said. "But it wasn't much better. Old and stringy and without flavor."

Milli regarded him with a puzzled frown. She didn't like being "taken in." She decided to let it go.

"My name is Milli Cushman," she said. "You are more than welcome to stay here until you are rested. You won't be bothered. I have sent my maid away."

"You're most kind," the boy said with exaggerated politeness.

“Until tonight will be sufficient.” If he realized that Milli was expecting him to introduce himself, he gave no sign.

After a pause, she spoke, a shade irritably. “No doubt, you *do* have a name?”

“I have lots of names. Even Latin ones.”

“Well, for Heaven’s sake, what is one? I can’t just go about calling you ‘you,’ you know.”

“You might call me Lupus,” the boy said. “It’s one of the Latin ones. It means wolf.”

“Do they call you The Wolf!”

“Yes.”

“How intriguing. But why?”

The boy smiled at her. “I daresay you’ll find out,” he said.

“You mean you’re one of the ones who . . . well, like the affair of that German officer last week . . . that is to say, in a manner of speaking, you’re one of those who’re *still* going at it hammer and tongs?”

“Tooth and nail,” the boy said.

“It seems so *silly*,” Milli said. “What *good* does it do. It doesn’t scare them. It just makes them angrier. And that makes it harder on *us*.”

“Oh, but it *does* scare them,” the boy said with an ironic lilt to his voice. “It scares them to death. Or at any rate it helps.” He yawned, his tongue curling out like a cat’s. And, suddenly, he was sullen. He glared at Milli with remote hostility.

“I’m sleepy,” he growled. “I’m tired of talking. I want to go to sleep. Go away.”

“Come inside,” Milli said. “You can have Maria’s bed.” She gave him her most delectable glance. The one that involved the upsweeping and downsweeping of her eyelashes with the slimmest trace of a roguish quirk about the lips.

“I won’t disturb you,” she said. “And, besides, you might be caught if you stay in the garden. There was a man killed last night by some kind of a creature, or so they say, and Maria is sure to spread the news abroad that she threw water at something, and police just *might* investigate, and it *could* be very awkward for us both. Won’t you come in, please?”

The boy looked at her in surly silence.

“Please, Lupus. For me?”

Once more he laughed softly. And this time the laugh was definitely a snarl. He reached out and pinched her. "For you, I will."

It was, Milli thought, not at all a flirtatious pinch. It was the kind of pinch her father used to give chickens to see if they were filled out in the proper places.

But Lupus wouldn't sleep in Maria's bed. He curled up on the floor of the parlor. Which, Milli thought, was just as well. It would save remaking Maria's bed so Maria wouldn't notice anything.

While her caller slept, Milli busied herself with pots and pans in the kitchen. It was tedious, but worth it. Tonight, there would be supper on the flagstones, with candles, and starlight, and all the accessories. A chance like this might not come her way for many another moon. She was resolved to make the most of it. As Savannah would have said, she was going to "do herself proud." For Lupus, the best was none too good. Not for herself, either. She nibbled a sandwich for luncheon, not wanting to spoil her appetite—not waking Lupus, for fear of spoiling his.

She got out her precious hoard of condiments. She scanned the fine printed directions on boxes. Meticulously she read the instructive leaflet inclosed in her paper bag of tanbarkly appearing flour. She took off her bracelet, rolled up her sleeves, and went to work—humming happily to herself, a thing which she hadn't done for months.

She scraped, peeled, measured, sifted, chopped, stirred, beat and folded. Some fairly creditable muffins emerged from under her unaccustomed and amateurish fingers, a dessert that wasn't bad at all, and a salad that managed to give the impression of actually *being* a salad, which bordered on the miraculous.

The day slowly drew to a close and Milli was quite startled to find the hours had passed with such swiftness. So swiftly, that her initial awareness of their passing was caused by the advent of a patently ill-humored Lupus.

"Oh, dear," Milli said, "I didn't realize—is it late?"

"No," Lupus said. "It's growing early. The sun is going down."

“Are you hungry? I’m fixing some things I think will be rather good.”

“I’m ravening,” Lupus said. “Let’s go watch the sunset.”

Milli put her hands up to her coiffure, coquettishly, allowing her sleeves to fall away from her round, white arms.

“Wait till I fix my hair. I must be a sight.”

“You are,” Lupus agreed, his eyes glistening. “And I won’t have to wait much longer.” Effortlessly he moved across and stood over Milli, devouring her with an all-encompassing gaze.

“Won’t you have one of these,” Milli asked hurriedly, hoping his impetuosity wouldn’t brim over *too* abruptly. She shoved a box of liqueur-filled chocolates at him. “There’s no such thing as a cocktail any more. Come along, we’ll eat them on the sofa. It’s . . . it’s cozier.”

But Lupus wasn’t interested in the chocolates. In the parlor he stretched his long, supple length on the floor and contemplated the garden, ablaze in the last rays of a dying sun.

Milli plopped down beside him and began to rub his back, gently with long, smooth, even strokes. Lupus rolled his head over in lazy, indifferent pleasure, and looked up at her with a hunger that would have been voluptuous, if it hadn’t been so stark.

“Do you like that?” Milli whispered.

For a reply, Lupus opened his mouth and yawned. And into it Milli dropped a chocolate, while at the same instant she jabbed him savagely with a hairpin.

The boy sucked in his breath with a pained howl, and a full eight minutes before the sun went down, Lupus had neatly choked to death on a chocolate whose liqueur-filled insides contained a silver bullet from Milli Cushman’s “war bracelet.”

It had been, Milli told herself later, a near thing. And it would have been *ghastly* if it hadn’t worked. But it *had* worked, tra la. Of course, it stood to reason that it *would*. After all, if, at death, a werewolf changed back into human form, why, logically, the human form would—if in close personal contact with a silver bullet *before* sundown—metamorphosis into a wolf.

It was marvelous that she’d happened to pick up “The Werewolf of Paris” yesterday—had given her an insight, so to

speak, and it was *extremely* handy that she'd had all that butcher shop background.

Milli wiped her mouth daintily with a napkin. How divinely *full* she was. And with Maria gone she could have Lupus all to herself.

Down to the last, delicious morsel.