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ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

writing under his famous pen name

A.A. Fair

A BERTHA COOL
DONALD LAM
MYSTERY



**CUT
THIN
TO
WIN**

**CUT THIN
TO WIN**

A. A. FAIR

(Erle Stanley Gardner)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- DONALD LAM**—Pint-sized private eye: He thought it was just a penny ante 'con' game he was getting into, but the stakes started rising 7
- ELSIE BRAND**—Donald's cooperative secretary: She'd even take notes in a closet, if it would save her Lam from the slaughter 7
- CLAYTON DAWSON**—He wanted to be the King of Hearts, until he found he could take more tricks with diamonds 8
- BERTHA COOL**—"Big Bertha" was the other half of the team of Cool & Lam, but she carried two-thirds of the weight 11
- MRS. HARVEY CHESTER**—She was the joker in the whole mess. Unfortunately she changed hands—and stories—so often even the police couldn't keep up with her 21
- PHYLLIS ELDON**—There was no doubt she was a Queen, but it would take a lot more than "eating bread and honey" to keep her happy 32
- SGT. FRANK SELLERS**—A fast-moving, slow-witted cop, he always won the last hand even when he didn't know the score 44

FICTION

**BERTHA
COOL
DIDN'T
WANT
TO
TAKE
THE
CASE.**


But I talked her into it, when our client laid twelve one-hundred-dollar bills on the desk.

"Fry me for an oyster," Bertha said. "It's your baby and you can change the diapers."

Less than a week later, Sergeant Frank Sellers announced he was going to take away my license, Bertha Cool announced that our partnership was dissolved, and my secretary was crying on my shoulder.

"Donald, please—*please* be careful."

"It's too late to be careful now," I told her. "I'm dealing either with a crooked lawyer, a jealous boy friend, a scheming daughter, one hell of a wealthy father, or a combination of any number of them. When you go up against a combination of that sort, you can't be careful."

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