

"Well, for heaven's sake, Marvin, do something. Tell the dame she's beautiful, send her flowers, take her to dinner. You been going around staring at your ideas and building up a defeatist complex. She's a woman, isn't she? A woman kicks up a fuss because she wants a little attention, that's all."

"Is that the reason? I often wondered why."
 "My wife starts raving because I don't pick up my socks, and I drop cigarette ashes around the house, and read the paper at breakfast, it isn't because I'm doing all those things. It's because she figures it's about time to create a little fuss and get some attention. They're just like children."

"Good," Marvin said. "I'll take her some comic books and penny candy."
 "I think you been having eye trouble," Art said. "Hundredths, double vision, trouble reading small print on the back of a sales contract. I think you ought to see a good optometrist. Maybe you could get started talking about something besides the Chamber of Commerce."

"Well," Marvin said. "I got nothing to lose, except my job, my self-respect and my temper."

"Good luck with it," Art said.
 Marvin didn't make an appointment. He walked into the office and a small blind girl glanced up as he came in. "The doctor isn't in."

"I'll wait," Marvin said. He sat down.

"She said to tell you that she left for Indo-China. Or maybe Peoria. If you come in to see her, that is."

Marvin picked up a magazine. "I'll wait till she gets back."

The girl looked toward the inner office, and then leaned toward Marvin. "She's better than a waffle iron at you, Mr. McConnell. I wouldn't wait if I were you."

"I'm going blind—I think," Marvin said.
 "Oh, that's different." The girl went into the inner office. Presently she came out and said formally, "The doctor will see you now."

Marvin walked into the office. She was seated behind a desk. She was wearing a wool skirt and a cashmere sweater, and a string of small pearls around her neck. She looked like an angel, and as cold as a green salad. Marvin sat down. "I thought I was having eye trouble, but I guess I'm wrong. When you were in the office the other day, I had the impression that you were beautiful. I never heard of a beautiful doctor, so I decided it was eye trouble. But I can see now that I was understating the facts."

She showed no sign that she had heard. She drew a form toward her, passing a pencil above it. "Age?" she said.

"Thirty-one," Marvin said. "I am of sound mind, I can get three recommendations and will you have dinner with me tonight?"

"Do you have frequent headaches?"
 "You're wasting your time being Chamber of Commerce president," Marvin said. "You should enter the Miss Oregon Pageant."

"Please sit over there."
 Marvin sat in a chair to which were attached a great many instruments. She flicked a switch and the lights went off. "Why, doctor?" Marvin said. Then a light went on at the far wall.

"Please tell me if you see two sets of lines—one horizontal and one vertical."

"Yes," Marvin said. "Will you turn the lights off again?"
 "No. Tell me which set is the clearer."

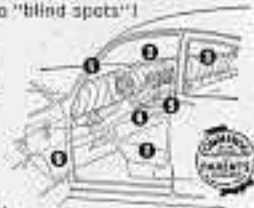
Marvin told her about the lines. He read the charts and lined up the dots.

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