



The Last Spin

by *Evan Hunter*

The boy sitting opposite him was his enemy.

The boy sitting opposite him was called Tigo, and he wore a green silk jacket with an orange stripe on each sleeve. The jacket told Dave that Tigo was his enemy. The jacket shrieked 'Enemy, enemy!'

"This is a good piece," Tigo said, indicating the gun on the table. "This runs you close to forty-five bucks, you try to buy it in a store."

The gun on the table was a Smith & Wesson .38 Police

spin *snurren, omdrejning*
opposite *overfor*
sleeve *ærme*
shriek *scream*
piece *revolver*
indicate *point at*
run *cost*
buck *dollar*



Special (...) Alongside the gun were three .38 Special cartridges.

Dave looked at the gun. He was nervous but he kept tight control of his face. He could not show Tigo what he was feeling. Tigo was the enemy, and so he said, "I seen pieces before. There's nothing special about this one."

"Except what we got to do with it," Tigo said. Tigo was studying him with large brown eyes. The eyes were moist-looking. He was not a bad-looking kid, Tigo, with thick black hair and maybe a nose that was too long, but his mouth and chin were good. You could usually tell a cat by his mouth and his chin. Tigo would not turkey out of this. Of that, Dave was sure.

"Why don't we start?" Dave asked. He wet his lips and looked across at Tigo.

"You understand," Tigo said. "I got no bad blood for you."

"I understand."

"This is what the club said. This is how the club said we should settle it. Without a big street diddlebop, you dig?" (...)

"We going to sit and talk all night, or we going to get this thing rolling?" Dave asked.

"What I'm trying to say," Tigo went on, "is that I just happened to be picked for this, you know? Like to settle this thing that's between the two clubs. I mean, you got to admit your boys shouldn't have come in our territory last night."

"I got to admit nothing," Dave said flatly.

"Well, anyway, they shot at the candy store. That wasn't right. There's supposed to be a truce on."

"Okay, okay," Dave said.

"So like - like this is the way we agreed to settle it. I mean one of us and - and one of you. Fair and square. Without any street boppin', and without any Law trouble."

"Let's get on with it," Dave said.

"I'm trying to say, I never even seen you on the street before this. So this ain't nothin' personal with me. Whichever way it turns out, like..."

"I never seen you neither," Dave said.

Tigo stared at him for a long time. "That's 'cause you're new around here. Where you from originally?"

"My people come down from the Bronx."

"You got a big family?"

"A sister and two brothers, that's all."

"Yeah, I only got a sister," Tigo shrugged. "Well." He sighed. "So." He sighed again. "Let's make it, huh?"

"I'm waitin'," Dave said.

Tigo picked up the gun, and then he took one of the

tight stram

moist fugtig

tell bedømme

cat fyr

chin hage

turkey out (slang) få

kolde fødder, løbe

bad blood hate

settle afgøre

diddlebop (slang) fight

get...rolling starte

I happened to be det

var et tilfælde, at jeg...

ad'mit indrømme

sup'posed to be should

be

truce våbenstilstand

agree blive enig

fair and square helt

retfærdigt

bop (slang) fight

turn out end

o' riginally to start with

Bronx se kortet på side

157

shrug trække på

skuldrene

sigh sukke



in snurren, omdrejning

posite overfor

ve ærme

riek scream

ece revolver

dicate point at

in cost

ick dollar

cartridges from the table top. He broke open the gun, slid the cartridge into the cylinder, and then snapped the gun shut and twirled the cylinder. "Round and round she goes," he said, "and where she stops, nobody knows."

"There's six chambers in the cylinder," Tigo said, "and only one cartridge. That makes the odds five-to-one that the cartridge'll be in firing position when the cylinder stops whirling. You dig?"

"I dig."

"I'll go first," Tigo said.

Dave looked at him suspiciously. "Why?"

"You want to go first?"

"I don't know."

"I'm giving you a break." Tigo grinned. "I may blow my head off first time out."

"Why you giving me a break?" Dave asked.

Tigo shrugged. "What the hell's the difference?" He gave the cylinder a fast twirl.

"The Russians invented this, huh?" Dave asked.

"Yeah."

"I always said they was crazy."

"Yeah, I always..." Tigo stopped talking. The cylinder was still now. He took a deep breath, put the barrel of the .38 to his temple, and then squeezed the trigger.

The firing pin clicked on an empty chamber.

"Well, that was easy, wasn't it?" he asked. He shoved the gun across the table. "Your turn, Dave."

Dave reached for the gun. It was cold in the basement room, but he was sweating now. He pulled the gun toward him, then he left it on the table while he dried his palms on his trousers. He picked up the gun and then stared at it.

"It's a nifty piece," Tigo said. "I like a good piece."

"Yeah, I do, too," Dave said. "You can tell a good piece just by the way it feels in your hand."

Tigo looked surprised. "I mentioned that to one of the guys yesterday, and he thought I was nuts."

"Lots of guys don't know about pieces," Dave said, shrugging.

"I was thinking," Tigo said, "when I get old enough, I'll join the Army, you know? I'd like to work around pieces."

"I thought of that, too. I'd join now, only my old lady won't give me permission. She's got to sign if I join now."

"Yeah, they're all the same," Tigo said, smiling. "Your old lady born here or the island?"

cartridge *patron*

break/broke open *lukke*

op

slide *skubbe*

cylinder *tromle*

twirl turn

chamber *kammer*

whirl turn quickly

dig (slang) understand

sus'piciously

mistænksomt

break chance

in'vent *opfinde*

still not moving

barrel *løb*

temple *tinding*

squeeze *trykke*

trigger *aftrækker*

firing pin *slagstift*

shove push

basement cellar

palm *håndflade*

nifty (slang) wonderful

mention say

nuts (slang) mad

old lady (slang) mother

per'mission *tilladelse*

the island Manhattan

(*se kortet s. 157*)



.dige patron
/broke open lukke

skubbe
ler tromle
turn
ber kammer
turn quickly
slang) understand
iciously
nksomt
k chance
nt opfinde
not moving
el løb
le tinding
eze trykke
er aftrækker
g pin slagstift
e push
ment cellar
1 håndflade
(slang) wonderful
tion say
(slang) mad
lady (slang) mother
mission tilladelse
island Manhattan
ortet s. 157)



"The island," Dave said.
"Yeah, well, you know they got these old-fashioned ideas."
"I better spin," Dave said.
"Yeah," Tigo agreed.
Dave slapped the cylinder with his left hand. The cylinder whirled, whirled and then stopped. Slowly, Dave put the gun to his head. He wanted to close his eyes, but he didn't dare. Tigo, the enemy, was watching him. He returned Tigo's stare, and then he squeezed the trigger.
His heart skipped a beat, and then over the roar of his blood he heard the empty click. Hastily, he put the gun down on the table.

I better - I had better
jeg må hellere
a'gree samtykke
slap hit
skip a beat hoppe et slag
over
roar brølen



"Makes you sweat, don't it?" Tigo said.

Dave nodded, saying nothing. He watched Tigo. Tigo was looking at the gun.

"Me, now, huh?" he said. He took a deep breath, then picked up the .38.

He shrugged, "Well." He twirled the cylinder, waited for it to stop, and then put the gun to his head.

"Bang!" he said, and then he squeezed the trigger. Again, the firing pin clicked on an empty chamber. Tigo let out his breath and put the gun down.

"I thought I was dead that time," he said.

"I could hear the harps," Dave said.

"This is a good way to lose weight, you know that?" He laughed nervously, and then his laugh became honest when he saw that Dave was laughing with him. "Ain't it the truth? You could lose ten pounds this way."

"My old lady's like a house," Dave said, laughing. "She ought to try this kind of diet." He laughed at his own humour, pleased when Tigo joined him.

"That's the trouble," Tigo said. "You see a nice deb in the street, you think it's crazy, you know? Then they get to be our people's age, and they turn to fat." He shook his head.

"You got a chick?" Dave asked.

"Yeah, I got one."

"What's her name?"

"Aw, you don't know her."

"Maybe I do," Dave said.

"Her name is Juana." Tigo watched him. "She's about five-two, got these brown eyes..."

"I think I know her," Dave said. He nodded. "Yeah, I think I know her."

"She's nice, ain't she?" Tigo asked. He leaned forward, as if Dave's answer was of great importance to him.

"Yeah, she's nice," Dave said.

"The guys rib me about her. You know, all they're after – well, you know, they don't understand something like Juana."

"I got a chick, too," Dave said.

"Yeah? Hey, maybe sometime we could..." Tigo cut himself short. He looked down at the gun, and his sudden enthusiasm seemed to ebb completely. "It's your turn," he said.

"Here goes nothing," Dave said. He twirled the cylinder, sucked in his breath, and then fired.

The empty click was loud in the stillness of the room.

"Man!" Dave said.

nod *nikke*

lose weight *tabe sig*

diet *slankekur*

pleased *happy*

deb *young girl*

turn to fat *blive tyk*

chick (slang) *girl-friend*

five-two = *five feet, two*

inches *ca. 155 cm*

guy *fyr, bandemedlem*

rib *drille*

cut short *afbryde*

en'thusiasm *begejstring*

ebb *ebbe ud, forsvinde*



kke
eight tabe sig
nkekur
d happy
ung girl
o fat blive tyk
(slang) girl-friend
vo = five feet, two
s ca. 155 cm
r, bandemedlem
ille
ort afbryde
usiasm begejstring
be ud, forsvinde

"We're pretty lucky, you know?" Tigo said.

"So far."

"We better lower the odds. The boys won't like it if we..." He stopped himself again, and then reached for one of the cartridges on the table. He broke open the gun again, and slipped the second cartridge into the cylinder. "Now we got two cartridges in here," he said. "Two cartridges, six chambers. That's four-to-two. Divide it, and you get two-to-one." He paused. "You game?"

"That's - that's what we're here for, ain't it?"

"Sure."

"Okay then."

"Gone," Tigo said, nodding his head. "You got courage, Dave."

"You're the one needs the courage," Dave said gently. "It's your spin."

Tigo lifted the gun. Idly, he began spinning the cylinder.

"You live on the next block, don't you?" Dave asked.

"Yeah." Tigo kept slapping the cylinder. It spun with a gently whirring sound.

"That's how come we never crossed paths, I guess. Also I'm new on the scene."

"Yeah, well you know, you get hooked up with one club, that's the way it is."

"You like the guys on your club?" Dave asked, wondering why he was asking such a stupid question, listening to the whirring of the cylinder at the same time.

"They're okay." Tigo shrugged. "None of them really send me, but that's the club on my block, so what're you gonna do, huh?" His hand left the cylinder. It stopped spinning. He put the gun to his head.

"Wait!" Dave said.

Tigo looked puzzled. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing, I just wanted to say - I mean..." Dave frowned. "I don't dig too many of the guys on my club, either."

Tigo nodded. For a moment, their eyes locked. Then Tigo shrugged, and fired.

And then the empty click filled the basement room.

"Phew," Tigo said.

"Man, you can say that again."

Tigo slid the gun across the table.

Dave hesitated an instant. He did not want to pick up the gun. He felt sure that this time the firing pin would strike the percussion cap of one of the cartridges. He was sure that this time he would shoot himself.

you game? (slang) er du med, tør du?

courage mod

gently blidt

idly dovent

block kvarter mellem to sidegader

cross paths meet

hooked up involved

send me (slang) sig mig noget

what's the matter what is wrong

frown rynke panden

dig like

lock mødes, holde fast i hinanden

hesitate tøve

per'cussion cap

fænghætte



"Sometimes I think I'm turkey," he said to Tigo, surprised that his thoughts had found voice.

"I feel that way sometimes, too," Tigo said.

"I never told that to nobody," Dave said. "The guys on my club would laugh at me, I ever told them that."

"Some things you got to keep to yourself. There ain't nobody you can trust in this world."

"There should be somebody you can trust," Dave said. "Hell, you can't tell nothing to your people. They don't understand."

Tigo laughed. "That's an old story. But that's the way things are. What're you gonna do?"

"Yeah. Still, sometimes I think I'm turkey."

"Sure, sure," Tigo said. "It ain't only that, though. Like sometimes – well, don't you wonder what you're doing stomping some guy in the street? Like – you know what I mean? Like – who's the guy to you? What you got to beat him up for? 'Cause he messed with somebody else's girl?" Tigo shook his head. "It gets complicated sometimes."

"Yeah, but..." Dave frowned again. "You got to stick with the club. Don't you?"

"Sure, sure – no question." Again their eyes locked.

"Well, here goes," Dave said. He lifted the gun. "It's just..." He shook his head, and then twirled the cylinder. The cylinder spun, and then stopped. He studied the gun, wondering if one of the cartridges would roar from the barrel when he squeezed the trigger.

Then he fired.

Click.

"I didn't think you was going through with it," Tigo said.

"I didn't neither."

"You got heart, Dave," Tigo said. He looked at the gun. He picked it up and broke it open.

"What you doing?" Dave asked.

"Another cartridge," Tigo said. "Six chambers, three cartridges. That makes it even money. You game?"

"You?"

"The boys said..." Tigo stopped talking. "Yeah, I'm game," he added, his voice curiously low.

"It's your turn, you know."

"I know."

Dave watched as Tigo picked up the gun.

"You ever been rowboating on the lake?"

Tigo looked across the table at him, his eyes wide. "Once," he said. "I went with Juana."

turkey afraid

trust stole på

stomp sparke, tæske

mess blande sig, blive
kæreste'

shake/shook ryste

heart mod

even money lige chancer

curiously mærkeligt

rowboat sejle, ro



key afraid
st stole på
mp sparke, tæske
ss blande sig, 'blive
'este'
ike/shook ryste
irt mod
n money lige chancer
iously mærkeligt
vboat sejle, ro



"Is it – is it any kicks?"

"Yeah. Yeah, it's grand kicks. You mean you never went?"

"No," Dave said.

"Well, you got to try it, man," Tigo said excitedly. "You'll like it. Hey, you try it."

"Yeah, I was thinking maybe this Sunday I'd..." He did not complete the sentence.

"My spin," Tigo said wearily. He twirled the cylinder. "Here goes a good man," he said, and he put the revolver to his head and squeezed the trigger.

Click.

Dave smiled nervously. "No rest for the weary," he said. "But Jesus, you got heart. I don't know if I can go through with it."

"Sure, you can," Tigo assured him. "Listen, what's there to be afraid of?" He slid the gun across the table.

kicks fun
ex'citedly *opstemt*
com'plete *fuldføre*
wearily tiredly
as'sure *forsikre*



"We keep this up all night?" Dave asked.

"They said – you know..."

"Well, it ain't so bad. I mean, hell, we didn't have this operation, we wouldn'ta got a chance to talk, huh?" he grinned feebly.

"Yeah," Tigo said, his face splitting in a wide grin. "It ain't been so bad, huh?"

"No, it's been – well, you know, these guys on the club, who can talk to them?"

He picked up the gun.

"We could..." Tigo started.

"What?"

"We could say – well – like we kept shootin' an' nothing happened, so..." Tigo shrugged. "What the hell! We can't do this all night, can we?"

"I don't know."

"Let's make this the last spin. Listen, they don't like it, they can take a flying leap, you know?"

"I don't think they'll like it. We supposed to settle this for the clubs."

"To hell with the clubs!" Tigo said vehemently. "Can't we pick our own..." The word was hard coming. When it came, he said it softly, and his eyes did not leave Dave's face. "... friends?"

"Sure we can," Dave said fervently. "Sure we can! Why not?"

"The last spin," Tigo said. "Come on, the last spin."

"Gone," Dave said. "Hey, you know, I'm glad that you thought of this idea. You know that? I'm actually glad!" He twirled the cylinder. "Look, you want to go on the lake on Sunday? I mean, with your girl and mine? We could rent two boats. Or even one if you want."

"Yeah, one boat," Tigo said. "Hey, your girl'll like Juana, I mean it. She's a swell chick."

The cylinder stopped. Dave put the gun to his head quickly.

"Here's to Sunday," he said. He grinned at Tigo, and Tigo grinned back, and then Dave fired.

The explosion rocked the small basement room, ripping away half of Dave's head, shattering his face. A small, sharp cry escaped Tigo's throat, and a look of incredulous shock knifed his eyes.

Then he put his head on the table and began weeping.

feebly weakly

take a flying leap *så er*

det bare synd

vehemently *heftigt*

fervently *brændende,*

inderligt

swell fine

shatter smash

in'credulous *vantrø*

knife *stikke, lukke*

weep cry



weakly
 i flying leap så er
 re synd
 nently heftigt
 ntly brændende,
 igt
 fine
 er smash
 >dulous vantro
 stikke, lukke
 cry



1. Where do you think the story takes place?
2. What has been happening, so that the two boys have to 'play Russian roulette'?
3. Describe the two boys – you can add details from films you may have seen or other stories you have read. Why have they been given such different names?
4. Are these two boys typical of their gangs, do you think?
5. How many times do they 'make the spin'? Is there any difference in the way they make these spins?
6. What sort of a relationship (:forhold) develops (:udvikle sig) between the two of them?
7. Imagine you are Tigo. How would you describe what happened that day to your girl-friend Juana?
8. Why were the boys members of their gangs? What does being a gang-member mean for a boy (both the good things and the bad things)?
9. Do you think Evan Hunter wants to tell anything in this story – or is it just exciting?

