“You must be as drunk as I am.” He grinned, seemed to remember why he had entered the alley in the first place, and said, “Don’t go way. I’ll be ri’ back.”

The man lurched away. Andy heard his footsteps, and then the sound of the man colliding with a garbage can, and some mild swearing, lost in the steady wash of the rain. He waited for the man to come back.

It was 11:39.

When the man returned, he squatted alongside Andy. He studied him with drunken dignity.

“You gonna catch cold here,” he said. “What’s a matter? You like layin’ in the wet?”

Andy could not answer. The man tried to focus his eyes on Andy’s face. The rain spattered around them.

“You like a drink?”

Andy shook his head.

“I gotta bottle. Here,” the man said. He pulled a pint bottle from his inside jacket pocket. He uncapped it and extended it to Andy. Andy tried to move, but pain wrenched him back flat against the sidewalk.

“Take it,” the man said. He kept watching Andy. “Take it.” When Andy did not move, he said, “Nev’ mind, I’ll have one m’self.” He tilted the bottle to his lips and then wiped the back of his hand across his mouth. “You too young to be drinkin’, anyway. Should be ‘shamed of yourself, drunk an’ layin’ in a alley, all wet. Shame on you. I gotta good minda call a cop.”

Andy nodded. Yes, he tried to say. Yes, call a cop. Please. Call one.

“Oh, you don’ like that, huh?” the drunk said. “You don’ wanna cop to fin’ you all drunk an’ wet in a alley, huh? Okay, buddy. This time you get off easy.” He got to his feet. “This time you lucky,” he said. He waved broadly at Andy, and then almost lost his footing. “S’long, buddy,” he said.

Wait, Andy thought. Wait, please, I’m bleeding.

“S’long,” the drunk said again. “I see you aroun’,” and then he staggered off up the alley.

Andy lay and thought: Laura, Laura. Are you dancing?

The couple came into the alley suddenly. They ran into the alley together, running from the rain, the boy holding the girl’s elbow, the girl spreading a newspaper over her head to protect her hair. Andy lay crumpled against the pavement, and he watched them run into the alley laughing, and then duck into the doorway not ten feet from him.

“Man, what rain!” the boy said. “You could drown out there.”

“I have to get home,” the girl said. “It’s late, Freddie. I have to get home.”

“We got time,” Freddie said. “Your people won’t raise a fuss if you’re a little late.”

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