#### SHORT STORY

(continued from page 21)

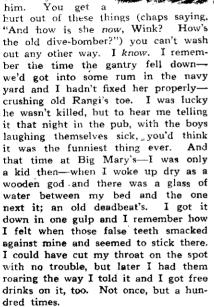
lawn in front of his house after midnight being a dive-homber. They go mad when they've been off it that long.

"Quite a night," he said, waiting for me to speak. "Quite a night. How did I go, Harry? Any kicks?" ing running. I c
"You're out, Winky," I said. "You me, but she did.

went mad."

He tried to make the right sort of crack, but he was too ill, and he put I his head back among the cabbages.

doesn't stop at the crossroads days. I gathered he'd done not so The new man had taken over his stores and any outstanding debts and chucked him a few quid in the bargain. He was clean and shaved, but still a bit shaky on it. He'd been putting himself right with what was left of the booze and I can't say I blamed



So I couldn't blame Winky. You just have to put yourself right. Me, I dare say I'd never have come right at all but for Grace. I didn't love her that morning I asked her to marry me, but I'd have settled for less-less looks, less sense, less everything. It was that or going round to see Jonesy the fifth morning running. I didn't think she'd have

DROPPED Winky and the kid at Benson's before going on into town to pick up some angle iron. Winky was quiet and a bit lofty. He wasn't WINKY didn't say much as we drove having even the one. He was going along. I was taking him and the straight up to the city by the next kid as far as Benson's because Bert train to join his girl. August-Hell!

He'd seen me and Grace and he reckoned he could take a hint.

I picked up the angle iron and was still early enough to pass the school bus -late as usual-on my way home. I tooted the horn twice for young Alison and caught a glimpse of her in the driving mirror waving with the other children in the back. The bus, a 15cwt. pick-up

like mine, went by fast, trailing dust and some ragged singing.

> You'll get a fish-ee on a little dish-ee You'll get a jumping jack when Daddy comes home.

I'd been doing a bit of a grin up till then, but now it didn't seem funny any longer what I'd seen at Benson's while calling in there on my way back from town for Ma Walker's stout: Winky up against a bar, a whisky in one hand and change from a fiver in the other, and the kid and that rabbiter from Murray's Creek roaring with laughter. "Over she went," Winky was saying. "Pot and all. Stew? You never seen stew like it! 'Fill your boots,' I tells them, 'Fill your boots. . .'"

Winky was right again. He'd missed the train, of course, but he was right again, I couldn't blame him.

"Grace," said the wheels of the old Chevvy, splashing shingle under the mudguards. "Grace, Grace to come

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