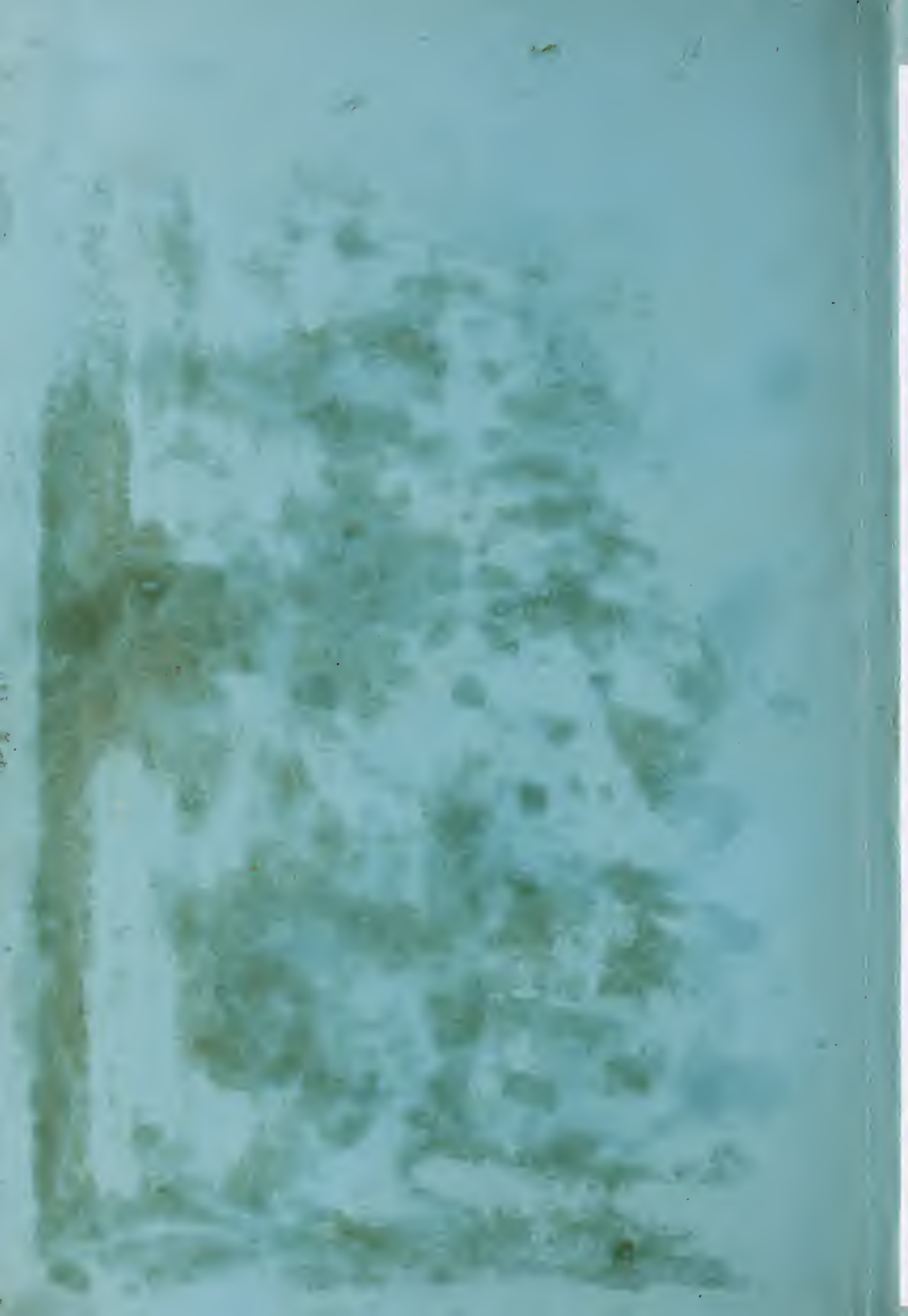


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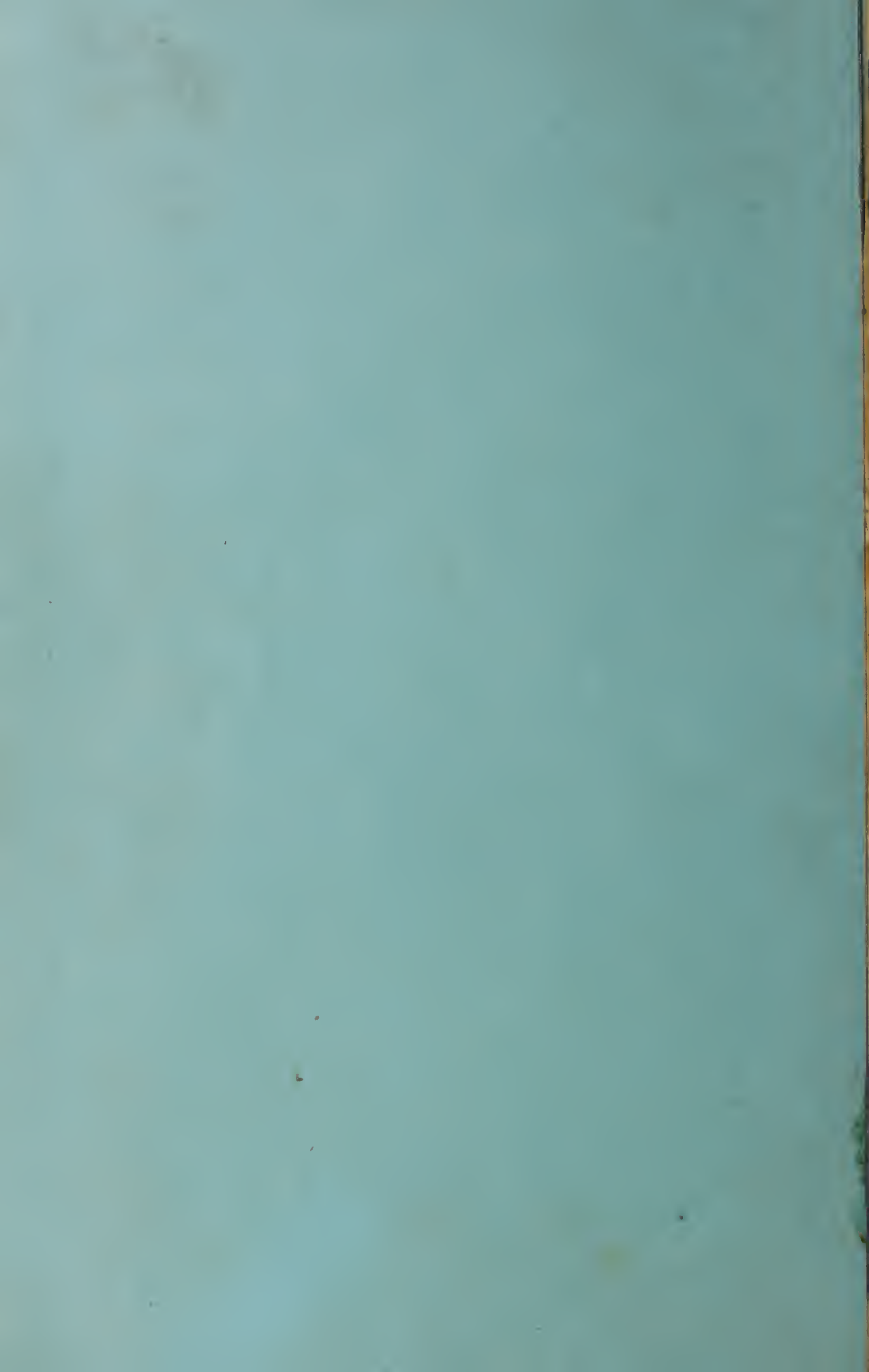
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No. 791.

EVERY TUESDAY

February 9th 1935.



**"The CASE
of the
HOWLING
DOG"**

*Gripping
Complete
Detective
Thriller.*

When Perry Mason was consulted by an agitated man about the howling of a dog he imagined the case to be a trivial one, but it developed abruptly into one of the most sensational murder mysteries of his career

The CASE OF THE HOWLING DOG



Starring
Warren William and Mary Astor

An Extraordinary Client

THE quiet of Milpas Drive, Los Angeles, was shattered by the dismal howling of a dog, and Arthur Cartwright went to the window of his bed-room and looked out into the darkness, holding a pair of binoculars to his eyes.

He had used those binoculars many times to spy upon his neighbour, Clinton Foley, but to-night all the windows of the house beyond two trim lawns and a common driveway were screened by curtains. With a gesture of helplessness he dropped the glasses upon the seat of an easy-chair and held his hands to his ears as though to shut out the hateful sound.

Other people in Milpas Drive, presumably, had been disturbed by the howling of the dog, but Arthur Cartwright was more than merely disturbed; he was terrified.

He had begun to undress quite a while before the noise had started, but instead of completing his preparations for bed had put on a dressing-gown over shirt and trousers to wander restlessly about the room.

The sound of footsteps in the carpeted passage outside the bed-room reached his shielded ears, and he went to the door. His elderly housekeeper, Elizabeth Walker, was out there with folded sheets and blankets in her arms, evidently on the way to the linen cupboard.

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"Did you hear it?" he demanded huskily.

Mrs. Walker was a prim-looking female dressed primly in black with a starched collar at her neck and an old-fashioned brooch beneath the collar. She was plain of face, and professed to be hard of hearing.

"What did you say?" she asked blankly.

"Did you hear that dog howling next door?" shouted Cartwright.

"I didn't hear any dog," she retorted tartly.

"Oh, it's driving me crazy!" he shivered. "You know, it means a death in the neighbourhood!"

The housekeeper screwed up her face.

"What's that?"

"Oh, nothing!" he exploded.

The howling of the dog persisted, but apparently she was quite unconscious of it.

"I might as well talk to these walls!" he snorted, and dived back into the bed-room and slammed the door.

At eleven o'clock next morning, Perry Mason, attorney-at-law, was seated at his own massive desk in his own elaborately furnished office on the fourth floor of the Hamilton Building, in Hill Street, when his pretty but very efficient private secretary, Della Street, stepped into the room and closed the door carefully behind her.

In the big outer office, and in other rooms on the fourth floor, all sorts of assistants were dealing with all sorts of callers, for Perry Mason was a very successful lawyer and had reached a stage in his career when he could afford to pick and choose, among the cases that were brought to him, those which seemed to merit his own personal attention.

He was a tall man and a handsome one, quiet of manner in the ordinary way, but fierce enough when occasion demanded. His own staff adored him; the district attorney had a very wholesome respect for his cleverness, and wrongdoers as well as perfectly innocent people sought his aid.

A wisp of a moustache adorned his upper lip, his brown hair was brushed well back from a particularly high brow, and a pair of very quick blue eyes could express everything, or nothing, as their owner willed.

"Mr. Mason," said Della Street in her own quiet way, "there's a young man out there with the jitters. I don't know what it's all about, but he seems to have jumpy nerves over a dog that bays the moon."

Perry Mason looked up from a law book which had been engaging his very close attention. His eyes frowned, but his lips smiled, for he had a very considerable regard for the girl who was his secretary.

"You know I can't be bothered with

such things," he growled. "Tell him to go in and talk with Morgan—Morgan knows all about dogs."

"He refuses to see anyone but you. Says it's terribly important. He acts so strangely. I wish you'd see him for a minute."

"Well, all right," surrendered Perry Mason, "send him in."

Arthur Cartwright was ushered into the room, and his agitation was manifest. He was not a bad-looking man, but his hands were shaky and his brown eyes were wild.

"Sit down," said Perry Mason. "My secretary told me you wanted to see me about a dog."

"Yes," said Cartwright, dropping into a chair facing the lawyer, "about a dog and a will."

"A will? Oh, well, let's talk about the will first."

"Just as you like."

A cigarette was offered and lit; Perry Mason picked up a pencil.

"First a little personal history," he said. "Your full name?"

"Arthur Cartwright."

"Age?"

"Thirty-two."

"Residence?"

"Four-eight-nine-three Milpas Drive."

"Married or single?"

Cartwright hesitated.

"Do we need to go into that?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, I don't think it makes any difference in the kind of will I'm drawing up—I mean on account of the way I'm leaving my property?"

"Just for my own information," insisted Perry Mason. "Your wife's name, please?"

"Evelyn Cartwright, aged twenty-seven."

"Residing with you?"

"No," said Cartwright, and compressed quite a lot of bitterness into the little word.

"Any children?"

"No."

"Very well," Mason leaned back in his chair. "Now then, how do you want to leave your property?"

"Before we go into that," Cartwright burst out, "I want to know if a will is valid no matter how a man dies. Suppose he dies on the gallows, or in the electric chair? You know, suppose he's executed for a murder—then what happens to his will?"

Not by the flicker of an eyelid did Perry Mason betray any surprise at such an extraordinary question.

"It makes no difference how a man dies," he replied quietly. "His will is not affected."

Cartwright seemed relieved.

"All right," he said. "Suppose I write the will entirely in my own handwriting—will I need witnesses?"

"No. A will is valid and binding, in this State, providing the date, contents, and signature are all in your own handwriting, and that there's no other writing on the document."

He opened a drawer of the desk and took out a printed sheet of blue paper.

"Here's a form, if you want it," he said.

Cartwright took the form and put it in his pocket.

"Well, that seems to clear up that point," he sighed. "I intend to leave my property to Mrs. Clinton Foley, living at four-eight-nine-one Milpas Drive."

"A neighbour?"

"Yes."

"Don't have any secrets from your lawyer, Cartwright. I won't betray your confidence."

"That's all there is to it."

Perry Mason was convinced to the contrary, but dismissed the subject.

"All right," he said. "Now let's hear about the dog."

His visitor immediately got to his feet, walked the length of the desk, and clenched his hands,

"A dog has been howling for forty-eight hours," he cried, "mostly at night, but sometimes during the day, and that continual howling is driving me crazy. You know, when a dog howls it's an omen of death in the neighbourhood."

"Where is the dog?" inquired Mason.

"In Clinton Foley's house."

"Suppose you tell me all about it, Cartwright."

Cartwright went back to his chair, but did not sit down.

"Look here," he blurted, "there's one more question about the will. Suppose—suppose Mrs. Clinton Foley shouldn't really be Mrs. Foley. I mean, suppose he divorced the original Mrs. Foley, and this is another one?"

"That wouldn't make any difference," replied Perry Mason, "if you described her in the will as the Mrs. Clinton Foley living at four-eight-nine-one Milpas Drive."

"All right. But suppose the original Mrs. Clinton Foley is still alive?"

"If you leave your property to the woman who is now the wife of Clinton Foley, that's all that will be necessary."

"Ah, good, good!" exclaimed Cartwright. "Now then, about that dog! We've got to do something to stop that howling! I—I want Clinton Foley arrested!"

Perry Mason pushed aside the pad on which he had made notes and pulled a law book towards him.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to handle this matter for you, Mr. Cartwright," he said. "I'm exceptionally busy just now."

Arthur Cartwright gulped.

"Oh, but look here," he shrilled, "you've got to handle it! I'll make it worth your while. I'll pay you—"

He whisked a wad of notes from his breast-pocket and held them out.

"There's ten thousand dollars! There'll be more—more—if you need it!"

Perry Mason looked up at him with a curious expression on his face:

"Ten thousand dollars to handle a case over a howling dog?" he scoffed.

The notes were placed on the blotting-pad before him, but he flipped them aside with his pencil.

"You're forgetting the will!" Cartwright protested. "You're to handle that, too, you know."

For a few seconds Perry Mason studied the distraught young man thoughtfully; then he rose and walked round the desk.

"Ten thousand dollars to handle a case over a howling dog?" scoffed Perry Mason.



"Cartwright," he said impressively, "if I act as your lawyer in this thing. I'm going to do what I think is for your own best interests, no matter what it may be."

"Oh, yes, yes!" agreed Cartwright eagerly. "Of course—I understand. Oh, yes!"

"All right, then just a moment. I want to call in one of my assistants—I want him to hear the facts in the case."

"Sure," nodded Cartwright, and sank down into the chair and passed his hand across his brow as the lawyer went briskly out from the room.

The District Attorney Intervenes

PERRY MASON crossed the general office, but he did not speak to any of his assistants at their various desks. Instead, he proceeded into the corridor and made his way along it to a door that bore upon its frosted panel the inscription, "Dr. Carl Cooper, Psychiatrist."

He opened the door and put his head round it to speak to a little man, dwarfed by the desk at which he was seated—a dapper little man with a blob of a nose and a monocle.

"Oh, doctor," he said cheerfully, "I want you to take a look at a client in my office. I want to know if he's in his right senses."

Dr. Cooper rose instantly.

"What makes you think he may be out of his mind?" he inquired.

"He's just paid me ten thousand dollars, in cash, as a retainer."

"Oh, that settles it!" chuckled the mental specialist. "That's a sure sign of insanity. A distinct departure from the normal."

"I'll say it's a departure from the normal," laughed the lawyer. "Come and have a look at him!"

Arthur Cartwright had been prowling about the room during Perry Mason's absence, but he sat down in the chair again as the handle of the door was turned.

"Mr. Cartwright," purred Mason, "this is my assistant, Mr. Smith."

He perched on the corner of the desk while the little doctor shook hands with the agitated young man and exchanged greetings.

"It's about a dog, Smith," he explained. "Clinton Foley, a neighbour of Mr. Cartwright, has a dog that howls."

"Yes!" cried Cartwright excitedly. "It's a German police dog, and it goes on, and on. That howling's got to be stopped. D'you hear? It's got to be stopped!"

"What makes him howl?" inquired Dr. Cooper, readjusting his monocle.

"Why, Foley makes him howl!" declared Cartwright.

"Why?"

"Oh, because he knows it drives me crazy! You see, it means a death!"

The little psychiatrist pursed his lips and tilted his head.

"How long has it been going on?" he asked.

"It started night before last," was the quavering reply. "I want Foley arrested."

"Now, now, we've got to be careful," said Perry Mason, folding his arms.

"Suppose Foley were to turn round and sue you for malicious prosecution?"

"Oh, he'd do that if he could!" Cartwright declared vehemently. "That's why I came to you. I want to be protected!"

"Very well, then," said the lawyer; "here's what I suggest: We'll acquaint the district attorney's office with the facts in a fair manner, and ask that a letter of warning be sent to Mr. Foley

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immediately, requesting that he abate the nuisance."

"No!" shouted Cartwright. "I want him arrested!"

"You've agreed to act on my advice," Mason reminded him. "If the letter warning Mr. Foley has no effect we will then ask that a warrant be issued."

Cartwright's fingers moved spasmodically against one another on his knees.

"All right," he said reluctantly, "but see that Foley's notified right away. Have it sent by special messenger—I can't stand another night of that infernal howling."

"I'll attend to it," promised Mason; and his client rose and looked about the desk for the hat and gloves he had left in the outer office.

"Thank you, gentlemen!" he said. "I'm sorry if I'm upset, but—but I haven't been sleeping much lately."

Perry Mason opened the door for him and crooked a finger at Della Street, who advanced with the hat and gloves. The door was closed, and Mason looked inquiringly at the doctor.

"Well?"

"Of course, I can't make a complete diagnosis on such limited observation," replied Cooper with professional caution, "but I should say it's a case of agitated melancholia."

"Nerves all shot from some great mental stress, eh?" Perry Mason translated into common English. "But he's not insane, is he?"

"Well, he isn't normal."

"I know—but he's not insane?"

Dr. Carl Cooper grinned.

"It isn't, of course, the degree of irresponsibility that would save a man from the penalty for having committed a crime," he said shrewdly, "if that's what you mean."

That was exactly what Perry Mason had meant. He picked up the notes and pocketed them.

"Okay, doctor," he said smilingly. "I guess it's up to me to get rid of that howling dog."

Other matters engaged most of his attention throughout the rest of that day; but the howling dog had become an obsession with Arthur Cartwright, and that night—after he had written for a while at a little desk in the library on the ground floor of his home—he stood at the window with the binoculars in his hands.

He saw Clinton Foley cross the wide hall of the house next door, and for a moment he glimpsed a big German police dog, howling on the mat at the front door. Then a dark-haired girl approached the window of the hall and pulled the curtains across the panes.

Cartwright's mouth was all twisted as he lowered the useless glasses, and the voice of Elizabeth Walker behind him made him jump. She had entered without knocking.

"Excuse me," she said. "I—I thought you'd retired."

"Must you always go prowling around the house?" he flamed at her.

"What?" said the housekeeper. He strode past her to the desk and picked up a large envelope which lay there, addressed to Perry Mason.

"I'm going out to post a letter," he shouted.

"Letter?" she echoed. "Who's it from?"

"Mind your own business!" he bawled. "I'm going out!"

"Oh!" She put down a decanter and a glass she had brought in on a tray and followed him to the door. "I've always worked for respectable people!" she called after him.

The letter he posted that night was

opened by Della Street in Perry Mason's office next morning—in company with many other letters and not a few bills.

"Oh, here's something more from Mr. Cartwright," she said, and held out a sheet of notepaper and the will form, now completed.

"Humm!" mused Perry Mason, as he read what Cartwright had written.

"He says: 'I know, now, why the dog howled. I want you to represent the beneficiary named in the enclosed will, and fight for her interests all the way through.'"

He dropped the letter to study the will.

"Does he leave you something?" inquired Della after a while.

"My, but you're getting mercenary this morning!" quoth her employer with a grin. "He leaves his property nine-tenths to Mrs. Foley and one-tenth to me. He provides— Well!"

"What is it?"

"Why, when he was in here yesterday, he told me he wanted to leave his property to the second Mrs. Foley, living with Clinton Foley in Milpas Drive, but now he leaves his property to the original Mrs. Foley, the divorced wife."

Della Street blinked.

"Oh, that makes a difference, doesn't it?" she exclaimed.

"Of course it does! It means that the original Mrs. Foley, whoever she may be, will now be my client. I've received my fee, and now I'm legally and morally obliged to protect her interests. The question is, what made Cartwright change his mind?"

The telephone bell rang and Della picked up the instrument.

"Yes?" she said. "Oh! It's Mr. Drumm, the district attorney!"

Perry Mason took the telephone from her, and Claude Drumm's none too pleasant voice sounded in his left ear.

"Something's come up that you ought to know about," it informed the listener. "Clinton Foley intends to ask that your client, Arthur Cartwright, be sent to the psychopathic ward for observation as to his sanity."

"Just a moment, Claude," returned Mason. "Did you send that letter of warning, yesterday, to Mr. Foley about his howling dog?"

"Yes, I did," the district attorney replied, "and apparently this howling dog business is all a part of Cartwright's imagination. Foley believes the man's dangerous—that he has a homicidal complex which may cause him to take the law into his own hands. Foley's in my office right now."

"All right," said Mason, "hold him there. I'll be right down."

A Visit to the House

THE district attorney's office was situated on the first floor of the Municipal Building, only a little way along Hill Street, and Perry Mason reached it within ten minutes.

"Come in, Perry, come in," said Drumm, a man of no great stature, but a very keen lawyer whose clean-shaven face bore some slight resemblance to that of the famous film star, James Cagney. "This is Mr. Foley—Mason."

Perry Mason gazed with interest at Clinton Foley. He was a tall man of almost military bearing, with a long nose, a smudge of a moustache, tight lips, and unpleasant eyes. The two men greeted one another formally, and Foley said:

"I've explained the facts to Mr. Drumm here. Your client, Mr. Cartwright, is a very peculiar man. He lives like a hermit, yet he spies on

me out of the windows of his house, covering every move I make with binoculars."

Perry Mason dropped into a chair at the end of the district attorney's littered desk and nursed his hat.

"Go on," he said quietly. "I'm listening."

"I'm convinced that Cartwright is a mental case," declared Foley emphatically. "Doesn't know what he's doing—and I have witnesses to substantiate everything I've been saying."

"I'm still listening," said Perry Mason.

"Well, it makes it very difficult for me to keep my servants. I have only one left now—my housekeeper. The cook and the chauffeur left last week. They couldn't stand it any longer."

"Your servants must be highly sensitive individuals," observed Perry Mason, with the barest suggestion of sarcasm in his voice.

"It's annoying to my guests also," bridled Foley. "The man never has the lights in his house turned on—just parades through the dark rooms at night with his binoculars, snooping and spying on everything that goes on in my house."

"Is it a crime to look through binoculars?" asked Perry Mason blandly.

"No," intervened the district attorney with some acerbity, "but that isn't the point, and you know it—the man's insane."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because he has reported a howling dog, and the dog doesn't howl. I propose to see that his sanity is inquired into."

"All right," said Mason, "I'm just warning you! If you sign a complaint alleging that my client is insane, you'd better make a thorough investigation; otherwise there's going to be trouble. All your ideas about the man's insanity are founded on Mr. Foley's statement that the dog doesn't howl—isn't that right?"

Clinton Foley scowled, but Claude Drumm nodded.

"Naturally," he agreed, "but Mr. Foley says he has witnesses to prove his statement."

Perry Mason stood up.

"Until you investigate these witnesses," he said sharply, "how do you know which one is crazy? Maybe Foley is crazy!"

Clinton Foley's unpleasant eyes blazed with fury.

"I beg your pardon!" he exploded, bounding to his feet.

"Gentlemen, please!" protested the district attorney; and then to Mason: "All you ask is that we investigate the facts before we do anything?"

"Right."

The District Attorney picked up the telephone, was put through to the sheriff's office, and asked for Bill Pemberton.

"This is Claude Drumm," he said. "Listen, Bill, we've got a dispute down here involving a couple of millionaires out on Milpas Drive. There's a question of a howling dog. One of them says the dog howls—the other says it doesn't. One of them says the other man's crazy."

Bill Pemberton, deputy-sheriff of Los Angeles county, a thick-set fellow with a full face and very bushy brows, emitted a fat chuckle.

"That's a hot one!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know the District Attorney had to settle quarrels about dogs. I didn't think you had the time. Why don't you throw those birds out on their ears?"

"I would," laughed Drumm, "only



Perry Mason stood between the two bodies with a finger to his lips, trying to visualise what had happened.

it happens that Perry Mason is here representing one of them. He demands an investigation."

"I'll be right over," decided Pemberton; and in a very few minutes he arrived and was introduced to Clinton Foley.

"Hallo, Perry," he said to Mason. "Who are the witnesses?"

It was Clinton Foley who replied.

"Well, there's Arthur Cartwright, who claims the dog howls," he said, "and there's Cartwright's housekeeper. She may claim that she heard the dog howl, but you'll find that she's as deaf as a post and couldn't hear thunder! Then there's my wife—of course, she's ill in bed, but she can talk to you. She knows that the dog's as quiet as a mouse. And then there's Miss Benton, my housekeeper."

"How about the dog himself?" suggested Pemberton. "He ought to have something to say about this."

"Well, I think you'll find him a willing witness," said Foley.

"Okay," said the deputy-sheriff. "Then let's get along."

The District Attorney was left in full possession of his room, and the three set off for Milpas Drive in a limousine, which Clinton Foley drove. The city was left behind, the fashionable hill district beyond the Wilshire Boulevard was reached, and they descended from the vehicle in a branch of the concreted way which divided the lawns of the two residences.

Perry Mason gazed quickly about him. He noted various details about the house on the left, which he assumed to be Cartwright's, and the number of windows in Foley's house on that side; but it was Foley's garage that interested him most. Its double doors were open and a touring car was visible inside. Part of the end wall had been knocked down and three workmen were

busy erecting the wooden framework of an extension.

"Oh, room for three cars, I see!" he remarked. "Going to drive them all yourself?"

"Why do you ask that?" demanded Foley.

"You said your chauffeur left last week."

"I don't see that it concerns you," Foley snapped, "but I'm putting on an addition to my garage because I happen to want it that way. Any objections?"

"None at all," replied Perry Mason blandly.

Pemberton intervened. "Who do we talk to first?" he inquired, a trifle impatiently.

"Well, suit yourself," said Clinton Foley. "I think after you've talked with my wife you won't need to bother with any more witnesses."

They were crossing the lawn, past two flower borders, when a girl came running out from the house—a brown-haired girl, plainly-dressed, her hair parted down in the middle and plastered down at the sides as though to make herself as unattractive as possible. Her right hand was roughly bandaged and she looked scared.

"Oh, Mr. Foley," she cried, "I—I must see you at once! We've had some trouble."

"My housekeeper," explained Foley. "What happened?"

"Prince bit me," she replied.

Clinton Foley looked annoyed rather than sympathetic.

"How did it happen?" he asked sharply.

"Oh, I don't know," she faltered, "but I—I think he'd been poisoned. He acted sick, and I forced him to swallow some salt for an emetic. Then he bit me. I shut him up in your bathroom. He's better now."

"These gentlemen," said Foley, "are investigating charges made by neighbours about the dog."

"Just a moment," boomed Pemberton, "let me do the talking. You have a German police dog on the premises named Prince?"

"Yes, sir," replied the girl meekly. "Has he been howling?"

"Howling?" She looked surprised. "Oh, no, sir. He barked once yesterday when a peddler came to the door, but there's been no howling."

"You're sure about that?"

"Oh, positive!"

"You see?" said Foley triumphantly. "Now if you'll talk with my wife I'm sure you'll be satisfied the charges are false."

"Your wife isn't here, Mr. Foley," said the girl.

Perry Mason and the deputy-sheriff exchanged glances. Foley seemed to be astonished.

"Isn't here?" he gasped. "Well, she couldn't have gone out—she's been very ill."

"I know," the girl responded, "but she went just the same. She packed a suitcase and took a taxi. She left a note for you."

"Where is it?" asked Foley gruffly.

"It's upstairs in her room on the dressing-table."

"Will you excuse me?" Foley said hurriedly to his companions, and ran to the steps of the porch and disappeared into the house.

Perry Mason, who had been studying the girl, inquired pointedly:

"Was there any trouble between you and Mrs. Foley just before she left?"

"Certainly not," was the indignant reply, "and, furthermore, it's not any of your business!"

She flounced away to the porch, and Bill Pemberton grinned at Mason.

"That for you!" he remarked.

"Funny thing about that girl," said the lawyer. "She's tried to make herself up to look as ugly as possible. Rather young for a housekeeper, don't you think?"

"Not gossiping, are you, Mason?" jeered the deputy-sheriff.

"No," was the quick reply, "just speculating—that's all."

The Letter

CLINTON FOLEY beckoned from the porch and Perry Mason and the deputy-sheriff joined him in a spacious lounge-hall, excellently furnished.

"Well, it's all over," he said bitterly. "You can call off your little investigation."

"Something wrong?" asked Pemberton.

"My wife's run away with another man," Foley growled. "And it may interest you to know that the man is Arthur Cartwright, the fellow next door who's been raising a fuss about the howling dog! His complaint against me was just a trick to get me out of the way long enough to carry out his scheme."

Perry Mason was not by any means convinced, and he resorted to sarcasm. "That shows you were wrong when you accused him of being crazy, doesn't it?" he said brightly.

"Keep your remarks to yourself!" shouted Foley.

"I'm here representing Cartwright," Mason reminded him. "You can't bluff me, Foley."

"Why, you—"

"Just a minute, folks!" Bill Pemberton commanded, and thrust his bulky form between the two. "Let's not fly off the handle!"

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"You're going to have plenty of work to do for your client, Mr. Mason," Foley bellowed. "I'm going to get out a warrant for his arrest!"

"That's up to the District Attorney," Mason retorted. "How do you know your wife left with Cartwright?"

"Well, she says so in this note. Here, read it!"

The deputy-sheriff appropriated the sheet of paper, and he read aloud from it:

"Dear Clinton, a few days ago I found out who was living next door. I know, now, that I have always loved him and not you. I am going away with him. I know we will be happy. Evelyn."

Perry Mason took the note and examined it, then handed it back to Foley.

"Short and sweet, isn't it?" said Pemberton.

"Yes," said Mason, "but there's something about that letter I don't quite understand yet."

"Look here," stormed Foley, "that man has broken up my home—he's tricked me and betrayed me, and he's going to pay for it. I'll catch him and prosecute him on every charge within the law. If it takes every cent I've got I'm going to make him pay for what he's done to me!"

"That's up to you, Mr. Foley," said Pemberton mildly. "You can talk with the District Attorney's office, and you can put private detectives on their trail."

Perry Mason smiled cryptically. "Do you mind if I use your telephone?" he asked.

"You can use my telephone, and then you can get out!" roared Foley.

"Thanks for the invitation," said Mason. "Where is it?"

The girl who looked too young to be a housekeeper stepped out from the doorway of the drawing-room.

"I'll show you," she said, and Perry Mason followed her across the hall into a panelled study, while the deputy-sheriff took his leave of Clinton Foley and went off to find a taxi.

"How would you like to make twenty dollars in a hurry?" Mason asked the girl as he dialled a number.

"Mr. Foley said you might use the phone, and then you were to leave," she said in a voice that was cold and hard; and he smiled at her in an irritating fashion till Edward Wheeler, one of his assistants, responded to the call.

"Wheeler talkin'. Yes, chief?" "Stand by—you and Dobbs. Important. Throw everything else overboard. I'll be there in half an hour."

The instrument was restored to its prongs, but the smile reappeared on Perry Mason's face.

"If you could find a photograph of the woman who left with Mr. Cartwright," he said to the girl, "it might even be worth twenty-five dollars." "Why should you want a picture of Mr. Foley's wife?" she challenged.

"Did I say his wife?" purred Mason. "Never mind—I'll probably be able to pick one up at Mr. Cartwright's home, next door. Thank you."

He walked serenely past her out into the lounge-hall—now deserted—crossed it to the porch, descended the steps, and strolled across the lawns to the house next door, where he rang the bell.

There was no response to the bell, so he banged the knocker with vigour till at last Elizabeth Walker opened the door, viewed him with disfavour, and asked what he wanted.

"I want Mr. Cartwright," he replied.

"Can't hear you," said the woman,

and held a hand to her ear. "You'll have to speak a little louder."

Perry Mason, in a voice that would have made any ordinary person jump, bellowed:

"Where is Mr. Cartwright? I'm his lawyer, Mr. Mason."

"Oh, his lawyer," said Mrs. Walker. "Went out last night about half-past ten, and he didn't come back."

"Did he take a suitcase?"

"No."

"Did he take his car?"

"No, he hasn't a car."

"Where did he go?"

"I don't know."

"Look here," shouted Mason, "I've got to find Mr. Cartwright, and you've got to help me."

"I don't know anything about it," she retorted. "He went out, and he didn't come back. Where he went is none of my business. I clean up the house for him, that's all. I'm deaf, and I can't keep track of what's going on."

Perry Mason decided not to ask about any photograph.

"What's your name?" he demanded loudly. "And how long have you known Mr. Cartwright?"

"My name is Elizabeth Walker," she replied. "I've worked for him for two months."

"How long would you stay if Mr. Cartwright didn't return?"

"I'll stay till my time's up."

"When will that be?"

"That's my business, Mr. Lawyer," she bit back at him, and went in and slammed the door in his face.

He glanced over his shoulder at Clinton Foley's house as he made his way across the grass to the drive, and at a window of the lounge-hall he saw the face of the girl peering round a curtain. He waved his hand ironically and went on out to the road.

Three quarters of an hour later he was in his own swivel chair, behind his own massive desk, with Della Street on one side of him and Edward Wheeler and George Dobbs on the other.

To Della he dictated some notes, which she took down in shorthand, and then he turned to his two assistants.

"I want you to find out everything you can about Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Foley, living at four-eight-nine-one Milpas Drive," he said. "Check on their housekeeper while you're about it. Also get me all the dope you can on Arthur Cartwright, living next door to them at four-eight-nine-three. Find out where they came from—their past history. Don't spare expenses."

Ed Wheeler, a heavy-featured man with a pair of very bright eyes and a straw hat perched on the back of his head, ventured a question.

"What's the low-down, chief?" he asked.

"That's what I can't figure out," Perry Mason replied quite frankly. "I'm representing Cartwright in a matter that began with a howling dog, but I think there's something fishy about the whole business. Cartwright's disappeared. Foley claims that he ran off with Mrs. Foley. I want the facts of the case as soon as you can get them."

The End of Clinton Foley!

IT was nearly six o'clock in the evening when Ed Wheeler and George Dobbs returned to the office in Hill Street and burst in upon Perry Mason and his secretary.

"Well, we got it," Wheeler announced triumphantly.

"Good!" said Mason, and pushed aside some papers he had been studying.

"We had to burn up the wires," said

Dobbs. "We got a couple of outside agencies working on the case."

"Never mind that—let's have the dope."

Dobbs looked at Wheeler, and Wheeler did the talking.

"The woman living with Foley on Milpas Drive isn't his original wife," he said.

"I had an idea she wasn't," commented the lawyer.

"As a matter of fact, she was the wife of Arthur Cartwright."

"The wife of Arthur Cartwright?" Perry Mason's blue eyes widened. "Well, that's interesting."

"Yeah," said Ed Wheeler. "Mr. and Mrs. Foley lived at Santa Barbara. They were friendly with Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright. About a year ago Clinton Foley skipped out with Mrs. Cartwright, got one of those cheap divorces for each of them, and they married one another in Reno. Foley's original wife, Bessie, was broken-hearted, and Cartwright swore he'd get even with Foley and get his wife back if it took him the rest of his life. About two months ago he traced Foley and Evelyn to Milpas Drive, and moved in next door."

"And now Foley is accusing Cartwright of running away with the woman who was his own wife," said Perry Mason with scorn. "Get Foley on the 'phone, Della."

Della Street looked up the number and dialled it.

"Foley has the reputation of being a pretty rough customer," said Ed Wheeler.

"Suits me," declared his employer. "I'm a fool for a fight myself."

"Here's your call," said Della, and he spoke into the instrument.

"Mr. Foley? This is Perry Mason, the attorney. I want to talk to you. No? Well, perhaps you'd better change your mind. This is about the affairs of

a client who lived at Santa Barbara—a married woman whose husband ran off and left her about a year ago. Yes, I thought you'd see me! To-night, at eight, sharp!"

He put down the telephone. "Now, then, what about Foley's housekeeper?" he demanded.

"I checked on her," said Dobbs. "Her name is Lucy Benton. She was Foley's private secretary in Santa Barbara. When he took a ramble with Mrs. Evelyn Cartwright, he took Miss Benton along as his housekeeper. From the dope I get, she didn't know Miss Benton had worked for him before."

"I see," nodded Mason. "What about the divorced wife, Bessie Foley?"

"We haven't got a line on her yet," admitted Wheeler.

"You get busy about her, Ed. Find her for me!"

"Right, chief!" said Wheeler, and went out.

"Della, you'd better stay around here to-night—I may want you later."

"All right, sir," said Della, and Perry Mason looked up at Dobbs.

"George, get out to the Foley home," he directed. "Stay out of sight, but keep your eye on the place. Check everything that goes on. I'll be there at eight."

George Dobbs travelled to Milpas Drive in a taxi, which he dismissed halfway along that palm-fringed thoroughfare. It was dark when he reached the lawns, and no one saw him steal from tree to tree till he had reached the side of the house, where he made himself one with the shadows.

He had been on guard for over half an hour when the front door was opened, and Lucy Benton stepped down from the porch. At almost the same moment a dark coupé appeared in the driveway between the two houses, and the girl sped over to it.

A man whom Dobbs could not see with any distinctness got down and opened the door for her, then climbed back at the wheel. The car was turned, and the light of the rear lamp shone upon its number-plate. George Dobbs took out a notebook and a pencil, looked at his luminous wristwatch, and made a note of the time and the car number.

Ten minutes afterwards a yellow taxi turned into the driveway from the road and came to a standstill between the two lawns. The driver got down from his seat and opened the door for a woman in a dark fur coat.

"That's the one," she said, "the house next door."

"Yes, ma'am," nodded the driver, and he went briskly off to the front door of Cartwright's house while the woman crossed the lawn to the porch of the house Lucy Benton had left.

She found the door slightly ajar and stepped into the brilliantly-lighted lounge-hall, which was deserted. She was quite young and very beautiful, but there was a strained look about her face. She gazed swiftly about her, then went to an elaborate radio cabinet, set against the wall, and turned the switch.

Abruptly there came a burst of music from the loud speaker—and a dog barked. Clinton Foley, who was in the bath-room, shaving himself, put down his razor, wiped the lather from his face with a towel, and unfastened the leash of a German police dog attached to one of the supports of the hand-basin.

Holding the leash, he went out through the library to the lounge-hall, but stopped short in the double doorway as he saw who was standing there.

"Oh, so it's you!" he rasped.

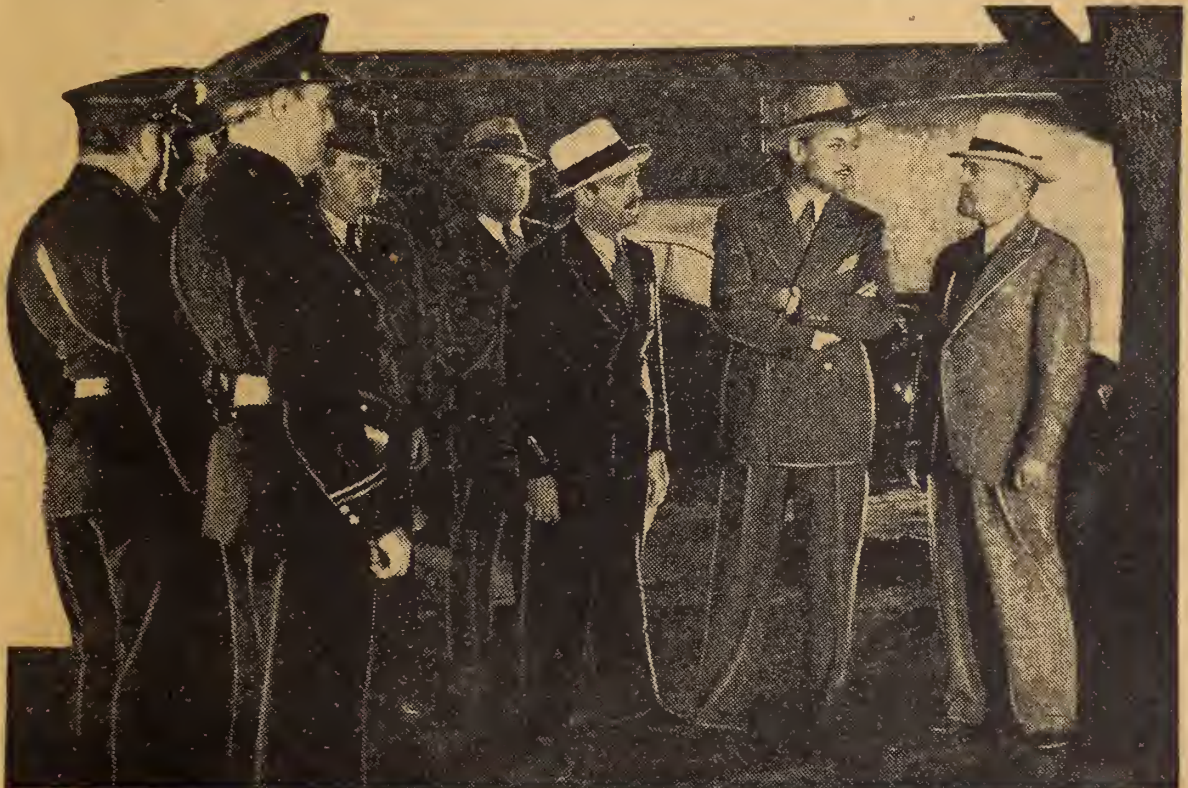
"You've found me!"

"Yes," replied the woman sternly.

"I've found you!"

"What do you want?"

"Justice!"



"Well, well," remarked Perry Mason, folding his arms. "The District Attorney himself on the job."

"Rubbish!" he snarled. "You've broken into my home like a common intruder, and I'm going to treat you like one!"

He let go of the dog and snatched up from a side table a paper-knife shaped like a dagger. But before either he or the dog could reach the woman she fired twice with an automatic she had taken from her handbag.

The dog rolled over on its side, and Clinton Foley pitched headlong to the floor and lay still. For several minutes the woman stared down at the two bodies with horrified eyes, then slowly she stepped nearer, dropped the automatic upon the carpet between them, and walked unsteadily to the front door.

The taxi-driver was standing beside his vehicle when she reached it, and in a voice not altogether under control she said:

"Well, where is he?"

"There's nobody home," replied the man. "I knocked and knocked, and

"Well, never mind," she broke in. "Take me to Ninth and Olive."

"Yes, ma'am," said the driver.

George Dobbs, concealed behind some shrubs at the side of the house, made several notes in his pocket-book after the taxi had gone. Among them were these items:

"Taxi 545. Woman in Black. Ninth and Olive."

Almost on the stroke of eight o'clock Perry Mason arrived in his own coupé, descended from it only a few yards away from his watchful assistant, and strode along the path to the open front door.

He rang the bell twice, but there was no answer, and finally he stepped in over the threshold. An acrid smell of burnt powder hung about the lounge-hall, and he looked round, sniffing at the air.

He saw the dog, lying on its side, before he caught sight of Foley. He caught at his breath, stared down at the gun, then stood between the two bodies with a finger to his lips, trying to visualise what had happened.

He stooped over the dog and found a metal disc attached to its collar on which had been punched the inscription "Prince. Property of Clinton Foley, 491, Milpas Drive." He sped to the telephone which he had used that morning, dialled the operator, and asked for Police Headquarters.

He was put through to Captain Kelly. "Hallo, captain," he said. "This is Perry Mason. I'm talking from the home of Clinton Foley, at four-eight-nine-one Milpas Drive; Foley's been murdered."

"Repeat that number," said the voice of the captain. "Four-eight-nine-one, Milpas. Stay right there! Don't touch anything! I'll send Sergeant Holcomb out with the Homicide Squad straight away."

Having replaced the telephone, Perry Mason went out into the porch and called to Dobbs, who ran round the house to him.

"Get out of the neighbourhood as fast as you can," Mason directed. "Keep out of sight, and keep your mouth shut till you see me."

Dobbs made himself scarce, and a very little while afterwards a police car came roaring into the driveway and stopped with a grinding of brakes. Perry Mason walked across the lawn as nine men scrambled down on to the grass, four of them in uniform, five in plain clothes.

The policemen lined up as he approached, and a man in a white soft February 9th, 1935.

felt hat strode forward with an air of importance.

"I'm Detective-sergeant Holcomb," he said. "Where's the body?"

To Perry Mason's surprise Claude Drumm, last to descend from the car, brushed past the other plain-clothes men and waved an imperious hand at the speaker.

"Just a moment, sergeant," he said brusquely. "I'll take charge!"

"Well, well," remarked Perry Mason, folding his arms. "The district attorney himself on the job! Hallo, Claude!"

"How are you, Perry?" returned Drumm. "Thought I'd look into this case personally. Sergeant, assign your men!"

Holcomb turned to the squad. "Cavass the neighbourhood," he barked. "Question anybody you find, and hold anyone who can't give a satisfactory account of himself. You three guys stick to me."

The four policemen went off towards the road; the three plain-clothes men waited.

"Come along," said Mason, and walked towards the house.

The Scented Handkerchief

WHILE flashlight photographs were being taken of the two bodies by an official photographer, Perry Mason leaned against a table in the library and looked from the keen face of the district attorney to the less intelligent face of the detective-sergeant.

Holcomb was broad-shouldered and powerful of build, but his moustache failed to conceal a weak mouth, and his brown eyes were inclined to stare rather than to notice things.

"I had an appointment with Foley at eight o'clock this evening," Mason said quietly. "I found the door open. I rang the bell and no one answered, so I walked in—and found Foley dead."

"You're not holding anything back, are you, Perry?" inquired the district attorney with obvious suspicion; and Mason chuckled.

"Are you insinuating that I might have shot Foley?" he challenged.

"How do we know you didn't?" growled Holcomb.

"I know you represented a client who had trouble with Foley," said the district attorney; and this was news to the detective-sergeant, who exclaimed;

"That's an idea! Maybe he's trying to cover up for him!"

"Maybe I'm trying to cover up for myself," retorted Mason.

"I'm beginning to think so!" Holcomb blustered.

"Then why don't you arrest me?"

"Maybe I will, if you don't come clean on this thing."

Perry Mason laughed, and walked over to a kidney-shaped desk near the bookshelves, where he deposited his hat under a reading-lamp. He was about to pick up a telegram he saw lying on the blotting-pad, when the district attorney pounced on it.

"Dispatched from Ventura to-day," he said, and read aloud: "Clinton, for my sake don't do anything that will cause any more scandal. It won't do any good, and will do us all harm.—EVELYN."

Perry Mason dropped into the chair behind the desk, appearing not to notice a plain-clothes man who had just sauntered into the room and was leaning against a row of books.

"Mind if I see that?" he asked.

Claude Drumm showed him the telegram, but did not part with it. Mason jotted some notes on a pad and pocketed the pad.

"It's quite possible that your client, Arthur Cartwright, really did do the job," said the district attorney. "Worked himself up to a murderous pitch, just as Foley feared he would. The dog tried to protect his master and was shot. Then Cartwright killed Foley. What do you think of that theory?"

Perry Mason raised his hand, and his face was inscrutable.

"Why don't you find Cartwright and ask him?" he said.

"You've probably got him pretty well hidden by now," growled Drumm.

"Why don't you co-operate with us?"

"If you stop this third-degree hokum I may," was the reply, and Mason got to his feet. "Come along!"

Holcomb and the district attorney followed him to the bath-room, and he pointed down to one of the supports of the wash-basin.

"Here's where the dog was chained," he said. "There's the catch-lock that fastened on the dog's collar."

"Well?" queried Drumm; and Mason picked up a crumpled towel from the floor.

"There's shaving lather on this towel," he said.

"What about it?" snorted Holcomb.

"In my opinion, this towel was dropped when Foley released the dog from the catch-lock. Now when a man shaves he doesn't put the lather on a towel—he only does that when he wipes the lather from his face. If Arthur Cartwright wanted to kill Foley, he'd have come here and blazed away without any conversation. But that isn't how it happened."

"You're talking in circles!" Holcomb complained. "Right now we don't care about the lather on the towel. What we care about is Arthur Cartwright. Where is he?"

"I don't know," said the district attorney with a mirthless laugh. "Look here, the coroner's physician says that Foley died not more than an hour ago. All you've got to do is to show where Cartwright was between seven and eight, and he'll be out of it as a suspect."

"Claude," said Perry Mason, "I've already told you that I don't know where Cartwright is. Look here, you're talking as though I were an accessory after the fact in this murder."

"Yeah," drawled the detective-sergeant, "he thinks you're holding out on us—and so do I!"

"Mason," said Claude Drumm, "you've got the reputation of being one of the shrewdest criminal lawyers in the country, but even the cleverest lawyer sometimes puts his foot in it."

"Meaning," suggested Mason genially as he dropped the towel, "that you're thorough with asking me questions for the time being?"

"That's it."

"Good-night, gentlemen. Any time I can be of service—"

He went off with a mocking bow, and Holcomb picked up the towel.

"Lather on a towel!" he exploded.

"He knows plenty!"

"Sergeant," said the district attorney, "I want you to shadow Mason. He's up to something, and I want to know what it is. I'll instruct my office to use every effort to locate Cartwright."

"You're right, chief," nodded Holcomb, and flung the offending towel into the bath. "Cartwright's the guy!"

Perry Mason went back to his office, and found George Dobbs there as well as Dellz Street. Dobbs had been making a few inquiries in the city on his own account, and he and his employer went off to a taxi-stand in Main Street.

"This is where that driver hangs out," Dobbs said.

There were six taxicabs on the rank, and they walked over to them.

"Take it is!" cried Dobbs, pointing. "Five forty-five!"

Perry Mason went up to the driver at the wheel of the leading vehicle, a thin-faced and elderly man with a hawk-like nose.

"You busy?" he inquired.

"No, sir," was the ready response.

"Where to?"

"Anywhere—just drive around."

"Okay," said the man; and George Dobbs opened the door for his employer and sat down with him in the back.

The taxi slid out into the traffic stream and turned the corner at Ninth Street in the direction of the Wilshire Boulevard. Its driver slid back the window behind him.

"My meter's running," he announced.

"That's all right," said Perry Mason, leaning forward. "You'll get paid for your meter and a nice tip on top of that."

"What's the gag?" asked the driver dubiously.

"I'm an attorney, and I'm trying to run down a little information for one of my clients."

Flower Street was passed, and Dobbs leaned forward.

"You drove a woman to four-eight-nine-one Milpas Drive this evening," he stated.

"What about it?" asked the driver over his shoulder.

"What did she look like?"

"Oh, she was about medium size—wore a black fur coat. Kinda good-looking—dark eyes. She had on some kind of a perfume that smelled great. She left a handkerchief in the car. Here it is!"

A tiny slip of lace and lawn was removed from a pocket and held over his shoulder with his left hand while the right held the wheel.

"Take a whiff at that!" he said.

Perry Mason acquired the handkerchief and held it to his nose.

"Very nice," he said. "I think I know the brand. 'Bellogia.'"

"Yeah?" said the driver, stopping because the traffic lights were against him at Figueroa Street. "Well, it still smells good to me."

"What else did you notice about this woman?"

"She had a strained sort of voice, and that's all I noticed about her, except that she was wearing black gloves."

"What happened when you got to the house?" asked Mason.

"Oh, why she asked me to go next door and deliver a message. I was to ask for 'Arthur' and tell him he'd better go over to Clinton Foley's house right away, because Bessie was havin' a show-down."

"Did you deliver the message?"

"No." The taxi moved on again along Ninth Street, released with other vehicles by the lights. "No, I kept pounding at the door, but nobody answered. So finally I took my passenger back where I'd picked her up."

Perry Mason reached farther forward.

"Here," he said. "Here's the handkerchief; but I wish you wouldn't turn it into the 'Lost and Found' for a while. I have an idea this woman will show up and ask for it. When she does, get her name and address."

The driver thrust the handkerchief back into his pocket.

"We've got to do that anyhow," he declared. "We got to turn in a report to the company on everything we find in the cab."

George Dobbs, who had been looking out through the little rear window of the vehicle, caught suddenly at his employer's sleeve.

"Police car trailing us," he whispered urgently.

Perry Mason took out a wallet, extracted a note from it, and held it over the driver's shoulder.

"Here!" he said. "Here's a twenty-dollar bill. Drive us around the next corner as fast as you can and let us out. Then you're to drive as far as that money'll take the cab. Another ear is going to follow you, but don't stop for it, and don't let them catch you until you're good and ready."

"Sounds screwy to me," laughed the driver, "but you're payin' for it!"

At the Breedmont Hotel

HALF an hour later Perry Mason was seated at his own desk in his own private office, with Della Street on one side of him and George Dobbs on the other. The police car had been evaded, and Dobbs was making a

report with the aid of his notebook.

"Probably the reason you didn't hear those shots," commented Mason, "was because the driver was banging on Cartwright's door."

"Probably so," agreed his assistant. "And then the radio was playing so loud, too."

"Well, that clears up your report on the yellow cab. Now what about Lucy Benton?"

"She left at seven-fifteen," said Dobbs. "A man called for her in a Chevie coupé. The licence number was 6M-9245."

"All right," Perry Mason jotted down the number. "Then what?"

"Then the taxicab you know all about. After that nothing happened till you showed up at one minute to eight."

"Fine!" said Mason. "Now here's what I want you to do. A telegram was sent from Ventura to Clinton Foley. It's supposed to have been written by the second Mrs. Foley, who was formerly Mrs. Cartwright. I want a photostatic copy of the original."

"That's a pretty hard job, chief," said Dobbs, rubbing his chin.

"Never mind how much of a job it is. I want you to get it!"

"Okay," said Dobbs.

The door had only just closed behind him when the telephone-bell rang. Della Street answered the call and handed the instrument to Perry Mason.

"Wheeler on the line," she said.

Ed Wheeler was in a drug-store call-box in Olive Street.

"Breedmont Hotel," he said tersely. "Ninth and Olive. Room 864, and the name is Mrs. C. M. Dangerfield."

Mason repeated the message and hung up.

"Dangerfield?" said Della. "Who's that?"

"That," replied Mason, "is the name under which Bessie Foley is registered at the Breedmont Hotel."

He rose and put on his hat.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, as he caught hold of her arm.

"You and I are going to pay a social call on a lady who may be arrested at any moment on a charge of murdering her husband."

"Oh!" said Della; and her grey eyes widened.

"Let's go," said he.

His car was standing at the kerb



"Are you mistaken, or are you not mistaken?" thundered Perry Mason.

down in the street, but he ignored it, and—a few doors away from the Hamilton Building—stopped a passing taxi, bundled his secretary into it, and sat down beside her.

The Breedmont Hotel was reached—a rather palatial establishment on the corner of Ninth Street and Olive Street—and the two ascended in a lift to the eighth floor. In one of the carpeted corridors Perry Mason knocked on the door of Room 864.

"Who is it?" demanded a feminine voice from within.

"An attorney," he replied loudly. "It's very important."

"I don't want to see anyone!" Mason turned the handle of the door, and it proved to be unlocked. He flung the door wide.

"Come on, Della," he said, and strode into a well-appointed bed-room, past a beautiful auburn-haired woman in a white silk-and-satin wrap, whose dark brown eyes flamed at the intruders.

"Please leave this room at once!" she cried.

"Close the door, Della," said Perry Mason, and Della closed the door.

"If you don't leave," stormed the woman, "I'll phone the police!"

She snatched up a telephone, but Mason immediately clapped his finger on the plunger, holding it down so that the line remained dead.

"Don't bother," he said calmly. "The police will be here soon enough, Mrs. Foley."

Her face paled, and the hand that held the telephone became unsteady. Mason took it from her and replaced it.

"Sit down and listen," he said. "Cut out all this monkey business."

"You'd better do as he tells you," urged Della. "It's for your own good."

Mrs. Foley sank into an armchair, and Perry Mason perched on the edge of a table beside her and folded his arms.

"I know all about you," he said pleasantly. "Don't deny anything—and don't go into hysterics. Your husband deserted you for another woman—Mrs. Evelyn Cartwright. He bought a divorce for himself and for her, and they married. You and Cartwright found them. Clinton Foley has been murdered."

"Murdered?" she shuddered.

"Yes. I specialise in murder cases. My name is Perry Mason."

"Perry Mason? Oh, I'm so glad to see you!"

"I thought you would be," he said grimly. "Now listen. I don't want you to try to explain anything to me yet. Cartwright made a will leaving you his property. He retained me to see that your legal rights were safeguarded."

"He named me in his will?" she said wonderingly. "I—I don't understand."

"Don't waste time! I've got my fee, and I propose to earn it, but if you don't want my services all you've got to do is to say so, and I'll walk out of here right now."

A measure of colour had returned to her cheeks, but she was still badly agitated.

"Oh, don't do that!" she exclaimed tremulously. "I want your services! I need help!"

"All right. Now if anyone questions you about where you were at any time to-night, or what you were doing, tell them you cannot answer any questions unless your attorney is present. That sounds simple, but it may be harder to do than you realise."

"Supposing they ask me—" she began; but he cut her short.

"If they ask you what the weather is—if they ask you how old you are—if they ask you what kind of face-cream

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you use—or anything else—make the same answer: you cannot answer any questions unless your attorney is present."

"I understand," she nodded—and stared in blank astonishment as he slid off the table, walked over to the chest of drawers and picked up a bottle of perfume, removed its stopper and sniffed at its contents.

"Yes, that's it—that's the perfume," he said. "Come here, Della!"

Della went obediently over to him and he showered the perfume all about her neck and shoulders till the bottle was empty.

"What are you doing?" cried Bessie Foley. "That costs a lot of money!"

"It's liable to cost you everything you've got if you're not careful," Perry Mason retorted. "Buy yourself some other distinctly different perfume. Sprinkle it over everything you've got."

"What else?" she asked submissively, as he looked quickly about the room.

"Check out of this hotel right away," he answered. "Go to the Broadway Hotel, on Fifth Street. Register under your right name, and be careful not to leave a back-trail to this place."

He whisked up a black fur coat from the coverlet of the bed.

"Are these the things you've been wearing to-night?"

"Yes," she admitted faintly.

"I want to borrow them for a while." He held up the coat. "Here, Della, slip this on!"

"But you can't take my things!" Bessie Foley objected as Della was helped into the fur coat.

"I said I only wanted to borrow them for a while," Perry Mason brusquely reminded her, and held out a black hat and a pair of black kid gloves. "Della, these, too."

The hat was donned, the gloves were pulled on—and almost fitted the secretary's hands.

"But my—" began Bessie Foley.

"Please do as I say, and don't argue," Mason interrupted. "I'm in a hurry. Don't answer any questions unless I'm present. Good-bye. Come on, Della."

He went out with his transformed secretary, closing the door behind him, and they walked together along the corridor to the lifts.

"I'm afraid you're skating on pretty thin ice, Mr. Mason," said Della, while they were waiting for a cage.

"Well, I haven't fallen through yet," returned her employer with a grin.

"Will you skate with me?"

"You know I will," she replied simply.

"All right. Let's see if you can impersonate Mrs. Foley!"

The Police Arrive!

IN Main Street, near the cab-rank, Perry Mason stood in the closed doorway of an office building while Della went over to the yellow taxi in which Bessie Foley had travelled to Milpas Drive. The two had waited a full twenty minutes for it.

"Pardon me," Della said to the lean-faced driver at the wheel. "Didn't I leave my handkerchief in your taxi-cab?"

The odour of a familiar perfume reached the man's nostrils, and he noticed the black fur coat and the black gloves more particularly than her face.

"Yes, I—I guess you did," he hesitated.

"May I have it, please?"

"Sure—er—where was it I took you?"

"Milpas Drive."

"That's right."

He was completely convinced and pro-

duced the handkerchief; also a notebook and stub of a pencil.

"That's nifty-smelling scent you use, lady. Er—what's your name and address? I got to make out a report to the Lost and Found Department."

Della took the handkerchief.

"Mrs. Clinton Foley," she said. "Broadway Hotel."

"Foley? F-o-l-e-y?"

"Yes."

"Okay, lady."

She returned to the pavement, dropped the handkerchief as though by accident near the doorway in which Perry Mason lurked, and walked on without a backward glance in the direction of her own home.

Mason smiled to himself as a police car pulled up at the kerb and Detective-sergeant Holcomb got out from it, then strolled over to the handkerchief and picked it up.

Holcomb fell into step with him as he sauntered away.

"Not following me, are you, sergeant?" Perry Mason inquired with an air of amusement.

"Nope, just out for a walk," replied the detective.

"Oh, I see! Well, it's lucky I ran into you. I've got a little something for you. Might be important evidence."

Holcomb accepted the scented handkerchief, but viewed it with scornful eyes.

"First it was a towel," he growled, "now it's a handkerchief. What's this got to do with the case?"

"It was left in Yellow Cab 545 by the woman who went to Clinton Foley's house shortly after seven o'clock this evening," replied Mason. "I thought you might be interested."

"You bet your neck I am!" exclaimed Holcomb, staring at him. "How did you get hold of this?"

"I'm not at liberty to explain that. You can get all the information you want from the taxi-driver."

"Now see here, Mason—"

"You see here yourself, Holcomb! An attorney is supposed to guard the confidences of his client. You can't drag anything more out of me. You've got the handkerchief, so good-night, sergeant."

He stopped a passing taxi.

"Broadway Hotel," he said to the driver, "and make it snappy."

Detective-sergeant Holcomb heard, and he stood holding the handkerchief while the lawyer entered the vehicle and was driven away.

The Broadway Hotel, in Fifth Street, was reached in less than ten minutes, and in less than fifteen Perry Mason was in a room on the third floor which Bessie Foley had engaged only a very little while before.

She had just taken off a tweed coat and a little grey hat and was dressed plainly in a dark blue frock with a white collar and cuffs. She seemed far more composed than she had done about an hour earlier, and she accepted a cigarette, which he lit for her; but she became badly upset again when he asked her to tell him exactly what happened when she went to see her former husband.

"How did you know I went there?" she gasped.

"It's my business to know things," he replied. "Give me the details."

She sat down in a chair, eyeing him with consternation.

"Well, when I got to the house," she said after a while, "the door was unfastened. I wanted to see Clinton without giving him a chance to prepare for my visit, so I went in. Wo—we had a



"Your Honour," cried the District Attorney, "in the name of common decency I demand an adjournment!"

few words. He let his dog loose. Suddenly there was a shot—the dog was killed. Clinton rushed in, and there—there was another shot, and he fell dead.

"Who fired the shots?" he asked, watching her eyes.

"I don't know," she replied slowly.

"Was there anybody in the room besides yourself and Mr. Foley?"

"I didn't see anyone."

"Could someone have been concealed in the room?"

"Either that, or someone might have fired the shots through the open door. It closed right after the shots were fired."

"What did you do?"

"All I could think of was running away. I knew that I might be suspected of having done the shooting."

"Hmm. I suppose you have no way of showing that you didn't do it?"

"No," she admitted, and bit her lip because it was quivering.

"A gun was found lying on the floor," said Perry Mason abruptly.

"Was it your gun?"

"No."

"Did you ever have a gun like it?"

"No. I never saw the gun." She clasped her hands together. "I tell you I didn't have a thing to do with it! Why won't you believe me? I'm telling the truth!"

"All right," said Mason quietly. "We'll let it go at that. What happened next?"

"I had sent the taxi-driver next door to call Arthur Cartwright, but he wasn't home. I was panie-stricken! I went out and had the driver take me back to the vicinity of my hotel. I figured that nobody would ever be able to trace me. I don't know how you found out about it!"

"Did you know that you left a handkerchief behind in the taxi?"

"Good heavens, no!" she gasped.

"Where is it?"

"The police have it," he said, and added in the most casual fashion: "I gave it to them."

She sprang to her feet in horror.

"I thought you were acting as my

lawyer!" she shrieked. "They'll be able to trace me through that handkerchief!"

"That's all right," he returned cheerfully. "They're going to trace you, anyway—and they're going to question you. You can't afford to lie to them, and you can't afford to tell the truth. You're in a jam, and you've got to keep quiet. Do you understand that?"

"But everybody will be prejudiced against me," she faltered. "It'll make them think I'm guilty! The newspapers will say that I refuse to talk."

He got up and pushed her gently back into her chair.

"Don't worry about that," he said. "You can tell the police and the reporters that you want to talk, but that I won't let you. Tell them you could easily explain everything, if I'd only give you permission to tell your story. You can even call me up on the telephone in their presence and plead with me for permission to talk. Put it on big! I'll sit tight and say that the minute you talk you'll have to get another lawyer."

She drew a long breath.

"Do you think I'll be arrested?" she quavered.

"Certainly you'll be arrested," he replied with calm. "You were in the house when Foley was murdered. You didn't notify the police. You registered at an hotel under an assumed name. If you think you can pull a stunt like that and get away with it, you're crazy!"

"Oh, I don't think I can stand it!" she said brokenly. "How soon do you think they—they'll come for me?"

There was an imperious knock at the door, and Perry Mason replied:

"Right now!"

He was not mistaken. Detective-sergeant Holcomb was on the other side of the door, and with him were two plain-clothes men.

"Open up, there!" bellowed Holcomb. "We're officers! Open up, there!"

Bessie Foley flew to an open window with the obvious intention of flinging

herself out from it. But Perry Mason grabbed hold of her before she could mount the sill, and he pulled her back and held her tightly in his arms.

"That won't do any good," he chided. "Get a grip on yourself. If you can keep your head, I'll manage everything. Ready now—chin up!"

She raised her head with an effort and tried to smile. Somehow the grip of his arms seemed to have given her courage.

"Rely on me entirely," he said, and let go of her to open the door.

Holcomb burst into the room with his companions, and his eyes were as fierce as his tongue as he shouted at Perry Mason:

"What are you doin' here?"

"I'm talking with my client, Mrs. Bessie Foley, divorced wife of Clinton Foley," returned Mason with a mocking bow. "Does that answer your question?"

"You bet your neck it does!" rasped the detective. "And I know, now, where you got that handkerchief! Mrs. Foley, you're under arrest, charged with the murder of your husband—and I must warn you that whatever you say may be used against you."

"That's all right, sergeant," purred Mason, "she won't say anything."

The two plain-clothes men caught hold of Bessie Foley's arms, but she kept her chin up. Holcomb dived over to the dressing-table and snatched up a bottle.

"Don't bother, sergeant," said Perry Mason genially. "It's not the same perfume."

"You'd see to that all right!" snorted the detective; but he sniffed at the bottle and at the handkerchief before he went out with his assistants and their beautiful prisoner.

Mason Makes an Offer

NEWSSBOYS were shouting in Hill Street next morning when Perry Mason got out from his coupe and crossed the pavement to the doorway of the Hamilton Building. He declined a paper that was thrust almost

under his nose and grinned at Detective-sergeant Holcomb, who was leaning against the wall.

"Hallo there, sergeant!" he greeted, and stopped to re-light his pipe. "I missed you when I got home last night. I expected to find you peeping in at my windows."

"Well, Mr. Wise-Guy," drawled the detective, "if you knew what I know you wouldn't be so sure of yourself! We've positively identified the gun found in Foley's house—the gun that killed him and his police dog."

Perry Mason's grin broadened. "That's very interesting," he remarked. "How do you do that?"

"We traced it by the numbers," boasted Holcomb, "and we got a report on its sale. It was bought by Bessie Foley, of Santa Barbara, two days before her husband ran away with Evelyn Cartwright. What d'you think about that?"

"It's the best news I've heard to-day," declared Mason. "Keep up the good work, sergeant."

He ascended to his office, leaving a puzzled detective behind; but in less than an hour he was seated at a little desk in a room almost adjoining the cells in the city gaol, and Bessie Foley was seated on the other side of the desk.

Other lawyers were talking to other feminine prisoners across similar desks dotted about the room, and a woman warder paced up and down the floor. Bessie Foley's face was very white and there were shadows under her eyes; but she seemed almost calm.

"How do you do, Mrs. Foley!" said Mason, depositing a leather satchel and his hat on the desk. "Police-sergeant Holcomb has traced that gun to you. Why did you lie to me about it?"

"I didn't lie," she replied.

"I—I just forgot. Two days before my husband left Santa Barbara I found out about his affair with Evelyn Cartwright. I went to a sporting-goods store and bought the automatic."

Perry Mason smiled. "What did you intend to do with it?" he inquired. "Use it on your husband—or on Mrs. Cartwright?"

"I don't know," she said vaguely. "My husband took it away from me because I threatened to kill myself with it in his presence—and I haven't seen it since."

"Then your idea is that someone got possession of the gun and committed the crime? How about Lucy Benton, the housekeeper?"

"Oh, why should she want to kill him?"

"I don't know," confessed Mason. "Why should anybody want to kill him? The fact remains that he's dead, and you're charged with committing the murder."

She looked at him reproachfully. "You don't believe what I've told you about the gun," she said.

"I never believe anything I can't make a jury believe," he retorted evenly, "and I'm not at all sure that I can make a jury believe about that gun."

She put her arms on her portion of the desk and leaned nearer to him, her mouth working.

"I want to tell you something," she began impulsively. "My husband was

cruel—unprincipled. He humiliated me—"

"Do you want me to help convict you, or defend you?" Perry Mason interrupted sharply, and he got to his feet and picked up his hat and his satchel. "Good-bye, Mrs. Foley—and remember, no one ever got into trouble by not talking too much!"

Without another word, without even a backward glance, he walked straight out of the visitors' room, and the matron tapped Bessie Foley's bowed shoulders.

It was not till late in the afternoon of the following day that Ed Wheeler put in an appearance at his employer's office with the photostatic copy of the telegram dispatched to Foley from the little city of Ventura, on the coast above Santa Barbara.

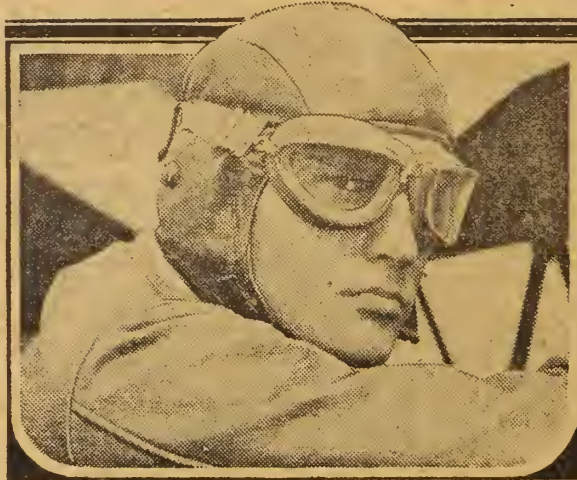
George Dobbs and Della Street were present, and Perry Mason said:

"All right, now let's check up and see where we stand. How about this phoney housekeeper, Lucy Benton?"

"She's got an alibi that covers every minute of her time from the moment she left the house," reported Dobbs. "The man who called for her in the coupé is Carl Trask—he was Foley's chauffeur. He's got something of a police record."

"Good!" said Perry Mason. "Crack down on him. Find out if he saw Miss Benton the day after the killing."

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND PROGRAMME!



MAURICE MURPHY

in

"TAILSPIN TOMMY."

War in the Air. High-speed thrills in a grim life or death vendetta between rivals in aviation. Don't miss the opening chapters of this smashing serial of a youngster's ambition to become an ace pilot and the adventures that befell him in his career.

"NAME THE WOMAN."

As a cub reporter, Clem Rogers made many mistakes, but when District Attorney Forbes was murdered luck favoured him and he beat all the experienced press-men to the story behind the crime in a whirlwind of dangerous adventure. Starring Richard Cromwell.

"THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH."

A gang of assassins planned a ghastly crime, but a Secret Service agent knew of their plans and they killed him. But the dying man managed to gasp out a few of the facts that he had learned and the gang adopted strange and drastic methods to preserve their secret. Starring Leslie Banks, Edna Best and Nova Filbeam.

Ed Wheeler produced a number of photostatic prints on which printed matter and handwriting appeared in white on a black background.

"These are the samples of handwriting you asked for," he said. "Now this is Mrs. Bessie Foley's handwriting, and this is the dame's who was Mrs. Cartwright. Here's some of the stuff that Benton girl wrote."

Perry Mason spread the prints upon his blotting-pad and asked for the copy of the note the second Mrs. Foley had left behind on the day of her supposed departure with Arthur Cartwright. Della Street brought it to him, and he studied it; the prints in turn.

"None of them match," he said disgustedly. "Even a handwriting expert couldn't find any resemblance!"

He worried the ends of his little moustache and frowned at the prints.

"I've got a hunch!" he announced suddenly, and looked up at Dobbs. "Remember the Benton woman was bitten by Foley's police dog? Is her hand still bandaged?"

"Yeah," nodded George Dobbs. "I checked on her at the Riverview Apartments early this morning—she's still bandaged, hand, wrist and elbow."

"Della," said Mason crisply, "ring up the Riverview Apartments and get Miss Benton on the line. Tell her it's the—er—the 'Chronicle' calling."

Della gaped, but obeyed. A few minutes later she handed over the instrument, and Perry Mason said in a feigned voice:

"City editor speaking. Miss Lucy Benton? Oh, Miss Benton, it looks like there's going to be a lot of—er—dramatic interest in the Foley murder case. You've been with the people concerned for a long time. Did you—er—keep a diary?"

Lucy Benton, in the snug little sitting-room of a service flat on the fourth floor of the Riverview Apartment House, overlooking the Los Angeles River in Alameda Street, frowned at a picture on the wall and inquired cautiously:

"Why do you ask?"

"For a very good reason," replied Mason. "In case you did keep a diary, we're prepared to pay you ten thousand dollars for the exclusive right to publish it."

"Ten thousand dollars?" echoed Lucy Benton. "Why—why, yes—yes, of course I'm interested. I—I—"

"Well, keep that diary up to date, will you?" said Mason. "Don't say anything about this offer. I'll have one of my reporters get in touch with you in a few days. Naturally, we'll have to see it before we close the deal."

Lucy Benton's voice sounded quite excited as she replied:

"Why, certainly. I—I understand."

"All right," said Perry Mason. "That's all."

He put down the telephone and grinned at his assistants.

"Do you think she did keep a diary?" asked Della Street.

"I don't know, and I don't care," was the reply. "The way I made the offer she'll have time to fake one. A girl can do a lot of writing for ten thousand dollars!"

Ho leaned back in his chair and lit a cigarette.

(Continued on page 24.)

Outlaws of the clouds, at war with the men of the U.S. Flying Service. A non-stop drama of a young pilot's fight to track down a dangerous gang of smugglers and clear his name of an undeserved stigma, featuring Ray Walker and Jacqueline Wells



Border Buddies

THE time was eight-fifteen in the morning, and the place was a bed-sitting-room in a comfortable lodging-house on the outskirts of San Antonio, Texas. The room was occupied by the recumbent figures of two young men belonging to the U.S. Border Patrol and billeted within ten minutes' walk of their depot.

An alarm clock buzzed startlingly, and its bell finally succeeded in awakening one of the sleepers. He was Lieutenant Pete Taylor, and with sundry grunts of disgust he reached over and clutched the offending clock sleepily. Then he removed it from the proximity of his bed by the simple process of tossing it across the room.

It fell on the pillow of his comrade's resting-place at the other side of the apartment, and that worthy in turn was aroused by that insistent clamour of the time-piece. With a drowsily impatient gesture he pitched it to the floor, and then all at once, as some penetrating thought took form in his befogged brain, he sat up with a spasmodic jerk, flung off the bed-clothes and planted his feet on the carpet.

The young man thus transformed from slothfulness to vigorous activity was Lieutenant Nicholas Terris, more commonly known as Nick. He was also one of the ace pilots of the Border Patrol; a handsome fellow of genial temperament and dare-devil character, with a sunburned, humorous face, a pair of keen, grey-blue eyes and a thatch of smooth, light-brown hair that was generally brushed to perfection, though at the moment it was straggling over his forehead.

Nick began to wash and shave with hot haste but scrupulous care, and

presently his movements awakened Pete Taylor again. The latter raised himself and blinked at his comrade, surprised by the unwonted alacrity with which Nick was preparing to greet a new day.

"Hey, what's the rush?" Pete demanded. "This is the first time I've known you to be up before me in months."

Nick was busily scraping his chin with a safety-razor.

"If you must know," he remarked, "my girl's coming home to-day. She's arriving on the boat from Mexico."

The effect of these words on Pete Taylor was remarkable. He fairly leaped out of bed, six feet of wiry and agile humanity, with a shock of crisp, dark hair and a determined jaw.

"Your girl, huh?" he scoffed. "Well, listen, mug—believe it or not—I'm going to make a date with her for to-night. That's what I call irony."

Now Nick Terris and Pete Taylor were fast friends, and though they were for ever chaffing each other, any man who might have tried to do one of them an injury would have had to deal with both of them. Not even the fact that they were in love with the same girl had spoiled their comradeship—the girl in question being Janet Curtis, the daughter of their colonel.

Within sixty seconds of rising from his bed, Pete Taylor reached under his pillow in search of a certain prized possession, and, on failing to find it there, he ripped out an exclamation and darted a suspicious glance at his fellow-pilot.

"Hey, wise guy, where's that photograph Janet gave me?" he stormed. "Come on, what have you done with it?"

No answer being volunteered, he blundered towards Nick's bed, and under the pillow he found two photographs of winsome Janet Curtis; one, the picture with which he himself had been presented, the other an identical copy of the same photo. Both were signed in Janet's own handwriting, and bore affectionate messages.

"Say, how did you come by one of these?" Pete wanted to know.

"Janet sent me one," his comrade rejoined airily. "Take a look at what she calls me. 'To dearest Nick.'"

"Ah, just a figure of speech," Pete said in derisive accents. "She really means what she's written on the picture that she sent to me. And, boy, you should have read the letter that came with it."

"I did," Nick observed carelessly. "You did?" Pete roared, beginning to advance on him threateningly. "Why, you double-crossing—"

He was interrupted by the appearance of the landlady, who announced that breakfast was ready, and mastering his wrath, Pete started to wash, shave and dress.

Three quarters of an hour later, Lieutenants Terris and Taylor reported at the aerodrome of the squadron to which they belonged, the pair of them looking spick and span in their khaki uniforms and peaked hats; and shortly after their arrival, Pete Taylor was accosted by Janet's father, Colonel Curtis, just outside the wireless office.

Colonel Curtis was a veteran of the Force, a powerfully-built, well-preserved man of fifty, rugged of feature and of somewhat hasty temper, yet immensely popular with his men.

Returning Pete's respectful salute, he fired a question at the young pilot.

"Where is Lieutenant Terris?" he asked.

"Why—I—er think Lieutenant Terris is in the wireless-room, sir," Pete answered a little uncomfortably.

Nick was in the wireless-room all right, despatching a radiogram to the s.s. Meridian, the boat in which Janet Curtis was travelling home. Presently he heard his colonel's voice summoning him, and hurrying forth, he joined Pete and the commanding officer, standing to attention before the latter.

"Lieutenant Terris," the colonel announced, "I want you to patrol Section Four to-day. Is that clear?"

Nick's face fell. Section Four embraced that corner of Texas which lies between the Laguna de la Madre and the great curve of the Rio Grande. He had rather hoped that he would be assigned to the job of reconnoitring the open sea, through which the s.s. Meridian was ploughing towards Galveston.

"Section Four," Nick reiterated. "Well, sir, I—I was just thinking that someone should take a look over the Gulf of Mexico this morning."

The features of Colonel Curtis seemed to harden.

"Someone *will*, Lieutenant," he said grimly. "You know, I appreciate your enthusiasm, which makes you think when you're off duty. But—you will still patrol Section Four."

Peter Taylor smirked discreetly behind his hand. Then he himself came under the steady gaze of Janet's father.

"You, Lieutenant Taylor, will patrol the border between Sections Two and Four," the colonel stated.

It was Pete's turn to register disappointment, for he had imagined that he might be detailed for duty over the gulf.

"The border?" he faltered. "Oh, no doubt the order is unusual, but you'll have to humour me," Colonel Curtis remarked with heavy sarcasm. "You see, every now and then I get the idea that this is the Border Patrol."

Within a few minutes the two discomfited pilots were ascending in their respective 'planes, but, once out of sight of the airport, neither of them paid any heed to the instructions he had received, and if old man Curtis had been able to spy them about half an hour later he might have torn his hair with rage. For Lieutenants Terris and Taylor were calmly flying on a parallel course over the blue waters of the Mexican Gulf.

Through the radio-phones that were attached to his helmet Pete Taylor suddenly heard the voice of his buddy.

"Calling Patrol 'Plane Seven. Calling Patrol 'Plane Seven. Where are you, mug?"

Pete Taylor answered the query through his microphone with a twisted grin.

"Patrolling the border, sweetheart. Where are you?"

"Flyin' over Section Four," Nick came back at him, glancing through space at the other machine as he framed his reply.

"You'd better be," observed the voice of Pete Taylor. "An' don't go near the steamship Meridian."

Fifteen minutes after this exchange of pleasantries the two Government flyers discerned their common objective, a sleek passenger steamer which was raking its way northward through calm waters, and with one accord the airmen proceeded to swoop closer to it and perform a series of hair-raising feats.

They were watched by groups of men and women lining the steamship's rail, and among those onlookers was a girl

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whom both aviators managed to pick out in the course of their aerial acrobatics.

She was Janet Curtis, the dark-haired little lady who had charmed their hearts and turned their heads, and she was quick to recognise the identification marks on the two 'planes.

"Why, it's Nick Terris and Pete Taylor!" she exclaimed to a tall, sallow individual with whom she had been in conversation. "Oh, how marvellous of them to come out and welcome me home to the Old Country! It's just typical of them, too!"

The man at her side said nothing. As he followed the evolutions of the two aeroplanes a slight sneer was playing around his thin-lipped mouth. Then he saw the machines straighten out and turn away from the steamship in a graceful manoeuvre.

Up in the forward cockpit of the 'plane that he was occupying, Nick Terris was talking to Pete via his radio attachment. His face had lost its habitual geniality, and he looked pretty fierce.

"Did you see Harland?" he demanded.

"Harland?" came the voice of Pete. "You mean Captain Harland, the guy that had to quit the service? Is he on the boat?"

"He sure is, and he's right where either of us would be if we were aboard. Alongside of Janet."

There was a brief pause, and then Pete's voice reached Nick's ears again—a voice that seemed to rasp harshly through the earphones.

"That rat—beside Janet, I'd like to choke the life out of him!"

"I'd like to be ahead of you and do the same," Nick rejoined.

Meanwhile, on the deck of the s.s. Meridian, Janet Curtis and Frank Harland had been joined by an elderly man in the uniform of the merchant service. He was the captain of the ship, at whose table Janet had had the honour of dining all through the voyage from Vera Cruz, seven hundred miles to the south.

Like everyone else, the skipper had been watching the reckless stunt-flying of the two young government pilots, and the expression on his face was one that seemed to strike a balance between amusement and sourness as he came up to Janet.

"Oh, good morning, captain," the girl greeted him. "Did you see the patrol pilots flying around your ship just now? Weren't they thrilling?"

"A couple of fools, if you want my candid opinion," the skipper grunted. "By the way, I've just had a radiogram in which you might be interested."

He handed a message to her, and Janet read as follows:

"There's a pretty little bundle of 'It' aboard your ship that answers to the name of Janet Curtis. She's your future daughter-in-law, dad. Introduce yourself.—Nick."

Janet gave vent to an ejaculation of surprise, and then looked up quickly.

"Oh, you dear," she said. "I didn't know you were Nick's father."

"And I didn't connect you with the young lady he's always telling me about whenever I go ashore," Captain Terris answered with a smile.

During the foregoing conversation, Frank Harland had been standing by in silence, and now Janet turned towards him.

"Oh, Captain Terris," she mentioned, "Captain Harland was in the Border Patrol, and he knew Nick—didn't you, Frank?"

"Yes, I knew him," Harland rejoined airily.

"Why did you leave the Service, Frank?" the girl asked.

For the moment Harland seemed a trifle confused. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"I found it rather dull," he said. "He found it rather dull, Captain Terris," Janet reiterated in an ineredulous tone. "Can you imagine such a thing, after watching your son and Pete Taylor just now?"

"Maybe Captain Harland wasn't so crazy as those boys," Nick's father remarked. "I reckon those two rascals could get a kick out of a lame mule."

"Perhaps you're right," Janet laughed. "But listen, I'll be seeing Nick to-night, at a big Aviation Dance which is to be held. Can I give him any message from you?"

The skipper of the Meridian smiled grimly.

"Yes," he declared, "if he's still alive by that time you might say to him that there are other ways of winning a young lady besides trying to break his fool neck."

Frank Harland Again

THAT night the Border Patrol was represented in force at the aviation dance, but there were also a good many civilian flyers present, and among these was the man who had been talking to Janet Curtis at the Meridian's rail earlier in the day.

Harland was far from popular with his one-time comrades of the patrol, for, although esprit de corps forbade the government pilots to refer to the subject even among themselves, every man knew that Harland had left the Service under a cloud.

The fellow who did that was not generally the victim of a public scandal, if such could be avoided, but he was deliberately "cut" by the other members of the Force. Consequently Harland was not made very welcome by his former colleagues at to-night's affair, and none resented his presence more than Nick Terris and Pete Taylor.

When Nick and Pete showed up at the dance, Frank Harland had just started a waltz with Janet, and the two friends looked grim as they saw the man weaving his way across the floor with the colonel's daughter in his arms.

The particular dance in question was an "Excuse me" number. In other words, a fellow without a partner was entitled to accost any man on the floor and request him to give up the lady with whom he happened to be paired.

"This is where I separate Harland from Janet," Nick growled.

"Go ahead," Pete stated. "I'll rescue Janet from you after you've had one turn around the floor."

Nick made a pass at him, and then edged his way through the crowd of dancers until he was alongside the colonel's daughter and Frank Harland.

"Excuse me," he said grimly, tapping the man on the shoulder.

Harland stopped dancing, took his arm from Janet's waist and looked at Nick impatiently.

"Say, what about letting Miss Curtis and I get round the hall?" he snapped.

"We've only just started."

"That's too bad," Nick remarked in icy tones.

An angry glitter appeared in Harland's eyes. He was quick to sense the aloofness and hostility of Nick's manner.

"You don't seem to like me, Terris," he said. "What's the idea of the cold shoulder?"

"I think you know," was the curt reply.

"I don't know," Harland retorted, "and I don't care for your attitude."

"Then why don't you leave?" Nick suggested.

A sudden expression of contempt and derision seemed to cross the other's face.

"I think I get you," he sneered. "You're worrying about the honour of the Force, is that it?"

"It might have something to do with that," Nick said crisply. "But maybe I just don't like your face—or anything about you."

Harland lost his temper at that and stepped towards Nick threateningly. As for the younger man, he needed no further provocation than the ominous look on the ex-captain's features, and his right came across in a smashing punch that took his opponent on the point of the jaw.

The crack of the blow was heard all over the room, and Harland went down like a skittled ninepin. At the same time an involuntary cry of alarm escaped Janet, a cry that was followed by an uproar of voices as men and women crowded around the scene of the altercation.

"Nick!" Janet exclaimed. "Nick, have you forgotten where you are?"

The stalwart figure of her father thrust his way into view. He had been drinking a cup of claret with a friend when he had become aware of the quarrel on the dance-floor, and, although he had no liking for Harland, he was enraged at one of his subordinates creating a disturbance.

"Lieutenant Terris," he ground out, "I think you'd better leave."

Nick had drawn back, already a little ashamed of his hastiness.

"Yes, sir," he mumbled, and, with an

apologetic glance at Janet, he made his way from the room.

He had been gone several minutes before Frank Harland was revived, and even then the former patrol pilot was in no condition to dance. He left the hall with a truculent expression on his sallow countenance, plainly nursing a grudge against the youngster who had bruised his jaw—a grudge that was to be repaid in full before very long.

Harland was not the man to forget a hurt, and, two or three days later, several circumstances combined to show him how he could take his revenge on Nick Terris. In short, through his connection with a gang of rogues whom he had joined after leaving the patrol, he was able to strike a dire blow at the young lieutenant.

Harland and his confederates were men who dealt in smuggling, robbery and any other criminal activities that presented a chance of earning easy money. The latest coup they had planned was a raid on the First National Bank at a small town known as Cajon, a hundred miles north of the border; and, while two of the gang who answered to the names of Mike Jordan and Paul Henty, were motoring towards the neighbourhood of Cajon, Frank Harland and an associate named Powell might have been located at a lonely hut of adobe fifteen miles within Mexican territory.

Inside that hut was a wireless transmitting set, and Harland was posted at the instrument. Powell was seated close to him, a big, thick-set individual with coarse features.

"Jordan an' Henty ought to be close to Cajon by now," said Powell, looking at his watch. "You'd better get Terris soon, or the whole job will fall

through. Remember, everything's been timed to the minute."

"You're right," jerked Harland, who was wearing a pair of earphones, "and this is where we get busy. Patrol headquarters are off the air now."

"Yeah, but are you sure Terris is in the air?"

"Certainly I am," Harland retorted. "I'm not working in the dark, Powell, believe me. Terris was to go on duty this morning and patrol Section Five, between Del Rio and Eagle Pass. We'll make contact with him all right."

He pulled a scarf around his mouth and began to speak into the set.

"Patrol Base calling 'Plane Number Six. Patrol Base calling 'Plane Number Six. Lieutenant Terris. Patrol Base calling 'Plane Number Six."

He was carefully manipulating a dial on the radio set while he talked, and all at once, some eighty miles to the north and five thousand feet above the hills and valleys of Texas, a lone flyer picked up the signal on his receiving equipment.

"'Plane Number Six answering. Lieutenant Terris here."

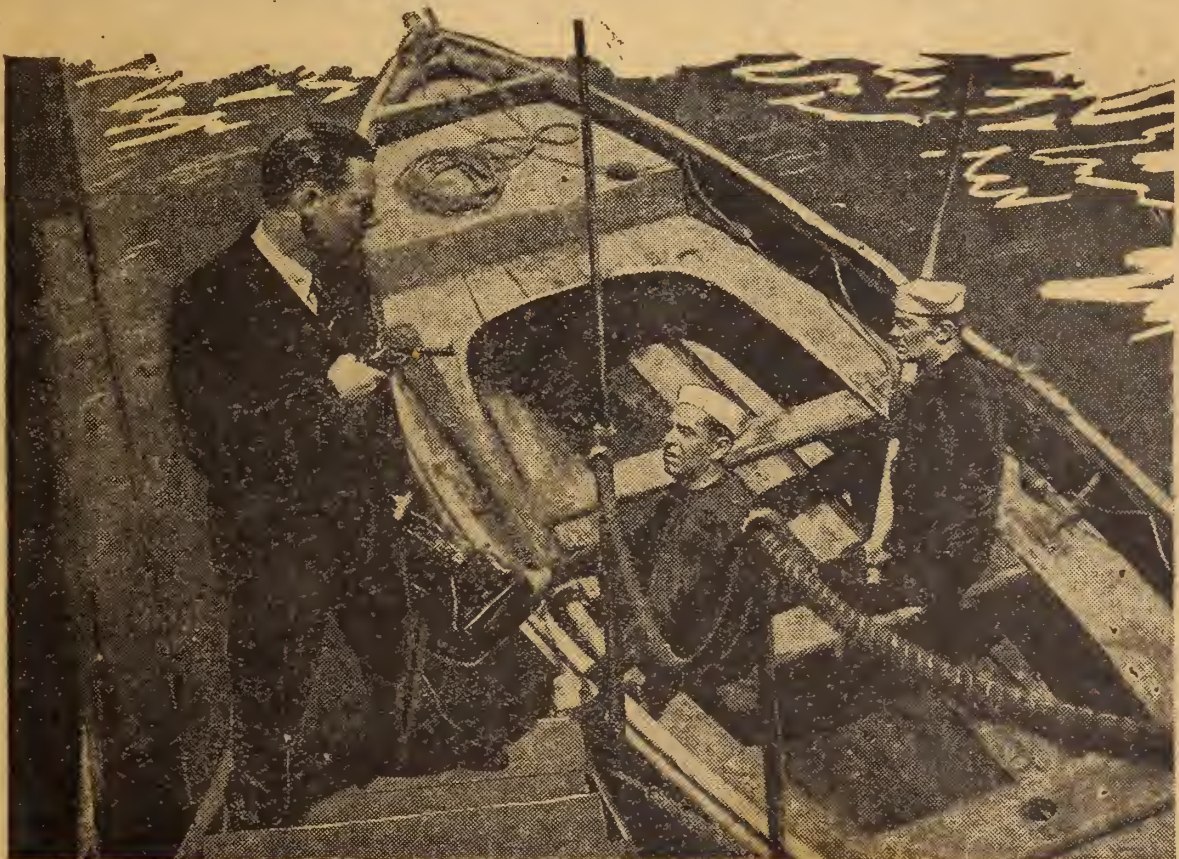
As Harland heard that voice he became tense. He must now do his best to imitate Pete Taylor's style of speech. Would he succeed in fooling Nick, or would the young pilot detect him as a fake?

"Oh, is that you, sweetheart?" queried Harland.

The familiar tone of address completely tricked young Nick Terris.

"Yes, dearie. What's on your feeble mind?" he wanted to know.

"You're to go to Emergency Field Number Three. Colonel's orders. You're to pick up a man named Jordan,



Nick descended into the waiting row-boat with the leather bag in one hand and Henty's revolver in the other.

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and take further instructions from him. Do you get it?"

"Okay," Nick answered.

"And make it snappy," said Harland. "Okay twice."

Frank Harland switched off and looked at Powell exultantly.

"He fell for it like a ton of bricks," he declared. "Boy, what a honey of an idea of mine that was! Jordan and Henty will actually have free transport into Mexico aboard a U.S. Government 'plane, and there's no telling what amount of trouble that pup Terris will get into. He'll certainly be called over the coals, anyway, when Colonel Curtis finds out that one of his men gave a lift to a couple of bank-bandits."

The Dupe

EMERGENCY FIELD NUMBER THREE was a level strip of plain about five miles south of Cajon, and in this somewhat lonely spot Nick Terris came to earth about mid-day, bringing his machine to a standstill on the rich, green mesquite grass.

Two or three minutes after he had landed, an automobile swung into view round a bend in the road that skirted the emergency field, and, turning aside from the trail, it bumped across the turf and came to a halt alongside Nick's aeroplane.

Two men emerged from the car, one of them carrying a leather satchel. Which was Mr. Jordan, Nick wondered? And *who* was Mr. Jordan? Some government official, he supposed.

He did not know that Messrs. Jordan and Henty had just burgled the Cajon Bank, having shot up a cashier pretty thoroughly in the process. Nor did he know that the sheriff of Cajon County and a couple of armed deputies had been pursuing them in a fast tourer.

"Are you Lieutenant Terris?" the man with the satchel was asking him briskly.

"Yes, sir," Nick answered.

"I'm Jordan. You're to take me and my friend below the border."

Nick was startled. It was an unusual order, for there was an international edict against United States Government 'planes landing in foreign territory, unless special permission were obtained.

"Below the border?" the young flyer echoed, wondering if Jordan had a permit.

It was at this juncture that the car occupied by Cajon's sheriff and his deputies swept into sight, and Jordan promptly whipped out a revolver, covering the surprised Nick.

"You heard me," he rasped. "Below the border, an' make it snappy. Come on, Henty, climb in."

The crooks entered the rear cockpit, and, handing the satchel of loot to Henty, Jordan pushed the muzzle of the gun into the back of the Patrol pilot's neck.

"Get goin'," he commanded harshly. "Come on, if you don't, we'll put a slug through you and handle the crate ourselves. Don't forget there's dual control here, and we'll use it if the worst comes to the worst."

Nick had no choice but to obey, and a moment later the craft was moving across the field, the spasmodic blurring of its motor rising into a powerful song of speed.

The ship left the ground, and soared skyward in a wide circle. She was a hundred and fifty feet in the air when the car containing the sheriff and his deputies careered on to the emergency field and jolted to a halt.

"Why, that's a Government 'plane

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those crooks have got away in," the sheriff ejaculated, staring upward. "Listen, you fellows search that auto they've abandoned. I'll drive back to the nearest telephone."

Within a quarter of an hour, the officer of the Law was in touch with Colonel Curtis at the Patrol Base hard by San Antonio, and, on receiving the sheriff's message, Janet's father sent for Pete Taylor, who happened to be available at the airport as a relief pilot.

"Bandits held up the bank at Cajon," the colonel stated. "They got away in a 'plane that was apparently disguised as a government machine. Lieutenant Terris is out in that section. Go give him a hand."

Pete departed with alacrity, and was soon in the air. In the meantime, Colonel Curtis was instructing his wireless operator to signal Lieutenant Terris, but no reply came from 'Plane Number Six, for, within five minutes of leaving the ground, Mike Jordan had leaned into the forward cockpit of the Patrol ship and smashed Nick's radio set with the butt of his gun.

'Plane Number Six was now winging its way southward in the direction of Mexico at a hundred and twenty miles per hour, and about one-fifteen p.m. Jordan ordered Nick to make a landing in a forest clearing some ten miles below the border.

With a revolver caressing the back of his head, Nick was compelled to obey, and shortly afterwards the 'plane was raking to a standstill on the ground. As it came to a halt, the young government pilot noticed a car standing near the edge of the trees some distance away, a man being in charge of it. Then he heard Jordan's voice right behind him again.

"Thanks for the ride, lieutenant."

The words were followed by a cowardly, unexpected blow with the butt of the revolver, and Nick slumped down in the forward cockpit, his wits scattered by the impact of the gun.

"That ought to hold him until we get away," Jordan said to Henty.

"Come on, and bring the swag with you."

The two crooks alighted from the 'plane and hurried to the waiting car, driving off with the man who had been sitting in the vehicle. By the time Nick Terris recovered consciousness, there was no sign of the rogues, and the only sound that disturbed the quiet of the clearing was the twittering of birds in the not-far-distant trees.

For several minutes Nick remained motionless, collecting his thoughts and wincing at the pain which throbbled through his head. Then he fell to speculating over the message that Pete Taylor had sent him—for he still imagined that it had been Pete's voice which had ordered him to pick up the man known as Jordan.

What was behind the whole affair? Why had Jordan and his companion forced him to convey them to Mexican territory? Who were the men who had driven on to Emergency Field Number Three just after he had taken off with his mysterious passengers?

Nick gave up the riddle, and set out for home to make a report. Ere long he was flying northward again at an altitude of several thousand feet, and it was soon after he re-crossed the border that he sighted another 'plane.

On closer approach he recognised it as Pete's, and soon Pete was waving to him from the machine. Nick answered the gesture sourly enough, and, unable to converse with him on account of his

shattered radio, laid his course for the airport, Pete accompanying him.

They landed on the flying-field of the depot almost simultaneously, and, descending from their 'planes, they walked towards each other.

"What's the matter with you?" Pete demanded, as he joined his comrade. "Where the heck have you been? I've been trying to get in touch with you—"

"What's the matter with me?" Nick broke in angrily. "Say, I'd like—"

He was interrupted by an orderly who came hurrying across at that moment.

"The colonel wants you, Lieutenant Terris," the man said. "He wishes you to report at once."

Nick strode in the direction of his commanding officer's quarters, and Pete hastened after him. As they entered the colonel's office they found him in conversation with a tall, lean man of sober mien.

"You sent for me, colonel," Nick said, saluting Janet's father.

"This is the sheriff of Cajon County," the commanding officer of the airport rejoined, indicating the tall individual to whom he had been talking when Nick and Pete had entered. "The bank at Cajon City was held up to-day by two men who made their escape in a 'plane which has since been identified as yours. Can you explain it?"

"No, sir, I can't," Nick answered hazily, "except that I received a message from you to go there and pick up a man named Jordan, who would give me further instructions."

The colonel looked at him blankly for an instant, and then:

"Yes, yes, that's quite true," he said. "Mr. Jordan is a secret agent of ours. The bank robbers must have known about our arrangements—though I can't imagine where they got their information from. We—we shall start an investigation as to what has become of the real Mr. Jordan. Lieutenant Terris here will give you a description of the thieves, sheriff—"

"We already have that," the representative of the law interrupted truculently.

"In that case," remarked the colonel, "I'm afraid we can do nothing more for you at present."

The sheriff turned to Nick.

"Where did you let those guys out?" he demanded.

"Ten miles south of the border," the young lieutenant informed him. "There was another man waiting for them with a car. They had a gun on me all the way down, and they'd smashed the radio soon after we started."

"Well, I guess that's that," the sheriff grunted, and, nodding to the colonel, he took his leave.

Janet's father waited until the door had closed behind the man, and then he glanced up at Nick, who had remained in the room with Pete.

"All right, lieutenant, I want the truth," he snapped. "I don't know Jordan—never heard of him in my life before—and I issued no orders about picking him up."

Nick looked staggered.

"But—you just told the sheriff—"

"What I told the sheriff has nothing to do with us," Colonel Curtis broke in grimly. "Do you think I'm going to let him know that one of my men has been mixed up with a gang of bank robbers, until I've had a chance to make some further investigations?"

"Oh, come, sir," Pete Taylor exclaimed. "This is ridiculous—"

"Lieutenant," Curtis ground out, "who asked you for your opinion?"

"I'm sorry, sir," Pete apologised, "but surely you know Nick too well to suspect him of being mixed up with a set of crooks."

Nick listened to his friend like a man in a dream. His brain was in a whirl, and he could make nothing of this ugly business in which he had become involved so innocently. What was Pete hiding? This was the question that reverberated in his bewildered mind. It had been Pete who had wirelessed those instructions purporting to be from the colonel, hadn't it?

The voice of Janet's father cut in upon the trend of Nick's confused thoughts.

"If Lieutenant Terris is innocent, then let him explain himself more fully. Lieutenant Terris, you say you received a message which was supposed to come from me. Have you any idea who sent it?"

Nick kept his glance averted from Pete. He could only think that his friend was in some way associated with those bank robbers — an unwitting accomplice, perhaps. At any rate, he could not bring himself to denounce him, whatever Pete may have done.

"I received the message by radio, sir," Nick muttered, "but—I didn't recognise the voice."

"You didn't recognise the voice?" the colonel ejaculated. "Yet you failed to check back to headquarters and see if the call was authentic? Terris, I want to believe you. But, if nothing else, you've been guilty of gross negligence."

"Will you permit me to resign, sir?" Nick said thickly.

"I'm afraid I'll have to," was the stern reply, and, saluting, the young pilot swung round and made his way from the office.

Pete Taylor followed him, and, once outside, he attempted to talk to Nick, but the latter flung away from him, and, without a word of farewell, he left the air base. As for Pete, he had to remain on duty, and it was not until evening that he was able to repair to the diggings which he had shared with his fellow-pilot.

Here he learned from the landlady that Nick had paid his bill and departed, and Pete was brooding over the whole affair in his room when Janet called on him.

"Where's Nick?" she wanted to know. She looked pale and agitated, and the expression in her eyes made him wonder if Nick, after all, were the one who must ultimately win her for a wife.

"I don't know where he is, Janet?" Pete said. "He packed and left before I got here."

"You don't believe this absurd suspicion against him, do you?" she demanded.

"No, I don't," Pete answered. "But I can't understand him. He seemed to be withholding something—"

"Listen," Janet interposed, "I think I know how to find him, and I'm going to try. I'm going to tell him that there are two people who have faith in him—you and I."

"Wait," Pete laid a hand on her arm. "Janet, Nick and I have always

thought a lot of you. I guess you know that. I—P'd like to know which of us comes first with you. Is it—Nick?"

"Yes," she said in a low voice.

He was silent for a moment. Then he took her by the shoulders.

"I hope everything turns out all right for both of you," he told her. "You know that, too, don't you—Janet?"

At Sea

THE following day there was activity in a certain remote hide-away fifteen miles south of the border. It was the hide-away occupied by Harland and his associates, and, in the hut from which the former Government pilot had made that bogus radio call the previous morning, the three men known as Jordan, Henty and Powell might have been discovered in close conversation over a map of the Mexican coast.

"At seven o'clock this evening the s.s. Meridian will be at this point," said Paul Henty, "about thirty miles off shore, and right opposite the border."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Powell. "I've checked her last six trips south from Galveston, knowing that she was going to take this consignment of cash," Paul Henty replied. "If there's any delay, I'll wireless Mike here. Meanwhile, let's go out and see how Harland is getting on."

Powell and Henty made their way from the hut, leaving Jordan inside. Not far from the dwelling was a creek in which a seaplane was moored, and close to the machine stood Frank Harland, listening to the note of its motor.

"She's in perfect order," the crook-



"The game's up," Nick told the crooks in grim accents. "You're taking a nice long trip that will end in the gaol-house!"

airman said as his associates came up. "The engine is running as sweet as honey. I've loaded up the crate with bombs, and there's a tommy-gun aboard. By the way, is anybody going along with me?"

"I am," rejoined Powell. "I wouldn't want you to think we don't trust you, but a quarter of a million dollars is a quarter of a million dollars."

Harland grunted.

"And Henty?" he inquired.

"He'll be aboard the Meridian," was the reply. "We're leaving Jordan here. He's all right for bank jobs, but he's just a plain thug, and this sort of coup is out of his line. In fact, I'll let you in on a little secret, Harland. We intend to ditch him. We've already tipped off the Mexican authorities about the crazy fool shooting that bartender down in Salinas Victoria, and they'll pick him up in due course."

"That's tough on him, isn't it?" Harland commented.

"It means a three-way split instead of a four-way split," Powell retorted. "I mean, when it comes to sharin' out our loot. Besides, Jordan is a blockhead."

"Maybe you're right," Harland agreed. "Well, what's the next move?"

"The next move is Henty's," was the reply. "He'll take the car, drive to railhead and catch the first train across the border. There's a chance he may be recognised, but he'll have to risk it—"

Henty left the hide-out shortly afterwards, and six hours later he was on the deck of the s.s. Meridian at Galveston, Texas. He might have been seen loitering near the gangway, and was leaning against the rail close by when a bank messenger came aboard with an armed escort.

The messenger was carrying a leather bag, and Henty knew that the receptacle contained a quarter of a million dollars in United States currency. With a glint in his narrow eyes the crook watched Captain Terris leading the bank messenger and escort in the direction of the purser's cabin.

The money having been deposited, the men from the bank took themselves off the ship, and in a little while Captain Terris reappeared on the deck.

"Do we sail on time, captain?" Paul Henty asked, accosting him.

"Right on the dot," was the reply.

Captain Terris passed on to his own cabin, and as he was about to enter it a girl came hurrying up, addressing him by name. He at once recognised Janet Curtis.

"Has Nick been here?" she asked earnestly.

The skipper fingered his rugged jaw.

"Supposing you tell me first why you want to know?" he murmured.

"Why?" Janet echoed. "Because I love him."

"Oh, just like that, eh?" Captain Terris said whimsically. "And I suppose you're going to tell him that you don't believe this ridiculous suspicion against him?"

"Of course I don't believe it. Nick couldn't do anything wrong. And besides, I've been figuring things out, and I have a theory."

The skipper smiled.

"You'll find Nick aft," he told her. "Don't be surprised if he's in overalls. You see, he's making this trip south with me, and he's insisted on making himself useful."

Before very long two young people were standing with clasped hands at the stern of the s.s. Meridian, and presently Janet was broaching the subject of Nick's resignation from the Border Patrol.

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"Was it Pete who wirelessly you yesterday?" she wanted to know.

Nick looked uncomfortable.

"He didn't say so, but it was Pete's crazy lingo," he muttered. "That's why I didn't bother to check the instructions."

"Outside the Force, who is there that knows the two of you well enough to fool you?" Janet said suddenly. "Listen, Nick. Who left that dance the other night hating you?"

"Frank Harland?" Nick ejaculated with a start. "You mean—he might have been responsible? Aw, no, Janet—he may have been sore at me, but he wouldn't buy an expensive radio set and engineer a bank robbery to get even."

"But wasn't he mixed up in something shady when he left the Service?" the girl persisted.

"Smuggling," Nick mused, "but they couldn't prove it."

"If he were guilty, he may have had connections with some gang," Janet pointed out. "The same gang who staged the Cajon bank robbery, perhaps—using you for a dupe."

Nick began to realise that Janet's theory was not so wild as it had first seemed.

"You're a smart girl," he said to her, "but how are you going to prove that you're right?"

"I can't imagine," she admitted. "But we know that you're innocent, so who cares?"

"Sweet kid," he breathed, pressing her hands tightly. "Say, listen, Janet. I'd like you to meet my dad."

"I've already met him," she rejoined.

"Yes, I know, but I'll bet you didn't think of what I've just thought of. A sea captain can marry people. How about it, dear? Will you stay aboard?"

Her answer was given in a whisper, but when the s.s. Meridian steamed out of port, Janet Curtis was still by the rail, holding a romantic conversation with the youngster who had proposed to her.

The Raider

AT seven o'clock that evening it was still broad daylight, and on the stroke of the hour Paul Henty made his way to the wireless cabin.

He found the operator standing on the threshold of his quarters, gazing up at the clear sky and listening to the powerful drone of a seaplane that had appeared out of the blue.

"Got a match?" Henty inquired, opening a cigarette-case.

The wireless operator obliged him, and then indicated the big seaplane flying towards the ship.

"She sure is a big baby, isn't she?" he commented.

Henty did not answer him. With the operator's attention focused on the 'plane, the crook slipped past him into the wireless cabin and started to damage the radio set with the butt of a .45 revolver.

At the first blow the wireless operator turned with an astonished cry and blundered through the doorway.

"Hey, what are you doing?" he exclaimed. "What's the—"

He never completed the sentence, for the handle of Henty's gun came down on his head with sickening force. The operator collapsed, and, satisfied with his work so far, Henty slid out of the cabin, closed the door behind him and made for the captain's quarters.

There were crowds of passengers on the deck, staring upwards at the approaching seaplane with interest. The gangster paid no heed to them, and, with revolver hidden in his pocket, he reached the skipper's cabin.

Henty let himself in without ceremony. As he entered he saw Captain Terris standing by a table in conversation with three other people—the ship's second officer, Janet Curtis and a young man whom Henty immediately recognised as Nick.

The recognition was mutual, and Nick gave vent to a startled ejaculation. Then he found himself covered by a forty-five.

"Don't move," Henty warned. "Keep quite still, all of you."

"What's the meaning of this?" Captain Terris demanded.

Before the gangster could volunteer a reply there was a sudden explosion two or three hundred feet ahead of the steamship's bow. It was the blast of a bomb that had been dropped from the seaplane which had attracted the interest of the crowds on the Meridian's deck.

"That's a visiting card from some friends of mine," Henty rasped. "Let's call it a sample. The next will fall astern, and the third will hit your deck. You'd better run up a white flag and put me adrift with the quarter of a million dollars that were deposited in the purser's cabin."

The features of Captain Terris became livid and he took a step towards Henty, only to be driven back by a significant jerk of the weapon in the rogue's hand. There ensued a spell of silence—a silence confined to the skipper's state-room, for out on deck the passengers were in a panic-stricken uproar.

A second bomb dropped in the ship's wake, and Henty grinned wolfishly at Nick's father.

"In another few minutes the third will strike your craft—unless you show that white flag. It will hit the fore-deck, probably cripple your ship, and undoubtedly blow some of your passengers to 'Kingdom Come.' Remember, there are women and children aboard, skipper."

Captain Terris ground his teeth. For several seconds he maintained a defiant attitude, but the safety of his passengers was the argument that finally prevailed upon him to surrender, and with an air of helplessness he turned to his second officer.

"Do as this man says, Mr. Watson," he ordered huskily. "Run up a white flag. See if you can calm those people on the deck. Then ask the purser to come here with that money."

Watson edged out of the cabin, and in a little while the clamour of the passengers began to die down. Meantime the white flag of surrender had been raised, and the big 'plane which had threatened the Meridian was descending to the surface of the sea.

Within two or three minutes the purser put in an appearance at the captain's cabin. He was carrying a leather bag, and Henty relieved him of it. Then the crook glanced quickly inside it to make certain that it contained the loot, and it was at this moment that Nick Terris saw his chance.

With an unexpected leap he pounced on Henty. The gangster instantly attempted to cover him again, but ere he could do so the young airman's fist had crashed home, and the rogue went down in a heap.

He was "out" before he hit the floor, and Nick spoke to the other occupants of the cabin briskly.

"This is where we fool this guy's accomplices. Dad, I'm going to change clothes with him and get aboard that seaplane. Take the money out of that bag and stuff it full of waste paper.

(Continued on page 23.)

A young ranch-owner, hearing that his best friend has been swindled by a crooked financier, settles the score with fists and hot lead. A breath-taking thriller of the fighting West, starring Bob Custer



"QUICK TRIGGER LEE"

The Swindle

OLD Dad Saunders sat by the side of the desk in Jeremy Wales' office and did his best to explain what he had come for.

He was a simple-looking man, with honest, rugged features—quite different from Wales. Wales had hard eyes and a clever face; he also had a smile which could hide what he was thinking.

"It's this way, Jeremy," said Dad Saunders, "I've struck a rich vein in that mine down in the valley. I'm extracting seven and a half ounces of fine gold from the ton, and I reckon I'll extract more as I get deeper."

Wales gave his enigmatic smile.

"Sounds pretty good, Dad," he said smoothly.

"It is good," said Dad Saunders. "But it ain't payin' me. At least, not yet. I sent to San Francisco for one of them ore-crushing plants, and they want a thousand dollars down. With the machine, I can increase my yield twenty times at least; without it—well, I guess I should just have to go on breakin' by hand, and that would barely show me a livin'. And I'm gettin' old, Jeremy, like you are. I want to take things easy."

Wales smiled again.

"So you want me to lend you a thousand dollars, huh?" he said.

Dad Saunders leaned forward eagerly.

"That's right," he said. "For, say, six months, and I'll pay fifteen hundred back."

Wales leaned back in his chair and scratched his chin. He appeared to be thinking.

"What's your security, Dad?" he asked suddenly.

Dad Saunders looked hurt.

"Security?" he repeated.

"Now look here, Jeremy, you and me's known each other for thirty years, and—"

Wales soothed him by patting him on the arm.

"Take it easy, take it easy," he said.

"I ain't castin' any reflections on your honour, Dad. Only, as you said just now, you're gettin' old. Your eyesight's bad, for one thing, and gettin' worse, by all accounts."

Dad Saunders cooled down somewhat.

"That's true enough," he admitted.

"Well, can't you see what I'm gettin'

at?" Wales spoke gently but with infinite cunning. "Supposin' anything happened to you. I'd lose my thousand bucks, wouldn't I?"

Dad Saunders nodded.

"That's true, too," he said. "An' I'd hate anythin' like that, Jeremy. What can you do to protect yourself?"

"Well," said Wales, "I reckon the mine's worth somethin'. How about you signin' a paper saying you owe me a thousand dollars—"

"Fifteen hundred," corrected Dad Saunders.

Wales waved his hand carelessly.

"I won't worry about the interest, Dad," he said. "Call it a thousand, with the mine as security. Then, if things go bad for you, I can get my money back from whoever buys the mine."

Dad Saunders nodded vigorously.

"I guess that's fair enough," he said. "And it's thumpin' decent of you, Jeremy. I reckon that when I make the grade, I'll not forget you."

Wales smiled.

"Glad to be of help, Dad," he said. He went across to his safe and counted out a thousand dollars. "There you are. Now just sit around a minute while I draw up the paper."

He brushed himself with writing. Briefly he drew up a mortgage saying that the undersigned had borrowed money, and that it would be repaid in six months, the Saunders gold mine being the security for the loan. Then he turned the paper round for Dad Saunders' signature.

Dad Saunders tried to read it, and found that he couldn't. But he could make out the figures written at the bottom—one thousand dollars. That, to him, was good enough.

He signed, picked up his money, and went away.

Hardly had he left the office than a door opened leading from Wales' living quarters, and a young man came in. He was inclined to fatness, and his eyes gleamed greedily.

"I heard what you and old Saunders was sayin'," he said rapidly. "I guess we might be able to break his title to that mine if we hired a slick lawyer from the East."

Jeremy Wales chuckled, and looked at the young man fondly. For the young man was his son, Sam.

"We don't have to," he said, picked up his pen, and made a quick alteration to the document that Dad Saunders had just signed. "Read that."

Sam did so, and uttered a long, drawn-out whistle.

"He says he owes you ten thousand bucks!" he muttered. "But I thought you only lent him a thousand."

"So I did," Jeremy Wales' eyes became like twin flames. "But I wrote ten thousand in words on this paper. I knew Dad Saunders couldn't read with those eyes of his. All he saw was one thousand in figures at the bottom, and it's easy to change one thousand into ten—just by addin' a nought at the end." He reached out and patted Sam on the back. "I did it for you, son. When old Saunders is called upon to pay and can't, I'll foreclose, sell the mine to you at a knock-out figure, and then leave you to it. I guess you'll be sittin' mighty pretty after that."

Sam laughed. Then he became suddenly thoughtful.

"I can do with big money," he said slowly. "I guess I've got a use for it now."

Jeremy Wales looked at him curiously.

"Findin' that movie girl expensive?" he asked.

Sam shook his head.

"No, not expensive," he replied. "Just disinterested. But I reckon I could change that with some big dough behind me."

Jeremy nodded.

"I reckon you could," he said. "And it won't be long in comin' now."

Meanwhile, Dad Saunders had returned to his mine. It lay some half a mile outside the township, and had formerly been a small ranch. Dad Saunders had given up raising cattle when he had struck gold, however, and two or three horses were the only livestock he had left.

He put his thousand dollars away against the time when the traveller from San Francisco should come again about the ore-crusher, and went about his work. Life, for him, was pretty quiet.

The following morning he was again at his job. Suddenly, round about midday, he heard the sound of approaching hoofs, and looked up to see the local

land commissioner approaching. The commissioner stopped and looked down at him.

"Good morning, Dad," he said. "I hear you're goin' to run this mine of yours on a big scale."

Dad Saunders grinned and scratched his head.

"Well, I don't know about runnin' it big," he said, "but I reckon to make a tidy profit out of it."

"It sounds big to me," said the commissioner. "Wales was over at my office this mornin' to register a mortgage for ten thousand on your prospects, anyway."

Dad Saunders stared at him in amazement.

"Ten thousand!" he said. "Ain't you makin' some mistake? It was a thousand I borrowed."

"Ten thousand, Dad," said the commissioner gently. "You must be gettin' absent-minded. The sum was named in both words and figures, so I reckon there ain't no mistake."

He rode on, leaving Dad Saunders staring after him angrily.

He might have been half blind, but he was no fool. He knew what had happened; Wales had tricked him.

He knew something else, too—that he had no remedy in law. There was his signature, and he would have to stand by it.

But he was not entirely helpless. Wales might be a dirty crook, but there were other men in the district who would see justice done.

With sudden resolution he went to the compound, threw himself upon the back of a horse, and rode swiftly towards a ranch that stood at the head of the valley.

Strange Shooting

PHIL LEE was superintending the branding of some calves that morning and, one way and another, he was feeling pretty good. He had found a gang of rustlers on his territory, and had handed them over to the sheriff, only to find that the gang had been "wanted" for three months back.

The sound of thudding hoofs made him look up, and he saw a rider coming down the trail. He recognised Dad Saunders.

"Hallo, Dad!" he said to the old man when the latter had reined in. "What's troubling you?"

Dad Saunders told him. He didn't waste much time over it, and as he proceeded with his story, Phil Lee's eyes narrowed.

Phil was pretty well known in the district. Not only was he a ranch-owner himself, and a pretty successful one at that, but he was also a friend to anyone who was in trouble. "Quick-Trigger Lee" was what folks called him, and he had earned the nickname honourably. He was so quick on the draw that even old-timers kept clear of him when any trouble was about—and Phil never hesitated to make trouble when a wrong had to be righted.

He heard the old man out, then turned to his foreman.

"We're going into town, Hutch," he said briefly. "Get two horses!"

Dad Saunders started to thank him, but he waved the thanks aside.

"Forget it," he said. "Plenty of time for that afterwards, Dad. We've got work to do now."

They rode into town, stopping on the way for Dad to collect the thousand dollars Jeremy Wales had given him.

Their first call was at the land commissioner's office, where they inspected the register of mortgages. The figure was ten thousand all right. From there February 9th, 1935.

they went to Phil's bank, where Phil drew a wad of notes.

Then they made their way to Jeremy Wales' office.

Sam was lounging about outside, talking to a bunch of strangers. He saw Phil Lee and Dad Saunders approaching, and hurriedly excused himself.

But he did not have a chance to get far. Phil caught up with him and gripped him by the shoulder.

"I guess I'll be wanting you," he said. "Inside!"

And he ran him into his father's office.

Jeremy Wales was there, waiting for them. Jeremy had heard the commotion outside, and had risen from his chair, his hand on his six-gun.

Phil shoved Sam forward and surveyed the old man critically.

"You'd better forget the artillery, Mr. Wales," he said quietly. "If we ever get to shooting, you're already dead!"

Jeremy Wales glared at him and slowly took his hand from his gun. He did his best to smile as he resumed his seat.

"What do you want with me, Lee?" he said.

Phil did not answer immediately. He looked around, and saw that two of the strangers had followed him in. They were standing just inside the doorway, their evil eyes glittering, ready for trouble.

Phil looked at Jeremy Wales pointedly.

"Do we have to talk business in front of a crowd, Wales?" he asked.

Sam broke in shortly.

"They're pals of mine," he said. "Anything you want to say can be said in front of them."

Phil shrugged his shoulders, and turned to Dad Saunders.

"Dad," he said. "I understand that you borrowed a thousand dollars from Jeremy Wales yesterday?"

"That's right," said the old man. "Here are the notes."

Phil took them and tossed them on to Wales' desk. Then he took the wad of notes he had just drawn from the bank and gave them to Dad.

"I'm buying the loan," he said. "All right, Wales?"

Jeremy Wales did his best to look indifferent.

"Okay by me," he said. "I still foreclose on Dad's mine if I don't get my money back."

Phil's mouth went hard.

"That suits us," he said. "We're redeeming. You've got your dough back intact, and we're taking the paper Dad signed. Get it."

Jeremy Wales met Phil's eyes, and saw danger in them. But he decided to hold out.

"Dad signed for ten thousand, not one," he said. "Give me another nine, and everything's square."

That was all Phil wanted. He walked slowly and deliberately to Jeremy Wales' desk, taking care to keep Sam and the two men at the door in sight.

"The argument's over, Wales," he said. "Give me that paper quietly, or I take it. Please yourself."

Jeremy looked appealingly at Sam, and Sam nodded to his two pals. They came across the room, forming a semi-circle around Phil, ready for action.

Phil gave them a look of contempt, and decided that they were not even worth gun-play. He turned casually to Dad Saunders.

"Look after the old man, Dad," he said. "I'll fix the others."

He wheeled suddenly, and sent his fist smashing into the face of the man nearest to him. Dad Saunders,

chuckling excitedly, grabbed old Jeremy's gun and threw it out of the window. Then he kicked Jeremy clean out of the office.

Sam's eyes flamed with murder. If he reached for his own gun and dragged it from its holster, but before he could bring it up to his hip, Phil was on him. He sent him back across a table, one hand across Sam's throat, and the other gripping Sam's gun-wrist.

"You aren't quick enough, Sam," he said softly, and dug his fingers into the tendons of Sam's wrist. Sam let out a cry of agony, and his gun dropped to the floor with a crash.

Phil, still holding Sam down, turned and saw that Dad Saunders was struggling with the third man. He did not move, but his voice carried across the room like a pistol shot.

"You'd better let the old man alone," he said slowly, "or I'll plug you right between the eyes."

The man laughed and began to bend Dad Saunders' arms behind his back. Phil saw and acted. Without seeming to move, he kept Sam helpless with one hand, picked a six-gun from the holster against his thigh, and pressed the trigger. The man's hat went across the room as though it had been knocked off by an unseen hand.

"Three inches lower," said Phil, "and you'd have been deader than mutton."

The man stared at him, petrified with fear, and his face went white. For a moment he seemed incapable of movement; then he released Dad Saunders abruptly, and ran for his life.

Phil laughed and indicated the other man, who was then trying to get to his feet, nursing his jaw.

"Send him after his pal, Dad," he said; "after which, we can talk to Sam about that paper."

Dad Saunders obeyed lustily. He might be old, but he still had enough strength to give a crook a good kick in the pants.

Phil grinned and stood back from Sam. "All I have to do now is to collect that document from you, Sam, and Dad and me will be on our way. How about it?"

Sam got to his feet, his face twisted with hate. He made to bend down for his gun, but Phil reached out and put his foot upon it.

"Haven't you had enough?" Phil asked softly.

Sam swore. He was beaten, and he knew it.

"The paper's in the second drawer of the desk," he said shortly.

Phil stood guard while Dad Saunders found it. Carefully Dad tore it into little pieces and burnt it in the stove.

Then, suddenly, pandemonium broke loose outside. A girl screamed, and the scream was followed by a rattle of shots.

Phil and Dad Saunders pounded out into the street. There, a few yards away and gaining speed every second, was a touring car. A girl was in the back, struggling with two men, while a third stood up, gun in hand, letting rip as hard as he could go.

Phil didn't stop to ask questions. He took one flying leap and landed on the back of his horse. The next moment he was galloping after the car at full stretch.

A Discovery

ALMOST before the driver had got the car into top gear, Phil was level with it, his feet clear of his stirrups. He leapt into the tonneau, six-gun in hand, and pressed the muzzle against the driver's head.

"Pull up, son," he said grimly. "And if any of those pals of yours think of trying conclusions with me, you die. So

I guess you'd better tell them to take it easy."

The driver swore, and slammed on his brakes. Phil waited until the car was at a standstill, then jumped out in readiness for trouble.

But it never came. Instead, the two men and the girl in the tonneau were holding their sides with laughter.

Phil looked at them hard, wondering if he was mixed up with a bunch of lunatics.

"Listen," he said, and spun his gun on his finger by way of letting all concerned realize that he knew how to use it. "If you can see anything funny in—"

He broke off. Someone came running towards him, and he turned, his gun held low. But the newcomer was unarmed. He wore a cap, the peak of which was at the back of his head, and his plus fours and pullover made him look like something that had escaped from a dude ranch.

"Say, cowboy," he drawled, "didn't anyone ever teach you anything at school?"

Phil blinked at him in astonishment. Then he caught sight of a second car that was trundling slowly towards them. In the back of the car was a cinematograph camera mounted on a tripod.

Phil saw the joke then. He gazed around at the grinning faces, and realised that the joke was on him.

He, too, roared with laughter.

Then he remembered the girl, and turned to her.

"Sorry, miss," he said, holstering his gun. "I guess I'm seatty. You see, I live a little way out of the township, and haven't been this way for a fortnight. I didn't know a movie outfit was in the neighbourhood."

The girl smiled, and it was the kind of smile that made Phil's heart miss a couple of beats.

"If it hadn't been a movie scene, what would you have done?" she asked interestedly.

Phil chuckled, and looked at the still laughing men with her.

"I guess I'd have busted them both

across the head," he said. "They wouldn't have woken up for a week."

There was just the smallest edge to his tone, and the laughing men heard it. Rather abruptly they stopped laughing and looked thoughtful.

The girl got out of the car and turned to the man with the back-to-front cap.

"I've done enough work for to-day," she said. "I'm tired. Let's make another start early to-morrow morning."

"Okay," was the reply. "It ain't my money you're spending."

The girl turned to Phil.

"I'm staying at the hotel up the street," she said. "Liko to walk back with me?"

Phil shuffled his feet awkwardly, and held out his arm.

"I'd like to," he said. "My name's Phil Lee."

"Mino's Rose Campbell," she replied as they walked away together. "The way you jumped into that car was marvellous. I've never seen anything like it before. You must be an awfully good rider."

Phil coloured with embarrassment.

"I guess I don't ride any better than other folks around here," he said.

"Rounding up cattle would make moderate riders of anybody."

Rose laughed.

"You're a funny sort of person," she said. "Most men boast about what they can do, but you do your best to run yourself down." She was silent for a few seconds, then continued: "Staying in town long?"

"As long as I'm wanted," said Phil.

"Then how about coming to my dance to-night?" She stopped and pointed to the hotel. "The boys have been working very hard lately, and I promised them a break. We've taken the chapel hall for the occasion." She lowered her voice a little. "As a matter of fact, I think there's something you could help me over. Will you come?"

Phil nodded gratefully. Danees were few and far between in these parts.

"Just say the time, and I'll be there," he replied.

"Seven sharp," she said. "And thanks tremendously for rescuing me." She smiled up into his face. "After all, it might have been real, mightn't it? So I'm grateful just the same."

She turned and ran into the hotel. Phil stood there, staring after her; and just went on staring until he felt a touch on the arm, and turned to find Dad Saunders by his side.

"Well, son," said Dad, "I'll be on my way. And when I make my big strike down at the mine, you ain't goin' to be sorry you stood by me."

"That's all right," said Phil. "Call on me any time you find yourself in a fix. So long."

"So long," said Dad, and left him there, still staring at the hotel.

At seven sharp, Phil approached the chapel hall. From within came the sound of music.

Phil was just about to go inside when he saw two shadows nearby. They appeared to be struggling, and one of them was a girl. Phil approached softly, and heard Rose Campbell speaking.

"Please let me go, Sam," she was saying. "I liko you as a friend, but no more. Can't you take no for an answer?"

Phil leaned against the side of the hall, his eyes hard.

"He's going to," he said quietly.

"Aren't you, Sam?"

Sam Wales spun round and let Rose go. He saw who it was, and grinned sheepishly.

"I—er—me and Rose was just havin' a little talk," he said. "We didn't hear you comin'."

Phil did not reply. He merely jerked his head in the direction of the hall, and Sam took the hint and went inside. Phil laughed and approached the girl, hat in hand.



Phil sent him back across the table, one hand on his throat and the other gripping his gun wrist.

"Friend of yours, Miss Campbell?" he asked.

She shook her head definitely.

"No," she replied. "But I know him. You see, when I came here with our production unit, he helped fix us up at the hotel."

"That's because his old man owns it," said Phil, grinning. "That Wales family is pretty slick on business."

She moved nearer to him, and lowered her voice.

"I also asked him to find someone for me," she went on. "I chose this place for a location because I have a grandfather out this way somewhere, but I don't think he's done very much about it."

"What's your grandfather's name?" asked Phil.

"John Saunders," she replied. "He's my mother's father." She looked at him anxiously. "Poor old chap, he's had a very hard life, and now I'm doing well, I want to make things easy for him. Do you know him?"

"Know him!" Phil chuckled as he thought of the scheme of the Wales family to ruin the old chap. "As soon as you can spare the time, I'll take you out to his shack. He's discovered a gold-mine near here, and—"

She was not interested in all that. She stopped him speaking by taking hold of his arm.

"You'll really take me to him?" she said.

"Whenever you like," Phil replied.

She started dragging him towards the hall.

"Wait for me while I change my clothes, and I'll come right away," she said. "I'll meet you in the hall in half an hour."

Phil nodded, and watched her run towards the hotel. He looked after her until she was out of sight, then drifted into the hall. Hardly had he set foot inside the door than the daughter of a neighbouring ranch-owner came up.

"We don't often see you in town, Mr. Lee," she said. "How about giving me a dance?"

Phil nodded. It was as good a way of making half an hour go quickly as he knew.

They waltzed away together.

Trapped

AT the end of the time one of the hotel servants came over with a message.

"The lady's ready, mister," he announced. "She's waitin' out the back—said she didn't want anyone to see her."

Phil nodded, and followed the man unsuspectingly. They went out through one of the rear doors of the hall, and it was not until he reached the back veranda that he realised that he had fallen into a trap.

For facing him was Sam Wales, while beyond guns in their hands, were two of Wales' men. They were standing up in a car, ready to shoot without warning.

"I reckon this is one of those times when bein' quick on the draw ain't going to help you any, Lee," said Sam, grinning evilly. "I've got a quarrel to settle with you, and this is the time to do it. I guess the lady won't like the looks of you by the time I'm through."

Phil faced him tensely, every muscle taut. Sam had to relax his watchfulness for just one second, and the tables were going to be turned.

But Sam had planned his coup carefully. Before Phil could do anything, the hotel servant who had made him come out here stepped behind him and pinioned his arms behind his back.

Sam Wales laughed and swaggered over. He reckoned he was safe now.

February 9th, 1935.

"You ain't so smart as I thought," he jeered.

Phil struggled to get free. Instantly one of the men on the car raised his gun and took careful aim. Phil stopped struggling. There was no sense in committing suicide.

"Where does all this get you, Wales?" he asked quietly.

Sam grinned.

"I'll tell you," he replied. "I was talkin' to Rose Campbell a minute back, and she said you was goin' to take her out to see her grandfather. Well, you ain't, because I'm goin' in your place. And I reckon that when she and me's better acquainted, she won't be wantin' to think so much about you. Get the idea?"

"You dirty hound!" roared Phil.

Sam's eyes narrowed. He swung back his fist, and hit Phil in the jaw. Phil saw red, and with a supreme effort, threw the man who was holding him over his head.

But the odds were against him. Sam whipped out his gun, gripped it by the barrel, and hit Phil behind the ear with the butt. Phil grunted, staggered back, and fell prone.

Sam kicked him and laughed. He turned to one of his men.

"Keep him in the stable behind the hall," he said. "And don't let him go until I get back." He turned to Phil's unconscious form. "I guess your lady friend won't think so high of you when she hears about this."

He swaggered away, leaving Phil to be dragged off to the stables.

Sam had timed his coup well. He got into the car and drove it round to the front of the hall. He was just in time. Rose was standing outside, looking about anxiously.

Sam got out and went up to her, a smirk on his face. He took off his hat.

"Was you lookin' for someone?" he asked.

Rose turned and saw him. She nodded coldly.

"I'm waiting for Phil Lee," she said.

Sam did his best to look regretful.

"I reckon Lee's busy," he said. "He started dancin' with a girl from the Three R Ranch after you'd left, and then took her walkin'. They're down by the brook somewhere."

He saw the expression of disappointment pass over her face, and chuckled inwardly. She turned as though to go down to the brook, then stopped. Bright scarlet spots burned in her cheeks.

"Do you know where Mr. John Saunders lives?" she asked suddenly.

"Sure," said Sam. "Was you wantin' to see him? If so, me and the boys will take you there. We're goin' that way ourselves."

She looked at him doubtfully, then still more doubtfully at the car. In the end, she shrugged her shoulders.

"I'll be grateful if you would," she said.

Sam went to the car, and held open the door. She got in and sat down next to the driving-seat. Sam got in beside her.

"You warm enough?" he asked, trying to be solicitous for her comfort.

"Yes, thank you," she replied stiffly.

"And would you mind hurrying? I want to get there quickly."

Sam's eyes glinted as he let in the clutch. The car moved slowly away.

Meanwhile Phil was fast recovering from the blow that Sam had given him. He kept his eyes shut until his swimming senses had returned to him fully, then opened them the merest fraction.

He found that he was lying on a truss of hay. Nearly sat one of Sam's men, smoking, gun in hand.

Phil did not move. He looked at the man for some time, wondering how to surprise him.

Then he had an idea. Moving his fingers inch by inch, he caught hold of a button on his jacket and wrenched it off. Slowly he worked it into position between thumb and forefinger, and flicked it across the stable.

It hit the far wall with a slight click, and the man with the gun spun round to see what it was.

The next instant, Phil was upon him and bearing him to the ground. The man tried to break loose, but Phil's fist swung hard and caught the man on the side of the jaw. The man went limp, gasped for breath, then tried to recover.

Phil hit again, this time more accurately. The man went down with a crash and lay still.

"I guess I owed you that," Phil muttered, and picked up the man's gun. Then he raced out into the open.

The car was nowhere to be seen.

Phil ran across to the veranda of the hall, and found a deputy-sheriff lounging about smoking a cigarette. Phil went up to him.

"Where's Sam Wales?" he asked crisply.

The deputy pointed down the trail that led to Dad Saunders' mine.

"He drove down that way," he replied.

"Miss Campbell was with him." He saw the expression on Phil's face. "Anything wrong?"

Phil shook his head.

"Nothing that I can't handle alone," he replied, and rushed away.

Pursuit

SAM WALES drove slowly. He did not reckon he had anything to fear from Phil Lee. Phil was a prisoner, and would remain so until further orders.

He leaned towards Rose confidentially. "So you found out about Dad Saunders after all?" he said in a low voice.

She turned and looked at him coldly. "Why didn't you tell me you knew him when I asked you first?" she demanded.

Sam did his best to put a tender look on his face.

"I'm sorry," he said. "The fact was, I reckoned I wanted to know you better. I thought that if I told you about him right away, you'd clear off down to his place, and I wouldn't see so much of you. You can't blame a guy for bein' crazy about you, honey."

She looked at him with distaste.

"And your way of showing how crazy you are about me is to tell me lies," she said bitterly. "I think you'd better drive more quickly. The sooner I arrive at my grandfather's place, the better I'll be pleased."

He took one hand off the steering-wheel and tried to put it about her. She shrank back, and when he persisted she reached out and brought the flat of her hand across his face.

One of the men behind guffawed. Sam went red, and turned to say something about it. But the words never left his lips. His mouth just dropped open, and his eyes began to show fear.

For riding hard along some rising ground a little to the rear was a lone horseman.

"Lee!" Sam Wales breathed.

Rose heard, and stared at the rider.

"Oh, thank heaven!" she cried, and made to get out of the car.

Roughly Sam pushed her back into her seat and pressed his foot on the accelerator. The car leapt forward.

"Let him have it, boys!" he shouted.

(Continued on page 28.)

"AIR PATROL"

(Continued from page 18.)

Give orders for a hoat to be lowered. Look, there's the 'plane, lying to starboard. You can see it through the port-hole."

"Son, you're taking an awful chance," his father began, but Nick cut in on him. His mind was made up, and nothing could deter him from his purpose. Consequently, some little time afterwards, the passengers aboard the Meridian were treated to the spectacle of a young man going over the side into one of the ship's boats, in which two sailors were already seated.

The young man was Nick Terris, of course. He was about Henty's build, and, in the gangster's clothes, he felt that he might pass muster for the scoundrel, especially with the aid of a pair of sun-glasses which he intended to slip on.

Nick descended into the waiting row-boat with the leather bag in one hand and Henty's revolver in the other. He made a show of covering the two oarsmen with the gun as they pulled for the stationary seaplane, and soon he was alongside the sky-pirates' machine.

A door was opened for him, and he was helped aboard by Powell, whom he did not recognise. But once in the cabin of the 'plane, he glanced through to the pilot's compartment and saw Frank Harland at the controls.

"What's the idea of the sun-glasses?" Powell was inquiring.

Nick kept his head down. "I was afraid someone might spot me on board the Meridian," he answered in a muffled tone. "Tell Harland to get goin'. Everything is okay."

Shortly afterwards the seaplane was rising off the surface of the water, watched by several hundred onlookers from the rail of the s.s. Meridian. But not all of those aboard the steamship were idle, for Captain Terris and one of his officers were engaged in the task of reviving the wireless operator whom Henty had struck down.

They succeeded in bringing him round, and the operator then set to work on the job of repairing the radio. He managed to fix it up temporarily, and, though it was by no means in perfect order, he finally made contact with Colonel Curtis at the San Antonio airport, flashing a message that turned the flying-field into a hive of industry.

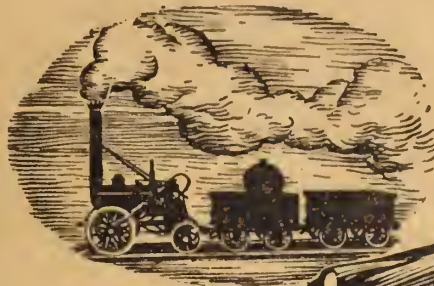
Pete Taylor was among the pilots who took off and headed for the Gulf in widely-scattered formation, intent upon tracing the seaplane that had figured in the raid on the s.s. Meridian, and presently he was flying alone over the deep, his nearest comrade being an aviator who was patrolling the coastline.

In the meantime, aboard the cabin 'plane occupied by the sky-robbers, neither Powell nor Harland had discovered Nick's identity. Powell had merely handed Nick a parachute, advising him to don it in case of accidents, and had then turned to enter into a conversation with the man at the controls.

Nick took the precaution of attaching the chute to his body, and as he was fixing the harness he heard a snatch of the discussion that was in progress between Powell and Harland.

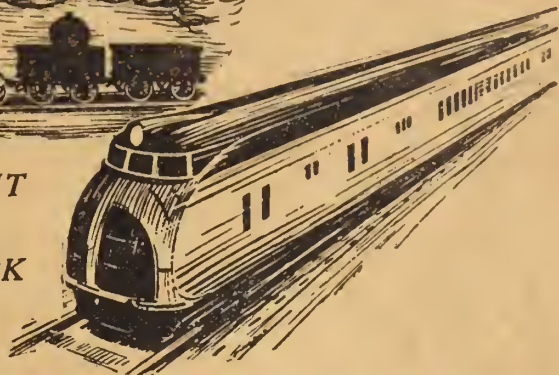
"Don't head for the old hide-out," Powell was saying. "The Mexican authorities will be picking up Jordan there, like I told you. Set your course for the south."

(Continued on page 27.)



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"THE CASE OF THE HOWLING DOG"

(Continued from page 12.)

"I'm beginning to see daylight in this case," he said contentedly. "I think I'm about ready to go to trial."

Laughter in Court

THE case of "The People versus Bessie Foley" came up for trial in Court No. 1 at the Hall of Justice a week later, and Claude Drumm—as district attorney—opened it on behalf of the prosecution.

"I propose to show," he wound up, "that on the night of the seventeenth of April of this year Cluton Foley was shot to death by the defendant in this case. I propose to show that she inadvertently left a handkerchief in the taxicab which took her to the scene of the crime, and that, recognising the danger of leaving behind so deadly a clue, she sought out the driver of the cab and had the handkerchief returned to her."

The members of the jury—seven men and five women—glanced across the well of the court at Bessie Foley, seated at the table of the attorney for the defence. The people who crowded the back of the court tried to get a glimpse of her strained face. She was dressed sombrely in black, except for a white blouse, and was nervously opening and closing her handbag.

On the other side of Perry Mason sat Della Street, in a grey costume and furs, a picture of serenity, though she did not feel by any means serene. But nobody paid any attention to her.

The lean-faced taxi-driver was called to the witness-stand, and gave his name as Samuel Martin and his age as forty-eight. Claude Drumm questioned him to his own satisfaction and sat down with a wave of his hand. Then Perry Mason rose, crossed the well, and leaned an arm upon the ledge of the witness-stand.

"You're absolutely certain that it was the defendant in this case who hired your taxicab?" he asked silkily.

"Yes, sir," nodded the man.

"And you're positive that it was the defendant to whom you returned the handkerchief?"

"Yes, sir, I'm sure of that."

"Then you're just as certain that the woman who called for the handkerchief was the same woman who hired you to take her out to Milpas Drive?"

"Yes, sir," declared the man emphatically, and pointed a finger at Bessie Foley. "That's the woman."

Perry Mason turned round.

"Della Street," he said loudly, "will you please stand up?"

Della stood, and there was a hush in the court.

"Take a look at this young lady," directed Perry Mason, "and tell me if you've ever seen her before."

The district attorney was instantly on his feet.

"Your honour," he cried, "I object to this form of testing the recollection of the witness. It is not proper cross-examination!"

The keen-faced judge looked at Mason. "You intend to connect it up?" he inquired.

"I'll do better than that," was the prompt reply. "I'll withdraw the question as it was asked, and ask you, Samuel Martin, is not the woman now standing in the court-room the same woman who called for a handkerchief which had been left in your taxicab on the evening of April seventeenth?"

February 9th, 1935.

"No, sir," persisted the witness, "it was the defendant."

"You couldn't possibly be mistaken?"

"No, sir, I'm not mistaken about either of 'em."

"Remember you are testifying under oath," said Perry Mason, and beckoned to Bessie Foley and to Della Street, who walked together across the well of the court and stood a few feet away from the witness-stand. "Now, are you absolutely certain that this woman is not the woman who called for and received from you the handkerchief which has been introduced as evidence in this case?"

Samuel Martin blinked as Della suddenly held her furs up to her face and smiled at him.

"Well—er—maybe I'm not so sure!" he stammered.

"Then if you could be mistaken about the woman to whom you gave the handkerchief, you could also be mistaken about the identity of your passenger?"

The taxi-driver moistened his lips with his tongue.

"Well," he admitted, "if I can be mistaken in one, I might be mistaken in the other."

"Are you mistaken, or are you not mistaken?" thundered Perry Mason.

"I don't know."

Laughter rippled round the court, and mingled with excited chatter.

"That's all," said Perry Mason, and the District Attorney sprang up again.

"Your honour," he said hoarsely. "may I ask for a recess until to-morrow morning?"

"Yes," decided the judge. "The court will adjourn until ten o'clock to-morrow morning. During the recess the jury is admonished not to talk about the case among themselves, nor to permit it to be discussed in their presence."

Newspaper reporters dived into telephone boxes out in the hall, and the court was cleared. But Press photographers were waiting in the hall with their machines, and as Della emerged with Perry Mason, flashlamps blazed and camera shutters clicked.

"Ooh!" cried Della.

"Don't get alarmed," said Mason. "You're only going to have your picture in the papers! Go ahead, boys!"

There were more flashes as the District Attorney appeared, and he shouted furiously at Mason:

"You deliberately planned this just to get a dramatic story on the front page!"

"Go on, bite him, Drumm!" urged one of the photographers, and the irate District Attorney was snapped in the very act of snarling.

"Got everything you want, boys?" laughed Perry Mason. "Give me a ring if ever you get picked up for murder!"

He went off with Della on his arm, but after he had left the Hall of Justice his air of easy confidence deserted him and, back in his own office, after lunch, he slumped into a chair and nursed his chin.

Ed Wheeler and George Dobbs found him there, and Wheeler said sympathetically:

"Got you worried, haven't they, chief?"

"Yes, a little," Mason confessed. "You see, there are only three keys to a successful outcome of this trial. One is the identification of a certain handwriting—the hand that wrote the second Mrs. Foley's letter of farewell and also wrote the telegram sent from Ventura; the second is the howling dog."

"You still harping on that dog?" exclaimed Wheeler. "I thought you'd forgotten about it."

"On the contrary," said Mason get-

ting abruptly to his feet, "I'm going to prove that the dog did howl—although that can come later."

"But the dog is dead," Wheeler reminded him.

"Nevertheless, when the time comes, I'll have to prove that the dog howled."

"You said there were three things," ventured Dobbs. "What's the third?"

"We've got to find out what happened to Cartwright and the original Mrs. Cartwright. They've disappeared. We've got to find them before the district attorney does, and beat the prosecution to their testimony. I want you to find them, boys, but first let's concentrate on this handwriting. I'm going to take a chance on your both going to gaol!"

"Yeah?" said Wheeler with a chuckle. "How?"

"I want you to call on Luey Benton. Tell her you're reporters from the 'Chronicle,' and have the okay to pay her ten thousand dollars for the exclusive right to publish her diary. Of course she won't let you have it till the money is paid, but she will let you look at it."

"You want us to grab the diary?" suggested Dobbs.

"No; I want you to turn to the page marked April eighteenth, and tear the page from the book. I want that page if you've got to fight your way out from her flat."

"All right," said Wheeler grimly. "Page April eighteenth. We're on our way, chief!"

Della entered with a whole sheaf of special editions of the evening papers soon after they had gone, and she and Perry Mason went through them together.

"This front-page editorial in the 'Tribune' criticises you for not letting Mrs. Foley take the stand," announced Della. "It declares that you're jeopardising the freedom of a woman who may be innocent."

"And how do you feel about it?" inquired Mason.

"I'm going to ask you to let her give evidence. Everyone thinks she's innocent, now that the evidence of the taxi-driver's blown to bits. All she's got to do is to deny the murder charges and give an explanation, and the jury will vote her not guilty."

"Suppose she were to tell her story and get convicted?" said Mason with a curious expression in his eyes. "Della, once and for all, I'm not going to let Mrs. Foley take the witness-stand under any circumstances!"

The Noise of a Drill

LUCY BENTON admitted Ed Wheeler and George Dobbs readily enough to the snug little sitting-room of her flat, and she accepted their statement that they were reporters from the "Chronicle," but it was quite another matter to induce her to let them look at the diary.

Carl Trask was in the room—a colourless sort of young man with a long nose and washed-out blue eyes—and it was really due to him that she yielded.

"Go ahead and let 'em take a look at it," he urged. "What can you lose? Ten thousand bucks is a lot o' dough for a little scribbin'!"

"All right," she said, none too willingly, "you may read just a little of it!"

She went into the bed-room and returned with a small leather-bound volume which she handed to Dobbs, who sat down on a chesterfield beside his colleague and began to turn the pages.

Suddenly he ripped a sheet from the book, and she flew at him like a wild-

cat, but was intercepted by Ed Wheeler, who sprang up and grabbed hold of her.

"What are you doing?" she cried savagely. "Give me that!"

"Take it easy, sister," drawled Dobbs, pocketing the sheet and dropping the diary on the chestfield as he rose to his feet.

"Carl, do something!" she shouted. "Don't let them get away with it!"

Carl Trask clenched his fists, but knew that he was no match for the two men.

"Come on, you guys!" he said fiercely. "Kick back with that paper!"

"They're not reporters at all!" stormed Lucy Benton, struggling to free herself. "They're detectives!"

"What's all the excitement?" jeered Ed Wheeler. "You're not afraid of anything, are you?"

"Come on, don't stall!" bellowed Trask. "Hand it over!"

"Just a minute, now," drawled George Dobbs. "What's your name?"

"My name's Carl Trask, but that hasn't got anything to do with it."

"Carl Trask, eh? And you want this piece of paper—is that right?"

"Yeah, and I want it in a hurry!"

Dobbs thrust his hand into his breast-pocket and he brought out a paper, but it was not the sheet he had torn from the diary.

"Well, here's a piece of paper that's just as good," he said. "Read it over carefully. Here's one for the dame, too!"

A second sheet of paper was deposited on the table while Carl Trask gaped at the one he had received.

"Hi, what is this, a subpoena?" he gasped.

"You guessed it, brother," chuckled Dobbs. "Be in court at ten o'clock in the morning."

"What's the big idea?" Trask exploded. "I'm not in on this!"

"That's what you think," said Wheeler, and let go of Lucy Benton to pick up his hat.

He followed Dobbs swiftly to the door, and they went out, regardless of the girl's shouted abuse.

Next morning, in court, Lucy Benton was one of the first witnesses called for the defence. She took her seat on the stand with a defiant toss of her head for Perry Mason, and the manner in which she answered his preliminary questions demonstrated her hostility and caused the District Attorney to wonder why she had been subpoenaed. But Perry Mason was very quiet and very patient.

"And now, in reference to Mr. Foley's German police dog, Prince," he said slowly. "Was the dog devoted to Evelyn Foley, formerly Evelyn Cartwright?"

"Yes," admitted the girl. "He had become very attached to her."

"And the dog was also devoted to Mrs. Bessie Foley?"

"Naturally," snapped Lucy Benton. "He had been with Mr. and Mrs. Foley for years at Santa Barbara."

"And the dog had also become attached to you?"

"Yes. He had a very affectionate disposition."

"I can understand that," commented Mason. "Yet the dog howled almost continuously during the nights of the fifteenth and sixteenth of April of the present year?"

"He did not!"

"Is it not a fact," suggested Perry Mason, moving nearer to the witness-stand, "that the dog left the house, stood near an addition to the garage which was under construction, and howled dismally?"

Lucy Benton's eyes were turned to

the clock on the wall, but she declared emphatically:

"He did not!"

Perry Mason, with a glance for the jury, looked up at the judge.

"May it please the court," he said gravely, "the defence, at this time, would like to make a motion for the adjournment of the court, officers, and witnesses, to the scene of the crime, in Milpas Drive, for the further examination of this witness."

"A most unusual motion," exclaimed the judge.

"Unusual, Your Honour," agreed Mason, "but not necessarily irregular. It is only at the Foley residence that the defence can hope to introduce new and important evidence, physically impossible to bring into this court."

The judge looked across at Claude Drumm.

"Does the prosecution wish to enter any objections?" he inquired.

"On the contrary, Your Honour," was the prompt rejoinder, "the prosecution feel that a visit to the scene of the crime may be of great benefit to the jury in arriving at a verdict."

The judge pursed his lips.

"Motion granted," he decided. "Bailiff, take charge of the jury."

A buzz of excited conversation filled the court. Bessie Foley looked worried, and Lucy Benton gulped and descended from the witness-stand because the clerk had whispered to her.

Cars were ordered, and all the people concerned in the case were conveyed to the house in Milpas Drive. The drawing-room was converted into a sort of court, and the judge sat in a high-backed chair at a little round table in the bay-window.

Lucy Benton was conducted to an easy-chair on the left of the bay, and Perry Mason resumed his interrogation. From the direction of the garage, out in the ground, there arose a noise as of pneumatic drills at work.

"Now, as I understand your testimony," said Mason loudly, because of the noise, "Evelyn Foley—formerly Cartwright—left this residence in a taxi-cab on the morning of April seventeenth."

"Yes, that is correct," admitted the girl.

"You saw her leave?"

"Yes."

Perry Mason folded his arms, paced a costly rug, and suddenly whirled round on the witness.

"Do I understand," he demanded, "that you saw her alive on the morning of April the seventeenth?"

Lucy Benton drew a long breath, then turned appealingly to the judge.

"Your Honour," she faltered, "that pounding is driving me crazy! I can scarcely think!"

The judge himself was irritated by the din and nodded.

"Bailiff," he said, "will you please see that that noise is stopped?"

The bailiff went out through the lounge-hall to the garden.

"The witness will answer the last question," directed the judge, and Lucy Benton held up her head.

"I can't say that I saw her personally," she admitted. "I heard

steps going down the stairs from her room. I was—here in this room. I glanced out and saw a taxi-cab drawn up by the front door. I took it for granted the woman was Mrs. Evelyn Foley."

Perry Mason advanced to an exquisitely-carved desk, from which he took two photostatic prints. He held them almost under the girl's nose.

"Now you've identified this letter as being in the handwriting of Mrs. Evelyn Foley," he said sharply. "Will you identify this photostatic copy of a telegram as also being in her handwriting?"

He thrust the print of the telegram into the girl's unsteady hand and stood over her.

"Don't you know?" he shouted. "You unhesitatingly identified this letter as being in her handwriting—what about this telegram?"

"Yes," murmured Lucy Benton in a voice little above a whisper. "Yes—it's the same."

Perry Mason took the photostatic copy of the telegram from Lucy Benton's hand.

"Will you kindly explain," he said in a voice that chilled her to the spine, "how Mrs. Evelyn Foley could have written a letter, and dispatched this telegram from Ventura, both on the seventeenth of April of this year, when you know that she was murdered on the evening of the fifteenth of April—just as you also know that her former husband, Arthur Cartwright, was murdered in this house on the following night?"

The Dog That Howled

LUCY BENTON sat speechless in her chair and closed her eyes; Claude Drumm sprang up in consternation.

"That is objected to," he shouted, "as argumentative, calling for a conclusion of the witness, not proper examination, and assuming a fact not in evidence."

"Objection sustained," said the judge.

The startled members of the jury settled down in their seats at the back of the room, and Lucy Benton buried her face in her hands. The noise of pneumatic drills persisted.

"Didn't you write this letter?" demanded Perry Mason.

"No!" cried the girl hysterically, and raised her head to look at the print he was holding out to her. "No, that handwriting doesn't resemble mine in the least!"

"As a matter of fact," said Mason, "on April the seventeenth your right hand was in a bandage, wasn't it? You'd been bitten by a dog?"

"Yes," she replied more firmly.

"Prince had been poisoned, and when I tried to give him an emetic he accidentally bit my hand."

"You couldn't hold a pen in that hand?"

"Of course I couldn't!" she cried.

"And that goes to show how false your accusation is that I wrote the letter or the telegram! Why, my hand was so crippled I couldn't possibly hold a pen in it!"

"Exactly," said Mason. "But didn't you go to Ventura on the seventeenth of April in an automobile driven by Carl Trask?"



ASK DAD—

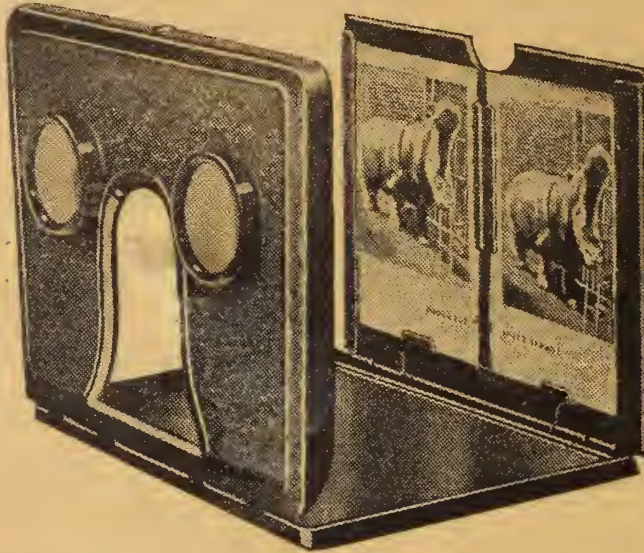
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"Yes," she said slowly. "I—I thought I might find Mrs. Cartwright—I mean Mrs. Evelyn Foley—in Ventura."

"And you didn't write this telegram while you were there, because you couldn't hold a pen in your right hand on that day, or for several days thereafter—isn't that true?"

"Yes."
"Very well. But isn't it a fact that you kept a diary over the period I've mentioned?"

"Yes," she said—and realised that she was caught in a trap. "No!"

The sheet which George Dobbs had ripped from the diary was flourished before her frightened eyes.

"Isn't this a page from your diary, written on April the seventeenth?" Perry Mason demanded harshly. "Is it not a fact, Lucy Benton, that you are ambidextrous—that you have always been able to write equally well with either hand? Is it not a fact that the handwriting on this page from your diary is identical with the handwriting on this letter and this telegram, both of which are purported to have been written by Mrs. Evelyn Foley, formerly Mrs. Evelyn Cartwright?"

Lucy Benton became a huddled and quivering figure of fear in the chair she occupied. Her lips moved, but she could not utter a word. And then, in the awed silence, everybody in the drawing-room realised that the din of drills had ceased and that voices outside the house were shouting something that sounded like "Murder!"

Bessie Foley, seated at the end of the carved desk caught at her breath and shivered.

Running feet sounded in the lounge-hall, and the bailiff burst excitedly into the presence of the judge, followed by Ed Wheeler and others.

"Your honour," blurted the bailiff, "they've just dug up two bodies in the garage! They were buried under the concrete!"

"You were right, chief," boomed Ed Wheeler. "It's Arthur Cartwright, and the dame was his wife! Both shot through the head!"

With a little strangled cry Lucy Benton got to her feet—and Ed Wheeler gripped her by wrist and arm. The district attorney rushed over to the judge.

"Your honour!" he cried. "Your honour, in the name of common decency I demand an adjournment!"

The judge rapped on the table with his gavel and glared at the whispering members of the jury.

"Granted," he said. "And the court recommends that the district attorney shall take the proper steps to determine this witness' connection with the murders of Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright."

In the cars that had brought them to the house, all those concerned in the proceedings were taken back to the court; and late in the afternoon of that day, Perry Mason made his speech to the jury.

After he had dealt with every other aspect of the case, he said warmly:

"It is the contention of the prosecution that the shots which killed Clinton Foley and the dog were fired by his wife, the defendant, but there is one unanswerable objection to such a theory. If the killer had been the defendant it would not have been necessary for her to have shot the dog. And why?"

"I will tell you why! The dog knew the defendant and loved her. It would have been overjoyed at seeing the defendant, and at knowing that the two persons to whom it was most devoted

had been remitted. That, ladies and gentlemen, disposes of the case for the prosecution!"

In the circumstances the verdict of the jury was almost inevitable. Bessie Foley was found not guilty!

At six o'clock in the evening, while newsboys were shouting in the streets of the city "Foley murder case result! Extra!" Ed Wheeler and George Dobbs played draughts in a room adjoining Perry Mason's private office and glanced occasionally at a splendid specimen of a German police dog, lying contentedly under the table to which it was fastened.

Perry Mason was leaning against his desk, talking to Della Street, who had several questions to ask.

"How did you guess that the bodies of Arthur Cartwright and his former wife were buried under the garage?" was one of them; and Mason replied:

"Arthur Cartwright told the truth when he said the dog howled on the night of April the fifteenth. Between the time he came here to see me and the time he wrote his will he discovered, somehow, that his wife was dead. That's why he changed his will, leaving his property to Bessie Foley instead of to Evelyn, who had been his wife."

"Then you think it was Foley who killed Evelyn?" said Della.

"Unquestionably. She discovered that Foley and his so-called housekeeper were in love. They'd probably been quarrelling about it for days. It was a premeditated crime, otherwise why should Foley have built a totally unnecessary addition to his garage? And when Cartwright faced them with his suspicions they had to commit a second crime to cover up the first."

There came a tap at the door, and Bessie Foley opened it, a free woman but a very pallid one.

"I beg your pardon," she murmured. "Am I intruding?"

"Oh, no at all!" declared Perry Mason heartily. "I was waiting for you."

An excited barking rang out from the inner room and he pressed a bell-button on the desk, whereupon Ed Wheeler released the dog and opened the door.

"Prince!" cried Bessie Foley, as the animal flew joyously to her. "Prince, you rascal! Hallo, boy!"

"I beg your pardon," said Perry Mason with a cryptic smile, "but his name is not Prince! Prince is dead!"

Bessie Foley stared at him, patting the dog.

"Down, Prince, down!" she commanded, and the dog settled contentedly at her feet.

"I urge you not to call him Prince," said Perry Mason significantly.

"Where did you get him?" she asked.

"Well," said Mason, "I couldn't understand why the dog suddenly stopped howling, and why an apparently friendly animal should have savagely attacked Luey Benton. So I made a round of the kennels in the neighbourhood, and I found one kennel where a man answering to the description of Clinton Foley had exchanged a German police dog on the night of April the sixteenth for another police dog of similar appearance. I purchased the dog."

"What are you going to do with him?" she inquired.

"I would suggest that you take him with you. Keep me advised of your whereabouts—and, remember, don't answer any questions."

She went off soon afterwards, expressing her gratitude; and the dog went

with her. But Della Street gazed accusingly at her employer.

"That was the dog that howled!" she said. "The only real argument you had to convince the jury of Mrs. Foley's innocence was that her own dog would never have attacked her—she'd never have had to shoot him. This means that—that woman actually did—"

Perry Mason clapped a hand over Della Street's mouth and slipped an arm round her waist.

"I have never heard Mrs. Foley's story," he said quietly, "nor has anyone else, but I'm convinced that anything she did was done in self-defence. She had to defend herself against a savage dog and a murderous man. I acted merely as her lawyer."

Della looked admiringly up into his face.

"You're a cross between a saint and a devil," she declared.

"How do you like it?" chuckled Perry Mason—and kissed her on the lips.

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SCREEN STORIES

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"AIR PATROL"

(Continued from page 23.)

The harness of the parachute firmly buckled around him, Nick drew Henry's gun and covered the two men with it.

"Harland," he ground out, "you'll take your orders from me. You'll set your course for the north and the San Antonio Air Base."

The scoundrelly pilot and his accomplice whipped round, and, as Nick coolly removed the sun-glasses he was wearing, Frank Harland gave vent to an oath.

"Terris!" he blurted. "The game's up," Nick told the crooks in grim accents: "You're taking a nice long trip that will end in the gaol-house. Come on, Harland—swing north!"

With the gun threatening him, the man at the controls was forced to obey, and for the next twenty minutes the 'plane sped in the direction Nick had indicated. Twenty minutes—because it took Harland just that length of time to pluck up sufficient courage to throw the craft into an ugly dive at the risk of being shot.

The sudden dip of the machine caught Nick unawares and pitched him in a heap on the floor. Powell also lost his balance, but he was flung against the side of the cabin and managed to keep his feet. Nor was he slow to take advantage of the situation, and with a shout he hurled himself on Nick Terris as the vessel straightened out.

A series of cowardly blows reduced the youngster to insensibility, and it was in an exultant voice that Powell called out to Harland.

"I got him! I got him! When you made that dive! What'll we do with him?"

"Dump him out," Harland answered tersely. "And make it snappy. There's another 'plane ahead of us, and it looks like a government outfit. See—it's just flown out of that cloud. I'm swingin' south again, but get Terris out of here."

With difficulty Powell dragged Nick from the floor and hauled him to the side of the cabin. Then he rolled down one of the windows and shoved his victim through the aperture, sending him to what seemed certain doom in a stretch of sea dotted with small islets.

Nick Terris was lucky. It was by sheer chance that the ring of the unconscious youngster's parachute fouled the catch of the window. It was by sheer chance that it held for an instant and then snapped—just as the rip-cord was pulled and the folds of the chute billowed out in the wind.

Nick floated downwards to the sea, and was dropped into the water, the cold shock reviving him even as the parachute sagged around him. Then he collected his wits, and, struggling out of the harness, he swam towards a strip of beach fifty yards away.

He gained firm sand, and as he hid so he realised that a 'plane was descending. It was the government 'plane which Harland had observed a minute or two previously, and as it came to rest on the beach Nick recognised Pete Taylor at the controls.

It did not take Nick long to climb into the passenger cockpit, before which a machine-gun was mounted, and in a few seconds the craft was rising into the air again, wheeling in pursuit of the ship occupied by Harland and Powell.

From the outset it was clear that the

(Continued on page 28.)

February 9th, 1935.

"QUICK TRIGGER LEE"

(Continued from page 22.)

The rider came to a sudden stop as a gun roared from the back of the car. He let go of his reins, and drew his own gun. Carefully he rested it on the crook of his left arm and pressed the trigger.

The bullet found one of Sam's rear tyres, and the car began to bump and sway dangerously. Rose let out a cry of alarm, and one of the men in the back touched Sam on the shoulder.

"You'd better stop, boss," he said. "We can deal with him better if the car is still."

Sam slammed on his brakes, and reached for his own gun. Phil, watching, suddenly spurred his horse and began to bear down upon the car as hard as he could.

The men in the back raised their guns and waited, knowing that the nearer Phil got the better mark he would make. Phil came on at headlong speed.

Suddenly one of the men took careful aim. Instantly Rose let out a cry and caught hold of his hand. The gun exploded and the bullet buried itself in the ground.

Phil's own gun roared a split second later, and the man fell backwards over the side of the car, a red stain appearing on his right shoulder. Phil's gun roared yet again, and the second man gave a howl of agony and started nursing his wrist.

Then Phil stopped. He was but twenty yards away now, and made a perfect mark.

"Well, Wales," he shouted. "Do we shoot it out?"

Sam's gun was half-up, and his first impulse was to take quick aim and let fly. Then he remembered the accuracy of Phil's shooting, and remained still.

"Take his gun and throw it into the road, Miss Campbell," Phil went on. "We can do without the artillery now, I reckon."

Rose obeyed, and Phil slid from the saddle. Slowly he walked to the side of the car.

"Sorry I had to make trouble in front of you," he said to Rose, and turned to Sam. "You'd better get going, Wales," he went on. "And if you want my advice, leave the district, otherwise the next time I meet you I'm going to give you the biggest beating you ever had. You'd get it now, only it wouldn't be a pleasant sight for a lady to see." Sam, sitting hunched in the car, made

no reply. Phil picked up the three guns that were lying around, and then turned to Rose.

"There's only one horse," he said, "but if you wouldn't mind sharing it with me I reckon we can manage."

Rose smiled at him, and got out of the car.

"Won't that young lady you were dancing with be jealous?" she asked. Phil looked at Sam significantly.

"So he's been telling more lies, huh?" he said. "That'll be something else to square later on." He led her to the horse and helped her mount, then swung up lightly behind her. "There isn't any young lady," he finished gruffly as he jerked the horse forward.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"The Case of the Howling Dog"—

Perry Mason, Warren William; Bessie Foley, Mary Astor; Della Street, Helen Trenholme; Detective-sergeant Holcomb, Allen Jenkins; Claude Drum, Grant Mitchell; Lucy Benton, Dorothy Tree; Clinton Foley, Russell Hicks; Arthur Cartwright, Gordon Westcott; Ed Wheeler, Eddie Shubert; George Dobbs, James Burtis; Elizabeth Walker, Helen Lowell; Bill Pemberton, Arthur Aylesworth; Samuel Martin, Harry Tyler; Dr. Carl Cooper, Frank Reicher; The Judge, Addison Richards.

"Air Patrol"—Nick Terris, Ray Walker; Janet, Jacqueline Wells; Colonel, William Farum; Captain Terris, Noah Beery; Pete Taylor, Hiram Hooper; Harland, Morgan Conway; Powell, Warner Richmond; Paul Henty, Donald Reed.

"Quick Trigger Lee"—Phil (Quick Trigger) Lee, Bob Custer; Sam Wales, Monte Montague; Jeremy Wales, Lee Cordova; John (Dad) Saunders, Richard Carlyle; Rose Campbell, Caryl Lincoln.

She leaned back against him contentedly.

"I'm glad about that," she said softly. "Very glad indeed."

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Admirers of Francis Lederer may be interested to know that there is a Francis Lederer Club with headquarters in London. Full particulars, if desired, can be obtained from the British representative, Miss J. P. Lederer, 67, Hodford Road, Golders Green, London, N.W.11.

"AIR PATROL"

(Continued from page 27.)

government plane had a big advantage in speed over his quarry, and soon Pete and Nick were close up on the fugitives. Then came a streaming blast of hot lead from the foe, a fusillade which was promptly answered by the patrol sloop's machine-gun.

Within the scaplane Harland was drilled by a rain of death that shattered the windows of the craft, and next instant the vessel was hurtling to disaster in a terrific nose-dive, exploding into fragments as it hit the water with ghastly impact.

Half an hour later Plane Number Seven of the Border Patrol was soaring high above the deck of the s.s. Meridian, and Lieutenant Pete Taylor was yelling a command to his friend and comrade. "Go on, mug, bail out! You've had one wetting, and another won't hurt you. You'll find a clute right beside you."

Nick grinned and began to prepare himself for another descent through space.

"Okay, sweetheart!" he sang out, when he had adjusted the harness. "I'll be seein' you."

"At the airport—after the honeyficers h moon."

"Right," said Nick. "That's if they'll take me back on the Force."

"They'll take you back, don't you worry," Pete rejoined. "They'll jump at you. So-long—mug!"

Five minutes afterwards Nick Terris was picked out of the sea by one of the Meridian's lifeboats, and the first to greet him as he climbed to the steership's deck was Janet. Together they stood by the rail, locked in fond embrace, with the youngster's father looking on smilingly, and meanwhile, high above the sea-going vessel, Government Plane Number Seven traced a message in the sky.

It was a message written in smoke, a message from a man who had lost in the game of love but knew how to take defeat and disappointment.

"Good luck!" it spelled.

Nick and Janet broke apart and gazed up at the whirling plane. They waved, and Pete waved back, then, with a final dip of his machine, he turned and flew off to the Airport.

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Conspirators

A POWERFUL low-bodied car pulled up with a screech of brakes before a shabby, red-bricked villa. A dark, pale-faced girl of unusual beauty alighted and surveyed the house carefully, then she glanced up and down the very quiet road before lifting the latch of the gate.

The place seemed deserted, but it was the address on the envelope. The girl was about to ring the bell when a sound made her glance round—a man had appeared from a side entrance and was peering at her through thick-lensed glasses searchingly and suspiciously. Not very old, of obvious foreign origin, with a thin face and hooky nose—very like a hawk. He came into the porch and towered over her, but the girl did not seem awed or perturbed by his behaviour.

"Are you Mr. Markoff?"

"I am," he replied, and took the letter she gave him. "You are Miss Arlington? Excuse me!"

The contents of the letter were brief:

"This will introduce Miss Carol Arlington. She will serve as undergraduate leader of the radical activities at State and will carry out your commands at all times. She will not fail the cause. Fraternally, K. N., 405."

Across the headlines were large blue letters: "THE LEAGUE OF FREEDOM."

Markoff folded the note.

"There are no other credentials?"

"None—that note is sufficient."

"It is unfortunate that you are so beautiful." Markoff scowled at her.

The girl smiled.

"Why?"

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"It raises questions concerning your sincerity."

"I've just been thrown out of one college for my sincerity."

His lips twisted in a sneer.

"That wasn't sincerity—that was stupidity. Now I must make one thing clear. I detest having to work with a woman. Here in America women are permitted to think that they are as smart as men, so I shall have to tolerate you. If you will keep that in mind—it will save much difficulty."

"Cut out the talk, and give me my orders." Her eyes narrowed as she strove to keep her temper.

"I said a moment ago that you were fired from college last year because of your stupidity." The eyes behind the glasses glowered at her. "That was true only in a measure. To a certain degree our whole party was guilty of the same kind of stupidity. We came out into the open. For this year the Central Committee has worked out an entirely different plan. In accordance with this plan you will be elected President of the Student League of Freedom here at State College."

"Do you mean to tell me that I can come here—a perfect stranger—and be elected to an important post?"

"That has been arranged," Markoff answered. "The branch committee have had their orders. Once you are elected I will have many things to tell you—but at no time must you be seen with me. When necessary we will meet here. I'm registered at the University as a law student. When you pass me on the campus—don't recognise me."

"That will be a pleasure," Carol Arlington laughed shortly.

"My plans are almost prepared for a great victory, and the Brotherhood will expect you to do your share, Miss

Arlington," Markoff told her. "Do not fail us, for the Brotherhood do not forgive a second time."

"Don't think you're putting a scare into me because you're not," the girl answered defiantly. "I was fired last time through obeying orders, and that's not my idea of failure, but the failure of the Brotherhood. Let us trust that their plans do not fail again. It might be unhealthy for all of us. If you ring State 45724 you can always leave a message for me. Good-day, Mr. Markoff."

The bogus student watched the car drive away before entering the house, which was apparently empty and unfurnished. He went down into the basement to the kitchen—an old dresser swung back to reveal a door. He tapped twice and the door immediately opened. The door closed behind him.

The Football Game

THREE weeks later Carol Arlington was elected President of the League of Freedom. It was not quite so easy as Markoff had hinted because of another candidate, Tony Tonetti. An American with Italian blood in his veins so it was said, and a great speaker. Probably he lost his chance by being so antagonistic to a girl being elected president, and thus got little of the female vote.

Markoff gave orders that meetings of a mild nature were to be held as the plan of campaign was not definitely settled by the Brotherhood. She was to keep her eyes open for any ideas and suggestions.

At the big football stadium she saw Larry Davis for the first time. A stalwart, upright young fellow, who in spite of his height and big build could move like the wind. The announcer on the

loud-speaker made his words ring round that crowded stadium.

"Believe me, this State team looks like another great football machine. At this stage of the game they're way out in front with a score of twenty to nothing. As usual, Larry Davis, dynamic quarter-back, is the leader of the State attack. His passing, punting and ball-carrying this afternoon has been little short of sensational. He's in mid-season form at the very start. Davis was an All-American last year, and, judging from his performance to-day, he's a cinch to repeat again this fall. Boy, he's the kind of quarter-back a coach stays up all night praying for. It's still fourth quarter. Captain Johnson is kicking off for Carter. It's a nice kick—going deep into State territory. Larry Davis is waiting for it on his three-yard line. He traps the ball neatly, spills a couple of tackles, and is away like the breeze. He's up to the fifteen-yard line and still going. My—oh, my—oh, my! He crosses the thirty—the thirty-five, and is finally downed on State's forty-seven-yard line."

The crowd bellowed their praise of this great run.

"Blake has the ball. He heaves it to Davis. Davis is off. With ease and without abating his tremendous pace he avoids the hands that try to bear him down. He's right down into Carter territory. Ah, he's down on Carter's twenty-three yard line—"

Carol Arlington turned to the girl seated next to her.

"That Larry Davis seems to be the whole team."

"I wouldn't say that," answered the student. "Although he did make All-America last year, and he'll make it this year just as sure as you powder your nose."

Carol said nothing for a while. She saw Davis make a brilliant run and score a touchdown, which the quarter-back converted.

"Does Larry Davis dance as well as he runs with a football?" she asked.

"You'd better ask Betty Wilson." The girl student pointed. "There she is over there. That dark girl with her friend, Dodo. It is a cinch for wedding-bells. And I expect Dodo will have to marry the big fellow on her left. Charlie Kipp is his name, and he follows her about like a lamb. He never has a cent, and manages to stay here by working down at Luigi's restaurant as a waiter. I think he is the biggest breaker ever known, but Luigi keeps him on to pay off for the damage—which will be never."

"I suppose Larry Davis and Charlie are pals?"

"Yes, they room together. Larry has been relieved of his military duties at the college so that he can play football."

"Has Larry a lot of money?"

"He hasn't any debts, which is something of a record, but he hasn't any money," the student laughed. "He has a job down at the gas station, and he works there most nights. I understand he is a smart mechanic, and hopes one day to start a garage of his own. He's an upper classman, and in his last year. Betty's also in her last year. The dean thinks they're a grand couple. Betty also works some nights—she's a cashier down at Luigi's. She can do anything with that old Italian. That's all I know."

"Rah! Rah! Rah! Larry!" raved the State fans, as the quarter-back made a brilliant run and then at the right moment got the ball to one of his own men who was unmarked. The result ended in another touchdown. State had beaten Carter by 34 points to nothing.

Two nights later Carol Arlington re-

ceived a message that Markoff wished to see her, and she went over to the deserted house. The girl was blindfolded—Markoff did not completely trust her—and taken down to the cellar hide-out. In one of the cellars the bandage was removed from her eyes.

"The Central Committee has decided on a plan of action," stated Markoff. "Somebody has said that a college is only a little red building attached to a stadium filled with two football teams and seventy thousand people. We're going to start the campaign by cracking inter-collegiate football wide open."

"Another nutty idea!" scoffed the girl. "What are you planning to do—bomb it from the air?"

"Silence!" Markoff rasped out. "This is no matter for jesting. We can achieve our end by taking the money out of it. The committee has gone thoroughly into the matter. Until the League of Freedom is strongly organized we cannot risk an open encounter with the authorities."

"Why pick football?"

"Because football is very vulnerable. It will give us something to shout about. Once the youth of this country have tasted victory in a common cause, it will be a simple matter to direct their energies against the evils of the existing social order." Markoff stood up and fairly shouted his words at her. "We must find a way to turn these fools from their football to the League of Freedom. Bust up their games and we will gain hundreds of recruits. Our power grows, and our power will grow at other colleges. In the end we shall be able to dictate to the cursed Senate when our representatives are chosen for office."

Carol Arlington smiled.

"If the committee wants me to attack football, I know a very simple way to begin."

"Then get busy." Markoff's voice softened. "So far your work in the good cause has been satisfactory. The Brotherhood are pleased."

Two men appeared at Markoff's signal

and her eyes were bound. When the bandage was removed she was in the garden of the deserted house. Carol Arlington drove her car slowly—her nimble wits were concocting a clever plan.

The Breakdown

CAROL drove out to the garage, and it was Larry Davis who appeared to fill up her car with petrol.

"May I thank you?" said the girl, when he came to her for the money.

"For what?" He was puzzled.

"For giving me one of the biggest thrills of my life. Your run to score that touchdown last Saturday."

The quarter-back gave a self-conscious laugh and shrugged his big shoulders.

"Oh, I couldn't help that. Two big fellows in the other team were chasing me."

"The cheering of your fans must have been stirring," Carol smiled round at him. "Are you going out for the All-American this year?"

"I shall do my best, but there are a lot of better players than myself."

"You're too modest, Mr. Davis. I admire your pluck working here so you can go to college."

"Matter of necessity." He produced a leather. "I'll just give your wind-screen a clean."

"Thanks." She watched him through half-closed eyes. "When are you here?"

"Between six-thirty and eight-thirty."

Carol thanked him again and smiled at him, then she drove away. At eight-thirty the manager of the garage had a message that Miss Carol Arlington had broken down on the Millpond road, about a mile from Briarcliff, and could someone come out to help her. She had a flat tyre. The manager told Larry about the puncture, and the quarter-back only hesitated for a moment before volunteering to go out with the service motor-bicycle combination. He could fix the puncture and still meet Betty Wilson at nine.



He took the letter she held out to him. "Excuse me," he said.

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When Carol heard that Larry was coming out to her she drove her car to the side of the road and unfastened the valve.

Larry arrived and changed the wheel for her, whilst she leaned against the car and chatted brightly.

"I've a dreadful premonition."

"About what?" he asked.

"That I'm going to have another flat on the way home."

"Well, I—I could hook my machine to the back and drive with you." He suggested just what she had hoped.

"Would you mind? It is kind." She gave him one of her most alluring looks. "You are a dear. Will you drive?"

After a while Carol began to talk about the League of Freedom and of the cause that should give the young people a chance to make a name for themselves without the restrictions that hampered them at the moment. Glorious new ideas. Modern youth. The way to make America the greatest country in the world. Carol was a great talker, and Larry thought it was marvellous that so beautiful a girl could be so clever. He promised to attend the next meeting.

There are always people ready in this world to broadcast scandal and gossip. Larry did not keep his appointment at nine, and by nine-fifteen someone had seen them driving together in the car and torn off to tell Betty Wilson the news. That young lady laughed about it, and pretended that she had called the evening off as she was studying for an exam.

At ten-thirty Larry came round to the dormie house where a number of the girls resided, and he was informed that as it was after calling hours he could not see Betty. Feeling very guilty, Larry begged the housekeeper to ask Betty to come down for a few minutes.

"I want to explain about to-night," began Larry. "I got a call for a breakdown out in the country—"

"Don't bother to explain, Larry," Betty interrupted. "Explanations are very dull. Take my advice and keep out of spots that make them necessary."

"Don't you care what I do?" he demanded.

"Don't you think it's time for footballers to be in bed?"

"Right!" Larry snapped out the word. He was in the wrong, but his conscience was not awake to the cheapness of his behaviour. The quiet, scornful words of this girl made him feel foolish and angry. He turned on his heel and strode away without a backward glance.

The Radical Meeting

IT was a surprise to Larry Davis to see Betty Wilson in the crowd outside the lecture-hall, which had been reserved for a meeting of the League of Freedom.

"You're not going to this meeting—are you?" Larry asked a little nervously, for he had not seen Betty for a week.

"Yes—any objection?"

"No, but how did you get away from the café so early?"

"Her man let me off."

"Just to come up here," muttered Larry. "I didn't know you were interested in the movement."

"I'm not." She came nearer so that others should not hear. "I came here to ask you just one question, Larry, do you think it's smart for you to be mixed up in this crowd?"

"Why not?" Larry demanded. "Carol says it's about time I did something besides carry a football."

"Do you think she'd mind if I came along, too?" Betty asked, almost too sweetly.

"Certainly not—come on!" The simple

December 7th, 1935.

Larry was pleased. "I hope Carol gets you as a recruit."

There were desks in the lecture-room, and they sat side by side. Carol was on the rostrum with two or three members of her committee behind her. Markoff was at the back of the lecture-hall.

"My father is one of the richest men in the country," Carol commenced.

"But I wonder if you know exactly why I'm here—why I'm part of your movement?" She glanced round for this to sink in. "There is only one reason—because I believe in the complete freedom of the individual. We are Radicals; it's our job to overthrow existing conditions. And so far we've failed miserably." A pause for this to digest.

"We've failed because we—as youth, as students—have undertaken to correct the evils created by our elders. I propose that we, as youth, attack youth. Let's challenge big business where big business is least expected to exist." Solemnly Carol looked round her audience, which was composed of a mixed gathering of at least a hundred. "I mean inter-collegiate football."

Betty shot a quick glance at Larry, who was sitting there with a bland, foolish expression on his face.

Tony Tonnetti was on his feet.

"You're making our organisation ridiculous. Some of you were present when we founded this branch of the League of Freedom. I know you all. I know the homes you come from, and I know that you'd die for an ideal. Football is an ideal, and—"

But Carol Arlington had her agitators there, and they shouted him down. The girl once more had the floor.

"Let's learn from experience and fact." Her smile was triumphant. "Last year one of the biggest coaches in the country resigned because the game's a racket. What right has a college got to burn our young men out in four years just to make a Roman holiday for the public? Like gladiators in the ring, with all the while the fear that they may fail, and that the public will turn down their thumbs to smash that unfortunate. It isn't a sport—it's nothing but commercialised brutality."

Betty Wilson stood up.

"I crashed the gate to-night, but I'm glad to see that this is an open meeting, where anybody can talk!" Her clear young voice rang through the hall. Her dark eyes were defiant. "We've heard a lot about football—but nothing from a football player. I'd like to hear what an All-American has to say about it!" She pointed to Larry, who blinked round nervously.

Under the repeated shouts of "Speech!" he rose to his feet.

"Er—I'm afraid I can't be of very much help to you—you see Miss Arlington told me if I came to this meeting all I'd have to do was to sit. I'm afraid I'm a much better sitter than I am a speaker."

"You're perfectly right, Larry. I did promise not to call on you!" cried Carol as the footballer made to sit down. "But now that you're on your feet tell us one thing—football is no longer an undergraduates' sport—it's a business. It's run for the profit of the college. You take a beating—the college and the coaches take the money. It's wrong, and we propose to stop all that. Will you help us?"

Larry grinned.

"Why, er—of course."

The audience applauded loudly, whilst Betty Wilson gazed at him as if she saw him for the first time in his true colours.

When the meeting was over, Betty and Larry made their way to the entrance. The triumphant Carol was

waiting for them, and she did not try to conceal her dislike of Betty.

"Burns you to find out that Larry can think for himself, doesn't it?" she sneered.

"No one can think better than Larry on the football field," was Betty's retort. "But at a meeting like yours he's just like a fish out of water!"

"You're proud of me to-night, aren't you?" Larry was angry at the scorn in her voice.

"Just about as proud as if you'd fumbled the ball on your own goal-line!" Larry's eyes could not face the fierce contempt and looked away. "If this is your idea of thinking for yourself I think it a very poor one. I think someone is doing the thinking for you." And with one look at the President of the League of Freedom, Betty left them.

The Favourite Fails His Side

ON the following Saturday State played a match away and State won by seven points to six. The Gridiron Review, which was the college paper, had not very much to say about the match except that Davis had not been up to his best form. He had played well, but not with his earlier brilliance.

The Saturday after State were at home to Manchester College, and the Stadium was packed in expectation for a great battle.

Betty was there with her friend Dodo, and the latter's escort—the fat Charlie Kipp.

"Larry don't seem to get going." Charlie scratched his mop of hair. "Ho seems to stick around as if he had glue on his feet."

"Larry's on the five-yard line," Betty pointed. "He's waiting his chance."

Manchester had the ball and as five of the State men rushed in to tackle the man it was neatly passed into centre. Larry rushed forward to intercept the pass, and Betty was sure her hero was going to make up for his past play. He caught the ball, but was slow getting away, and was instantly seized by three Manchester men and brought down, the ball rolling out of his hands.

"Through Davis' fumble Manchester is now in sporting position," the announcer told the Stadium. Betty could have killed the man, and when, a few seconds later, Manchester got the expected touchdown, then the commentator had a lot to say.

"Larry will soon even up the score," Betty whispered to her friends.

"The teams are now lining up for the kick-off. State have never lost to Manchester on their home ground, but today they must look to their laurels."

"What a lot of nonsense that man talks!" Betty spoke indignantly. "If Larry scores he'll be all full of praise for Larry, and what a wonderful team are State!"

"State has the ball!" Charlie leaned forward eagerly. "That's the second down—seven yards to go. The boys are going into a huddle, and Larry is sparking up signals. I bet every cent I got they make it! Ah, now for the fun!"

The ball came back between the centre's legs to Davis, and instead of catching it neatly he seemed to fumble the ball as if it were greasy. Then Davis swung away to try and work away from Manchester and gain the valuable seven yards which were necessary for State to maintain the attack. He hadn't run a few yards before he was brought down and again the ball slipped out of his hands.

"What's the matter with Larry?"

shouted someone behind Betty. "Is he sick?"

"He hasn't fumbled in two years," muttered veteran Coach Parker to his assistant. "I'll have a word with him when this quarter's through."

The score was still Manchester 6 and State nothing when the third quarter ended.

"Something the matter with you, Larry?" questioned the coach. "Sure your mind's on football?"

"I'll be all right. Sorry I'm playing so badly," Larry answered. "I'll snap out of it next quarter."

But the All-American was no better. The coach had taught them many clever moves, but to-day they seemed to fail. Manchester had lost several of their best men through injuries, and yet State did not make any progress. Davis seemed to have lost his sprint, and was tackled before he could gain any ground, but when the quarter-back got the ball and had almost a clear field the crowd did think he could make a brilliant rundown. What happened was hard to say, but Larry seemed to trip over his own feet, stumbled, and the ball shot out of his hands.

State's groan could have been heard miles away.

It was more than Coach Parker could endure. He stabbed a finger at one of the reserve players, who was seated on a long bench. "Lucats—get in there!"

The whistle shrilled.

"Lucats for Davis," the commentator seemed to chuckle. "Coach Parker's taking Davis out of the game. One can't be surprised after this afternoon's childlike display!"

Betty bit her lip as she saw Larry hurrying off the field. Would they give him another chance? Then she gave a gasp of dismay, because the coach had given an imperious wave of his hand.

"Coach waves Davis to the showers!" The loudspeaker seemed to thunder the words. "Lucats replaces Davis as quarter-back for State."

Lucats did not fumble the ball, but he hadn't the speed. State fought stubbornly, but with little co-ordination. They were like a side without a leader. Manchester registered two more touchdowns with one converted.

Markoff's Treachery

BETTY told herself that she did not care when Carol Arlington brought Larry Davis to Luigi's restaurant the night of the match. Saturday night was always a gala, and usually the State boys made all the noise, but this night it was the Manchester lads who waved rattles and yelled battle-cries. Being good sportsmen the State boys shouted back defiance, and threatened to tear Manchester to pieces in the return match.

Manchester started one of those crocodile stunts, people holding on to coats-tails and threaded in and out of tables. The leader kept this up for ten minutes, but he had a definite objective, and that was the table where Larry sat with Carol Arlington.

Larry grinned good-humouredly as the head of the crocodile paused before his table, but it was not so easy to smile when a large bunch of onions was handed to him.

"For you—All-American!" jeered the Manchester fan. "That was a great score you piled up—for us."

"You were our guests to-day," Larry looked unconcerned. "I was just being polite."

They cheered, and the chain of humanity passed.

"That was pretty rotten of them."



Larry Davis snatched off his helmet. "You can have this!" he cried. "I'm through!"

Carol leaned across the table and laid a sympathetic hand on his.

"A winner's privilege," Larry answered dismally.

She pressed his hand.

"Snap out of it, Larry. It's not the end of the world."

"I know; but an All-American isn't supposed to lose." He moved restlessly. "And when I do lose the rest of the college feels that I've let them down. That's what hurts."

"Never mind," Carol sensed danger. "Larry, here's Coach Parker. Wonder what he wants?"

The lined face of the old coach was set and unpromising as he came to their table. Behind him stood his assistant.

"Can you excuse yourself for a minute? We want to see you outside."

Larry bridled at the tone.

"You and Blake know Miss Arlington." The quarter-back stood up. "I'm afraid I can't leave her. If you can't talk to me in here it will have to wait."

"It can't wait!" the coach rasped.

"All right," Larry squared his shoulders. "What's on your mind?"

"Is it something I shouldn't hear?"

Carol stared at the two trainers with impudent scorn.

"No, it concerns you definitely." Coach Parker glanced at her with equal contempt before giving Larry a searching look. "I understand that you joined Miss Arlington's Radical Club. The other night at a meeting you took a stand against football."

"Well, I— You see—"

The question floored Larry, then he became angry. "What are you getting at?"

"Word was just brought to me that this afternoon your fumbles were not accidents."

"Are you accusing me of throwing the game?"

Larry was horrified.

"It's what they're saying all over the campus."

The coach's tone denoted uncertainty.

"Do you believe that?"

"I don't know what to believe." The coach faced his quarter-back. "Your play was so atrocious I could believe anything."

Larry clenched his fists as if he would strike his accuser, then he pushed back his chair and without a word walked from the restaurant. It was as if he were unable to stay there and listen to such an accusation a moment longer without saying or doing something he would regret.

Carol Arlington smiled as she watched him, but turned with a start as someone touched her shoulder. It was Markoff. At once she pushed her bag off the table to give him an excuse.

Markoff picked it up and handed it back.

"Keep that rumour that Davis threw the game alive." He spoke out of the corner of his mouth. "I started it."

The next morning the coach went to see the dean of the college, and he reported all that had happened. The dean was a wise man and a great scholar. He listened patiently.

"I have a hunch that Carol Arlington is somehow connected with Larry's fumbles," the coach concluded. "If something isn't done to stop that bunch of Radicals—in two weeks' time we won't have a football team!"

"I understand your anxiety; but what specific charge can you bring that would warrant me taking action?" The dean shook his head slowly. "You have none."

"They're trying to break up the morale of my football team," shouted Parker. "That crowd in the League of Freedom would do any dirty trick."

"No, no, no—you're wrong, Parker." December 7th, 1925.

The dean was emphatic. "I know almost every one of them personally. They're youngsters with ideas. We're a college, and we're supposed to foster ideas, even if sometimes the students make mistakes; and as regards the latter, if they meet the scholastic requirements and conform to the regulations I can't interfere with them."

"Then you don't care if the football team goes to smash?"

The coach did not mince his words.

"That would be very regrettable, but the morale of the team is not my province," the dean answered sharply. "If there's anything the matter with that—it's up to you to fix it."

"All right, then!" The coach's jaw set in hard lines. "I'll take steps to see that these Radicals don't bust up my team. Those Radicals will want to leave my province before I'm through."

And he went out, muttering dire threats.

The Secret Practice

THE coach was missing from college the rest of that day, but on the next morning he called together all members of the A and B teams for a secret practice. No one was to be admitted to the stadium.

Among the players there was plenty of discussion concerning Coach Parker's move, and they prophesied some startling changes in the line-up and severe criticism.

The two teams got changed, and everyone was silent and preoccupied. Lucats, who had taken Larry's place as quarter-back, went over to Wilson, who captained the B team.

"This place's like a morgue," he whispered.

"They say Parker's going to give Larry the works," Wilson answered.

"He'd better lay off," Lucats muttered. "Larry's a good fellow, and done some great things for State. One bad showing, and all that is forgotten. You heard about coach going to Luigi's the other night and accusing Larry of intentional fumbles? Would you like that said of you? Would you be smiling? No; and if coach treats Larry that way again we'll have trouble."

"You can't blame coach for getting mad."

"Coach Parker knows his job, and he's dead keen on college honour and all that sort of thing," Lucats stated. "But he's hasty-tempered and a little old-fashioned in his ideas. I've got a hunch this practice is going to prove a flop."

Larry was one of the last to arrive, and, except for one or two brief greetings, all gave the star player a somewhat cold reception. All the boys were changed when Coach Parker appeared, and with him was a large, heavily-built man, whose face was vaguely familiar.

"Boys!" The coach's voice rang out harsh and authoritative. "You've all heard of Bull Stevens. In his day State never lost a game. He's been kind enough, as a personal favour to me, to come down here to-day. Bull was in the team over thirty years ago, and some of their methods were a bit different from present times. Bull is going to try out methods of his day that never failed. Bull, they're all yours."

The big, scowling man, whose hair was very thin, had lost none of his vitality.

"Boys, old man Parker tells me you haven't much morale," he bellowed at them. "In my day we didn't have any such thing as morale—that's a new disease. We just had a lot of fight.

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Now, I'm not going to bother about your morale—I'm going to find out what's the matter with your fight. Any of you fellows ever hear of fight day?"

The players shook their heads.

"Well, it's something they cut out of football some years ago." Bull Stevens glared round. "I don't know—maybe you fellows are too soft to take it, but I'm going to take a chance, and if the going gets too tough you can always quit." He pointed to the doors. "Come on—on your feet and out in that field."

On the field Parker chose two teams that he considered of equal strength, then Stevens lined them up for a talk.

"This is going to be a regular football game—and every man on this squad is going to get a chance to play this afternoon," Stevens paused. "And get this—there's no first string man who has a stranglehold on his job, and if any of you soreheads think you've been overlooked and deserve a place in the team, and want a chance to show your worth, then now is the time. It was just such a day as this that Percy Wendell of the 1912 Harvard team went from third string substitute to full-back and captain. A great football player has a great love for the game, and if he wants to play for the college then he's got to fight. Those that won't fight can get out—they're no good. This is fight day."

The players glanced across at each other apprehensively.

"Coach Parker has picked two teams and the rest arc reserves." Collins squared his shoulders. "The reserves go out to the bench, and be ready when wanted. The rest of you take your places."

"How do you think the boys will take it?" the coach asked anxiously as he watched the boys going to their places.

"It'll show what they're made of," Stevens answered. "They're not a bunch of cissies. They've got to look at the team facing them and regard them as an enemy through whom they have to smash their way or go under. Pick out the fighters and State's on the map again."

"Don't brains count for anything, Bull?"

"Brawn's far better than brain," retorted the old warrior. "This method never failed in my day, and it's the only chance I reckon you have of making anything out of this bunch."

The practice started and, within one minute, the whistle shrilled.

"This is a fight game!" Stevens raved at them. "Twelve and Fourteen—come here! Your ideas of intercepting a man arc fine at a girl's school, but not on a football field. You, Twelve, could have stopped that run by throwing yourself forward—I suppose you were scared of making yourself dirty, or hurting your hands. You Fourteen, were outpaced and manœuvred. You were like a great ox!

Put a bit more jerk into it, my lad, or you'll go out to the bench!"

A few moments later the whistle shrilled again. Why hadn't Six tried to break through the gap? Why had he run a foolish diagonal course that had just wasted time and been brought down with a bare seven-yard gain? Had he been scared the nasty rough boys might hurt him?

The two teams realised that if they wanted to retain their positions they had to fight, and Stevens made it plain enough that if they could not take bruises and kicks they could quit. He roused them with stinging, lashing words so that they crouched like warriors going into a battle of life and

death. They saw red, or rather some of them saw red.

The result was a pile of humanity on the ground and when the players had been removed there was the man with the ball—knocked-out. One of the assistants dashed out and threw water over the boy, who spluttered and soon recovered. The play continued, and then another player had to retire with a strained tendon.

All this while Larry Davis, from the bench, had been watching the play with angry, dissatisfied gaze. Geton, the opposing quarter-back, was ordered to the bench for being a fumbling, futile blunderer. Lucats was shouted for and came out from the bench.

"When you come out on the field, run!" bellowed Stevens. "Do you think we've got all day? Hurry, hurry!"

"Better take it easy," cautioned Coach Parker, "or else you'll have this place like a battlefield."

"I'm going to rouse this bunch or bust!" Stevens was living again the old days. "I'll make 'em fight!"

Two minutes later Lucats tried to make a run from a pass and was brought down. The doctor had to go out to another victim.

Larry was shouted for to replace Lucats, and the star quarter-back did not go to his place, but strode up to Stevens.

"Stevens, why don't you cut out this rough stuff?" he demanded. "We don't go for it around here."

Stevens' hard mouth twisted in a sneer.

"No! You drop the ball and run this moment anybody looks at you. Your turn is coming, Davis, and when it does—if I can land you in the hospital I'll be doing the team a favour."

An angry retort rose to Larry's lips, but he checked it and strode off to his place. He was boiling with rage.

It was the other side's play, and resulted in another wild scrimmage and one man was so badly winded that the doctor had to make another rush on to the field.

"Now you're going to have a try-out!" Stevens shouted to Larry. "Now we should see something."

The ball came to Larry and he fumbled it. Stevens' remarks were scathing, and Larry wanted to rush at the man. It had been a clumsy pass and short; Larry had failed to gather it, but, according to Stevens, only one person was to blame. They would start that play again.

This time Larry gathered the ball and hurled himself like a battering-ram at the defence. He was brought down and told to use his brains. Next time he was accused of running wide with a hint that the first tackle had scared him. On the third run Larry broke through. He was so mad with rage against everyone that he did not fail to use his strength to fling the defence to one side. It was to be a touchdown. He had showed Stevens what he could do. He realised as he ran that he had a clear field, and he glanced back. The defence were not trying to stop him—why not? He turned his head a bit more and saw a small crowd gathered near the centre of the field—someone else had been hurt.

Larry Davis flung down the ball and raced back.

"Get the doc here!" Coach Parker shouted.

Larry peered over the other players' shoulders and saw someone moaning on the ground. He pushed everyone away so that he could get nearer. It was Paul Alton, one of his greatest pals.

He glanced round and noticed how everyone seemed to be staring at him. Paul had been one of the defence and had tried to check him—he had knocked Paul down.

"My chest—my chest!" groaned the sick footballer as the doctor knelt by his side.

The doctor made his examination. "A rib gone," was his verdict. "This man must go to hospital."

"I couldn't help it, Paul." Larry knelt beside his friend. "I was so mad at Stevens I didn't even see you." He did not care if Stevens or Parker heard.

Two stretcher-bearers raced on to the field, and Larry helped to get the groaning Paul on to the canvas.

"Tough break, kid!" Stevens smiled at the injured man, then turned away as if the matter was at an end. "All right—let's get going. We can't waste the whole day."

The stretcher-bearers moved away and with them went Larry Davis, unstrapping his helmet.

"Davis!" Stevens sang out.

Larry took no notice.

"Davis!" roared Bull. "Get back in that game!"

Larry motioned the stretcher-bearers to wait, then he turned round. "He's my room-mate. I got to see him to hospital."

"You can't do anything for him, and your football playing is rotten!" bellowed Stevens in a voice that rang round the empty Stadium. "Stop crying, and get into the game."

Larry Davis walked up to Bull Stevens, and the team thought he was going to strike the one-time star. A queer grin showed on Larry's face as he snatched off his helmet. "You can have this!" the All-American cried. "I'm through."

"Larry, you can't do this!" The coach was aghast.

"Oh, can't I?" sneered Larry, and tossed the helmet to the coach. "Just

watch me!" He turned and ran back to the stretcher.

No one moved or did a thing but stare until Larry Davis and the stretcher-bearers had gone.

Markoff a Marked Man

MARKOFF was smiling as he came down the street after a busy day at the college. His plans were maturing better than he had dared hope. State football was in a glorious mess after the sensational withdrawal of Larry Davis. The Freedom of Youth had upheld Larry's action and the college was divided into two camps. Stevens had gone, and Coach Parker was in a worse quandary than ever. True the fighting spirit had been roused but it had done no good, and unless something happened would fade away into nothing, leaving Parker with a team of fourth-rate footballers. Markoff chuckled as he thought of the last three matches he had watched—the pitiful display of State had made him rub his hands. Soon! Soon it would be the time for the final blow.

Markoff stopped before a tenement house and glanced round. All seemed quiet, but a surprise awaited him when he entered his room. Everything was in confusion. Drawers opened and their contents on the floor, bags and suitcases flung open, and his desk burst open, with the papers scattered in an obviously hurried search. He went quickly to the fireplace and knelt down; part of the wainscoting came away and revealed a recess.

A look of relief showed as he drew out some papers. The searchers had not found the papers that meant everything to the cause. Swiftly he closed the secret drawer, placed the papers in his pocket, and hastened to the door. Suddenly he hesitated and turned uncertainly. Quietly he went across to the window and drew back the curtain; a man was leaning against a lamp-post.

With a curse Markoff dropped the curtain and hurried to a window that looked on a side alley. Another man was there!

Panic seized him and he drew out a gun, as if expecting the door to burst open and his enemies to enter. He bolted and barred the door and minutes passed, then he pouched the gun and paced the room. He unbarred the door and crept down the stairs: someone came into the hall and he bolted up the stairs. Next he tried the fire-escape, and had climbed out of a window when he saw a man in the grounds. Every exit was barred.

Back to his room went Markoff. He was trapped. He must not be found in possession of these papers. He would burn them. He hesitated, for those papers had meant weeks of hard work. A rush to the window showed those watchdogs were still on the prowl.

His brains should tell him some way out of this jam. Was the great Markoff to be caught by a bunch of cheap 'tces? He must act swiftly because they might come again to these rooms. They had been once and failed to find the secret recess. Ah, now he saw his plan of campaign!

Markoff went back to the fireplace, opened the panel and placed inside his gun and the papers. He straightened up his room and then went back to the windows. The men were still there. Finally he went out of his room, locked the door and went downstairs.

At the bottom of the stone steps a thick-set man was waiting for him, and barred Markoff's way as he would have passed.

"One moment!"

The man ran his hands in expert fashion over the Russian's clothes.

"Apparently you are looking for something?"

Markoff seemed amused.

"Wise guy, huh?" sneered the searcher.



"What's the idea?" demanded Markoff.

"That's a compliment, coming from you. Are you finished?"

The man gave a brief nod.

"On your way."

And he watched Markoff till the latter was out of sight.

Once certain that he was not being followed, Markoff took a car to the other side of the town, where Tony Tonnetti resided. Quickly the Russian told what had happened.

"We must get them out of there to-night." Markoff's eyes blinked behind his spectacles. "Those papers contain the names of all the secret committee. If they're found, the Government will smash the committee and us along with it."

"They've searched the house and got 'totes planted outside!" Tonnetti whistled his dismay. "How we going to get them?"

"Would you trust that football player, Larry Davis?"

A decided shake of the head.

"He's tied in with us. And watched just as closely. They're not wise to him, but mighty suspicious. But his name gives me an idea. I've got it!" He smiled at his own cleverness. "How about Betty Wilson?"

"Betty Wilson! She'd never do it!"

"Yes, she will—she'll do it." Tonnetti laughed and winked slyly. "I'll tell her it's to save Larry Davis. She'd do anything for that big sap."

"Go to it," Markoff decided. "Let there be no mistakes."

That evening Tonnetti went to Luigi's and waited outside till Betty appeared. She recognised him as one of the League of Youth leaders.

"I want you to do something for me."

"I see no reason why I should help you."

Her expression was as cold as her tone.

"Nor do I," he admitted frankly.

"But I'm telling you because you can keep Larry Davis from being thrown out of college, or even worse."

"I don't know what you mean." She faced him indignantly. "And I'm sure Larry is man enough to want to face the consequences of his own actions. I won't believe any of your lies."

"These are facts," Tonnetti shrugged his shoulders. "Larry is an ardent supporter of the league, but he doesn't understand our real aims. He got excited about this football business, and is being led around by the nose, and you know it. Well, he has been persuaded to sign some papers, and if made public would ruin his chances of ever making good as a footballer. They are papers of a definite revolutionary nature, and actually would cause him tremendous harm, whatever business Davis decides to adopt as a career."

"You tricked Larry into joining the league," the girl cried, with contemptuous scorn. "If I offer to help will you promise you will find some way to destroy these papers and get him out of your rotten league? Otherwise I won't do a thing."

"I swear it," Tonnetti cried solemnly. "What you have to do is very simple. You have to get a number of papers, and amongst them are those signed by Larry. You must go to a certain house at a certain time and get them. Our enemies will be on the watch, but they won't suspect you. It is very simple."

"All right. Where is the house?"

"Markoff's place. Here is a plan of his room." Tonnetti drew on the back of an envelope. "At the left of the fireplace you'll find part of the wains-

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coting loose. Behind is a recess, and—"

At nine that evening Betty was excused from Luigi's. All the way to the place where Markoff lived she imagined she was being followed. There was a man outside the house, and Betty walked past him with fast-beating heart. At the top of the stone stairs she gave a quick glance back and was relieved to find that the man was rolling a cigarette. If he were a detective he did not place any importance on the girl's visit.

Very quietly she went up the stairs and met not a soul. Markoff's room and everything seemed quiet. She opened the door and expected to find herself facing a lot of police-officers, but the place was dark. Quietly she closed the door and locked it. She took from her pocket a torch and began a tour of the apartment. She soon found the fireplace, and, after some searching, the hidden recess. Inside there were a number of papers and a gun. She took out the papers and left the gun, and was about to replace the panel when she hesitated. There was a grim smile on her pretty face as she took out the gun and placed it in one of the drawers. "I hope the cops break in and find it, and you'll get put in prison for carrying a gun without a permit," Betty thought.

With the papers in her pocket she unlocked the door and peered forth, and was about to leave when she heard footsteps. She peered through a crack in the door and breathed when she heard steps going down the stairs. Probably only someone staying in the place. She left Markoff's and walked down the stairs. On the second floor she passed a student and gave him a slight smile. She hurried on lest the young man wanted to stop and talk; down into the hall and out of the front door.

Another few yards and she would be quite safe. Her heart missed a beat as she saw a broad-shouldered man approaching. The same man that she had seen before. She walked down the stone steps, and this time she knew the man was watching her. Why? Probably he was wondering why she should have come to this house for so short a while and what was her business there. She tried to look casual as she passed him, and she had a terrible desire to look round to see what the man was doing.

Betty walked quite slowly, and after going two or three hundred yards, dared to look back. The man was strolling after her. He was suspicious of her. How she longed to run. She must not get panicky or else Larry would be ruined.

At the corner of the street she looked back and saw that the man had quickened his pace and was not so far behind. Once round the corner Betty began to move quickly. She looked round desperately—this street was the rendezvous.

A car came along. Tonnetti sat in the back, with Markoff at the wheel. The car passed Betty and then swung into the kerb.

Tonnetti crouched down, with his hand on the door-handle. When Betty had passed he opened it quietly and ran after her in rubber shoes that made no sound. He seized her round the shoulders, with one hand over her mouth.

The girl struggled, but Tonnetti was strong. Markoff jumped out and held open the door of the car. Tonnetti had swung up Betty in his arms, and he flung her into the back of the car, then

jumped in after her, as Markoff got back to the wheel.

"Help! Help! He—"

Betty's cries were stifled.

The detective saw the girl seized and the car speed away. He hastened to put through an emergency call to the police.

The Secret Agent

NEXT morning the dean was at his office extra early. An amazing tale had been brought to him of a girl being kidnaped, and that the man responsible was a college student.

In his big study he interviewed Betty and Markoff. Betty decided that there was no necessity to tell all the story and involve Larry. She had been asked as a great favour to go to a certain house and get some papers, and on leaving the house she had been kidnaped.

"Before I knew what was happening a car drew up to the kerb," concluded Betty. "A man must have got out and run up to me from behind. I heard the car, but paid no attention. I did not suspect anything. I was pushed into the back of the car, my screams stifled, a coat flung over me, and then the car sped away. About five miles out of town the papers were taken from me, and I was forced out into the road. I had to walk back."

"And you identify the driver as Mr. Markoff?" questioned the dean.

"I do."

"This is serious."

The dean looked worried. He turned to Markoff.

"What have you to say?"

"The whole story is fantastic and ridiculous." Markoff jumped to his feet. "As a matter of fact, I was with Anthony Tonnetti last night."

"Do you mind if I send for Mr. Tonnetti?"

"Certainly not." Markoff spoke with easy assurance. "We were having breakfast together when your call came and he walked over with me. I believe he's in your outer office."

The dean switched on a dictograph and ordered Anthony Tonnetti to be sent in.

That young man came into the dean's office, and after a respectful "Good-morning" did a most amazing thing. He walked up to Markoff and ran his hands over him.

"What's the idea?" demanded Markoff.

The study door opened and two men entered. They had guns in their hands.

"I wanted to be sure you weren't armed before placing you under arrest." Tonnetti signalled to the two men. "Handcuff him!"

"Dean Churehill," Markoff protested. "I don't understand what this means."

"Nor do I," exclaimed the dean.

"Anthony Tonnetti, what is the meaning of this outrage, these armed men, this—"

"I will explain, sir," Tonnetti smiled.

"Thanks to Miss Wilson I came into possession of some records which proved very interesting. When our code expert got through with them we learned that this man's name was not Louis Markoff, but Boris Marovitch. Three years ago Boris was deported as an enemy alien."

"Anthony Tonnetti, do you mean to say," spluttered the dean, and was silenced by an imperious gesture.

"Dean Churchill, this is going to be a morning of surprises for you. My name is not Anthony Tonnetti. Officially I have no name. The Department of Justice placed me here to help uncover enemy aliens who were taking definite steps to destroy the American form of

Government. By his name you can guess the part of the world where Murovitch was born. The Brotherhood of which he is a member planned to stir up strife all over America in businesses, colleges, military academies, factories and even prisons. They would have got their men elected as officials and even senators. Too vast a scheme to explain in full, Dean Churchill, but you can take it from me that Marovitch was attacking State through the League of Freedom.

"I always thought the League quite sound."
 "Yes, but not when people like Marovitch are interested," the agent of justice shook his head. "With money and influence he made use of these Radical hot-heads. I had to be a hot-head myself to get wise to this scheme and get into his confidence."

Markoff seemed resigned to his fate. "I suppose I'm going to take another ocean voyage at the expense of your Government?"

The agent nodded. "You bet, and don't come back, because next time you may get shot. Take him away, boys."

The dean still looked bewildered after the door had closed. "You know I had no idea that the Government had agents in colleges."

"About a hundred of us, Dean, scattered throughout the country," was the ready explanation. "We are selected because all of us are college graduates and know the student mind. I may look about twenty, but I'm nearly thirty—I've been in the service five years."

"Why didn't you take me into your confidence?"

"Because our orders are to work in secret. Yours is the problem of education—ours the safety of the Government. America has no fear concerning the loyalty of American youth, but where you give them intellectual freedom, we must give them protection from paid agitators like Markoff. I must ask you to keep this arrest and my identity in strictest confidence. And that goes for you, young lady."

"Certainly," Betty's eyes were gleaming. "Does this mean the end of the League of Freedom?"

"No." The agent shook his head. "But it does mean the end of Carol Arlington. In fact, I have an appointment with her at the police station. I think, Dean, you want to know why the daughter of a rich man should act this way." He smiled. "Most of his money came from abroad—from the people who employ Markoff. We have wanted to get something on this so-called American financier for years, and now I think we have it. Carol Arlington is only American through her mother. Now, Dean, I wish to be excused. I may come back to this great college very soon, and I may get sent elsewhere, but you must always treat me as a student." He laughed. "Even if I should take another name."

"I should recognise you," the dean cried.

"My hair is fair." The agent smiled. "We're all good at make-up. Good-bye!"

When Betty left she saw Larry Davis in the outer office, and though the girl did not speak she smiled at Larry, and the big fellow looked delighted. Then the dean sent for Larry, and later on put through a call to Coach Parker.

"Good-morning, Parker! Larry Davis just left my office. He's decided that his thinking apparatus went a little haywire, and he's coming over to make his apologies to you."

"A lot of good that will do him."
 "Don't be too hard, coach," urged the dean. "He's only a youngster, and

they are not so wise as they like to make out. They need the guiding hands of their elders."

"What do you expect me to do with him?" came the gruff voice of the coach.

"Take him back in the team," answered the dean. "I know it's none of my business, and I wouldn't dream of telling you how to handle the boys, but you won't have any more trouble."

"I don't have any time for types like Larry Davis," the coach shouted back. "He let down the school team and walked off the field, and he can't do that to me. He can come down and I'll let him play with some of the B reserves, but no more. Larry Davis, the All-American, is a back number."

"Don't be too hard, Parker," urged the dean. "I follow with keen interest the progress of State. And I'm not talking nonsense when I say that State won't do any good until it has a quarter-back like Davis. The most important man in the team in my humble opinion, and you'll be unwise not to forget and forgive. The College Board want to see State get back its reputation and name, and they have their eyes on you. Good-morning, Coach Parker."

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND FILM DRAMAS



RICHARD DIX

—in—

"THE ARIZONIAN."

Silver City was in a lawless condition when Clay Tallant rescued a pretty girl from a hold-up on his way to it to join his brother Orin, but it was a better place when he left it behind after many desperate adventures as a dramatically appointed marshal. A great yarn of the old-time West.

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A tale of mystery with an unexpected ending, related by an ardent member of the Criminologist Club. Starring George Mulcaster and Ena Moon.

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Another smashing episode of the great serial:

"THE ROARING WEST,"

starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans.

The Unwanted

A MONTH later, on a Saturday morning, the following appeared in the local paper:

"State goes into the final game of the term with little hope of victory. Since Larry Davis quit the team, State has not scored. Notre Dame have a great forward line, and only need a break to romp away with the game."

Yet in spite of this gloomy outlook the Stadium was packed for the match.

In the dressing-room Coach Parker was addressing his men:

"To-day you're the under-dog. But you don't have to stay there. True we lost the last three games—but you don't have to lose this one. I think that the team playing this day is the finest State has ever known, and with a little more confidence should score an easy victory. If every one of you gets in there and fights every second you can win. You're playing Notre Dame, the league champions; beat them, and you take your place among the great teams of State College. That's all."

The boys cheered, then filed out of the dressing-room, whilst sour old Coach Parker watched them with a look of sorrowful pride in his eyes. But his expression hardened at sight of almost the last player.

"Davis!" he rapped out. "No use in you going out there!"

"I'd like to—just in case—" humbly replied the All-American.

"For the twentieth time—no!" Coach Parker was a grand trainer, but he did not easily forgive. "The greatest football player in the world couldn't turn in his suit on me and then come back for the big game."

Davis hesitated, then shuffled past. Coach Parker went out to the gridiron and gave last-minute instructions to his men. He came back to the bench, and if he saw Larry Davis sitting there with a sweater round his shoulders he paid no attention.

"It's the big game of the season," boomed the announcer. "Thousands of people in the Stadium. Both teams are now out in the field waiting for the kick-off. Notre Dame will kick to State. There it goes! The ball is high in the air—State is waiting for it. Lucats takes it—starts going—and is spilled on his own thirty-three yard line." The roaring of the crowd shut out the sound of his voice for a few moments. "State's ball—first down—ten to go—"

A very even game, but it was easy to see that the superiority was not with State. All their attacks were frustrated by the brilliant tackling of the Notre Dame players. They were superior to State in all departments of the game.

It was Wilson, of Notre Dame, who did a brilliant run across midfield and crossed the far goal line. He had dodged and twisted round the State players, and when they had tried to catch him had been left standing. It was a touchdown, but Notre Dame failed with the kick, so they only got six points.

The assistant nudged Coach Parker.

"Why don't you put Davis in?"

"That double-crossing—" Parker checked himself. "I'm running this team."

"Both teams are out in the field ready for the second kick-off," the announcer boomed. "State is kicking to Notre Dame. A long kick that goes deep into Notre Dame territory. Rosetti, their quarter-back, gathers it, runs hard, and goes to the twenty-eight yard line. First down—ten to go—Notre Dame

ball. Rosetti is given the ball—he is running wide—ho is spilled after a short gain of one yard. Notre Dame ball—second down, and nine yards to go. They're out of the huddle. Rosetti gives over the ball and it goes to Coogan—Coogan gives the pass to centre—he gives it to Rosetti. Pretty work—pretty work! Rosetti neatly fends off an attack, feints, and seems to have a clear run. There he goes like a streak of lightning. He can't make it—two State men waiting for him. Well done, Rosetti! He shoots the pass to Critchley, who is unmarked. State never expected the move, and Critchley is going over the line."

Notre Dame gained the extra point, and so the score was thirteen to nothing.

It was agony to Larry Davis, who twisted on the bench as if he were sitting on needles. Unable to stand it, he raced up to Coach Parker.

"Let me in there—will you?"

"If we lose by twenty touchdowns you'll never get in there!" was the sour answer.

Blake and Hubbard for State nearly broke through, but the chance was bungled and intercepted. Soon after Hogan, of Notre Dame, nearly scored another touchdown. State looked a beaten team. There was only ten minutes to go.

A Girl With a Brain

THERE was one girl who was thoroughly depressed as she watched State's futile efforts to score. Time and again she glanced across at the bench and the pathetic figure of Larry Davis. Charlie Kipp and Dodo looked just as mournful, for they realised Betty's state of mind.

Suddenly Betty jumped up and grabbed the megaphone of a student near her.

"Listen—listen, boys—please!" They heard her, because State were not doing much cheering. "Listen, everybody! There's just about ten minutes left to play—plenty of time to win! Sitting out on that bench is the man who can do it for us. Larry Davis! We've got to make Coach Parker let him into the game. Come on now—we want Larry! Let's go! We want Larry! We want Larry!"

Coach Parker scowled round, and tried to give his attention to the game.

"Wo, want Larry! Wo want Larry! We want Larry!"

It drowned every other cry.

"Coach!" the assistant shouted. "You're a great fool if you don't let Larry into this game. Larry treated you badly, but it was a woman that fooled him. Once you were fooled by a woman—you who are so cute. State look like a pack of kids, and you'll look even worse if State don't make a showing! I want to come back here next season, and so do you, but you won't unless you buck up your ideas."

"Mind your own business! How dare—"

"We want Larry! Wo want Larry! We want Larry!"

A sudden quiet—Lucats had been knocked out. The doctor and the stretcher-bearers were running.

"You can send in Larry now and your fool pride won't get hurt," whispered the assistant. "You had to send in Larry because you had no one better. Listen to that mob cry. If you don't put in Larry you'll go down in the December 7th, 1935.

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annals as the dumbest, craziest, pig-headed, venomous old—"

"Shut up, or I'll—" Coach Parker began, but got no further because the cries of the crowd had swelled in volume.

"We want Larry! We want Larry! We want Larry!"

Coach Parker jumped up. Larry Davis had not taken his eyes off the coach for the last few minutes. The coach pointed:

"Get in there!"

How the crowd shouted when Larry Davis went into the game, and what a silence when play recommenced.

"State's All-American quarter-back is going into the game," the announcer cried. "And now they're in punt formation. Davis is standing behind his old goal line waiting for the pass from centre. Here it is—and it's high. Davis is not going to kick the ball—he's running instead. Notre Dame are taken by surprise. Boy, oh, boy, is he moving! He goes tearing down the field like a madman. An attempt to intercept cunningly avoided—a clear field—it's a touchdown!"

Davis took the kick, and it was a peach. Notre Dame thirteen—State seven. Four minutes to go.

"Davis is an inspiration to his teammates. He's driving them hard—making them fight. Hero's a pass from centre. Davis takes it, fades back, and throws a long pass—it's okay! Hubbard takes it. Hubbard is inspired, and goes across mid-field, with Notre Dame falling over themselves to stop him. It must be close on time. Can Hubbard make it? Clever work—clever work! Hubbard has avoided a tackle in a manner that he must have learnt from Larry Davis. It's a touchdown!"

The score-board showed thirteen points all. An awed hush as they watched the kick being taken. It was a conversion. State's number on the board became fourteen.

The crowd went crazy. They threw hats in the air, they sang and danced, they embraced perfect strangers, and, happiest, among them all was Betty Wilson.

On the field the happiest man was Larry Davis. Coach Parker coughed, and gave his assistant a sideways glance.

"All he needed was to be kept on that bench. It would have been fatal if I had used him before."

The assistant was speechless.

Then the crowd seized hold of Betty, and she was carried over people's heads down to the field. They hoisted Larry Davis up, and those two people who had saved State that day were chaired. They tore round and round the gridiron until at last some of their exuberance evaporated.

They called upon Larry for a speech. "Folk, I haven't got a thing to say," those round him heard him say. "It's not me you should call upon for a speech, but Betty." He smiled at her. "Betty Wilson won this game for State."

They tried to make Betty make a speech, but she shook her head. The chair-bearers swayed towards each other, and Betty, to save herself from falling, clutched at Larry.

Larry put his arms round her and kissed her. That was far better than any speech!

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Charles Farrell as Larry Davis and June Martel as Betty Wilson.)

When Perry Mason was consulted by Rhoda Montaine about a girl friend whose husband had returned from the grave to blackmail her, he did not dream he was to become involved in a most extraordinary murder case. A powerful mystery drama, starring Warren William and Margaret Lindsay



"The CASE OF THE CURIOUS BRIDE"

An Important Occasion

EVEN among the open-air stalls of San Francisco's famous Fisherman's Wharf newsboys were shouting.

"Pa-per! Extra! Perry Mason! Pa-per! All about the Hatchet murder! Pa-per!"

Perry Mason, attorney-at-law, was leaning over one of the stalls to pick out from a goodly collection of crabs four of the most desirable specimens, and he paid no attention whatever to the raucous voices that mentioned his name.

Although he had scored a triumph in the criminal court at the Hall of Justice only a few hours before, he was, at the moment, concerned exclusively with the selection of edible crustacea worthy of a celebration at Luigi's Restaurant in Market Street.

He was a tall man and a handsome one, quiet of manner in the ordinary way, but fierce enough when occasion demanded. His own staff adored him; the District Attorney had a very wholesome respect for his cleverness, and wrongdoers, as well as perfectly innocent people, sought his aid.

A wisp of a moustache adorned his upper lip; his brown hair—mostly concealed, just now, by a soft felt hat—was brushed well back from a particularly high brow, and a pair of very quick blue eyes could express everything, or nothing, as their owner willed.

Beside him, an interested party because he was to help devour the crabs, stood Wilbur Strong, the city coroner—a long-nosed, clean-shaven and elderly man, who was so hardened to his gruesome duties that he was prone to indulge a grim sense of humour. He

would have chosen some larger crabs, but Perry Mason was adamant.

"I contend," he said definitely, and in the manner of an advocate, "that the four I have selected will lend themselves more aptly to the Bordeaux treatment."

"But, Perry," protested the coroner, "taking into consideration the fact that in this particular species—"

"Objection overruled," Perry interrupted, and addressed the stall-keeper. "Joe, we've decided upon these four antagonistic arthropods. Could we conclude some purchase agreement?"

Joe looked round with a puzzled expression on his homely features, and at that moment a broad-shouldered man, full of face and weak of mouth but with a pair of particularly bright brown eyes, swept up to the stall with two evening papers in his hands, and a very ugly newspaper reporter beside him.

"Ho means he wants to buy 'em, chump!" boomed the brown-eyed one, who was known (affectionately and otherwise) as "Spudsy," though his real name was Herbert Drake, and who was Perry Mason's faithful adherent and bodyguard. "Look, Perry! Did we put that trial over? Boy, they're ravin' about you!"

Perry scorned even to glance at the headlines thrust upon his attention. He made sure that Joe picked up the right crabs and suitably wrapped them, and he paid the price demanded. Spudsy turned to the newspaper reporter, flourishing the front page of the "Enquirer."

"Hi, Toots!" he said disappointedly. "Where's my picture? I stood right next to Perry!"

"So did I," said Toots, whose surname was Howard, and whose real front

name was James. "But I'm a reporter, not a photographer!"

The crabs having been paid for and received by Perry Mason, the four men retreated from the region of stalls to a streamlined and dark-blue saloon capable of exceeding all the speed limits of the State of California, and climbed into it.

A uniformed chauffeur pressed a self-starter, and the car slid almost noiselessly away from the kerb and round a corner. Market Street was reached in less than ten minutes, and the car drew up outside the glass-canopied doorway of Luigi's very popular establishment.

A typically Irish patrolman who had paused to have a word with the door-keeper greeted Perry Mason as he crossed the pavement. Spudsy, following his employer and the coroner in company with Toots Howard, proudly presented the policeman with the two newspapers he had purchased.

"The papers say we're a genius," he proclaimed. "Take a look at 'em, Clancy!"

In the vestibule an attendant informed Perry that a lady had been looking for him.

"Good!" murmured the attorney. "Not carrying a gun or a hatchet, eh?"

"Send all dames to me," said Spudsy. "That's my department."

The vestibule was crossed and the counter of the gentlemen's cloak-room was reached. Several male patrons of the establishment were congregated there, handing outer garments to the girl in charge, and one of them clapped Perry on the shoulder.

"Great speech, Perry!" he said enthusiastically. "You certainly put it over!"

"Thanks!" drawled Spudsy on behalf of his employer. "Gangway!"

Coats and hats were deposited, and the four proceeded into the restaurant, which was fairly crowded. Luigi, proprietor of the place and an Italian of Italians, short of stature and very tubby, advanced swiftly towards them, beaming and bowing. He viewed the parcel Perry carried, and was prepared for an invasion of his kitchen.

"What is that?" he inquired.

"Epicure's dream, Luigi," replied Perry. "I bought them myself, and now I'm going to cook them myself."

"Thanks!" murmured Luigi, who, on many previous occasions, had endured his distinguished patron's culinary whims.

"I'm going to China," Perry explained, "and that's why this dinner has to be something out of the ordinary. Just lead me to a skillet, my learned friend."

"Si, si, signor!" Luigi, with rather a worried expression on his fat face led the way between tables in serried ranks assembled upon carpet warmly red, and the kitchen was reached.

A variety of odours assailed the nostrils of the four as they entered it. White-robed cooks were busy at the stoves, but Pierre, the head chef, deserted a dish he was preparing to greet the lawyer.

"Pierre," said Perry, "we're going to try a noble experiment."

"Oui?" said the chef, who was a Frenchman.

"Crab à la Bordeaux." Perry turned to Luigi. "I want a fine white wine—a Bordeaux of 'twenty-one."

Perry shed his coat and donned a white overall which one of the cooks brought him. Spudsy stayed the departing proprietor to order a drink for himself and Toots. The coroner looked on with a tight-lipped smile.

"We'll mince the crab like lobster hermidor," said Perry and unpacked his parcel on a bench while the chef hovered round him. "And cheese, Pierre—a grated Parmesan. No Gruyère to-night."

Pierre raised his dark brows.

"That is too radical," he said, "but it is your stomach, not mine. Good thing you bring the coroner along with you."

Laughter followed that remark, but Perry wagged a knife at the critic.

"Pierre," he said confidently, "you'll be wanting my recipe!"

Quite expertly he was removing the crabs from their shells when the door from the restaurant was opened, and a swarthy waiter appeared with drinks upon a tray.

"Signor Mason," he announced loudly, "there's a lady waiting at the bar."

"If she's at the bar," said Perry, without looking up, "it must be for you, Toots."

"No, signor," protested the waiter; "she say she want to see you."

"All right, Tony," nodded Perry, "we'll have the lady later—with the cognac."

"But she say it is very important!"

"So's the cognac!"

"He's got cookin' on his mind," said Spudsy. "Beat it, Tony!"

Tony vanished with an empty tray. Perry began to mince the dissected crabs.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a grin for the coroner, "to-night we make history! To-night we startle the entire cooking world! Our experiment will rank with the achievements of Albert at the Ritz."

The door the waiter had closed behind December 7th, 1935.

him was re-opened, and a very beautiful girl put her head into the kitchen. A little hat was tilted sideways on her dark brown head and furs accentuated the perfect contours of her neck. She was tall for a girl, but perfectly proportioned, and Spudsy stared at her with admiring eyes. But her eyes were only for Perry Mason.

"Hallo, Perry!" she called, across the intervening space. "What are you doing, whipping up a little fudge?"

Perry Mason looked up with a start. "Rhoda!" he exclaimed. "Why, if I'd known it was you I wouldn't have kept you waiting a minute."

"No," mocked the girl at the door, "I'm sure you wouldn't. It's only a few years since you were supposed to meet me at a certain bar—and didn't!"

"Five years, as I reckon time," said Perry, who had a passion for accuracy even when it was to his own disadvantage, and he began hurriedly to shed the white garment he had borrowed. "But bars were against the law, then. Wilbur, you watch the crabs! Toots, you watch Wilbur!"

The Handbag

HE went out with the girl into the restaurant and marched her off between the tables to one set in an alcove at the far end of the big room, beckoning a waiter on the way.

"Rhoda," he said, as they sat facing one another across the table, "it's great, seeing you again. You haven't changed a bit!"

The waiter arrived with cocktails and departed. The brown-haired girl sipped at her glass and looked over its rim.

"You like women a lot, don't you?" she said.

"They're nice," said Perry, and drank as though to womankind in general.

"Would you do something for one even if you were never going to see her?" she asked with an eagerness she tried vainly to conceal.

"I would—if she were pretty," Perry returned. "Anything but my recipe for onion soup, that is. I never told you that, did I? When I was younger there were times when I was impulsive."

"This girl's husband," said Rhoda, "disappeared four years ago, and, not long afterwards, he died suddenly—or, at least, she was told he was dead."

"Hmm, that's something you'd think she'd check up on pretty carefully," commented Perry. "And now she's married again?"

"No. But she wants to get married again, and somebody told her that she'd have to prove definitely that her first husband is dead."

"You don't want me," said Perry lightly. "You want the coroner."

"Oh, but you could help the poor kid, Perry. It's just that she's curious about her legal standing."

"Just curious, eh?" He looked at her quizzically. "Just a curious bride."

"All right, call her that—if it makes it more intriguing to you. Won't you help her a little for me, Perry?"

"When you put it that way," he replied, "I've got to. Tell your curious bride to call at my office."

"Oh, but—er—"

"Second-hand information is always unsatisfactory. What's her name?"

"Her name," hesitated Rhoda, "if you have to know, is Helen—Helen Crocker."

"All right; now, where does she live? If she won't come to see me I may have to drop in on her—on my way to China!"

"China?" echoed Rhoda, in evident

dismay. "Well, it's—er—fourteen-ninety-six East Sycamore Street."

"Fourteen-ninety-six East Sycamore?" Perry laughed. "That would be a nice residential district if it weren't under water! The bay drowns out East Sycamore Street just beyond the eight hundreds!"

Rhoda gulped and bit her lip, but just then Luigi came to the table to announce regretfully that the only Bordeaux he had was of 1918.

"Use Chablis 'twenty-one," said Perry, his eyes on the girl's hands because she was twisting a brand-new wedding-ring round and round on her finger.

Luigi bowed and went off, and she said tremulously:

"What difference does it make what her name is, or where she lives? This girl is a friend of mine, and she's in trouble. You can give me the information."

"Swallow your drink, Rhoda," said Perry. "You're getting terribly upset over this friend of yours. Been married long?"

"You mean my friend?"

"No, sweetheart, I mean you."

"You still know everything, don't you?"

"Well," purred the attorney, "I know that when a woman fingers her wedding-ring like you're doing she hasn't had it on long."

Luigi reappeared, bowing over clasped hands.

"No Chablis 'twenty-one," he lamented.

"No Chablis 'twenty-one?" Perry rose to his feet. "Well, I'll have to take a look into your cellar, Luigi."

He smiled down at Rhoda.

"I'll be back in less than five years this time," he assured her. "Meanwhile, perhaps you can think of your friend's identity and her correct address. I'm getting interested in our curious bride. Come on, Luigi!"

Proprietor and patron descended to the wine cellar, which was a large and well-stocked one. The patron evidently knew his way about it, for after a very brief search among the bins, he held up a bottle in triumph.

"Chablis 'twenty-one!" he cried.

"Bravo!" exclaimed the surprised proprietor. "Signor Mason knows Luigi's wine cellar better than Luigi, eh? I'm gonna watch you from now on!"

Perry handed him the bottle and hurried back to the alcove; but Rhoda was no longer at the table, nor was she anywhere in the restaurant. He looked down at the chair she had occupied, and on it he saw a beaded handbag which she must have left behind.

He picked it up, and, without the slightest compunction, opened it. Inside, amongst other articles, was an ugly little automatic—and that gave him something to think about.

The girl had slipped out from the restaurant almost immediately after he had gone off with Luigi, and she walked briskly down Market Street to a roadster round a corner. The night was cold, but crisp and clear. She climbed into the open car and drove off as though making for some rendezvous, and she did not look back.

Had she done so she might have seen a tall and clean-shaven young man who stepped out from a doorway near the restaurant and made for his own car; but she had no idea that she was followed all the way across the city to an apartment-house in Norwalk Avenue.

Some hours afterwards she opened the front door of another apartment-house.

situated in quite a different part of the city, and climbed carpeted stairs to a flat on the third floor. She was in the hallway of the flat, and had fastened its front door, when a voice called out:

"Is that you, Rhoda?"
She went into a bed-room, elegantly furnished, and the young man who had followed her from the restaurant was sitting bolt upright in bed.

"Carl!" she exclaimed. "Are you still awake?"
"I couldn't sleep," he replied. "How's your headache, dear?"

She sank wearily into a chair and took off her hat.

"I—I thought the air would clear it up," she said with a sigh, "but it's worse now—and my legs ache from walking so far."

"That's too bad," he murmured sympathetically, and added, with just the barest hint of reproach in his voice: "You were gone a long time."

"I—er—I have a sharp pain here," she said, and put a hand over her heart. "Carl, would you mind if I slept in the other room to-night? I—I'm afraid I might keep you awake."

"If you'd rather," he returned. "I think it's better." She crossed the room to kiss him, avoiding his lips. "There—now you go to sleep. You need your rest. Good-night, Carl."

The Wooden Indian

THE dinner for four at Luigi's was a great success. The crab à la Bordeaux was pronounced delicious, despite the substitution of one wine for another, and the coffee stage had been reached when the waiter named Tony came to the table with a telephone to which a length of flex was attached.

"Excuse, please," he said. "Phone call for Signor Coroner. I will connect you."

The flex was plugged into a wall-

socket, and Wilbur Strong spoke into the instrument.

"Yes, this is the coroner," he said in a voice that suggested he was just about as pleased to be disturbed as a general practitioner called up in the middle of the night. "What? I can't help it if you looked for me all afternoon. I'm at an important meeting of the International Committee for the Elimination of Starvation. Oh, all right!"

The telephone was removed by the waiter. Perry asked laughingly:

"Well, Wilbur, what's the latest error on the part of our Grand Jury friends?"

"Some gink by the name of Gregory Moxley," growled the coroner, "was laid gently to rest four years ago in Meadowbrook Cemetery."

"Say, that's mighty nice country up there," said Toots brightly. "You get a marvellous view of the mountains and the ocean."

"Oh, yeah?" snorted the coroner. "Well, some lunatic thinks he saw this Moxley on the street, and the Grand Jury want me to look in the coffin."

"Better look in the coffin, Wilbur," said Perry cheerfully. "We'll finish our coffee at the morgue!"

"No, no," protested the coroner. "Now, listen, I don't want to be inhospitable, boys, but—"

"Now, Wilbur," admonished Perry, getting to his feet, "surely you wouldn't deny us this midnight rendezvous with death?"

Wilbur yielded, warning his companions that they would find the county morgue rather a smelly place, and they all went off in Perry's car to the grim building.

A minor official, in charge for the night, provided them with coffee in an office full of filing cabinets, and the coroner enveloped himself in white overalls, with a sort of collar in front to

protect his mouth, and pulled rubber gloves over his hands.

They passed through a glass-panelled room in which shrouded corpses reposed on marble slabs and entered the autopsy-room, where a large and rather ornate coffin, recently disinterred from Meadowbrook Cemetery, stood on trestles.

"What's the dope?" asked the coroner, and the official in charge read from a card:

"Gregory Moxley, died four years ago of pneumonia. Buried from funeral parlours of Malivinsky and O'Darrow. Height, five feet, eleven inches; weight, thirteen stone seven."

"Get a can-opener, son," said the coroner with callous levity. "We'll see whether this Moxley died of pneumonia or a wild hare."

The coffin was opened, a cloth was pulled back, and an expression of amazement swept over the coroner's face as he stared downwards.

"Well, I'll be—"
Words failed him for a few moments, and then he began to laugh.

"Gentlemen, in all my experience as a coroner, I—I've— Oh, step over here and look at this!"

The three stepped forward. Perry and Toots Howard still holding their coffee-cups, Spudsy with his hands on his hips. They looked into the coffin, and what they saw there was not a human body but a wooden effigy of a Redskin, highly coloured, and complete with feathered headdress.

"I always wondered what had become of those things," said the coroner.

"My grandmother had one of 'em, back in eighteen-sixty, in front of her cigar store," said Spudsy.

Perry laughed.
"Good old Moxley!" he exclaimed. "He gave his six feet of land back to the Indians!"



What they saw was not a human body, but a wooden effigy of a Redskin, highly coloured, and complete with feathered headdress.

"What a yarn!" cried the reporter. "What a yarn! White man saved from the grave by noble Redskin! Where's the phone? This is a headline story with a banner line!"

He went off to find a telephone, and Perry turned thoughtfully to his henchman.

"Spudsy," he said, "there are certain elements of time and events in this nutty night that might be fitted together—if I weren't going to China. For instance, husband supposed to be dead for four years, and Rhoda—"

"I once fought a guy in Fresno eight rounds who had a sister named Rhoda," interrupted Spudsy.

"This Rhoda hasn't got a brother," said Perry, "but she had a husband. It's too bad I'm on a vacation, because I'm as curious as a June bride!"

The celebration so rudely interrupted by a corpse that was not a corpse was resumed in one of the gay resorts of the city and continued far into the night. As a consequence, Perry Mason was still in bed next morning when he should have been preparing for his departure to China, and his secretary, Della Street, arrived at his luxurious flat in Jefferson Square.

Spudsy admitted her, instead of the Chinese servant who usually answered the door, and Spudsy was very scantily clad and was holding a tumbler into which he had squeezed the juice of an orange.

"Well, well, you make a very natty figure, Spudsy," said the girl, "stripped down to your fight togs to squeeze an orange! Where's Ping?"

"Chinese New Year," explained Spudsy. "He's celebratin', too!"

She followed him into the sitting-room, cool, calm and efficient. She had been Perry's secretary for quite a number of years, and though her good looks and perfect figure appealed to him considerably, her intelligence appealed still more. She looked from Spudsy's blood-shot eyes to his unsteady hands as he put the tumbler on a table and reached to a decanter.

"I think you need a little ice," she said.

A piece of ice tinkled in the glass, but the decanter was raised.

"I guess we'd better fill it up the rest of the way with gin," said Spudsy. "Not that there's any hurry, though—he won't be up for hours. My orders. I told him he needed a little shut-eye."

"Oh, you told him?" said she, and sailed across the room to a door and opened it, to enter a spacious bed-room in which the famous attorney was apparently fast asleep.

She went to the windows, pulled aside the curtains and raised the blinds, flooding the room with the light of a February day. On the dressing-table she saw a beaded handbag, the clasp of which was unfastened, and an ugly little automatic. She frowned at the gun and leant over the bed to waken the sleeper.

"All aboard for China!" she said loudly in his ear. "Don't you hear the call of the Orient?"

Perry opened his blue eyes and sat up to blink into her green ones. He put his hands to his aching head.

"There are a thousand Chinese gongs clanging in my cranium," he growled. She skipped away into the sitting-room and returned with a glass of milk and soda-water, despite Spudsy's protests.

"Here, drink this," she commanded. "I couldn't!" Perry shuddered. "My mouth tastes like the whole Chinese Army marched through it last night!"

December 7th, 1935.

"Possibly that explains the beaded bag on your dressing-table," she remarked.

He took the glass of soda-and-milk from her and put it on a little table beside the bed.

"Haven't you looked through that bag yet?" he inquired.

"No," she replied, "but I'm going to!"

He watched her as she went to the dressing-table and picked up the automatic. He was fully awake, now, and, though his head ached, his brain functioned.

"Number three-four-eight-nine-two-six-one," he said. "A twenty-five Colt automatic."

"Right," said Della Street, and put down the gun to examine the contents of the handbag, while he, behind her back, slipped out of the bed in his pyjamas and donned a dressing-gown and slippers.

"Looks like she knew she was going to meet you!"

"Oh, sure!" he scoffed, busy tying a silken cord round his waist. "That's why she got that very potent drug from a prescription by a Dr. Millsap!"

"Umm!" mused Della. "She's got —"

"Thirty-four dollars and twenty-four cents," he completed for her glibly. "One lipstick, one compact, one lace handkerchief, one telegram."

"That proves you were awfully drunk," she informed his reflection in the mirror and with irony. "Otherwise you wouldn't remember so well."

"If I could only remember who the girl was!" he said—and walked over to her.

"You remember me, don't you?" she challenged.

"Oh, yes," he laughed, "you're Della Street."

"So you needn't lie to me! Just tell me how long this case will postpone that trip to China."

"Not a moment," he declared. "I gave her a chance last night to come clean."

"So did whoever sent her this telegram," she retorted, holding a creased and flimsy sheet of paper in her hands.

"Await your final answer; five o'clock to-day extreme limit," he recited. "Addressed to 'R. Montaine,' at 'a hundred-and-twenty-eight, East Pelton Avenue.'"

"What a memory!" quoth Della.

"Who tore off the signature?"

"That's something I can't remember," he replied, "because I never knew. I wish I did."

She tilted her head at him.

"You've got an awfully far-away look in your eye, Perry," she said.

"and it isn't China."

"You're wrong, Della," he assured her. "My heart throbs only with a passionate desire to eat shark-fins and bird's-nest soup."

"I know," she nodded, "but first you're going to clear up our little mystery, so you might as well get started."

"I don't want to work—I need a vacation."

"You need a cold shower!" she retorted, and caught hold of his arm and marched him towards the bathroom.

"Anybody'd think that I was the secretary and you were the boss," he chuckled.

"Well, maybe I am," she said calmly.

A Real Corpse

WHILE Perry was having his bath and Spudsy was out in the kitchen, preparing breakfast, Della sat on a chesterfield in the sitting-room, looking at the morning papers. She was still looking at them when the

door-bell rang and Spudsy admitted Toots Howard and a tall and quietly dressed young man who looked handsome beside the ugly reporter.

"After you, doctor," said Toots, and the tall young man passed into the sitting-room and glanced about him, his dark eyes finally resting on Della.

"Where's the patient, please?" he inquired.

"Just a minute," said Toots. "This is Dr. Millsap. Where's Perry, Della?"

"The doctor's too late to do him any harm," said Della. "He's recovering."

Toots went off to Perry's dressing-room and presently returned with him fully dressed and blandly smiling.

"Good-morning, doctor," said he. "Nice of you to come over."

Millsap frowned.

"I was led to believe that I was to attend a patient here," he said stiffly.

"Nice of you to believe that, doctor," purred Perry. "Sit down."

Millsap seated himself in a chair and Perry sank into a capacious easy chair facing him. Over his shoulder he said to Della:

"You'll get all the important remarks down in shorthand, won't you?"

"I will if they turn up," said Della, and she nursed a notebook on her knee and poised a pencil.

"Might I ask you what it is that's trying to make a sap out of me?" exploded the doctor.

"I'm Perry Mason," said Perry in the smoothest of voices. "If you weren't already a sap you wouldn't give poison to your lady friends."

Millsap started ever so slightly and his frown deepened.

"Your advice would be a lot more important," he said curtly, "if I knew what you were talking about—and if you did!"

"I'm talking about Rhoda Montaine," said Perry. "Let's both talk about her now. If you like Miss Montaine well enough to send her out armed to the teeth with instruments of death, you ought to like her well enough to explain yourself."

Della smiled at her notebook.

"The medicine was just a hypnotic to induce sleep," said the doctor stiffly.

"Permanent sleep?" asked Perry.

"No, certainly not! It isn't a poison, in proper doses."

"The gun is lethal enough!"

"Rhoda was in trouble and needed protection."

"She hasn't got the gun now," said Perry. "She's only got you for protection—and me. You tell me where Rhoda is, and I'll tell you how we can get her out of this."

"I haven't anything to say."

"Did it interfere with your friendship for Rhoda when she married Carl Montaine, the millionaire's son?"

The question was a totally unexpected one, and caused the young doctor to catch at his breath, but he summoned a show of dignity to his aid.

"I don't know why I should discuss this matter with strangers," he said.

"I'm her attorney," said Perry, and took the crumpled telegram from his pocket. "Do you know who sent her this?"

Millsap read the telegram and handed it back.

"I haven't anything to say," he reiterated, and then Perry rose up and patted him on the arm.

"How about some breakfast, doctor?" he suggested genially. "It's bound to be very tasty. Spudsy's cooked it!"

The astonished doctor was at a loss for words, but just then Spudsy entered with a tray, and an appetising odour filled the room.



A crowd gathered, two attendants of the airport ran over, and the attention of the detectives was diverted.

"I—er—I—I guess I'll have some," decided the doctor.

A trifle less than two hours later Perry and Spudsy entered the office of the Western Union Telegraph Company whence the message to "R. Montaine" had been dispatched, and Spudsy dived into a telephone-box there while his employer spoke to a clerk behind the counter.

"But this is very irregular, sir," objected the clerk.

Perry, for the purposes of deception, had adopted the accent of a Frenchman.

"But I have receive this message on a business matter very important," he said, "and so stupidly I've lose the address of ze sender. Please, you could discover it up for me?"

"You are Mr. Montaine?" asked the clerk doubtfully.

"Oh, oui!"

"Well, I'll see what I can do for you."

Spudsy put his head out of the telephone-box.

"Monsoor Montaine," he boomed, "I have for you ze office."

"Ah, merci!" Perry returned and took his place in the box and closed the door. "Is zis you, Della? What have you found out for me?" he said into the instrument, and Della replied:

"There was a marriage licence issued last week to Carl Montaine of Pasadena. The girl was Rhoda Moxley, a widow."

"Wedow of Moxley, the coffin man, eh?" said Perry. "Now, listen, my chickadee, get in touch with the gas company and the water company and see if any connection has been made for ze 'usband. I want ze address. No?"

"No," said Della. "And in case you're interested, your accent is rotten!"

Having hung up, Perry returned to the counter. The clerk had looked up the original message and informed him that the sender was a Gregory Moxley

"Moxley?" said Perry. "Ah, oui—zat I know; but ze address?"

"Three-sixteen, Norwalk Avenue," said the clerk, and wrote the address on a slip of paper.

Perry had left his car a little way down the street. He and Spudsy went out to it, and Spudsy took the wheel.

"I'll still make that boat to China," said Perry on the way to Norwalk Avenue.

"Yeah; but how?" wondered Spudsy.

"It looks like a Chinese puzzle to me!"

"Well, it's like this: Our girl friend, Rhoda, thought she was a widow for four years, and then she thought she'd become a bride again—which was exactly what her first husband had been playing dead and waiting for. Now he's turned up, and is putting on the pressure. Blackmail, Spudsy, blackmail!"

Norwalk Avenue was reached and the car drew up outside the entrance to a building of white stone labelled "Colemont Apartments." Perry descended to the pavement, and Spudsy would have followed, but his employer raised a restraining hand.

"So sorry," he said, "but I'll have to handle this alone. We only want to give Moxley such a scare that he'll hide himself in a coffin."

He walked into the building and ascended to a door on the second floor, at which he knocked.

"Come in!" called a gruff voice, and he turned the handle of the door and walked into a plainly furnished living-room and faced a pugilistic-looking person who was lolling in an armchair with a newspaper on his knees.

"Good-afternoon!" he said incisively. "I'm here to take charge of things for Rhoda. You remember Rhoda?"

"Do I?" grunted the man, whose mouth was large and whose eyes were small.

"You remembered her four years after you died!"

The little eyes rounded.

"Oh, so I'm a dead 'un, am I?" asked their owner, rising to his feet.

"I wouldn't say that exactly," Perry returned. "Not to a man smart enough to pull that trick with a wooden Indian."

"Oh, you know all about the wooden Indian, eh? Well, even a smart fellow makes a little mistake sometimes."

"You made a big mistake. Moxley!"

"You're goin' pretty good yourself, buddy," retorted the man. "I ain't Moxley! If you want to see the master mind, Moxley, he's in there!"

A thumb was jerked in the direction of a door behind some curtains, and the door was opened. On the floor of an inner room a white sheet covered some fairly bulky form and near it a man was stranding with a cigar clamped between his teeth.

"You wouldn't be Moxley, would you?" inquired Perry.

"Not if I could help it," was the harsh reply. "There's Moxley."

A corner of the white sheet was jerked back, disclosing a dead body on the carpet.

"That's what happens to 'em when they get too smart," said the man with the large mouth and the small eyes significantly. "You better take a good look at him!"

"Dead, eh?" murmured Perry.

"That's a great discovery of yours!" jeered the second man. "Just give us your name so that we can make sure you get full credit."

Perry regarded the none-too-attractive features of the dead blackmailer, then moved towards a desk on which there was a telephone. But the man who had lifted the sheet whipped out a gun.

"Keep away from that 'phone!" he roared.

"Put that gun away," said Perry quietly. "You might break something."

Through the open doorway of a bed—
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room came Wilbur Strong in his shirt sleeves, wiping his hands on a towel and grinning broadly.

"I thought that was your voice, Perry," he said. "Bless my soul! Well, you boys are as wrong as usual! He's not a crook, he's a cook—and one of the greatest in the world! Makes scrambled eggs taste like heavenly shortcake!"

Shamefacedly the plain-clothes man put away his gun, and with a belated greeting for the coroner Perry dialled the number of his own office on the telephone.

"Hallo!" he said. "Oh, that you, Norris. Let me speak to Miss Street, please. This is Perry Mason."

The man with the little eyes gaped at his colleague; the voice of Della sounded in Perry's left ear.

"Oh, hallo, sweetheart!" said her employer. "What's new at the gas station?"

"Both gas and water connections," Della replied. "were made in the name of Carl Wilton Montaine at two-three-oh-nine Hawthorne Avenue. Got it?"

"Right!" Perry made a note of the address on a slip of paper after he had replaced the telephone, then walked over to the coroner, who said quite cheerfully:

"Well, it's a nice little murder, Perry. Who are you working for—the dead man, or the dame that bumped him off?"

"What happened?" asked the attorney.

"All I know is what I see on the floor. Mr. Moxley won't change places with any wooden Indian this time!"

"Any details of how he joined your tribe?"

"Oh, some!" was the reply. "The first the police knew was when the people in the next apartment house reported last night that someone over here was trying to disturb the peace."

"A nice conservative way of putting it," remarked Perry. "Somebody made quite a mess of this apartment."

"Certainly made a mess of Mr. Moxley," said Wilbur. "Hit on the head with the poker and stabbed in the back. That's enough to kill any man!"

"Any finger-prints?"

"Can't even find the knife."

"Yet you say a woman did it?"

"Well, the couple across the way declare that just before a crash of glass they heard a woman's voice."

"H'm!" grunted Perry, and contemplated a shattered mirror over the mantelpiece.

Pursuit!

THERE came a sound of heavy footsteps in the other room, and three men strode in at the curtained doorway. One of them was Joseph Lucas, Chief of Detectives, an unpleasant-looking person with a pronounced jaw and an almost permanent scowl; the other two were typical plain-clothes men.

"Hallo, Wilbur!" said Lucas after a brief survey of the body on the floor and the disordered room. "Got it all figured out?"

"As usual," returned the coroner, who had no great liking for the domineering detective.

"Hallo, Joe!" said Perry, folding his arms.

"I thought you'd gone to China!" snapped Lucas. "What're you doing here, anyway?"

"Oh, just a little social call—the coroner sent for me."

"Yes," said Wilbur Strong, without the slightest hesitation, "I wanted to consult him about a recipe for ice-box cookies."

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"He didn't talk about no cookies, chief," interposed the pugilistic-looking plain-clothes man whom Perry had first encountered. "He talked about Moxley and a dame named Rhoda and some racket that Moxley was working on her."

"Who's Rhoda?" Lucas rapped at Perry, and Perry replied with an indulgent smile.

"You wouldn't want to know, Joe. It'd get you all mixed up."

The plain-clothes man, who had drawn a gun, stepped forward.

"We found some keys that don't belong to these doors on the floor by the body," he stated. "Maybe they'll tell us who this Rhoda is. Mason phoned, too, chief, and he wrote something on a piece of paper."

Lucas scowled again at Perry. "What was it?" he demanded.

"Well, I'll tell you, Joe," drawled Perry. "Just a little music for my exit march. Good-bye, boys! As the coroner is wont to say, 'I'll be seeing you'!"

He walked out from the flat, blowing a kiss to the coroner from the door, and after he had gone Lucas grunted:

"Nice friends you've got, Wilbur!"

"Even you, Joe," returned the coroner brightly, "would like his cooking."

"Lemme see those keys!" Lucas snapped.

Perry Mason went out from the apartment house to his car and climbed into it beside Spudsy.

"Two-three-oh-nine, Hawthorne Avenue," he directed, "and don't spare the horses!"

Spudsy drove away down the wide thoroughfare.

"I guess you didn't have much trouble handling Moxley," he said. "Did you put him in his place?"

"Somebody else had already done a very excellent job of putting Moxley in his place," replied Perry.

In Hawthorne Avenue a better-class apartment house was reached, and once more Spudsy was left at the wheel while his employer climbed carpeted stairs to the third floor and rang the bell of a door.

Carl Montaine rose up from a chair, brushed his rather disordered black hair back from his brow with his left hand, put a glass from which he had been drinking on a table, and crossed a well-furnished sitting-room to answer the summons.

He stared in annoyance at the tall stranger who brushed past him into the room he had just left, and followed to demand an explanation, but Perry forestalled him.

"Sorry," he said in the most self-possessioned manner imaginable, "but I'm looking for Rhoda Montaine."

"She isn't here," growled the young man.

"Who are you?" inquired Perry.

"I'm her husband, that's all!"

"You're one of her husbands, that's all!" Perry corrected. "And you're all upset, aren't you?"

A telephone-bell rang, and Carl moved towards a desk on which the instrument reposed, but Perry stopped him.

"I'll answer all 'phone calls for you," he said masterfully, and whisked the telephone from its plunger. "What?"

"No, no! Dis is de Dog-Walloper's Saloon! We eat guys wid names like dat!"

Down crashed the instrument, and Carl Montaine asked nervously:

"Who was that?"

"That was Joe Lucas, Chief of Police

Detectives," Perry informed him. "They're catching up with us. In case you don't know, we're Perry Mason. Sit down, Montaine; your legs are giving way!"

Carl Montaine permitted himself to be led over to a chair. He was quite good-looking, but his hands were trembling, and his mouth was working. "But what do the police want?" he quavered. "What do you want?"

"I'm trying to help Rhoda," said Perry. "Where is she?"

"I wish I could tell you, Mr. Mason. She acted rather strangely all morning, and a little while ago an express-man came for her trunk. Then she took a suitcase and left."

"What did she say?"

Carl Montaine moistened his lips with his tongue.

"Just that—that going away was the only means of saving me from scandal."

"What scandal?" demanded Perry sharply.

"I—why, I—I don't know."

"You must know something," said Perry still more sharply, "or else it's too cold for you in here!"

"Anybody'd be a little shaky," blurted the agitated young man, "if his wife walked out like that."

"And the police were about to walk in!" added Perry. "Not long after midnight this morning your wife's former husband, Gregory Moxley, was murdered!"

Carl Montaine sank back in his chair, trembling all over. "Rhoda wouldn't do that," he faltered. "She didn't!"

The telephone bell rang again, stridently, insistently.

"The police found some keys beside the body," continued Perry. "That screaming 'phone means that they've traced them to your wife."

"My father could get me out of this," mumbled Carl.

"Not with all the Montaine millions," Perry assured him curtly.

"I can't tell him! There—there's never been anything like this in our family. I don't know what to do! Oh, it's terrible, Mr. Mason! The scandal will ruin me, and my father, too!"

Perry Mason, with a gesture of disgust, went over to the telephone and ripped its cord from the wall.

"They're going to question you," he said sternly. "Tell them nothing—and plenty of it. A husband can't testify against his wife in any criminal proceedings."

"Oh, but they'll make me talk," whimpered Carl. "I—I can't conceal facts."

"I'm sorry Rhoda developed such a poor taste in ties," said Perry cryptically, and he went out from the flat and down to the streamlined car at the kerb.

"But why the airport?" asked Spudsy as the car streaked across the city. "Are you gonna fly to China?"

"Step on it, boy," urged Perry. "My friend Joe Lucas has put a tail on us. There's a police car right behind."

Spudsy increased speed and the car shot down a hill in the direction of the municipal airport, but he declared disconsolately that the easiest way to get rid of the police would be by stopping.

"I haven't mopped up a cop since nineteen-thirty-one," he said. "How'd you know you'll find her at the airport?"

"She expressed her trunk and she's carrying a light suitcase," expounded his employer. "That means she's travelling fast and high. But if she gets

off on a 'plane, it'll mean she's running away—and that'll hang her!"

The police car was held up at a corner by a traffic block and the airport loomed in sight.

"They can't arrest her if they don't find her," said Perry. "You stay near the ticket window."

With a grinding of brakes the dark blue saloon came to a full stop outside the combined booking-hall and waiting-room of the airport and was left untended while Perry and Spudsy rushed into the building.

Spudsy darted round a bookstall to the ticket window; Perry looked to left and right and caught sight of Rhoda, among other passengers, walking towards a covered way that led down a slope to the flying field.

He caught up with her, grabbed hold of her, and before she had time to realise what was happening was holding the suitcase and kissing her on the lips.

"Frances, darling, it was all a horrible mistake!" he cried, for the benefit of staring people. "That woman was my sister! Come on, darling, we're going to be married!"

Rhoda gasped, but a strong arm was round her waist and she was swept back into the booking-hall.

"Get in a 'phone-box as quickly as you can," he whispered in her ear, and tore across the floor to have word with Spudsy.

A row of telephone-boxes stood against one of the walls, not very far from the circular bookstall which occupied the middle of the vast room. Rhoda ran into one of them, and Perry joined her there and closed the door.

"Get down on the floor!" he commanded harshly.

"How can I?" she asked in a plaintive voice. "There isn't room."

"Get down and make room," he said. "Right now it's the most comfortable place in the world for you."

She squeezed down between his legs and the cork-lined wall of the box, and he pushed her still farther down, so that her head would not show through the glass panels of the box.

Into the booking-hall streamed three detectives from the car that had pursued his, and they saw Spudsy at the bookstall and caught sight of him in the box.

"There he is!" cried one of them. "We'll park here!"

Tit-for-Tat!

PERRY'S quick eyes had seen the enemy even before he himself was seen. He dialed the number of the "Enquirer" and asked to be put through to Toots Howard.

"Hallo, Toots!" he said after a while. "Perry Mason! I'm in a 'phone booth with Rhoda Montaine, the little lady the State is going to try to hang as the murderer of Gregory Moxley. By this time, Toots, you've probably read of the killing in a rival paper. I'm at the municipal airport, up to my neck in police detectives."

"Say, you're sinking pretty low!" exclaimed the voice of Toots in his ear. "D'you want me to stagger over and rescue you?"

"If you get here soon enough," responded Perry, "the 'Enquirer' can have the honour of capturing the beautiful murderess."

"Right," said Toots, and rang off. But Rhoda, crouched very uncomfortably on the floor of the box, cried indignantly:

"You're not going to turn me over to anybody for a crime I didn't commit."

"Keep your head and your voice low,"

said Perry, thumbing the pages of a telephone directory, "and tell me what did happen."

"I don't know," she replied in a whisper. "I didn't even know he was dead until now."

"You were doing a nice job of hanging yourself, running away like that," he retorted, running a finger down the names on a page of the directory.

"I knew there'd be some kind of scandal, and I didn't want to bring my husband into it. I thought Moxley had been dead four years—honestly."

"I know. And Moxley thought, when you married a rich kid, that he could come back and make himself a nice living. But what happened? You couldn't get the money he demanded, but you went to his apartment."

"Yes," she admitted. "He was furious. I couldn't do anything with him. He hit me, and—and then the lights went out. But I didn't kill him! I swear I didn't!"

Perry rang up the airport in which he was concealing a girl wanted by the police, and to the uniformed attendant at the inquiry office across the room he said:

"There's a funny-looking guy at the news-stand reading a magazine he hasn't paid for. Call him to the 'phone, will you?"

Spudsy was the only man at the bookstall who appeared to be reading a magazine, and he was called over to the attendants' instrument.

"Spudsy," said Perry's voice in his ear, "Toots Howard will be here any second. I want to talk to him before those three dicks crash down on me. The moment Toots arrives, take a good sock at your nearest neighbour."

"Okay!" said Spudsy delightedly.

During the period of waiting Perry kept the plunger of the telephone down with one hand while he talked to Rhoda as though speaking into the transmitter.

He told her that the District Attorney would ask her a lot of questions, but that she was not to answer one of them.

The three detectives watched him with gloom.

"Wonder how much rent he pays for livin' in there!" growled one of them.

Perry was consulting the directory again when Toots Howard burst into the waiting room with several of his colleagues and among them a Press photographer. Spudsy, by the bookstall, immediately tore a newspaper from the hands of an astonished man; but the man was a giant and towered over him, bellowing:

"What's the matter? Have you gone daffy?"

Spudsy retreated in haste, came to a man of less than his own size, and struck out at him. But this one, though small, happened to be a professional boxer, and the battle that followed was fierce and resulted in the downfall of the assailant.

While it was in progress a crowd gathered, two attendants of the airport ran over, and the attention of the detectives was diverted. Perry put his head out of the telephone-box to call Toots to him.

"This is Rhoda Montaine," he said, and Rhoda rose up from her cramped and undignified position. "Of her own free will she surrenders to you gentlemen as representatives of the 'Enquirer.'"

"That's fine, Perry!" declared Toots, and the Press photographer took a flashlight picture of the girl as she emerged from the box.

The detectives swooped, but the reporters barred their way.

"Say, what does this mean?" howled one of the officers.

"It means," responded Toots with a wave of his hand, "that Rhoda Mon-



Lucas took the sheet of paper and read what was typed on it. "Well, we aren't proving anything here," he grunted.

taine, of her own free will, has surrendered to the Press."

"On the pages of the 'Enquirer,'" said Perry, "she'll get a square deal! For once we'll let the great American public try a ease."

"So that's the kind of a shyster you are!" howled the baffled plain-clothes man.

"One more crack like that, my fine, flat-footed friend," said Perry, "and I'll tear you three to ribbons, assisted only by my friend Mr. Spudsy Drake! Where is Spudsy? Spudsy!"

Spudsy rose up from the floor near the bookstall and walked over, and even the detectives laughed, for his face was bruised and his nose was bloody.

"All right," said the detective, "we'll accept the girl from the 'Enquirer.'"

Rhoda travelled with the reporters in their car to the office of the newspaper, and within an hour she had been handed over to the police as a voluntary prisoner. Perry tried to see her at the Hall of Justice, but was rebuffed, while the "Enquirer" enjoyed the benefit of being the only paper to publish the story of her arrest.

Next day, in the region of noon, Perry rang up the District Attorney from his own office in Columbia Street.

"Ah, Mr. Stacey, at last, eh?" he said with some heat. "How long do you think you're going to get away with hiding my client from me? I could excuse a flat-foot like Lucas, but our esteemed District Attorney!"

The District Attorney suggested jeeringly that he should get the "Enquirer" to find the girl for him.

"You and the boys work so well together," he said. "The husband? Oh, you'll see him, too—in court, sir, when I go to trial!"

It was a case of tit-for-tat, but Perry wasn't standing for it.

"All this will get you nowhere!" he exploded. "They'll not change the law for you, Mr. D.A. A husband can't testify against his wife in a criminal proceeding. Even you know that."

He swung round with the telephone in his hand as Della Street entered the many-windowed room.

"Montaine senior is outside," she announced. "Looks like he knows his way around. Past sixty, wide face, straight mouth, tight-lipped. I'll send him in."

The rather grey-haired man who was ushered into Perry's presence just after he had put down the telephone had been pretty accurately described. Perry rose to greet him.

"I've been expecting you," he said. "And you hoped I'd bring my cheque-book?" suggested the millionaire.

"Naturally—since I happen to be defending your daughter-in-law."

"And, naturally, you've got the amount of the cheque pretty well set in your mind?"

"Naturally," bowed Perry.

"Mr. Mason, I'm prepared to double that amount if you'll consent to let me decide the perfect outcome of the affair."

"Oh, sit down, Mr. Montaine," purred the attorney, "and tell me your idea of the perfect outcome."

Montaine seated himself facing the desk.

"My son," he said, "married a woman whose greatest affection was for his pocket-book. I think, Mr. Mason, that it would be best if he were free from this unfortunate marriage entanglement."

"I see," nodded Perry. "Then it is your intention to find your son's marriage illegal?"

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"In a nutshell, Mr. Counsellor, I shall attempt to do that very thing at any cost!"

"Even at the cost of Rhoda Montaine's life?"

The millionaire bounded to his feet.

"I've made a lot of money in my time, young man," he said icily, "but I didn't make it by being blunt."

"And I've done pretty well in my own small way," retorted Perry, also rising, "mainly by being blunt! Mr. Montaine, I'm defending a woman charged with murder, and it's my idea to defend her as well as I can."

"Then you refuse my offer?"

"As bluntly as possible!"

"In that case, I shall have to rely on the District Attorney."

"I guess you will," agreed Perry. "Although I can't absolutely recommend him as a man to depend on. Good-day, Mr. Montaine!"

Della returned after the visitor had departed and Perry made a face at her.

"Mr. C. Phillip Montaine, of Pasadena," he said wryly. "Well, I dusted him off, Della—and now I'm going over to the District Attorney's office. Oh, by the way, you'd better call the steamship company and tell 'em I won't be able to make that boat for China."

"They'll be awfully glad to know that," said Della. "The boat sailed two hours ago!"

Rhoda Makes a Mistake

THE office of the District Attorney was situated on one of the upper floors of the Hall of Justice; the office of Joe Lucas, Chief of Detectives, was situated on a lower floor. In the ante-room of the District Attorney's office a secretary started up from his desk to stop Perry from opening the inner door, but was too late—and Perry had a perfectly good view of the official he sought, practising golf-shots on a rug.

"Hallo, Perry!" he exclaimed somewhat shamefacedly. "Something worrying you? Oh, it's the Montaine-Moxley case, of course. Well, don't let it upset you or my practice—I'll see if Lucas knows where the young lady is."

He propped a putter against his desk to speak into the dictograph.

"This is Stacey," he said. "Is Lucas there? Old friend named Mason inquiring about him."

A nasal and obviously disguised voice answered back:

"I don't know, sir. I think Mr. Lucas is out playing golf."

"The lucky stiff!" quoth the District Attorney as one filled with envy.

"Probably find him at the club, Perry—out there yesterday I shot a—er—"

"You boys aren't playing golf," Perry interrupted dryly. "You're playing hide-and-seek! It's a kid's game at best, Mr. D.A."

He took hold of the putter and, with it, sent a ball flying through a pane of glass.

"Bad shot, Mr. Mason," rebuked the District Attorney; but at least Perry had relieved his feelings.

He had also thought of an expedient, and he went off briskly to carry it into effect.

Rhoda, at that moment, was seated in a chair in a room on the same floor as the office of the Chief of Detectives. In accordance with Perry's instructions she had refused to answer any questions, but Joe Lucas was not by any means defeated. He had sent for Carl Montaine, and he escorted that young man into the room.

"Carl!" cried Rhoda, springing to her feet.

"Hallo, Rhoda," returned Carl in a strained sort of way.

"I guess you two would like to be left alone," said Lucas, and he went out and closed the door. But there was a microphone in the room, connected to a dictaphone in a radio department along the corridor, and he went into that department and grinned at a shirt-sleeved man at the desk where the dictaphone stood.

"Okay, Paul," he said. "Get it all—and don't let the newly-weds get you two upset!"

The conversation recorded by the dictaphone was certainly something of a revelation.

"Oh, darling!" Rhoda said tremulously, "I—I've missed you so much! You're all I've got to keep me going! It's been so awful not seeing you. I—I knew when I ran away that it was going to hurt me, but I had to do it for your sake."

"Let's not talk about how hard it was to do anything for my sake," Carl Montaine bit back at her.

"I tried every possible way to make Moxley leave us alone."

"I suppose that's why you sneaked down to Luigi's that night?" challenged Carl.

"Yes," she admitted. "I—I wanted to consult Perry Mason about the legal side."

"And what were you consulting Dr. Millsap about?" he demanded bitterly. "The medical possibility of a man returning to life?"

"He's just an old friend."

"Oh, just an old friend, eh? But you had to sneak out to meet him!"

"Carl!"

"I called his apartment the night of the murder and he wasn't there. You were out with him somewhere!"

"Carl! Oh, Carl, what are you saying? My nerves were to pieces—that's why I saw him. I thought you loved me! The only thing that's kept me going during these past awful hours was the thought that you—you'd stand by me."

"The law must take its course, Rhoda," Carl said, almost like a school-boy repeating a lesson. "Even if it means scandal for the Montaine name."

"Those are your father's words, Carl!" she cried. "They don't sound like you."

On a typewriter the officer at the desk had practically kept pace with the spoken words, recording them on paper. In the silence that followed he ripped the sheet from his machine.

"Well, I guess that young couple of yours won't be speaking to each other any more for quite a while," he said to Lucas. "Here's the record, if you want it."

Lucas took the sheet of paper and read what was typed on it.

"Well, we aren't proving anything here," he grunted.

"Only that no matter how low Moxley was," remarked the officer with considerable feeling, "that girl killed the wrong husband!"

"Aw, don't be so sentimental," drawled Joe Lucas, and he went back to the room in which Carl was leaning against a filing cabinet with his hands in his pockets and Rhoda was twisting a little handkerchief into a ball.

"Sorry," he said gruffly, "time's up! Can't let you two have any more secrets."

"Thanks for this favour, Mr. Lucas," said Carl frigidly.

"Aw, that's all right." The Chief of Detectives waved a hand in dismissal, closed the door after the young man

had departed, and walked round to a desk.

"Sit down, Mrs. Montaine," he said, taking a document from his pocket and opening it out on the blotting-pad. "Don't look so worried. I just had a talk with the District Attorney, and the people in the next apartment claim that Moxley's door-bell was ringing at the time the murder was committed. Now, Mrs. Montaine, if you were ringing Moxley's door-bell and he didn't answer the door because he was busy gettin' killed, why, it couldn't have been you that killed him. Don't you see?"

Rhoda, who had sunk into a chair and burst into tears, looked up with a tear-stained face.

"Yes, th-that must be it," she faltered. "I—I rang the door-bell and—er—I didn't get any answer. I remember now."

"That's fine!" boomed Lucas. "Saying that'll get us a lot further than you waiting for Perry Mason to let you talk. Now, you just sign this statement to that effect."

He held out a pen to her, and she rose to take it and to sign her name to the statement he read aloud to her.

About an hour afterwards, Perry Mason once more invaded the ante-room of the District Attorney's office, and this time nearly a dozen newspaper men and photographers were with him.

The secretary eyed the crowd with dismay and rose up behind his desk.

"You can't go in there, Mr. Mason!" he cried out. "The District Attorney is very busy."

Perry flourished a sheet of blue paper which he took from his breast-pocket.

"Not too busy to look over this habeas corpus for my client," he said sternly, and advanced to the door and opened it—only to gaze into a deserted room. "He isn't in his office. Where is he?"

"I don't know," the secretary replied.

"You're fired, gentlemen of the jury!"

The newspaper reporters and the photographers clustered round the attorney. Toots Howard, who was among them, gurgled:

"All right, Perry, let's have it!"

Perry addressed the men collectively, as though he were in a court of justice.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he declaimed, "and in calling you such I could ask for no more jurisprudent an assemblage, is it not with the utmost falseness that this building is known as the Hall of Justice?"

"That's right, Perry," declared Toots.

"I have here a document, known technically as a habeas corpus. You know the meaning of that word. The ancient Romans, from whom it sprang, knew its significance well, but does our District Attorney? It means that my client—that innocent victim of modern scheming—must be delivered into my hands; a privilege that is being denied me, and her. But is justice served? It is not! Not only is my client hidden from me, but the District Attorney hides from me as well!"

Dropping his arms and his rhetorical manner, Perry beamed at the representatives of the Press.

"Is that all right for the climax, or could we do better?" he asked genially.

"It's very good," said Toots.

Flashlight photographs were taken of the wily advocate, and the reporters were busy making notes when the District Attorney walked in from the corridor with Joe Lucas.

"You're getting very hard to find,

Mr. District Attorney," said Perry. "I have a present for you!"

The District Attorney bestowed a casual glance upon the writ of habeas corpus and smiled at Lucas, who produced the statement Rhoda had signed.

"We have a little legal document, too," sneered the Chief of Detectives.

"Perhaps you recognise the signature," said the District Attorney. "It's your client's. When she signed this she practically signed her death warrant!"

A Blonde Pretender

EMPOWERED by the writ of habeas corpus, Perry visited Rhoda in gaol that afternoon, and he took Toots with him. As he needed food he had a meal brought in from a neighbouring restaurant for himself, the reporter, and the beautiful prisoner, and under the watchful eyes of a warder the three sat and ate in a bleak room.

"Start talking, my good woman," said Perry. "This man Toots has been deaf since birth."

Toots grinned and filled his mouth; Rhoda talked. She admitted once more that she had seen Moxley on the night of his death, though to no purpose.

"He was so furious with me for not bringing the money he demanded," she said, "that he hit me and tried to choke me. I broke loose and grabbed a poker from the fireplace, and when he came at me again I hit him good and hard."

"Good and hard?" murmured Perry, raising his brows. "Well, when I get you before a jury, don't hit quite so enthusiastically!"

"He staggered back," said Rhoda, "but he didn't fall. I started to run out from the flat, but suddenly all the lights went out and I realised that somebody else was in the apartment."

"Maybe," suggested Toots brightly, "it was the wooden Indian, come to scalp Moxley by way of revenge!"

"A little more quiet, please!" commanded the warder from the door against which he had taken his stand, and Perry frowned at the reporter.

"You couldn't see who it was, Rhoda?" he asked.

"No," she replied. "Everything was happening at once. There were matches being lit by somebody, and the door-bell was ringing frantically. Then I heard the sound of glass crashing in the inside room—and after that the door-bell stopped ringing, and—and all was quiet. I ran downstairs and went home."

"Hmm!" mused Perry. "Well, our plea would have been self-defence, but you smashed all that up by telling the police that you were ringing the bell."

"I—I don't know why I signed it," murmured Rhoda.

"All the State has to do," Perry informed her, "is to produce the person who was ringing the bell. The finding of your keys beside the body makes you out a lovely little liar."

Rhoda sighed.

"After all, what difference does it make," she said plaintively, "with Carl against me?"

"What did you marry him for?"

"I loved him," she replied slowly.

"He—he was so helpless and he—he needed mothering. His father had been a brute to him—made a wreck of his life, and—"

Another warder put his head in at the door.

"Your time's up!" he announced.

Perry wiped his mouth on a serviette and patted Rhoda on the arm.

"We'll show 'em a thing or two," he said confidently. "Keep your chin up."

From the gaol he went back to his own office, where he summoned Spudsy and conversed with him at length.

"Moxley's game," he said, "was to marry women and then disappear.



"And that's the hand!" said Perry. "The hand that carved the life out of Gregory Moxley!"

He'd wait till his widows had married again, and then he'd come back and demand hush-money. So to-morrow, Spudsy, you must go out and find some other woman that Moxley was married to, get her down to the morgue, and have her identify Moxley as her dead husband. That will make Rhoda unmarried to him and her marriage to Carl Montaine legitimate. Under the law a husband cannot testify against his wife, and young Montaine will, therefore, be prevented from going on the stand. You've just got twelve hours to find the woman."

Spudsy scratched the back of his head and stared at his employer.

"Sounds easy!" he remarked lugubriously. "D'you think I'd better start from north to south, or go from east to west?"

"Oh, come, come, Spudsy," reproved Perry. "Surely you can think of some lady friend who might have wed Moxley? What about a certain blonde named Florabelle Morgan, living at the Churchill Hotel? You used to be very friendly with her—and she's not a bad actress."

"Boy!" exclaimed Spudsy with a long-drawn sigh of relief. "Am I glad we thought of her?"

Florabelle Morgan was a cabaret dancer whose brother Perry had done his best to save from the gallows, though without avail—an ample blonde, prepared to do almost anything for money and especially for the befriender of her brother. She proved quite willing to play the part of one of Moxley's widows, and on the following evening she was taken to the morgue by Spudsy, where, in the presence of numerous newspapermen, she tearfully identified the corpse of Gregory Moxley as that of a long-lost husband.

Flashlight photographs were taken of her, and Wilbur Strong, the coroner, was an interested witness. Having been well tutored in the part she was to play, Florabelle answered all the reporters' questions satisfactorily, but two men from the District Attorney's office arrived on the scene, and they were sceptical.

They asked her name, and she gave her real married name with a feeling of safety because her own husband had been dead for a number of years.

"Mrs. Gregory Lawson, sir," she said. "This man was my husband, and his name was Lawson, not Moxley."

"Where's your marriage certificate?" demanded one of the officers brusquely. "I have it right here," she whimpered, and produced a genuine document from her handbag. "Oh, my poor Gregory!"

"Sonora, Mexico, eh?" grunted the officer, pocketing the certificate. "I'm afraid you'll have to come with us, Mrs. Lawson. The District Attorney wants to talk to you."

"Do you mean to tell me that I'm not to have a minute alone with my dead?" she sobbed.

"Come on!" commanded the hard-hearted official.

After she had gone the reporters and photographers trooped away, with the single exception of Toots, who followed the coroner into the office along the corridor. The coroner said slyly:

"Well, how do you figure it, Toots?"

"Looks to me," replied the representative of the "Enquirer," "like Perry Mason was born with a lot of lucky horseshoes."

"Yes," chuckled the coroner, "and he always puts one in his glove when he swings a fast one at the D. A."

A policeman entered to deliver a message, and Toots asked if he could take another peep at Moxley.

December 7th, 1935.

"Sure; make yourself at home," replied the coroner.

So Toots went back into the glass-pannelled room of shrouded corpses, but he stopped short with a gasp as one of the white sheets was flung back and a fully-clothed figure sat bolt upright. It was Spudsy the sheet had concealed, however, not a dead body, and Spudsy cried out:

"Hi, Toots! Who won the Lasky-Spimioni fight to-night?"

Clues!

PERRY MASON, that evening, went to Norwalk Avenue alone, and he climbed a fire-escape at the back of the Coleman Apartments to the kitchen window of the flat in which Gregory Moxley had been killed. The police had left the window unfastened, and he slid in over the sill with an electric torch in his hand.

In the light of the torch he examined each room thoroughly, paying particular attention to the broken mirror and a damaged chair. From the carpet near the door he picked up a jagged piece of thick plate-glass, silvered on one side, which clearly had been part of the mirror. This he wrapped in a handkerchief and put in his pocket before he continued his search.

Only one other find rewarded his efforts, and that was a charred fragment of a sheet of letter-paper which he retrieved from a fireplace, and this seemed to please him, though there was nothing more on it than the printed words, "Fremont Hotel."

He went back to his office, where Della Street was still waiting, and Spudsy had just arrived, and Spudsy was sent off to South San Francisco to investigate every resident in the Fremont Hotel, which was situated in that suburb of the city.

Nearly twenty-four hours elapsed before the faithful assistant returned, but meanwhile he had cultivated the acquaintance of one of the girls on the switchboard at the hotel, and from her had learned quite a lot.

"There's a singer in the Midnight Follies at the Irving Theatre we'll have to see," he informed Perry.

"Connected with the case?" Perry inquired.

"Sure! She and her brother—a guy by the name of Oscar Pender. They phoned Moxley from the hotel just thirty minutes before he got bumped off. The telephone operator gave me the tip. She still calls herself Doris Pender, but I've checked on her, and I've found out that she married Moxley last year."

Perry whistled shrilly.

"What could I do without you?" he groaned. "That makes Florabelle no widow of the deceased!"

"It still makes Carl Montaine a real husband of Rhoda," said Spudsy.

"We'll go and see these Midnight Follies," decided Perry.

They went to the Irving Theatre, where Perry bribed the stage-door-keeper, and between turns they invaded the dressing-room of Doris Pender, a dark-haired girl and a good-looking one.

"Can we talk to you for a minute?" Perry said to her. "We're inspectors from the telephone company."

"Telephone company?" echoed the girl. "Well, I haven't much time now. What's the beef?"

"You were in South San Francisco on the night of the twelfth?"

"Is that a crime?" she demanded, eyeing the intruders with scorn, though not without a measure of nervousness.

"No," said Perry, "but it's a crime

to try to collect money over the telephone by threats."

"It looks," she retorted, "as though the telephone company's got the wrong number, as usual!"

"Lady," said Perry sharply, "there's no use denying that you called Gregory Moxley that night from the Fremont Hotel—you or your brother—and Moxley was bumped off that night!"

"Wait a minute—wait a minute!" gulped Doris Pender. "That telephone call didn't have anything to do with that killing!"

Perry moved towards the door, beckoning to Spudsy.

"Wait a minute!" cried the girl. "Listen—"

"Good-night!" said Perry emphatically, and he went out with Spudsy past a call-boy who was about to knock.

Outside the stage-door he left Spudsy to lurk in the shadows while he himself went back to the office. He knew that he had left Doris Pender panic-stricken, and he felt pretty sure that she would fly off to her brother the moment she could escape from the theatre. Spudsy would attend to that matter.

Toots was at the office in quest of news. Della Street said plaintively as her employer seated himself in a businesslike manner at his desk:

"It's pretty late for a lady to be still working!"

"Yes," agreed Perry, "and it's late for a lady to be still in gaol; and it's late for Spudsy to be out on a wild-goose chase."

"You've still got that Moxley widow," remarked Toots.

"Yes," said Perry, and filled his pipe. "But I don't think I'll have her long. Things are messed up badly."

The door was opened and Wilbur Strong walked into the room.

"Hallo, fellows!" he said. "Perry, my friend, I've got some more bad news for you! Your young Dr. Millsap turned out to be a bell-ringer. He's admitted to Joe Lucas that it was him ringing the bell while Moxley was being done in."

"That's fine!" quoth Perry bitterly. "He's certainly fixed things up beautifully for Rhoda!"

"Hasn't he, though?" said the coroner. "With her saying it was her ringing the bell, and her keys by the body—say, I guess I'll have a little of your embalming fluid, Perry!"

Della had already provided Toots with a whisky-and-soda. She mixed one for the speaker and another for her employer, and then the telephone-bell rang.

The District Attorney was on the other end of the line, seated at a desk in a room where Joe Lucas had been badgering Florabelle Morgan for a very long while. The blonde pretender was facing a painfully bright light as well as the Chief of Detectives, and some reporters were present.

"Hallo!" said the District Attorney into his instrument.

"Hallo, Stacey!" returned Perry. "Sorry to keep you up so late worrying about me."

"Well," was the retort, "I think we've managed to work out something that'll keep you up all night every night until the trial! Listen, Perry, you'd better not plan to use that woman Florabelle's identification of Moxley as her husband. Somebody paid her to do that. We caught her putting the money in the bank!"

"That's a lie!" stormed Florabelle, jumping to her feet, but Perry could not hear her voice, nor could he hear the voice of Joe Lucas commanding her to sit down.

(Continued on page 26)

Over the prairies swept a torrent of pioneering humanity, bent on seeking wealth in virgin territory. But the promise of riches beckoned rogues as well as honest men, and the settlers' trails were blazed with feud and death. A smashing serial of the lawless West, starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans

"The ROARING WEST"



EPISODE 6.—
"Death Rides the Plains"

Read This First

Montana Larkin, an ex-deputy, is planning to join in a land rush with Jinglebob Morgan, his friend, whose brother has provided them with the map of a claim which contains rich mineral deposits.

Montana and Jinglebob make the acquaintance of a rancher named Parker, and are introduced to his daughter, Mary, and his niece, Ann Hardy. From Parker they learn the details of the projected land rush, and agree to ride in company with the cattleman and his party.

Parker's foreman, Gillespie, is a crook, however. Discovering the purpose of Montana and Jinglebob, he beats them to their claim with some of his hirelings, and records it in his name.

Later, Jinglebob's brother Clem arrives on the scene, and reveals the fact that the land secured by Gillespie is worthless, owing to a flaw in the map which Jinglebob had possessed.

Clem is kidnapped by the Gillespie gang, but is rescued before Gil can force him to divulge the whereabouts of the real claim.

That same night Gillespie and his men come to the Parker ranch. Anxious to account for Montana, they entice him to the bunkhouse by a trick. As the ex-deputy realises his danger he sweeps out the light, but five guns blaze in the darkness!

Now read on

Gun Duel

It was lucky for Montana that he had the presence of mind to bound to one side as he shattered the bunk-

house lamp, or five leaden slugs must have ripped through his body.

In the instant that he leapt away from the table he heard the bullets whistle past him and smack into the timbers of the wall. Then he dived for the door, and in another split second he was clear of the building.

A second volley splintered the panels of the door as he slammed it after him. Next moment he heard Gillespie's voice raised in strident tones.

"He's got away! After him!"

Montana dodged round the corner of the cow-hands' quarters and sped to the ranch-house, and as he reached the porch Jim Parker came blundering across the threshold with Mary, Ann, Jinglebob and Clem.

"What is it?" Parker jerked. "What happened, Montana? We heard shots!"

"Gillespie and his gang!" the ex-deputy answered tersely. "Quick—inside! They may try to rush the house!"

Even as he spoke the words Gil and his men swung into view round the angle of the bunkhouse, and a bullet cut a neat hole through the sleeve of Jinglebob's shirt.

"Inside!" Montana repeated. "Turn out the lights and get under cover. We'll beat off these coyotes!"

The girls were hustled through the doorway, Montana following with Parker and the Morgans. In the living-room stood young Steve Randall, his arm bandaged, a look of blank inquiry on his face.

"Gillespie, Steve!" Montana told him. "Douse that light an' then lie low. Keep out of the way with Ann and Mary. You can't handle a gun with that game flipper o' yours."

"Gimme a six-shooter an' I'll use my

left hand," Steve retorted, as he turned out the lamp that illuminated the living-room; but the other men paid no heed, for already they were making towards the windows.

They took up their positions in the gloom, and, looking out, they saw Gil and his hirelings advancing on the house. "Let 'em have it!" Jim Parker said crisply.

Four guns roared a flaming challenge to the onset of the Gillespie gang. It was an opening fusillade that drew no blood; but Butch Riley clapped a hand to his pate as his sombrero was whipped off, and the other members of the party had close enough shaves.

By tacit understanding the crooks swerved towards a big wagon that offered them shelter, and as they ducked behind it Hank Rodgers uttered a hoarse comment.

"We're sunk, Gil!" he gasped. "If we could 've finished Montana and then busted down on Parker and the Morgan's afore they could organise—if we could 've done that, we'd have been settin' pretty. But right now we're in a spot!"

"There's four o' them and five of us," Gillespie retorted, "an' the prize we're after is a claim that's worth a fortune in gold. We're gonna fight, and we'll smoke Larkin and his friends outa there if I have to stay here all night!"

He set an example to his men by crouching down behind one of the wagon-wheels and firing through the spokes, and Rodgers and the others followed suit, the bellow of their "irons" echoing around the ranch-house and outer buildings of the Dry Creek outfit.

In grim response the guns of the defenders belched lead that struck splinters from the wagon-spokes, and the back of

Tex Sanders' hand was blistered by a ricocheting slug that kept him out of the duel for two or three minutes, during which time he nursed his slight hurt and mouthed black oaths.

Meanwhile the window-panes of the living-room were falling asunder in fragments before the enfilading bullets of the attackers, and Clem Morgan suffered a cut on the cheek by a flying piece of glass.

He continued to blaze away, however, pumping the trigger of a borrowed forty-five that Mary had brought him from her father's private collection.

Over at the wagon Sanders finally resumed active interest in the siege, but neither he nor the other three men under Gillespie's command had much hope of success crowning their efforts.

"Hank was right, Gil," Jake Conroy blurted all at once. "We ain't got a chance. There ain't enough of us to smoke out them hombres."

But Gillespie could not see it—would not see it. Greed had inspired in him a desperate determination to discover the whereabouts of that valuable strip of land which Clem Morgan hoped to stake, and he persisted in his determination until Hank Rodgers suddenly clutched him by the arm and indicated two horsemen who were riding towards the ranch from the east.

"Look!" Rodgers panted. "Maybe you'll believe we're up against it now. That must be Slim an' Porky, back from Auburn!"

The oncoming riders were Slim and Porky, indeed—the two loyal punchers who had remained steadfast to their employer with the somewhat chicken-hearted Happy when Gillespie had caused the split in the Parker outfit. And at the sound of firing Slim and Porky had drawn their revolvers; were now galloping up to investigate the situation.

The fact that there were only two of them was not insignificant, for their presence swung the balance completely in the favour of the ranch-house defenders. Even Gillespie realised that.

Confronted by the belching guns of the men in the house, outflanked by Slim and Porky, the gangsters could not afford to maintain the battle. Despite his announcement that he was prepared to fight all night, Gillespie saw that discretion was advisable.

"Beat it, fellers!" he snarled in chagrined accents. "Pick up your horses and pull out here!"

He led the way in a rush to the copse where he and his accomplices had left their brones, and presently the rogues were spurring from the scene, exchanging a few shots with Slim and Porky as the two cowboys blazed at their departing figures.

Slim and Porky drew rein in front of the ranch-house, watched Gillespie and his men ride off into a tract of brushwood, then dismounted as Montana, Jim Parker and the Morgans came out on to the porch.

"Hallo, there, boys," old man Parker greeted his two employees. "Mighty glad to see you!"

"That was Gillespie an' his gang. wasn't it, boss?" said Slim.

"Yep, it sure was!" the rancher declared, glancing ironically in the direction that the crooks had taken. "They tried to raid us, but I reckon we were one too many for 'em when you and Porky showed up."

Slim was all for organising a pursuit, but Parker would not hear of it, seeing little chance of catching up with the gangsters—except, perhaps, by running into an ambush in the dark.

"You're right, Mr. Parker," Montana put in, giving the rancher credit for his caution. "We can't take any long

chances. Meantime I suggest we should look around for Happy."

Happy was discovered among the bushes into which he had been thrown, after he had been knocked senseless, and he was carried to the bunk-house, where he came round after five minutes' attention. Then, having heard his story, Montana returned to the ranch-house with Parker and the two Morgan brothers.

When they re-entered the living-room the lamp was alight again, and Steve Randall was awaiting them with Ann and Mary.

"Slim and Porky brought those gew-gaws you asked them to buy in Auburn, Mary," Jim Parker told his daughter. "They say they're in their saddle-bags."

"Never mind them now," Mary rejoined. "I'd forgotten all about them. The point is—are you sure Gil and his crew have gone?"

"They've gone all right," Montana interposed, "and I figure they won't be back here in a hurry. It was Clem, of course, that they were after."

Mary nodded. She and her father had been taken into full confidence by Montana and Jinglebob after the land rush, and understood the situation completely.

"I reckon we oughta track them skunks down and round 'em up," Jinglebob stated emphatically. "We've got plenty on 'em now—what with the murder of Trask, the attempted rustlin' of Parker's herd and this attack to-night. Clem, ain't you got no idea where that hide-out of Gillespie's is?"

"Naw," his brother said, shaking his head. "Yuh see, I was blindfolded when I was taken there, an' blindfolded again when I was brought out."

"How about you, Steve?" Jinglebob asked young Randall. "If you can tell us where that hide-away is, we'll call in the sheriff and grab the whole gang."

"I only know that it's somewhere near Hell's Gate," Steve replied. "But I'll tell you what, Jinglebob. I'll try to contact Gillespie and team up with them again. He ain't to know that I'm not on his side any more."

Montana moved between Jinglebob and the wounded man.

"I guess you're fit enough to fork a saddle, Steve," he observed, "but if you don't know where Gillespie's hide-away is, how are you gonna contact him?"

"You're forgettin' Marco Brett, Montana," Steve Randall answered. "Gil is bound to show up at Brett's saloon in Sicomoro some time, and that's where I'll be lookin' for him. I'll join up with him again, and when I get the low-down I'll tip you off—let you know the best way to corner him and his crew."

The idea appealed to Montana, even if Parker and the others seemed a trifle dubious, and after a moment's thought the ex-deputy looked at Steve Randall quizzically.

"I'm hopin' you'll play straight with us," he said.

"You can trust me," Steve told him. "I give you my Bible oath on that, pardner."

"All right," Montana grunted. "You'd better start out at sun-up tomorrow."

News of Plunder

EARLY the following day Gil Gillespie and his men cantered into the main street of Sicomoro from the north, and, hitching their ponies to the veranda rail of the town's saloon, they filed through the swing-doors and crossed the bar-room to the private office of Marco Brett.

Big Marco Brett was seated at his desk, but rose quickly to his feet as Gil and his hirlings entered the room.

"Hallo, Gillespie," he greeted.

"Takin' a chance comin' to Sicomoro, ain't you? Or maybe you haven't heard?"

"Heard what?" Gil demanded.

"The sheriff was here after you left town yesterday," Brett explained. "I don't know how true it is, but there's a rumour goin' around that he'd like to see you about the shootin' of Bill Trask up in Red Gulch, the night of the flood. He's dropped the charge against Montana Larkin, anyway."

Gillespie scowled.

"The sheriff had better not try any funny stuff with me," he said. "Sicomoro ain't Red Gulch. There ain't much account taken of the law in Sicomoro. Yeah, and talkin' of Montana Larkin, that guy is gettin' in my hair. I told you how he busted up that cattle raid. Well, he's ridin' herd on Clem Morgan now."

"You mean—he took Clem Morgan away from you?"

Gillespie nodded viciously, and Brett gave vent to a low whistle.

"Queered the plan you had in mind about the land with the mineral deposits, eh?" he mused. "Say, that's tough, Gil. The way you talked about that deal, I thought it was a cinch."

"I'm gonna make it a cinch," Gillespie ground out. "But listen, Brett, I've got to have more men. You know plenty of tough hombres that you could get in touch with. There's a good many right here in this town—fellers that have done work for you. Put 'em on to me, Brett, will yuh?"

The saloon owner fingered his chin. "Okay, Gil," he said shrewdly, "but for that little favour I'd want a cut in this land deal."

"You're on, Brett," came the reply. "I'm convinced there's enough gold in that strip for you and me both, and any likely guys that care to throw in with me. The way Clem Morgan's talked about it, we'll make our fortunes."

"Yeah, if we can find the strip," Brett grunted, "and find it afore Morgan stakes a claim on it. The way I look at it—"

He paused, for at that instant there was a knock on the door, and with a frown the crooked saloon owner called out inquiringly.

"Who's there?"

"The name is Steve Randall," a voice answered from the other side of the door.

Gillespie uttered an exclamation, and, striding in front of Brett, he opened the office door to admit the unexpected caller. A moment later Steve was confronting the ex-foreman and his associates with a look of sham resentment on his countenance.

"I thought I might find you fellers here," he said. "A fine bunch you turned out to be, didn't you—leavin' me in Hidden Valley after that battle there?"

"We had to clear off in a hurry," Gillespie muttered. "What happened to you, anyway?"

"Larkin and his friends took me to the Parker ranch, an' I've been held prisoner there ever since," Steve rejoined. "While you and the boys were shootin' up the outfit last night I slipped out through the back door, stole a horse and made my getaway."

It was at this point that another visitor arrived, and Gil and his men recognised him as one Blackie Davis, an individual who had had a good many dealings with Marco Brett in the past.

Blackie Davis nodded to the Gillespie gang and then addressed Brett, knowing that he could speak freely in the presence of Gil and his party.

"I've got some news that might interest you, Brett," he announced. "I've been ramrodin' Bill Hardy's freight

column across-country, an' believe me it's the biggest, richest outfit I ever saw."

Steve Randall glanced at the man known as Blackie with interest. He recalled that Bill Hardy was the father of Mary Parker's cousin Ann, and wondered why Blackie Davis should bring tidings of the wagon-train to Marco Brett. Then the saloon owner's voice interrupted his reflections.

"What's Bill Hardy's outfit carryin'?" Brett asked.

"What ain't it carryin'?" Blackie retorted. "Supplies of all kinds—thousands and thousands of dollars' worth—not to mention a prairie schooner full of gunpowder and ammunition. I tell yuh, Brett, if you could lay hands on it you could sell the stuff yourself, quiet-like, and make a pile out of it."

Brett's eyes narrowed craftily.

"How well is the column guarded?" he murmured.

"It's wide open," was the answer. "It was attacked a while back by renegade Indians. They was beaten off, but a good many men was lost in the fight. The column is short-handed now—and what's more, Bill Hardy himself was plugged. He's layin' up in one of the schooners."

"Renegade Indians," the saloon owner ejaculated. "Say, we ain't had trouble with Redskins in years."

"Yeah; but I reckon someone's been peddlin' liquor among these here renegades, an' they got crazy enough to think they could act like their forefathers and get away with it."

"Where are the wagons now?" Brett demanded.

"Up in the rock country," said Blackie. "They're headin' for the water-hole at Lizzard Creek, because their water supply give out. I made some excuse, left the outfit, an' came on to town."

The saloon-owner turned to Gil Gillespie, a sinister smile playing around his brutal mouth.

"Seem' we're more or less in partnership now, Gil, how would you like to pull off this job?" he suggested. "I can get hold of those extra men you were talkin' about. Say the word an' I'll have 'em rounded up within the hour—enough of 'em to make the thing easy for you. Then you can hit the trail for Lizzard Creek."

"I'm your man, Brett," Gillespie declared. "You can depend on me."

"What about Clem?" Steve Randall interposed quickly. "You'd better have him watched, or before you know what's happenin' he might stake out that land of his and file a claim on it. Supposin' you leave me to keep an eye on his movements, seem' I've got a bullet hole in me arm and can't fight. I'll know where to find you if I want to get in touch with you in a hurry."

"That's a good idea, Randall," Gillespie agreed. "You beat it for the Parker outfit and watch points."

Steve left the saloon without delay, and soon he was galloping off in a northerly direction at the top speed of his brone—seemingly bent on carrying out Gillespie's instructions, but actually contemplating a very different mission.

For, on sighting the Parker outfit an hour or two later, he did not conceal himself in some favourable coign of vantage to play the spy, but rode straight ahead for the ranchhouse and located its owner near a corral at the back of the building.

Jim Parker was interviewing a group of likely-looking cowboys who had shown up at the house that very morning, some of them having arrived singly, others in two or threes. They were men who had heard that jobs were to be had at the ranch, and, although

these applicants were really too numerous for his requirements, Parker was, nevertheless, prepared to engage them *en bloc* in view of Gillespie's activities.

The arrival of Steve interrupted the interview, but before the newcomer could divulge the information which he had picked up in Sicomoro, Montana hurried into view with Ann, Mary and the two Morgans.

"Hallo, there, Randall!" Jim Parker was saying to Steve as they came up. "Didn't expect you back so soon. Have you found out something?"

"Gillespie and his gang are raisin' reinforcements," Steve jerked, "and they're plannin' to jump Bill Hardy's freight column at Lizzard Creek."

The news was received with consternation by the Parkers and Bill Hardy's daughter, Ann, and their agitation increased on learning that the wagon-boss had been wounded in a previous raid by renegade Indians. Then Jinglebob Morgan spoke up.

"If the new hands will throw in with us, we've got enough men to save that column and maybe bust up the Gillespie gang," he growled. "Ask 'em how they feel about it, Parker."

The situation was explained to the cowboys who had been applying for jobs at the ranch, and they seemed ready enough for action.

"All right," Jim Parker declared. "Every man of you is on my pay-roll now, and this is where we ride."

"Wait a minute," Montana said. "You've got cattle on this property, Parker, and I advise you not to leave them unattended. Let me handle this job. I'll take Slim, Porky, Jinglebob and the new hands with me, and make for the Lizzard Creek trail. You stay right here with Clem, Happy and Steve—just to keep an eye on things."

The rancher fell in with this proposal, and shortly afterwards Montana and his followers set out for the south-east, a formidable body of men with purposeful expressions on their weather-beaten faces.

They were accompanied by Ann Hardy and Mary Parker, for Ann had flatly refused to stay at home and, with equal stubbornness, Mary had insisted on accompanying her, even in defiance of parental commands.

It was a long ride to the Lizzard Creek trail, and the sun had crossed the meridian when Montana and his party espied it ahead of them. Then they beheld a straggling column of prairie schooners moving slowly from the east, and, knowing that this must be the Hardy freight-train, they pushed onward at a brisk pace to meet it.

The first wagon in the column was the one that contained Bill Hardy and, within a few seconds of the supply train halting, Montana was climbing into that first schooner with Mary and Ann.

Bill Hardy was lying there on a pile of hides, a fine-looking old fellow, though his countenance was drawn with suffering, and his mind in so disordered a condition that he scarcely seemed to recognise his own daughter.

Leaving the two girls with the wounded man, Montana moved to the front of the wagon and spoke to the driver of it.

"Hardy seems in a pretty bad way," he said.

"He keeps cryin' out for water," the other rejoined, "but there ain't a drop in the outfit. That's why we're headin' for Lizzard Creek."

"Then there's no possible chance of making Sicomoro by the direct route?" Montana queried.

"Not a chance," was the reply. "If we was on horseback we could all reach Sicomoro to-night. But these here wagon-teams can't keep up a fast pace for long, and we're jest about desperate. Why, the very ponies will pass out on us if they don't get their thirst slaked."

Montana nodded grimly.

"All right," he said. "Here, let me have those reins. You've probably had more'n enough drivin' to do."

"I sure have," the other answered. "Wouldn't mind a spell in the saddle for a change."



"Inside!" Montana repeated. "Turn out the lights and get under cover. We'll beat off these coyotes!"

He alighted from the wagon and mounted a spare horse that had been hitched to the back of the vehicle. Then Montana cracked a whip above the heads of the prairie schooner's team, and the animals plodded forward.

One by one the rest of the wagon-teams in the column were set in motion by their drivers. Meanwhile, Jinglebob, Slin and Porky had taken charge of the brones belonging to Montana, and the two girls, who had boarded the first schooner with him, and the remainder of the Parker ranch-hands were cantering back along the train to spread the news that trouble might be expected.

The wagons and outriders of the Hardy freight-train looked grim as they heard these tidings, and rifles, shotguns and revolvers were sternly examined, their owners making certain that these were loaded.

Forewarned and forwarned, the convoy rumbled slowly onward over the plains, Lizzard Creek its goal.

Onset

LIZZARD CREEK was situated in the heart of a singularly barren expanse of country, and was akin to an oasis in the desert. And, like an oasis, it had become the permanent residence of at least one human being.

This individual was one Dave Baxter, and he obtained a living from two sources. Primarily a horse-dealer, he also held the rights on the water-hole at the creek—the word creek being used in this instance according to the American definition, and signifying a narrow plain between the mountains, not a river tributary.

There was no river near Lizzard Creek, but there was water in the form of a deep, sprawling pool; and apart from his activities in regard to horseflesh Baxter was wont to allow any way-farers to slake their thirst there—at a price.

Baxter's outfit consisted of a large corral, that was usually packed with mules and ponies, and a fair-sized dwelling, where he lived with such men as he employed. It was this outfit that Gillespie beheld after a long ride from Sicomoro with his four cronies, Blackie Davis and a powerful band of ruffians hired by Brett.

"Whose dump is that?" Gillespie asked, viewing the bunkhouse and the corral.

"Dave Baxter's," Blackie replied. "Let's have a little talk with him. He's a friend of Marco Brett's, too."

The gang spurred on, and a little while later drew rein near the water-hole. Their arrival brought several men from the bunkhouse, these being headed by Baxter in person, who was

a tough-looking customer of unpleasant manner.

Blackie held converse with Baxter and made the position clear.

"Now if you refuse to let that wagon-train water here, Dave," he added, "they're bound to head for Devil's Gorge in the hope of gettin' water there."

"So what?" Baxter asked. "On the trail to Devil's Gorge there's plenty o' spots where Gillespie and his bunch could ambush the train," Blackie observed. "You see, we aim to wipe out every man in that column and leave no evidence."

Baxter considered for a moment. "If I do as you ask," he said at length, "I'll want my pickings outa the deal. I'll even follow up with my own men an' join you when you cut loose on the trail."

"Brett would be agreeable to that," Blackie declared. "How about you, Gillespie?"

Gillespie nodded, and, the bargain having been sealed, he and his gang departed with Blackie, turning on to the Devil's Gorge trail and seeking cover behind a mass of huge boulders that were just in sight of the Baxter outfit.

Baxter and his hands were left to await the arrival of the freight-train, which presently came into view, and a few minutes later the leading wagons halted near the pool.

Montana acted as spokesman, addressing Baxter and his employees, who had taken up a position between the convoy and its objective.

"We're out of water, friends," the ex-deputy explained.

"You're outa luck as well," Dave Baxter grunted. "We ain't got no water for strangers."

"What's that?" Montana ejaculated. "You heard me," Baxter rasped, and now Montana realised that Baxter and his men were gripping the butts of their guns. "We ain't got water for strangers, so pull out of here."

"We're willing to pay for it," Montana protested, alighting from the Hardy wagon.

"We don't want your money," came the harsh reply. "Get out."

Some of the other wagoners descended to the ground and added their voices to Montana's appeals, but all to no purpose, and, with the argument still in progress, the ex-deputy quietly retreated and spoke in an undertone to Jinglebob Morgan.

"This hombre is within his rights—Baxter, or whatever his name is," he said. "But I reckon we've got the law of common humanity on our side, if nothing else."

"Let's rush 'em," Jinglebob muttered.

"We can shoot our way to that water, if need be."

"And put ourselves completely in the wrong? No, I've got a better lynch, Jingles. See the horses in that corral? Well, when Baxter and his men start after 'em, you tell the folks to fill up with water."

Jinglebob did not altogether comprehend, but he was to understand Montana's meaning soon enough. For, mounting his pony and riding quietly round to Baxter's corral, the ex-deputy opened the gate of the pen and proceeded to drive out the mob of brones and mules.

The argument over at the water-hole was suddenly interrupted by the drumming of hoofs and the piercing yawns of Montana's voice as he scattered the herd far and wide, and with loud shouts of dismay Baxter and his men rushed for their saddle-horses, bent on giving immediate chase and rounding up the animals that had stampeded from the corral.

Away they spurred in full pursuit, and, with the herd fairly on the run, Montana swung off into a thicket, waiting until Baxter's party dashed past before he issued forth again and returned to the water-hole.

Here Jinglebob had quickly taken control of the situation and led a rush to the pool, and now the men of the wagon-train were engaged in filling empty kegs that they had carried from the prairie schooners. It was a task that was completed while Baxter and his employees were still speeding after their fleeing herd, and with triumphant shouts the freighters got under way again.

In the meantime, up on the Devil's Gorge trail, Gillespie and his force had witnessed the whole affair without being able to realise exactly what had happened. They only knew, as they saw the wagons and outriders drawing away from Lizzard Creek, that events had not turned out according to plan.

"Something's gone wrong," jerked Blackie Davis. "They've got water, and they ain't headin' this way at all."

"Baxter slipped up somehow," Gillespie snarled. "No chance of an ambush now. We'll have to bust leather and catch up with that column, and it's gotta be a runnin' fight!"

He clapped his heels to the flanks of his pony and charged through the rocks, and the men under his command stormed after him. Across the barren, dusty ground they swept, turning finally on to the tracks left by the receding wagon-train.

They had been seen by the freighters, and the word had spread like wildfire that the expected attack was at hand, so that every driver was now crowding on all speed and every outrider galloped

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with drawn six-gun; and soon the blatter of firearms was punctuating the thunder of the horses' feet.

They might have halted and given battle, the men of the column, but, despite the fact that Montana and his company had swelled their numbers, they were still in the minority, and, although realising that they might ultimately be forced to make a determined stand, it was their object if possible to obtain the advantage of some sloping ground ahead.

Vast clouds of dust rose from hoofs and wheels, forming a screen between pursuers and pursued and rendering marksmanship more difficult. Gillespie and his rogues were gaining, however, and ere long they were perilously close to the hindmost prairie schooners.

One of the hindmost wagons was the vehicle laden with gunpowder and ammunition, and two men were aboard it, a shaggy old pioneer who was in the driving position, and a younger man who was crouching in the interior.

It was the younger man who suddenly conceived the idea of checking the enemy's pursuit by use of the gunpowder, and, picking up one of the smaller kegs of explosive, he fitted a short fuse to it and struck a match.

The fuse began to splutter, and the man in the wagon tossed the keg over the tailboard. It rolled a few yards after it hit the earth, then came to rest near a prairie dog's burrow—the powder wagon drawing rapidly away from it while Gillespie and his band as rapidly approached it.

The spark touched the explosive and there was a shattering roar, accompanied by a vivid blast of flame. Three of the gang were blown to eternity, and the rest thrown into confusion.

Cursing, Gillespie led his men on again, and through the dust haze saw the young fellow in the powder wagon preparing another fuse. This time Gillespie and his followers knew what to expect, and they concentrated their fire on the interior of that vehicle.

The man with the fuse was drilled through the heart, and pitched from the swaying schooner. The same volley from the outlaws' guns accounted for the veteran driver, and, as his lifeless hands let fall the whip and reins, his team of ponies eased up.

The Gillespie gang came alongside, and all at once Blackie Davis scrambled on to the wagon from his horse, calling upon another of the band to do the same.

"What's the idea?" Gillespie shouted.

"The guy what threw out that keg has given me a hunch," Blackie answered. "You fellers hang hack a little. I'll take this freighter right to the head of the Hardy outfit and then bomb the foremost schooners. That oughta pull up the whole bunch quick enough—yeah, an' throw such a scare into 'em that your work will be easy. All I need is one man to help me."

"You'll never make it, Blackie," Gil belted. "You'll be shot to pieces before you ever get near the head of the train."

"No. They'll never notice me—an' if they do, they'll take it I'm on their side. They won't guess anything's wrong until the explosions start—an' when that happens they'll be too het-up to do much."

The powder wagon was still going forward, and, as a gangster named Dorgan clambered aboard, Blackie lashed the horses into full gallop again

and pulled away from Gillespie and the rest of the gang as these slackened pace a trifle.

Suddenly the nature of the ground seemed to change, and the clouds of dust that rose from it became less dense. In that clearer atmosphere Blackie Davis again saw the press of prairie schooners and out-riders in front of him, and with swift strokes of the whip he drove his team after them at full stretch.

To give the man his due, he was a magnificent driver, and, making up on the column, he weaved his way through them towards the leading wagons. Meanwhile Dorgan was in the back of the vehicle which Blackie had commandeered, and was engaged in attaching a fuse to a canister of explosive.

The powder wagon swept onward, Blackie Davis flailing his horses mercilessly, but handling the reins with consummate skill and steering the outfit through that stampede like a navigator taking his ship through a treacherous sea.

Sometimes the schooner was on two wheels. Once it almost fouled another vehicle, and once it came near to being sandwiched between two heavier wagons.

Blackie forced his way ahead of the foremost schooners, and the last one which he overtook was the Hardy outfit, containing the wounded boss of the freight-train and the two girls from the Parker ranch. It also contained Montana, who had abandoned the saddle of his horse to relieve Mary of the wagon-team's reins.

"Hurry up with that powder!" Blackie yelled to Dorgan. "Toss it into that schooner behind us. That oughta make the rest of these freighters sit up!"

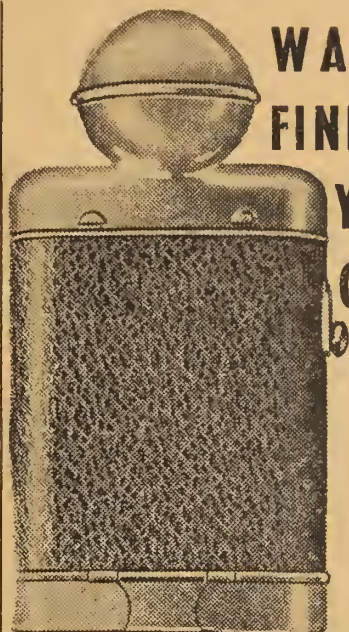
"The fuse is ready now, Blackie," Dorgan answered from the interior. "But there's women in that outfit!"

"What of it? Do as I tell yuh!"

Dorgan lit the fuse that he had attached to the canister. Then he

dragged apart the curtains at the tail-board of the wagon in which he and Blackie were riding. An instant later he was raising his hand to make the fatal throw!

(To be continued next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans.)



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December 7th, 1935.

"THE CASE OF THE CURIOUS BRIDE"
(Continued from page 20)

"I got that money as a present!" she cried. "I've got an uncle in Australia who's rollin' in dough!"

"Yes," said the District Attorney, holding his hand over the telephone. "but Perry Mason doesn't deny that it was a false identification."

That was a blow to the blonde, and Lucas followed it up. "Remember," he rasped, "you're fooling around with a murder charge!"

"All right, all right," surrendered Florabelle. "It was a whim, boys, that's all! Just a whim!"

"That's more like it!" exulted Lucas. "Here, you can have a cigarette!"

The wily District Attorney spoke again to Perry. "We've got a confession," he said, "and I could use it to make you withdraw—and possibly get you disbarred. But I won't do that because it would deprive me of the pleasure of beating you for once. Good-night, Mr. Mason!"

Perry put down the telephone with a grimace.

"For once!" he growled, and turned to the others. "Well, the blonde Florabelle turned out to be just a blonde, after all! She gave in!"

"The police are really gettin' tough this time," quoth Toots.

"Yeah, you'll be able to go to China 'most any time now," said the coroner.

"Perry——" began Della, but at that moment Spudsy tottered into the room, and they all stared at him, for his face was bruised and swollen, and some sticking-plaster adorned the left side of his brow.

"What happened?" asked Perry.

"I met Oscar Pender, of South San Francisco," Spudsy replied. "Followed his sister in a taxi to a low-down lodging-house on the water-front, and after she come out and went off I barged in."

"Good!" said Perry. "You look as though you found out something."

"I did!" said the warrior. "I found out that Pender was at Moxley's apartment the night Moxley got bumped off!"

"There's the man I want!" cried Perry. "Why didn't you bring him in?"

"For two good reasons. First, I had to get my health back, and, second, he was practically surrounded with private detectives!"

"Sure they were private detectives?"

"I can smell 'em! Pender gave them the slip, but not me! I out-foxed the lot of 'em!"

Perry tapped his teeth with the stem of his pipe.

"Spudsy," he said, after a while, "go back and out-fox Pender, even if he kills you! Get him to my apartment to-morrow night, not later than eight."

Spudsy blinked and gulped, but nodded his aching head. "All right," he said, "but this time I ain't goin' alone!"

"Better luck this time, Spudsy," said Toots. "Have a drink before you go."

Perry lit his pipe and puffed at it reflectively.

"Someone with money is interested in Oscar Pender," he remarked. "Someone with money asked me to go easy on the Rhoda Montaine defence. Della, first thing in the morning we'll get someone with money on the 'phone!"

The Truth At Last!

A PLAN already half-formed in the attorney's mind was elaborated in the small hours of the morning when he should have been fast asleep, but he looked fit enough when he arrived at his office and began to put the plan into operation.

During the afternoon he went to see Rhoda in her cell, and a warder affected not to notice the forbidden cigarette she accepted and smoked.

He went over all the old ground with her again, and she seemed no longer concerned to protect Carl Montaine.

"Then you went home?" prompted Perry.

"Yes," she said wearily, "then I went home. I put the car in the garage at the back of the apartment house, and I—I tried to close the doors, but I couldn't because the bumper of Carl's car was sticking out. So I left it and went upstairs, and I tried to sleep and couldn't. Isn't that enough?"

"I think it is," decided Perry. "I'm sorry to have had to put you through all this again."

"I don't see what difference it makes, anyway," she lamented. "I haven't got a chance!"

"Oh, yes, you have," he reassured her. "True, they've

got you, but they've got Dr. Millsap, and Flornbelle—and almost everything—almost!"

"She found a little hope in that word 'almost.'"

"What are you going to do?" she asked anxiously.

"I'm going to give a cocktail party to-night," he replied.

"Oh, Perry, don't joke!"

"I'm not joking," he declared. "It's our only hope, but it's a good one."

At eight o'clock that evening his luxurious flat in Jefferson Square was ablaze with lights, and most of his guests for the cocktail party were assembled in the spacious sitting-room.

Carl Montaine was there with his father, both wondering what it was all about. Dr. Claude Millsap, released on bail, sat in an easy chair under a curtained window. Toots was present, and so was Della Street, and Wilbur Strong, the coroner, arrived a little late.

Ping, the Chinese butler, drifted from one guest to another with a tray loaded with cocktails, and then Perry stood on the hearthrug holding a long-stemmed glass in his hand, and addressed the company at large.

"My friends," he said, bowing to left and right, "since, by some weird whim of Fate, there has arrived here such an unassociated group, I suppose the most appropriate toast would be to the hope—however remote—that some mutual benefit may come out of the meeting of this strange assembly. Good health!"

Everybody stood up to raise their glasses, and then the telephone-bell rang. Della answered it and called to her employer.

"Pardon me," said Perry, and went over to the instrument.

"Hallo!" he said. "Who? Oh, Mr. Drake! You've brought him in personally? Very well, bring him up!"

It was Spudsy, telephoning from the hallway on the ground floor, and with him were two particularly tough-looking men who were holding the arms of Oscar Pender, an even tougher specimen than themselves. Perry put down the instrument and turned to his guests.

"That was my assistant, Mr. Drake," he explained. "He has found a man he believes to be the murderer of Gregory Moxley. Better fortify yourselves with another cocktail, gentlemen, because he is about to appear amongst us!"

"That's a good idea," decided Toots; but Carl Montaine cried hoarsely:

"Then you can free Rhoda?"

"Who shall say?" murmured Perry, and his slant-eyed and soft-footed butler appeared with a fresh supply of cocktails, which he was handing round when a commotion was heard outside the room, and the voice of Spudsy, raised in anger, shouting:

"Shut up and get in there!"

Oscar Pender was bundled into the room by his custodians, and stood scowling at strange faces. The two tough assistants of the redoubtable Spudsy retired, but Spudsy stood close to the captive with a life-preserver in his hand.

"We've all been looking forward to seeing you, Mr. Pender," said Perry genially.

"Well, take a good look at me," snarled Pender, "and take a good look at your friend here as well, because some time soon there'll be only one of us."

"Another crack like that and there'll be three of us," retorted Spudsy, swinging the life-preserver, "because I'm gonna bust you in two!"

"Sit down, Mr. Pender," urged

Perry. "Sit down. Let's talk about your last murder. Do you always come up to the big city for your killings?"

Oscar Pender looked round at the guests who had re-seated themselves.

"Say, everyone else is gettin' a drink," he complained. "Why don't I get one?"

Perry apologised and beckoned to Ping, who somewhat diffidently proffered a cocktail, which was swallowed in the twinkling of an eye.

"I was there all right when Moxley got it," admitted Pender, restoring an empty glass to the butler's tray, "but I'd just called to collect some money he'd swindled out of my sister. Thanks."

"You had a perfect motive for killing Moxley, then," said Perry. "Your sister phoned him from South San Francisco half an hour before his death, and told him that if he didn't kick through you'd kill him. You didn't want to make your sister out a liar, so you did kill him."

"I didn't kill Moxley," returned Pender calmly, "and I can prove it with his own blood. I got some of it on my shirt!"

Somebody in the room gasped, and the coroner stared. Perry said, very quietly:

"Then I trust you haven't changed your shirt since, Mr. Pender."

Pender waved that matter aside.

"I'm gonna tell you what happened," he said. "I went up to Moxley's by the back stairs, but when I reached the door I heard the sound of glass crashing inside, and that didn't sound kosher to me, so I scrambled down them stairs again and hid in the dark. Then I heard somebody hot-footin' it down the same way, and they're runnin' so fast they bumps into me."

"And didn't say 'Pardon me'?" questioned Perry.

"He said somethin' worse than that," was the reply. "He says Moxley's been killed."

"Did you get a good look at this man?"

"Well, no. It was dark, and—and I

—"

"Would you say he was about my size?"

Pender looked up at Perry, but shook his head, and the attorney said:

"Gentlemen, will you stand up, please?"

There was a scraping of chairs and everybody stood, except Della. Perry beckoned Carl Montaine forward.

"Would you say about his size?"

"I'm not sure," muttered Pender.

"Perhaps the size of Mr. Montaine senior?" suggested Perry.

"No," said Pender definitely. "Not so heavy and not so stiff."

"Doctor, will you step forward, please?"

The handsome, black-haired young doctor approached quite readily, and Pender surveyed him.

"Well," he said doubtfully, "he was about the size of this guy."

"We're all about the same size," said Perry, "and it was dark. What did this man say?"

"Well, he said we'd better beat it, or we'd be suspected of murder."

"And what did you answer, in your own quaint language?"

"Well, I told him I'd already ankled up from South San Francisco just to gnom a big load of dough from this loogan."

"Did the gentleman seem to understand that?"

"He knew what it was about all right," said Pender with a grin, "cos he handed me a wad o' money and told me to beat it."

Perry nodded, glancing from one strained face to another.

"And now, Mr. Pender," he said crisply, "what about the blood on your shirt?"

"The blood come off the money," was the answer he had expected to receive, though it surprised Toots and the coroner, and he swung round on C. Phillip Montaine.

"Out of all the millions the Montaines have," he cooed, "none of their money would have blood on it, would it?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Mason!" snapped the millionaire.

"Then Carl is eliminated too!"

"Yes, Mr. Lawyer," roared the grey-haired parent: "eliminated from your facetious and supposedly humorous insinuations!"

Perry took a white handkerchief from the pocket of his coat.

"At the risk of appearing to contradict myself," he said in the calmest of voices, "it does not eliminate Carl—it points the finger right at him!"

"I trust you're not as confused as you seem, sir?" rapped the millionaire.

"No, not at all," was the bland reply.

"In fact, the story starts with you the day you came into my office and tried to bribe me into hanging Rhoda Montaine, innocent or guilty. You couldn't buy me, so you bought a crew of private detectives to find Oscar Pender, here, and get him out of the country to save the neck of your son."

Abruptly he flung out an accusing finger, and his voice became stern.

"You knew he was guilty," he thundered, "because you were at the Moxley apartment when the murder took place!"

"You'd like to be able to prove that," Carl's father cried furiously, "and I'd like to hear you try!"

"All right," said Perry grimly. "All you've got to do is to listen. Sit down!"

Montaine sank back into the chair whence he had risen, muttering to himself. Carl rose up indignantly, and Perry promptly pushed him into another chair.

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**BOY'S
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**AT ALL NEWSAGENTS
AND BOOKSTALLS**

3/6

"When you saw your wife sneak out on the night of the murder," he said, "you thought she was going to a rendezvous with Dr. Millsap so you followed her."

"Excellent imagination, counsellor," sneered the enraged parent, but Perry flipped a hand at him.

"This isn't imagination," he said. "Rhoda unlocked the garage doors when she left, but she couldn't lock them again when she returned, because, in this young man's haste to beat her home, he neglected to get his car well into the garage and the bumpers were in the way."

He looked down at Carl.

"You followed her to Moxley's apartment," he accused, "and you sneaked up the back stairs."

"You seem to be getting my son and Mr. Pender confused," said Montaine, the millionaire, tartly.

"No," returned Perry, "I'm not getting either of them confused—I'm just getting Carl straightened out. You heard Moxley threaten your wife—you heard her try to 'phone for help. You thought of the name she'd have to give—the name you gave her—the sacred and precious name of Montaine!"

Carl flinched, but his father cried out: "Insane tirade!"

"In your excitement," pursued Perry inexorably, "you turned out the lights. You ran into the inner room; you struggled with Moxley and you killed him!"

"Let me go!" shrieked Carl Montaine. "It's a frame-up!"

"That's the voice!" shouted Oscar Pender, and bounded forward excitedly. "I recognise it!"

Perry grabbed hold of Carl Montaine, who tried to escape from him. A lamp on a table by the chair was overturned, but Carl was forced back into his seat, a handkerchief fluttered to the floor, and a jagged piece of broken mirror was forced against the palm of his right hand, where it fitted a scar.

"And that's the hand!" said Perry, removing the piece of mirror. "The hand that carved the life out of Gregory Moxley."

For several minutes there was a horrified silence in the room, then Perry suggested mildly that everybody should have another cocktail.

"I'll have a dozen!" said the coroner huskily.

"I could use one," said Toots, and the Chinese butler flitted silently about the room with his tray, while Carl Montaine tried to collect scattered wits.

"I didn't kill Moxley," he cried suddenly. "I swear I didn't! You're wrong about the killing! When Rhoda came out of Luigi's I followed her to Moxley's apartment. Just as I got there I saw Millsap drive up. He ran up the steps to the front door and rang the bell, so I ran round the house and up the back stairway."

He drew a long breath and sat up right.

"I heard Moxley struggling with Rhoda as I went into the apartment by the tradesman's door," he went on, "and then I saw him hitting her. She backed away, found a poker, and struck him with it. I switched off the lights to help her, and when he got them on again she had gone. He rushed at me in a murderous rage, and we fought. All this time the front door bell was ringing."

"I managed to knock him down, but that made him wilder. I could see he was going to find some weapon, so—so

I picked up a chair and threw it. It shattered against the mirror, and then I hit him again. He staggered back and fell against a blade of glass—I heard it cutting into his flesh. He just seemed to hang there, and then he fell. That's what killed him!"

"And then?" asked Perry.

"Then I—I knelt down beside him, and before I realised what I was doing I pulled the glass out of the wound. That's how I cut my hand. I was in a panic—didn't know what to do. I wrapped up my hand as best I could, picked up my hat, and ran down the back way again."

"The rest happened just as you said. I gave Pender money so he'd go away and keep quiet. I didn't mean to accuse Rhoda. I—I thought she'd plead self-defence and the jury would free her. I thought—"

"That's enough!" Perry cut in, stemming the torrent of words, and he turned to the distracted father, who was fumbling in a pocket. "I believe what your son has said, but a jury will have to be convinced. No, put that cheque-book away. Bring it to my office at ten in the morning. Your son's defence, and Rhoda's divorce, will make quite a dent in it!"

The Chinese butler was hovering in the doorway.

"Hats and coats, Ping," directed Perry. "Toots, your paper gets the privilege of turning the Moxley murder suspect over to the police. Dr. Millsap, you'd better run along to the gaol—Rhoda will be out by the time you get there, and her nerves may need some medical attention."

"Thank you, Mr. Mason," murmured the young doctor, and he was the first to depart. Toots went off with Carl Montaine and his father, and Oscar Pender was permitted to follow.

In less than half an hour Perry, Della, the coroner, and the redoubtable Spudsy were seated round a table in the dining-room, and Ping was waiting on them.

"Della," said Perry with a sigh, "I think I'm going to need a vacation." Della smiled impishly at him.

"Ever think of taking a trip to China?" she inquired.

(By permission of First National Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Warren William and Margaret Lindsay.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"FIGHTING YOUTH"—Larry Davis, Charles Farrell; Betty Wilson, June Martel; Charlie Kipp, Andy Devine; Coach Parker, J. Farrell MacDonald; Carol Arlington, Ann Sheridan; Tonnetti, Eddie Nugent; Luigi, Herman Bing; Dodo, Phyllis Fraser; Markoff, Alden Chase; Paul, Glenn Boles; Dean Churchill, Murray Kinnell.

"THE CASE OF THE CURIOUS BRIDE"—Perry Mason, Warren William; Rhoda Montaine, Margaret Lindsay; Carl Wilton Montaine, Donald Woods; Della Street, Claire Dodd; "Spudsy" Drake, Allen Jenkins; Dr. Claude Millsap, Phillip Reed; Chief of Detectives Joe Lucas, Barton MacLane; Wilbur Strong, Ohn Howland; C. Phillip Montaine, Charles Richman; "Toots" Howard, Thomas Jackson; Oscar Pender, Warren Hynner; Doris Fender, Winifred Shaw; Gregory Moxley, Errol Flynn; Florabelle Morgan, Mayo Methot; Luigi, George Humbert.

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BOY'S CINEMA

THE FOREMOST
AND
BEST PAPER
FOR
THE LATEST
FILM STORIES

EVERY TUESDAY
AUG. 17TH 1935. No 818.

2^D



"WEST POINT OF THE AIR"

*A Father's
Fight for
His Son's
Honour.*

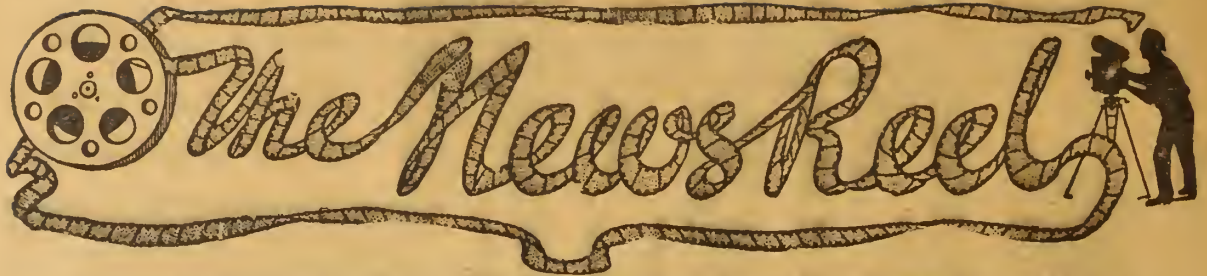
Starring

**WALLACE
BEERY**

and

**ROBERT
YOUNG**





The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Ensuring the Correct Background

Hollywood "joined the army" some time ago when a large company of stars, featured players and technicians were sent to Randolph Field, Texas, a very famous American air school, for scenes in "West Point of the Air."

The regiment of seventy cameramen, director's aides, sound-recording engineers and other workers was the largest number ever sent out to a single location by the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios.

For the aerial photography two cameras shot from the ground; two worked from a platform 168 feet in the air on top of Randolph Tower, the famous 4,000,000 candle-power aeroplane beacon; two were in the air, while a seventh camera "covered" the ground from the barrack roofs.

The first day's shooting included two difficult training manoeuvres flown by Army aces during one of their regular flights. Nearly one hundred ships in perfect flying formation formed a triple chevron mark.

While Wallace Beery flew from Hollywood in his own passenger monoplane, other members of the company travelled by train. With them they carried over eight tons of cameras and sound and electrical equipment which were unpacked at the field.

It was one of the most complete "miniature studios" ever set up on a location site, and included apparatus for developing and printing film, so that the director could see the "rushes" of scenes right on the flying field.

On the Same Film Three Times

Doran H. Cox, because he is at present serving as assistant to Rowland V. Lee, who is directing "The Three Musketeers" for Radio Pictures, becomes something of an historical figure—he is the sole connecting link between three film versions that have been made of the Dumas classic.

Cox was also assistant-director to Charles Swickard in 1914, when the latter guided Orin Johnston through the rôle of d'Artagnan. That first adaptation was a Thomas Ince three-reel super production—made without benefit of lights.

When Douglas Fairbanks swash-buckled and fought in the romantic story, some years later, Cox was again assistant-director—this time to Fred Niblo.

Cox's third participation in the colourful doings of the Musketeers in seventeenth-century France is consequently tinged with tradition and sentiment. He treads familiar ground and walks in familiar places. The Broadway actor, Walter Abel, now plays the redoubtable d'Artagnan; Paul Lukas

August 17th, 1935.

NEXT WEEK'S THREE COMPLETE FILM THRILLERS



RICHARD BARTHELMESS

IN

"FOUR HOURS TO KILL"

A gangster is betrayed to the police, but while being taken by a detective on his last journey an unexpected delay gives him a chance to escape, and he has four hours in which to get his revenge. An amazing thriller.

"THE SILVER STREAK"

They said it was a freak train, but after he had rushed it half across a continent in nineteen hours to save the lives of men they changed their tune! When once he had started, nothing could stop Tony Caldwell—not even a crazed murderer. Starring Charles Starrett and Sally Blane.

"DEATH FROM A DISTANCE"

During a lecture on astronomy there is the sound of a pistol shot, and when the lights are turned up an eminent doctor is found dead. Lieutenant-Detective Mallory finds himself up against a maze of conflicting evidence when trying to unravel the crime. Starring Russell Hopton.

Also

Another grand episode of the thrilling serial of adventure in the jungle:

"THE CALL OF THE SAVAGE"

Starring Noah Beery, Jun., and Dorothy Short.

is Athos; Moroni Olsen, also of the New York stage, is Porthos, and Onslow Stevens is Aramis, Margot Graham is Milady de Winter, and Heather Angel is Constance. Others in the cast are Ralph Forbes, Nigel de Brulier, John Qualen, Murray Kimmell, Lunsden Hare, and Miles Mander.

Risking Their Lives

Making motion pictures, frequently has its hazards and thrills for the

cameraman as well as the actors. Roy Davidson and Harry Perry, special-effects photographers, not only had to wear parachutes, but were strapped into the open cockpit of their camera-plane when filming "Death Flies East"—the story of which appeared last week.

Because of the clouds hanging over Southern California, the exterior views of the passenger plane had to be filmed at eight to ten thousand feet above the Sierra Mountains. Davidson and Perry were swathed in heavy wraps and gloves while facing the screeching north wind at that altitude in an open aeroplane. Now and then the clouds broke away, showing the rugged, snow-clad ranges of the Sierras through fleecy, cloud-framed holes below.

In Foggiest Hollywood

During the height of the summer, when Hollywood was sweltering in a heat-wave, Samuel Goldwyn was making "Barbary Coast," and the players had to endure an artificial fog as well as the intense heat.

The set, representing the San Francisco waterfront, was pitched under a huge canvas roof. It was hot and stuffy from the combined effects of the brass sun and the big lights, and the atmosphere was filled with fog made by atomising a specially prepared oil. The air was so thick that it was difficult to see what was going on, whilst the oily dampness necessitated frequent stops for make-up repairs.

The players, including Miriam Hopkins in the leading rôle, spent their spare time devising new methods of torture for the script writer, technicians, director, and producer!

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WEST POINT OF THE AIR"—*Big Mike Stone*, Wallace Beery; *Little Mike Stone*, Robert Young; *Skip Carter*, Maureen O'Sullivan; *General Carter*, Lewis Stone; *Joe Bags*, James Gleason; *Dave Marshall*, Rosalind Russell; *Phil Carter*, Russell Hardie; *Pettis*, Henry Wadsworth; *Jaskerelli*, Robert Taylor; *Captain Cannon*, Frank Conroy; *Lieutenant Kelly*, G. Pat Collins.

"MR. DYNAMITE"—*Mr. Dynamite*, Edmund Lowe; *Lynne*, Jean Dixon; *Charmion Dvorjak*, Esther Ralston; *Jarl Dvorjak*, Victor Varconi; *Mona*, Verna Hillie; *Lewis*, Minor Watson; *King*, Robert Gleckler; *Williams*, Jameson Thomas; *Joe*, James Burtis.

Big Mike's son was too sure of himself, perhaps because Lady Luck had smiled on him all his life. But there came a day when his nerve and his confidence failed him, and it was then that his rugged father proved his finest friend. A top-flight drama of pilots in the making, starring Wallace Beery and Robert Young



Pioneer Pilot

DURING the year 1910 the military encampment at Randolph Field, outside the city of San Antonio, had become the headquarters of aviation in America.

Here men risked their lives in the frail, new-fangled machines that had earned the sardonic nicknames of "crates" and "flying coffins." Here they devoted themselves fearlessly to the development and exploitation of a contrivance that was still in its hazardous infancy.

Here, like the gods of some ancient saga, they took unto themselves the wings of a bird and soared towards the heavens—carrying the traditions of the Army into this youngest branch of the Service.

One of the greatest of those early pioneers was Lieutenant Kelly, and on a certain spring morning, when conditions were not altogether admirable for his purpose, Lieutenant Kelly might have been seen preparing to make an ascent.

The machine which he was to take up was a Curtiss "pusher" biplane, a spidery affair that looked as if it would scarcely hold itself together once it was off the ground. But at that time it was a thoroughly up-to-date craft, and ranked high in the estimation of flying men.

It was certainly an object of wonder and admiration to three youngsters who were gazing upon it just then. One of these children was a girl, the other two were boys, and their presence at Randolph Field was explained by the fact that they belonged to a couple of the men stationed there.

The girl was Skip Carter, and the smaller of the boys was her brother Phil.

They were the daughter and the son of Captain Carter, one of the officers at the military post.

The third youngster was known as Mike Stone—Little Mike Stone, to distinguish him from his father, Big Mike Stone, who was a corporal, and something of a character.

Big Mike Stone loomed up impressively as the children were about to take too lively an interest in the craft that they were contemplating, and he addressed them in gruff, deep-toned, but kindly, accents.

"Hey," he said, "hey, you kids, don't you start climbin' all over that ship, now. Don't you know that the lieutenant is just goin' up and everything has gotta be in order?"

The three youngsters retreated, and were standing well clear of the plane when Lieutenant Kelly showed up with Captain Carter and one or two other officers.

Kelly and Carter had been friends all their lives, and for that matter Big Mike Stone had also been a close companion of theirs when they had all been recruits in the Army. But Kelly and Carter had had the advantage of a superior education and had risen to the rank of officers, whereas rough-and-ready Mike was no higher than a non-com., and probably never would be.

Not that this made any difference to the captain and the lieutenant when they were out of uniform. They still regarded Mike as their friend—the best friend a man could possibly have, for they knew the sterling qualities that existed under his simple, downright exterior.

A heart as big as his hulking body,

and a nature as lovable as his genial face was ugly. That was Big Mike Stone.

The corporal saluted as the officers came up, and Kelly and Carter returned the salute smilingly. Then the lieutenant laid eyes on the three children nearby and promptly went over to them, singling out Big Mike's son, who was a great favourite with him.

"Wish me luck, Little Mike," Kelly said.

Looking on with a grin, Big Mike felt someone touch him on the arm, and as he glanced round he saw the wiry figure of one Joe Bags, who was also a corporal.

Now, Joe Bags was possessed of a mania. That mania was the study of astrology, and he was forever consulting a handbook which dealt with the subject, a volume that was easily his most prized possession.

"I don't like it, Mike," he whispered luskily. "The book says that this is a bad day fer takin' any kind of chances. The evil planet Saturn is in conjunction with Venus, which is liable to make things plenty tough."

Big Mike looked at Joe with scorn.

"Ah, you an' your star gazin', you make me sick," he growled. "I don't believe in that punk."

Joe Bags shook his head in gloomy fashion, and was about to make some comment when Captain Carter's voice was heard giving out instructions. Immediately the two corporals jumped to action, and soon they and a whole crew of soldiers were fussing around the Curtiss "pusher."

With everything in readiness for the flight, Lieutenant Kelly climbed into the plane, seating himself on two stunts at

the front of the machine, and planting his feet in a pair of stirrups that were clamped to a crosspiece beneath him.

To a modern pilot he would have looked incongruously exposed, but there were no enclosed, well-constructed compartments in the flying vessels of those early days.

The engine was started up. It was a water-cooled unit at the rear of the craft, and it coughed fumes and spat flame from its exhaust as Kelly opened the throttle. Presently, however, its note became steadier, and suddenly the ship was on the move.

Watched by Carter and the captain's fellow-officers and men, the pioneer pilot dove the machine across the flying field. Then he swung around to take off into the wind, and, after it had taxied rapidly over the turf for some little distance, the craft lifted clear of the grass and rose towards the Texas sky.

It circled higher and yet higher, then turned in a northerly direction, and it was passing above the field at an altitude of several hundred feet when the engine began to misfire.

Away below, Carter and the onlookers heard the stutter of that engine, and an expression of intense anxiety dawned in the captain's eyes.

"He's having trouble with the motor!" he jerked. "See, he's losing height. Pray God he's able to keep control, but this wind is going to hamper him?"

In the background, Joe Bags pursed his lips and let his hand stray to his hip pocket, where the book on astrology reposed. The evil planet Saturn in conjunction with Venus! And yet Big Mike Stone called the study of the stars "a lot of punk."

White-faced, the men on the field stared up at the sky and followed the uncertain motion of the Curtiss plane with agitated gaze. Would Kelly be able to handle it? Would he?

And then all at once the engine spluttered feebly and faded out; and next instant the craft was diving earthward in a swift, ugly spin, plunging to disaster in the field which it had bravely left a few minutes before.

It crashed at the north end of the encampment, and, when they gained the wreckage, the men who had come running from all directions knew that aviation and the struggle for progress had claimed one more gallant life.

That night Big Mike Stone soothed his little son to sleep, for the boy was old enough to understand what had happened—and to realise he would never again see the Lieutenant Kelly whom he had loved so dearly, loved better than anyone except his father.

It was shortly after slumber had at last silenced the youngster's weeping that Big Mike was asked to report to Captain Carter, and, when he appeared in the latter's quarters, his superior laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Mike," the captain said, dropping all formalities, "you and I have had our share of grief. We both lost our wives within a few months of each other—and now we've lost our greatest friend."

Mike nodded his big head. He was numb with emotion, choked by a lump in the throat.

"Mike," Carter went on, "I'm aware what Kelly intended to do for your boy. He was as fond of that youngster of yours as he could have been of his own flesh and blood. He was going to help you send him to West Point Military Academy, wasn't he?"

"Yes," the corporal answered huskily.

"Well, your boy's still going there," Carter said. "You've got to let me

help you as Kelly would have helped you. I know you've got ambitions for your son and, if it's only a question of the expense, those ambitions are going to be fulfilled."

Football Hero

THE years had slipped by and, thanks to the financial assistance that Captain Carter had rendered his father, those passing years had treated little Mike Stone with wondrous kindness.

High school, college, and then West Point—this was his career in a nutshell—and at each of the three institutions he had earned honours as a student and an athlete. But to-day was the day of days, this crisp, keen day in the month of January. For to-day he was representing the great military academy in the biggest football game of the season, the match against the Navy.

Up on the packed terraces of the college arena a hundred thousand wild enthusiasts were yelling themselves hoarse, and a hundred thousand pairs of eyes were focused with eager intensity on the teams which were battling for the mastery down there on the pitch.

The game was nearing its end, a game as memorable and thrilling as any that had ever been played at the vast bowl in Orange County, State of New York. There were only a few more minutes to go, and the issue was still in doubt.

In a couple of seats overlooking the midfield you might have seen two fans who had a personal interest in the sporting event which was in progress. One of them was Big Mike Stone, older-looking and even bulkier-looking than he had been in the early days of aviation, but then many changes had taken place since the year 1910.

The Randolph Field down in Texas, for instance, was no longer a rough cantonment with a collection of sheds that housed a few crazy planes. It was a magnificent aerodrome, proud of its equipment, its squadrons of heavy bombers and swift scouting machines that could darken the air like a cloud of locusts when flying in mass formation. It was, moreover, the foremost instructional depot of the U.S. Army for would-be pilots.

And Big Mike Stone, a sergeant now, was one of its chief instructors.

But to return to the scene of the West Point versus Navy game—Big Mike was seated next to Skip Carter, grown to lovely young womanhood, and the pair of them were almost frenzied with excitement. Indeed, Big Mike had reached the pitch of interfering with the comfort of the other spectators immediately around him, and at a particularly critical moment of the match he had to apologise to a girl behind him—having leaped to his feet, lost his balance, and blundered against her.

"I'm sorry, lady," he gasped. "Sorta—sorta carried away. That's my boy out there, you see. Mike Stone—Little Mike, we call him—Number Fourteen."

The girl smiled understandingly. Her name was Dare Marshall, and she was a typical daughter of fashionable New York, beautifully dressed and astonishingly attractive, though her features, nevertheless, lacked the winsome appeal of pretty Skip Carter's.

"Little Mike Stone?" she echoed cheerfully, raising her voice above the hubbub to make herself audible to the burly sergeant. "He doesn't look so little to me—especially after the way he's been throwing those Navy gorillas about."

"He ain't so little as that," Big Mike answered with a grin. "He's taller than me now, an' turns the scales at a hundred and eighty pounds; but we've always called him Little Mike, an' I guess we always will."

"Well, you've certainly got reason to be proud of him," Dare Marshall said, glancing towards the field and singling out a padded stalwart who wore the number 14 on his back. "He's been the mainstay of the West Point team up till now."

She was right, and even as she stated that opinion it was borne out by a sudden break-away dash which Stone Junior made.

The ball had come to young Mike from Phil Carter, also in the West Point team, and like a hound slipping its leash the sergeant's son made for the opposing line.

One hundred thousand people scrambled to their feet en masse—one hundred thousand people minus one, for, despite his bulk, Big Mike Stone was knocked on his back by a large, fat woman who sprang up with a shriek of excitement and cannoned into him as he himself was in the act of rising.

Big Mike spent the next thirty seconds in searching for his hat and in trying to shield himself from the stamping, trampling feet of his neighbours. He did not see the glorious run staged by his son—the swift, swerving cut-through that baffled man after man and carried the youngster to his objective.

It was a run that ended with Little Mike lying between the Navy's goal-posts and a trail of prone and defeated opponents marking the course that he had taken, but by the time that Big Mike managed to stand up every man on the field was on his feet again, and the ball was being carried back to be placed for the kick.

The crowd was still in a hilarious uproar, and Big Mike had to bellow at Skip Carter before she could hear him.

"What happened?" he shouted in frantic tones. "What happened?"

"Mike scored!" Skip shrilled in response. "He's won the game for West Point! Even if the touch-down isn't converted, West Point's won!"

The kick was now being taken and, propelled by a studded boot, the ball soared clean between the Navy's posts to increase the margin of the soldier-cadets' victory. A split second afterwards the whistle went for time, though it was almost drowned by the thunderous cheering of the spectators.

With the players trotting off the field a rush was made for the goal-posts by mobs of West Point's supporters and, these posts having been torn out of the ground, they were borne off in triumph. Then the laughing, jostling crowds on the terraces began to pour down the gangways to the exits.

Escorting Skip Carter down one of the lanes between the rows of seats, Big Mike Stone suddenly felt someone touch him on the shoulder, and as he looked round he saw the girl who had been sitting behind him during the match.

"I'm awfully glad to have met the father of a football hero," she said merrily.

"Come to the Lido Restaurant to-night, an' you'll meet the hero himself," Big Mike declared in a hearty tone. "The teams are congregatin' there!"

He saluted her with a smile, and some time later he and Skip were outside the dressing-rooms of the players. Here Big Mike left his companion to seek out his son and, just across the threshold, he ran into Phil Carter, who

was stripping off his begrimed football kit.

Phil's father was with him—General Carter now—and one or two other senior officers of the Service were standing round.

"Hallo, there, sergeant!" the general exclaimed. "Say, that was a great game your boy played."

He turned and introduced the grinning Mike to a bluff Army man who was among the party of officers.

"Oh, General Devens," he said, "may I present Sergeant Stone? It was his son who won the game for West Point to-day."

Mike had taken off his cap. He stood stiffly to attention as General Devens smilingly acknowledged the introduction and congratulated him on his boy's fine display. Then Little Mike was seen emerging from one of the showers, a magnificent specimen of young manhood, his wet hair hanging into his clear, grey eyes, his bronzed face lighting up as he saw his dad amongst the group of officers.

Accompanied by General Devens and three or four of the party, Big Mike moved across to his son as the latter was briskly towelling himself, and the officers began to praise the youngster un stintingly, in a manner that might well have turned his youthful head.

"It was a great performance, Stone," Devens declared finally, "and I guess your father is mighty proud of you."

Little Mike smiled and turned to his parent.

"What did you think of the game, dad?" he asked.

"Aw, it was fair," the older man said with enforced coolness. "Pretty fair."

"Go on," his son challenged genially. "I'll bet you yelled yourself hoarse."

Big Mike's face expanded into a broad grin again.

"Yeah, I did, too!" he croaked.

There was a concerted laugh, and then, feeling that the sergeant and his boy might like to be alone, General Devens and the other men drifted off. When they had gone, Big Mike watched his boy gathering his football kit together, and presently indicated the crash-helmet that the youngster had worn on the field.

"You'll be swappin' that for a flying helmet in a month or two, when you graduate from West Point," he said,

with a twinkle in his eye. "By that time I reckon you'll be so swollen-headed that you'll need a bigger size, huh!"

"What do you think?" Little Mike asked with a chuckle.

"I ain't paid to think," his father answered whimsically, "but I'll tell you what I'll do. If you come down to Randolph Field with any high an' mighty ideas after you're through with West Point—well, I'll hammer 'em out of you, see?"

"Okay, dad!" Little Mike agreed in a light-hearted tone. "But, changing the subject, don't forget our date at the Lido to-night, with Skip and Phil."

His father assured him that nothing could stop him from being there, and that evening he and Little Mike, together with General Carter's son and daughter, were among the diners at the fashionable Lido Restaurant.

It was as they were toasting West Point's victory that two people approached their table, one being Dare Marshall, the other a man of forty-five who was her escort.

"Hallo, there!" the girl said to Big Mike. "How about that promise of yours?"

Big Mike rose to his feet as he recognised her.

"Promise?" he said. "Promise?"

"Sure, you told me that I'd meet the hero of the big game here to-night," Dare reminded him.

"Oh, yeah," the sergeant answered with a grin. "Er—Mike, this is Miss—Miss—"

"Dare Marshall," put in the girl from New York. "Miss Dare Marshall."

She was introduced to the rest of the party, and then presented her escort, who was apparently a relative. These formalities over, Little Mike urged the new acquaintances to join the party, and summoned a waiter to fetch a couple of chairs.

Indeed, Little Mike seemed to have been impressed by Dare Marshall at first sight, and was soon paying her a good deal of attention, entering into an animated conversation with her and dancing with her two or three times, to the music of a live-wire band.

His interest in Dare caused him to be a little neglectful towards Skip, who was sitting on the other side of him, and the younger girl began to look as

if she were not exactly enjoying herself. Youthfully and sweetly unsophisticated, she found that she could not keep Little Mike's attention against the rivalry of Dare Marshall's presence, Dare Marshall who was worldly wise, who knew how to use her charms, who was obviously making a "dead-set" at the West Point cadet—perhaps because it pleased her vanity to be in the company of a celebrity.

For to-night, at least, young Mike Stone was a celebrity—a handsome, twenty-six-year-old idol of the football public.

Sometimes the youngster would remember Skip and begin some conversation with her, but always he was diverted from her by some interruption made by Dare, and Skip would fall meekly silent again, toying helplessly with a crushed table-napkin.

In her heart she felt miserable. While they had been growing up, she and Little Mike had been sweethearts—not consciously, but as if through some tacit, instinctive understanding. And now Skip realised that she cared for him deeply.

She was suddenly aroused from her thoughts by the voice of Big Mike Stone. In response to some remark made by Dare Marshall's relative he was sheepishly confessing that he had not witnessed his son's brilliant achievement in the last minutes of the match.

It was a statement which was received with surprise and amusement. Then Dare volunteered a suggestion.

"Let's go to a picture house," she proposed. "It's only eight o'clock, and the game will be shown on the news-reels."

The idea was unanimously approved, and, having paid their bill, the party repaired to the nearest cinema, where they sat down just as a record of the big game was being flashed on the screen.

Various incidents of the match were re-lived, and then came the moment when Little Mike had made his glorious run.

Experiencing again the excitement he had felt at the actual arena, Big Mike saw the ball come to his son from Phil Carter—and that was as much as he saw, for at this juncture a number of people in the row before him decided



"Go on," Little Mike challenged genially, "I'll bet you yelled yourself hoarse."

to leave their seats, having apparently witnessed that part of the programme already.

They stood up and completely blocked Big Mike's view. As they fussed and fidgeted before him, waiting while other patrons were rising to give them a clear exit, the burly sergeant made vain efforts to catch a glimpse of the screen between their shifting figures.

"Hey, move on!" he complained. "Move along, please! Aw, sit down, then, can't you?"

He rapidly waxed wrathful and impatient. He could hear the voice of a commentator coming over the sound-track, but could see not a thing for those cursed people who were in front of him, and when at length they passed from the line of his vision the film was blackening out.

"Well, what did you think of it?" Dare Marshall asked him, from the end of the row.

"I guess I'll have to read about it in the morning papers," Big Mike growled dismally.

They left a few minutes afterwards, and outside the picture house Mike Senior explained that he and Skip would have to be going.

"We've got to catch that Texas train," he said, "and General Carter will be waiting for us at the station. He's going straight there from General Devens' quarters."

"Phil and I will trail along to the station with you," Little Mike announced; but Dare Marshall laid a hand on his arm appealingly.

"Oh, must we all split up?" she protested. "The night's young, and Uncle George and I are going along to the contest club. We're meeting some friends there—an awfully jolly crowd. You'd like them, and we'd love to have you and Phil come along."

Young Mike looked at his father and at Skip, and it was the latter who answered his questioning glance.

"Sure, you and Phil go along with Miss Marshall and her uncle," she said in a small voice. "There—there really isn't any need for you to come to the station with us."

Big Mike nodded. "That's right," he stated. "You two boys enjoy yourselves some more. And Mike—thanks for whipping the Navy."

A street-car hove into sight just then, and Big Mike signalled the motor-man. Then, as the vehicle drew up, he helped Skip aboard and climbed after her.

Standing on the rear platform of the car, Big Mike and Skip waved farewell to Phil, Little Mike, Dare Marshall and her uncle. They were still waving when Dare slipped her hand through young Mike's arm possessively.

"I'll take good care of him," the girl called to the two figures on the platform of the receding street-car.

Big Mike happened to glance at Skip. He noticed vaguely that her eyes were downcast, and that there was an odd little droop to her shoulders.

Airmen in the Making

TWO months had elapsed, and from the window of his quarters at Randolph Field, Big Mike Stone was gazing out across the extensive landing-ground.

There was a gleam in his eyes, for to-day he was expecting his son, young Mike, and a number of other cadets having graduated from West Point and been drafted to San Antonio for practical instruction in flying.

Already Phil Carter and most of the fellows from the northern military academy were present at the Texas aerodrome, but Little Mike had yet to put in an appearance.

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Big Mike squared his shoulders and threw up his head. Then he addressed Joe Bags, who was seated at a table nearby, looking through the pages of a well-thumbed volume.

It was that self-same volume which dealt with the study of the stars, still Joe's favourite subject of discourse.

"Joe," Mike said, "it seems like yesterday that my boy an' Phil Carter an' Skip used to play around the collection of shanties that was once Randolph Field."

"Yeah, there's been a lot o' changes around here since then," Joe Bags commented.

"You're right," Big Mike declared. "We've gone a long way since poor Kelly crashed in that ole pusher 'plane. While those kids have been growin' up, aviation has grown up as well. Only, in the case of aviation, every inch of progress has been made by sacrifice." "You sound like the general talkin'," Joe remarked facetiously.

Mike was about to offer some gruff retort when the note of a 'plane's motor reached his ears through the open window. A moment later he was fixing his attention on a commercial 'plane that was approaching the aerodrome.

It was flying low, but on drawing closer to Randolph Field it proceeded to go through a series of movements that caused Mike's face to harden. In other words, the civilian pilot in charge of it began to give an exhibition of crazy stunt flying that was not likely to be appreciated by the personnel of an army depot—men who could put a craft through the whole gamut of aerobatics, but who had been disciplined to do so at a reasonable altitude, and to avoid endangering lives or property.

"Look at that passenger outfit!" Mike snarled. "Say, if I had my way some of these civil flyers would be lynched."

He continued to glare at the offending 'plane until it grounded on the field a short distance from his quarters. He was still glaring when its pilot and a solitary passenger emerged from it, but his expression changed as he recognised the passenger as his son.

Meanwhile, the advent of the cabin 'plane had been witnessed by a group of people which included Skip and Phil Carter, General Carter and a Captain Cannon, the latter being chief instructor at the aerodrome, and, as Little Mike and the commercial pilot emerged from the machine, the general advanced towards them with a darkening brow.

He was followed by Captain Cannon, and the pair of them confronted the civilian aviator.

"A man like you has no business to be carrying a licence!" General Carter ground out. "What do you mean by flying over this aerodrome in that fool-hardy fashion? Do you realise that the slightest misjudgment on your part may have damaged Government property or caused loss of life?"

The pilot of the cabin 'plane had begun to look abashed, and young Mike Stone made haste to volunteer a statement.

"I'm afraid it was my fault, sir," he explained. "I persuaded this man—"

"Then he should have known better than to let himself be persuaded," the general cut in tersely, "particularly by someone so lacking in consideration for others or respect for the Service."

Young Mike was silent, and General Carter turned to the commercial pilot.

"Get your ship out of here," he ordered curtly. "I'll report this matter to the proper authorities, and at least see that you are never allowed to land on this field again."

The civilian airman climbed back into his machine, and a few seconds later he

was taking off, General Carter then switching his attention upon Mike again.

He had done much for the youngster; he had been a second father to him, and he was almost as fond of him as he was of his own son. But he did not intend to let sentiment or favouritism influence him.

"Lieutenant Stone," he rapped out, "I want you to understand that flying rules are made to be obeyed, for they save men's lives. By urging that commercial aviator to indulge in an exhibition of aerobatics, you violated those rules."

"Yes, sir," Mike said humbly. "I warn you, Lieutenant Stone," the general went on. "If you don't learn to obey regulations here, I'll wash you out just as I would any other member of the Force. Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir," the younger man breathed. General Carter left him, walking off with Captain Cannon, and when they had gone Phil and Skip came forward to welcome Mike.

"Gee," the latter gasped, "I certainly made your dad blow up. I wouldn't upset him for the world. I just didn't think—"

"Aw, forget it," cut in Phil, a big, brown-haired fellow of hearty mien. "The Old Man will get over his tantrums. C'mon and I'll show you your quarters."

Accompanied by Skip, he conducted Mike, Junior, to the rooms he was to occupy, and, after an appreciative glance around, the new arrival set down a valise with which he had stepped out of the cabin 'plane.

"Shall I help you to unpack, Mike?" Skip suggested.

"Young lady," Mike said with pretended severity, "you're not even supposed to be in my quarters. It's against regulations."

"The general's daughter is above regulations," Skip answered laughingly. "Phil, you've got your own unpacking to do, haven't you? All right, you run along and I'll give 'Lieutenant' Michael Stone a hand."

Phil departed, and Mike proceeded to unlock the valise. As he opened it, Skip saw a photograph lying on the top of his clothing, and on picking it up she recognised the features of Dare Marshall.

"Oh!" she said involuntarily. "Nice, isn't it?" Mike commented. "I was tickled to death when she gave it to me. We've been seeing a lot of each other—"

He paused, and then: "You're not jealous, are you?" he asked banteringly.

"I—jealous?" Skip retorted in a gay tone, though her heart felt leaden. "How did you ever get conceited enough to imagine that I was sweet on you?"

"I just can't pick a quarrel with you, can I?" Mike chuckled. "Say, where's the best place to put a pretty girl's picture?"

Skip suggested the mantelpiece, and presently the photograph was gracing the shelf. Then Mike produced one of Skip herself, and this was also set in a conspicuous position.

Skip left Mike's quarters a few minutes later, and she had not long been gone when the youngster's father opened the door and stepped across the threshold. He looked pretty grim, and did not return the beaming smile with which his son greeted him.

"Why did you have to come down by 'plane?" the older man grated.

"Why?" the lieutenant exclaimed. "There's no harm in a would-be pilot getting used to the air, is there?"

"Yeah, and somebody's liable to give

you the air around here if you're not careful," Big Mike snarled. "I understand it was you who put that commercial aviator up to all that crazy flyin' over the aerodrome."

"So what?"

"So what?" the irate father stormed. "Listen to me, if you don't line up with the regulations of the Service I'll—"

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," young Mike interrupted. "You seem to forget that you're addressing a superior officer."

The big sergeant's face coloured wrathfully.

"Don't you come that superior officer stuff with me," he blazed. "I—"

But again his son interrupted him, this time laying an affectionate hand on his shoulder.

"Aw, dad, I'm only pulling your leg," he said. "But don't bawl me out, anyway. I'll be a good guy from now on—honest, I will."

"See that you do," Big Mike growled, somewhat appeased, and then, gradually softening, he began to tell the youngster how glad he was to see him.

"But say," he added, "I almost forgot. The new draft is paradin' before the general, and you're wanted out there along with the rest. Get into your uniform, and make it snappy."

Young Mike hurriedly changed from civilian clothes, and ten minutes later, when General Carter appeared on the parade ground to give a brief address to the new officers, the former football hero of West Point was standing in the front file.

The general formally welcomed the cadets to Randolph Field, and then proceeded to give them some sound advice.

"If we appear severe in regard to our regulations," he told them, "remember that since the Wright Brothers first flew from Kitty Hawk, many fine and courageous men have given their lives to advance flying to its present state—and for that reason the lessons that they have passed on cannot be ignored."

He paused, and drew back a pace.

"Good luck to each and every one of you," he finished, and carried his hand to the peak of his cap as the West Point graduates saluted him smartly.

The general's address preceded a series of rigorous tests through which the cadets were put in order to ascertain whether they were suitable for the Force. In the first place there was a medical test, followed by the examination of eyes and mouths by a military oculist and a military dentist.

"A fine set of teeth, lieutenant," young Mike was told by the aerodrome's dental surgeon.

"Do you have to chew your way through this outfit?" Mike inquired jocularly.

The jest was not appreciated. Indeed, Mike's free-and-easy, cocksure manner had not gone down well with the other specialists who had looked him over, much as they had admired his physical qualities.

The next step in the programme was rather more interesting, the cadets being confronted with an intricate and sensitive machine which measured their resistance to distraction. Then they were taken to a room where each in turn had to occupy a contraption which was made to rock to and fro, to spin completely over and to describe all manner of evolutions calculated to produce giddiness and sickness, if the victim were in the least susceptible to such complaints.

Young Mike Stone came through these tests with flying colours. Yet he was nevertheless the subject of a heart-to-heart talk between his father and General Carter, when the latter had

scanned the reports tendered by the men who were responsible for carrying out the examinations.

"Sergeant," the general began, as Big Mike appeared in response to a message requesting his presence in the commanding officer's quarters, "Sergeant, I'm putting you in charge of a party of the West Point students. Lieutenants Stone and Carter will be among that party. Er—I know I can rely on you to make flyers out of every one of them, if they have the right stuff in them."

"I'll do my best, sir."

The general stood up, and, dropping all formalities, he spoke to Big Mike as man to man.

"Let's forget the discipline of the Service for a moment," he said earnestly.

"Listen, Mike, according to the reports your boy has the makings of a splendid pilot. But I understand he's inclined to be pretty cocky and self-assured. Things come a little too easy for him, I'm thinking."

Big Mike puffed his lips.

"If cocksureness is his trouble, I'll see that it's taken out of him," he stated grimly.

"I know you will," the general said. "And Mike, do the same for my boy if he shows any signs of going over the traces. So far as your rank of sergeant-instructor permits you, keep a tight rein on him. I want no favouritism, and if he doesn't measure up to our standards here—I expect you to recommend his transfer."

"I understand, sir," the big fellow answered. "If any one of those boys don't pass muster with me—they're as good as out, sir."

Riding the Clouds

DURING the days that followed, Big Mike Stone took his pupils in hand and lectured them diligently.

One of his first concerns was to familiarise them with the handling of a parachute, and in characteristic style he described the method of using this device.

"If you have to jump," he impressed on them, "don't pull the rip cord till you're clear of the machine. And listen, if any emergency should ever crop up while you're undergoing your training, always remember that your instructor jumps last."

His next job was to explain fully the controls of a 'plane, and he first of all singled out a youngster named Pettis, who had scraped through the preliminary tests rather doubtfully.

"Get into the forward cockpit of that crate over there," he ordered, indicating a machine that was standing in one of the hangars.

Pettis obeyed him, and Big Mike clambered into the rear compartment, the other students looking on.

"You see the stick?" the sergeant said to Pettis. "Okay, put it back. Right. Now you understand what happens. That raises the flippers and makes



Skip leaned weakly against the 'plane in which her brother had crashed so disastrously.

the nose climb. The ship goes right up, see."

"Now push the stick forward," he went on. "That makes her dive."

Pettis nodded, and so did the other pupils. Then Big Mike continued the lesson.

"Now shift the stick from side to side. You see those flaps moving on the wings? They're called ailerons, and in operating them by means of the stick you can make the crate bank. You turn to right or left—see?"

Day by day the routine of lectures and practical instruction was carried out. And one by one Big Mike took his pupils into the air and coached them, his hand always ready to operate the dual control lever if they made a mistake. But the majority of the youngsters were fairly rapid learners, and progressed satisfactorily.

The only exception was Pettis. He seemed unable to make a showing, and in the end Big Mike was compelled to advise his transfer to another arm of the Service.

Pettis was summoned before a council of senior officers, over whom General Carter presided.

"Sergeant Stone reports that the headwork of Lieutenant Pettis is very poor," the general said, reading from a document in front of him. "He is constantly skidding, slipping, ignoring other traffic completely—a source of danger to himself and others. Therefore Sergeant Stone has been forced to recommend elimination."

He looked up at Pettis and laid aside the paper.

"I'm sorry, lieutenant," he observed. Pettis made his way from the room, and outside he was met by a group of his fellow-students. They eyed him with mute inquiry.

"Eliminated," he said huskily. "I guess—I guess I'm for the infantry."

His comrades consoled with him, knowing what a bitter disappointment the youngster must have suffered. Yet Pettis was more or less resigned, for he had realized that he would never make a flyer.

The rest of the student-officers said farewell to him the following day, and an hour after his departure they were in the capable hands of Big Mike again. He made no reference to Pettis, but grudgingly informed his pupils that he was fairly satisfied with the progress they had made. Then he selected his son for a test flight.

"I'm taking you up with me to-day again," he said.

Now the previous afternoon he had made this same statement to Phil Carter, and, once in the air, had tossed out the dual control-stick and commanded his protégé to operate the craft.

Phil had been up with him a number of times previously and had managed pretty well, although he had known all along that his instructor could take over immediately if he made any blunder. The realization that he could depend only on himself had shaken him for the moment, but he had felt mighty proud when he had landed the machine safely.

Was it now Big Mike's intention to put his son through that same ordeal?

This question was occupying Little Mike's thoughts while a plane was being made ready, but, far from the prospect being an ordeal, the youngster saw in it a means of "putting one over" on his father, and he contrived to smuggle a spare joystick into the ship with him when he entered the rear cockpit.

Big Mike climbed into the forward compartment, and presently the plane was taking off from the landing ground.

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With the wind whistling in its struts it climbed higher and yet higher, and it had attained a height of several thousand feet when the sergeant quietly dismantled the stick on which his fingers had been resting.

He turned and held it up to his son, then pitched it overboard.

"Now ground the plane all by yourself," he said with a grim smile. "You ought to be able to by now."

Little Mike returned the smile. Beneath the cowl of the rear cockpit he was grasping the genuine lever on which the manipulation of the machine now solely depended. But in his free hand he was clutching the spare stick that he had smuggled into the craft, and, still smiling, he held this up to his father before tossing it after the instrument which the older man had "jettisoned."

The spare stick followed the first one, falling away through several thousand feet of empty air. And Big Mike watched it, agape with horror, believing that the ship was now without any means of control.

For a moment the sergeant could not speak. Then he found his voice and gave vent to a wild bellow.

"Jump!" he roared, and in a panic he scrambled over the side, hurling himself from the machine and pulling the rip-cord of the chute he was wearing.

The folds of the safety device billowed out, and at an arrested momentum Big Mike began to drift earthward. Flying above him, his son gazed after him with amusement for a few seconds and then proceeded to follow him down, quite confident of his ability to land the plane.

His confidence in himself was not misplaced. He was safely on the ground when Big Mike reached terra firma near the north end of the field, and he had stepped out of the craft by the time that his irate and discomfited parent disentangled himself from the parachute and blundered across to him.

Big Mike had not far to walk, for the youngster had landed fairly close to the locality whither the older man had been drifting.

Marching up to his son, the sergeant-instructor brushed past him and glared into the rear cockpit to see the genuine control-stick still in its place. Then he swung around on the grinning student-officer.

"I suppose you think that was funny!" he snarled.

"Aw, can't you take a joke, dad?" Little Mike chuckled. "I was only clowning."

"Clowning!" Big Mike breathed. "The United States Government don't run this place for clowns. I oughta see that you're washed out—that's what I oughta do."

"But you won't, dad, will you?" his son said gently.

Big Mike's face was working, but the stormy passion within him was a fire that would soon die down, quenched by his sheer good nature and his love for his boy.

"Well, maybe I won't this time," he grumbled. "But one more trick like that an' I'll—I'll— Aw, get out of here before I forget myself."

The First Casualty

THREE or four nights after he had been flying solo, young Mike Stone entered his quarters to find a girl waiting for him—a girl whom he recognised with an exclamation of astonishment and joy.

"Dare!" he ejaculated breathlessly. "How did you get in here?"

"Smuggled myself in," she answered

with a smile. "I told you, Mike, that I'd be down here the first vacation I got, and I'll be staying in San Antonio for a month. Are you glad to see me?"

"Glad!" Mike announced hilariously. "Honey, I'll say I'm glad!"

He took her in his arms and kissed her, and he was still clasping her when a knock on the door interrupted them. Next moment his father appeared on the threshold, and, seeing the youngster's visitor, the big sergeant-instructor checked abruptly.

Then his face seemed to darken, and he glowered at his son ominously.

"You know it's against the regulations to have women here in your quarters," he ground out.

"Aw, take it easy, dad," young Mike retorted. "Skip's been here, hasn't she?"

"Skip's different," the older man rasped. "She's privileged, and nobody ever saw her in a huggin' match like this. Let go of that dame and tell her to get out."

"Look here, dad," his son snapped, "you can't use that tone—"

Dare Marshall interrupted him sweetly.

"Oh, I can see your father's point of view, Mike!" she said. "Listen, Sergeant Stone, you don't have to worry. We'll be out of here in two shakes. I just dropped over to ask Mike if he could see me to-night."

She turned to the younger man again and proceeded to explain.

"Some friends of mine live in San Antonio," she told him. "They're throwing a party for me, and I'd like you to be there. Will you come along, Mike?"

"Say, listen," the lieutenant's father interrupted curtly, "Mike's not going anywhere to-night. The chief instructor is gonna take a peek at the new officers to-morrow morning, and my boy's got to have his wits clear—"

Once more young Mike swung around on his parent.

"Look here, that's about enough, dad," he jerked. "I'm free, white, and I've cut my teeth; and I don't need a nurse or a keeper. Dare, I'm ready to leave now, so let's get going."

He departed with her, and Big Mike was left to fume and rage impotently, cursing the name of Dare Marshall—and he had occasion to curse that name afresh the following morning, when he discovered that his son had not returned to his quarters.

Fearful lest young Mike should fail to answer to his name when called upon, the sergeant presented himself to Captain Cannon on the flying field as the chief instructor was preparing to watch the student-officers take the air.

The first man to be called upon was Phil Carter, and, showing signs of nervousness under the critical eyes of the captain, he entered a two-seater plane and taxied across the turf.

The machine rose from the ground and circled towards the sky, and after a short flight Phil Carter set her down again, coming in from the west over one of the buildings that flanked the field.

Now, a hundred yards to the east of that particular building, a carriage-way marked the edge of the actual landing ground. This was the main approach to the officer's quarters, and a smart-looking car had appeared on it as Phil was making his descent.

The car contained Dare Marshall and young Mike Stone, returning from a gay party that had been prolonged all through the night at the home of the girl's friends in San Antonio; and when Phil swooped over the building at the west side of the field he suddenly

perceived the automobile directly in front of him.

Taking the line of Phil's descent, it was obvious that he must clear the roadway only by a few feet ere setting the machine down upon the landing field. It was equally plain that he must foul the car if he kept to his course.

Quick thought and action were needed. In that instant of emergency, however, Phil Carter's brain seemed benumbed. He should have opened the throttle and pulled back the stick—"given his craft the gun," as Big Mike Stone had said again and again in lecturing his pupils on how they should act if ever they found themselves balked during an attempt to land.

But Phil Carter's wits deserted him. He acted in panic-stricken fashion and tried to bank, cleared the moving automobile all right, but at the cost of throwing his ship out of control. Tilting madly as it rushed above the heads of Dare and Little Mike, the plane scraped one wing on the ground beyond the carriage-way, and the contact was enough to hurl the ship into an ugly somersault.

The craft finished on her back with a wing and part of her landing gear buckled, and as she came to rest men streamed across the field, running to the aid of her pilot. But none ran so hard as Big Mike Stone, and he was first on the scene of the accident.

He saw the car which had figured in the occurrence. It had stopped, and his son was climbing out of it. Struggling towards him, Big Mike clutched him by the arm.

"Get to your quarters," he said fiercely. "Get yourself shaved and straightened up. Go on!"

White-faced, the young man stumbled off, unnoticed and unheeded except by Dare Marshall, whose features were also deathly pale. The crowd which was now assembling round the wreck of Phil Carter's plane had eyes only for a limp and insensible form lying trapped within one of the inverted cockpits.

Big Mike blundered back to the wreck, and as he reached it he saw Skip coming up. He tried to stop her from approaching, but she thrust past

him and saw the body of her brother dragged from the overturned ship.

An aerodrome ambulance had arrived in the meantime, and Phil was borne away in it. As she watched the vehicle drive off with the injured man inside it, Skip leaned weakly against the plane in which he had crashed so disastrously.

Behind her groups of pilots were examining the wreck, unanimously declaring how lucky it was that the craft had not caught fire. Then Skip's father showed up.

His countenance looked drawn and haggard, but by sheer will-power he was able to keep a grip of himself.

"This is bad for the other students, captain," he told Cannon huskily. "Get them all into the air as quickly as you can. This thing mustn't be allowed to prey on their nerves."

Cannon looked at him, and there was admiration in the captain's eyes. The man who could learn that his son had met with a serious accident, and who could still think of his duty and the moral effect of the situation on others—that man was indeed a magnificent example to his fellows.

"Yes, sir," Captain Cannon answered, and within fifteen minutes the pupils of Big Mike Stone were going into the air. Little Mike being amongst their number.

The official inquiry into the cause of Phil Carter's accident had merely established the fact that the pilot, in crashing, had failed to meet a sudden emergency which was liable to occur at any hour of any day.

In a lecture-room at the aerodrome, however, Big Mike Stone took it upon himself to enlarge upon that bald, official statement, and before an assembly of his pupils he went to the length of illustrating his remarks by drawing a diagram on a blackboard.

"Now here's the position of the car," he said, "and this is the direction from which Lieutenant Carter was coming in for a landing. All right. When he saw the car he should have given his ship the gun and zoomed. Instead of that he lost his head and tipped it into a

vertical bank, looking one wing. This rolled him up in a ball over here—"

He was interrupted by a hoarse exclamation from one of his listeners. The interrupter was his son.

"Phil is in hospital!" he cried out. "Dying, maybe. Yet you talk as if he were a piece of machinery, or an illustration!"

The sergeant looked at the rest of the junior officers, and then fixed his eyes on young Mike.

"We've gotta learn lessons from crashes," he said, "so that we can avoid crashes."

"But the whole thing was my fault," his son groaned. "It didn't come out at the inquiry, but if I hadn't got Dare Marshall to run me home from that all-night party the accident would never have happened."

Big Mike hit his lip. "It just happened to be the car you were in, that's all," he said, logically enough. "In most cases the pilot is to blame—and in this case he was certainly to blame. The man who flies a ship must learn to think fast."

Little Mike was in no mood to listen to cold reasoning, and fifteen minutes later he was at the hospital where Phil Carter was lying. Here he was informed that he might see his friend for a few minutes, and a nurse escorted him to the private ward which the injured youngster was occupying.

Outside the door of the room the nurse paused.

"Don't mention his leg," she whispered. "He's in too weak a condition to be told yet that they've taken it off below the knee."

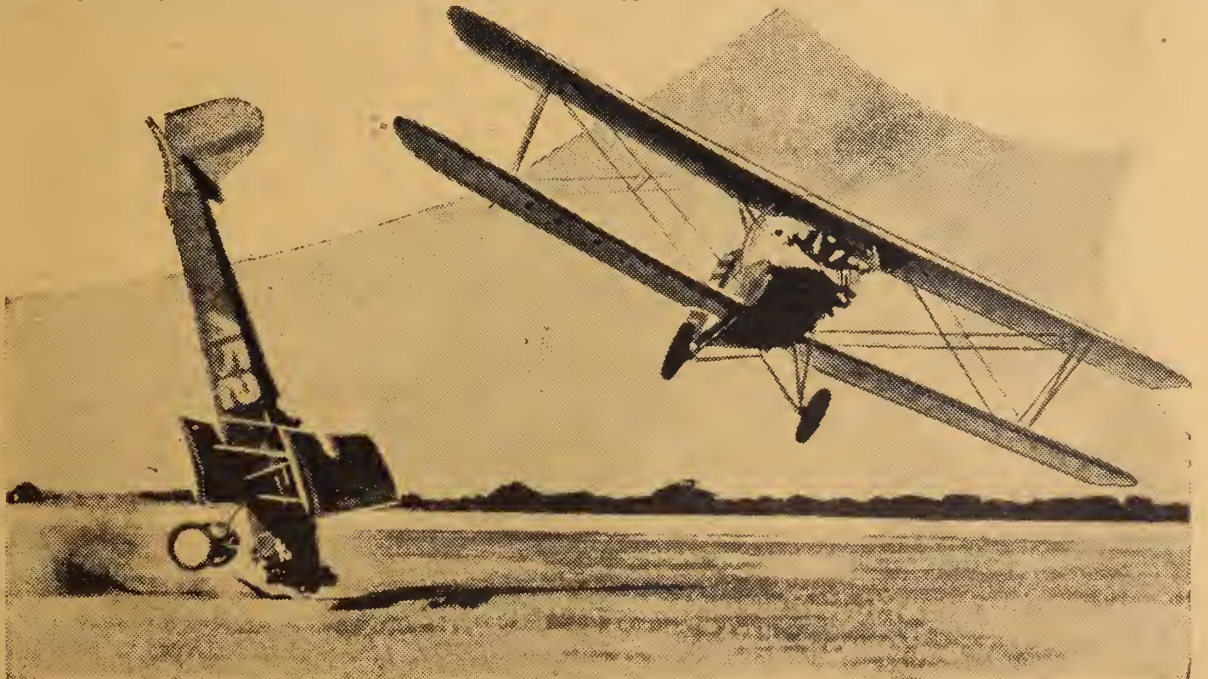
The blood in Mike's veins went cold, and his face turned ashen in hue.

"I—I didn't know," he said in a cracked voice.

"His sister is with him just now," the nurse went on. "But as you're a very close friend of the family—"

"Has—has Miss Carter been told," he interrupted, "that her brother won't—won't fly again?"

The nurse inclined her head, then opened the door of the private ward and stood aside for Mike to enter. As



Jaskerelli's ship hurled itself into the ground nose-first, with terrific impact.



The sergeant raised a clenched fist. "Don't be a fool," he said fiercely, "and don't tell me that Big Mike Stone has gotta beat some manhood into his boy!"

he crossed the threshold he saw Phil lying in bed, with Skip bent over him.

"Hallo, Mike," Phil said gamely, conjuring up a smile.

"How are you feeling, old man?" Mike asked in a tremulous voice.

"Better than I did when I first came round," was the answer. "I'll be all right. Flying again inside a few weeks. You wait and see."

Mike and Skip exchanged a swift, anguished glance. There were tears glistening in Skip's eyes.

"Sure, Phil!" Mike managed to say. "You'll—you'll be all right."

There was a pause, and then all at once Phil Carter winced and uttered a half-stifled groan.

"My leg hurts—just below the knee," he breathed. "The left one— In an awkward position, I guess— Would you move it for me, Skip?"

His left leg was the one that had been amputated, and it was the pain of the operation that he was beginning to feel, an operation performed when he had still been insensible.

Skip looked at him in dismay, not knowing what to do or say. Then luckily the nurse entered, and, as Phil repeated his request, the woman made a pretence of shifting the leg for him—without removing the bedclothes, of course.

"There, that's better, isn't it?" she said.

"Yes, I—I think so," Phil rejoined weakly.

A minute or two later Mike and Skip left the ward, and, out in the corridor, the maimed lieutenant's sister burst into a fit of uncontrollable weeping.

Mike put a sympathetic arm around her and led her away from the door of her brother's room.

Ragged Nerves

PHIL CARTER'S crash continued to play on the mind of young Mike Stone in the days that followed, and, although he managed to convince himself that the fault had not been his, August 17th, 1925.

yet he felt that in a way he had been indirectly responsible.

It was a feeling that was not shared by others—least of all by Phil, who would have promptly disclaimed it. But every time he went to see his chum in hospital Mike came away with a heavy heart.

Meanwhile he and his fellow-students were being taught the more exacting features of 'plane control, and one afternoon they were again mustered for the purpose of showing Captain Cannon what progress they had made.

Out on the flying field, just prior to going up, Mike was accosted by his father and Joe Bags.

"You've got your assignments all right, son?" the big sergeant asked. "You know what you have to do?"

"Yes," Little Mike rejoined dully. "Slow rolls, lazy eights, and cross-wind landings."

"You'll eake-walk through 'em," his father told him reassuringly. "Just watch those cross-winds, that's all."

Young Mike nodded dumbly. He seemed nervous, ill at ease. That morning he had visited Phil Carter again, and he could not forget Phil's attempts to be cheerful, attempts that were too obviously forced, for the injured pilot knew by now that he was crippled for life and would never realise his ambition to be a flying ace.

"You're feeling all right, aren't you, kid?" Big Mike said to his son.

"Sure, I'm—I'm all right," the younger man answered with an effort, and then moved off towards the 'plane in which he was to ascend.

Big Mike watched him, and was gazing after him when Joe Bags spoke in gloomy accents. He had been consulting his book on astrology.

"You know to-day ain't no day for Venus to be in the house of Mars," Joe muttered. "It's a bad sign, Mike."

Big Mike was about to make some retort when he observed a familiar automobile passing along the main carriage-way of the airport, and as it halted he

recognised Dare Marshall sitting behind the steering-wheel.

"There's that dame again," he growled. "She'd better lay off my boy, or she'll see more stars than ever were mentioned in that fool book o' yours, Joe."

Followed by his comrade, he walked over to where Captain Cannon was standing with some other officers, and he was hovering near that group when the names of his son and a student known as Jaskerelli were called out.

Cannon had decided to take the cadets in pairs, and instructions were given to young Mike Stone and Jaskerelli to go up in their ships and carry out the various manœuvres which they had been detailed to perform.

One after the other, the youthful pilots took off in their respective 'planes, and soon they were high up in the blue vault of the heavens, Captain Cannon studying the evolutions of the two machines with an appraising eye.

He seemed satisfied by what he saw, and was congratulating Big Mike upon these first two pupils when the ships began to glide earthward.

Jaskerelli was approaching from the south to effect a landing that required no extraordinary skill, but according to his assignment papers young Mike Stone had to combat stiff cross-winds, a ticklish business; and suddenly, when young Mike's craft was only a few feet from the ground, it started to waver precariously.

"The cross-winds have got him!" jerked Cannon.

The onlookers became tense. Then Big Mike spoke in a hoarse tone.

"He'll come out of it all right," he said. "He'll come out of it all right."

But he was mistaken. One wing-tip of the swaying 'plane grazed the surface of the field, and the ship slewed round. At the same time it rose sharply into the air as the man at the stick "gave it the gun" in a desperate effort to avoid complete disaster.

Young Mike Stone then found himself sweeping into the line of Jaskerelli's descent—Jaskerelli, who was gliding in from the south.

The two 'planes rushed towards each other, and a collision seemed imminent. Young Mike banked wildly, veering away from the other craft, and if Jaskerelli had kept his head all would have been well. But Jaskerelli had been thrown into confusion, and lost control.

His ship hurled itself into the ground nose-first, with terrific impact. Then it vaulted into the air and smashed down on the landing-field fifty yards further on, bursting into flames almost immediately.

Little Mike was now speeding westward, crouching in the front cockpit of his 'plane with fear and horror written on his face, and all at once he found himself making straight for one of the airport buildings.

He was still only a few feet from the ground, but he had no room to land, and any attempt to do so would have hurled him into the wall of that building ahead of him.

He pulled back the stick with last-minute presence of mind. The machine zoomed again—cleared the roof of the building—but fouled an observation tower, and beneath the roar of his engine he heard the crumpling of metal as his landing gear was torn away.

Down on the field a fire-truck was racing towards the blazing wreck of Jaskerelli's craft. Meanwhile, Big Mike Stone and Joe Bags were standing beside Captain Cannon, staring anxiously at the 'plane in which the sergeant's son was climbing.

It had survived the brush with the observation tower, and, minus its wheels, it continued to answer the pull of the stick and gain height. Then its anguished pilot began to circle above the airport aimlessly.

"If Little Mike tries to set her down with that smashed landing gear he'll bust himself wide open!" Joe Bags gasped. "Maybe he don't know that his landing gear's gone!"

The boy's father was already alive to that possibility; was already asking Cannon to let him go up and see what could be done; and, as permission was granted, Big Mike called upon another instructor and scrambled into a 'plane with him.

Bidding his colleague take the controls, Big Mike sat tensely in the forward cockpit. A few seconds later the ship was on its way heavenward, and not long afterwards the man in its rear compartment was steering it into a parallel course with the damaged craft occupied by the sergeant's son.

Big Mike waved to the youngster in the other machine—shouted to him and tried to indicate, by gestures that the wheels beneath his ship were missing. But he did not command him to bail out.

"Pancake landing!" he bellowed, making a descriptive movement with his hand. "Pancake landing!"

Young Mike's face was turned towards him, a face that was sickly white and panic-stricken. He could not hear his father's words, and appeared too bemused with fear to grasp the meaning of his signals.

"Get above him!" Big Mike said to the comrade who was at his back.

The other instructor obeyed him, and presently the 'plane containing the two older men was immediately over the damaged machine flown by the hapless student.

Big Mike climbed from his seat, and, waiting his chance, dropped to the upper wing of his son's craft. For one awful moment it looked as if he must slide off into space and plunge to his doom far below, but he gained a grip, and, after lying there breathlessly for several seconds with the wind tugging at him, he managed to lower himself to the fuselage and tumble into the cockpit behind his boy.

"Your landing gear's gone!" he panted.

"I know," the youngster moaned. "What can I do? What can I do?"

He checked himself, and then, with a shudder, he looked down at the field, in the middle of which a swarm of men were vainly endeavouring to extinguish the flames that were rising from Jaskerelli's ship.

"Jaskerelli's burning!" he sobbed. "Jaskerelli's burning!"

Big Mike tried to rouse his son, tried to make him turn his eyes from the grim scene away on the landing field.

"Listen, kid," he jerked, "listen, you've made a mess of things but you can still pull out with some credit, and you've got to—you've just got to. Set her down in a pancake landing. You can do it."

The youngster looked at him wildly.

"You take the controls! You take 'em, dad! I'm through—I'm finished!"

"Don't be a fool," Big Mike rasped. "Keep your hand on that stick!"

His son began to struggle up from his seat all at once. His mind was in a chaos, but he had remembered the parachute he was wearing.

"I'm going to bail out!" he cried.

"No you don't!" Big Mike roared, shoving him down again, and then, with no alternative but to handle the ship himself, he pushed the joystick forward and sent the craft into a swift earthward dive.

He straightened out when it seemed as if the 'plane must hurl itself into the ground as Jaskerelli's had done, and, cruising across the field at a height of only two or three feet, he at last brought the machine into contact with the turf, well away from the spot where that other vessel was blazing.

The ship scraped across the field for thirty or forty yards, swung around viciously, and finally came to a standstill—the relief and admiration of all who had witnessed the feat.

Big Mike clambered out of the machine and helped his son to alight. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see Captain Cannon and several other men hurrying from the vicinity of the hangars, and he looked at his trembling youngster grimly.

"You made this landing," he said. "You brought that 'plane down and pancaked her. You understand? As far as anybody else is concerned, you made the landing!"

"Why should we lie about it?" young Mike blurted in a voice that was choked with emotion. "Why should you lie for me and gain me some credit that I don't deserve?"

"Listen, I wouldn't lie for you if I thought you were plain yellow," his father bit out.

The student-pilot made a desperate gesture.

"I am yellow!" he cried. "Can't you see that? I'm finished—finished. First Phil—and then Jaskerelli! Can't you understand? Look over there at Jaskerelli's burning 'plane! Can't you see what that means to me, or isn't there any feeling in you?"

"Aw, listen, Mike, you're shaken up—"

"I'm through!" the younger man flung at him with rising voice. "Wash me out before I stop being human! Wash me out before I become a



The men of the escort halted simultaneously, brought their left hands across the stocks of their rifles, and then wheeled smartly to retrace their steps, leaving the degraded sergeant to proceed alone.

machine—like you, with your blackboard diagrams that show how a fellow can cripple himself for life, or die!"

"Mike!"

"I'm through, I tell you, and I'm going to let them know it!"

The sergeant raised a clenched fist.

"Don't be a fool," he said fiercely, "and don't tell me that Big Mike Stone has gotta beat some manhood into his boy!"

The young lieutenant lost his temper at that. Indeed, he was so overwrought by the events which had taken place that he scarcely knew what he was saying.

"Get out of my way!" he shouted. "And in future you'd better remember your rank! Stand to attention when you talk to an officer!"

Big Mike glared at him. Only once before had the youngster mentioned their difference in rank, and then only in jest. But now he was in deadly earnest.

"Stand to attention when you address an officer!" the lieutenant repeated furiously. "That's an order—and you'll take it as such—the way you've taken orders for thirty years!"

Those bitter, stinging words filled Big Mike with a rage that was ungovernable; words that he had never thought to hear from the son he idolized. A red mist seemed to gather before his eyes, a mist in which he beheld an impassioned face that he wanted to hit—yes, wanted to hit, for the first time in his life.

Big Mike's right shoulder swung forward, lending full force to the punch that he aimed at the younger man. He felt his bunched knuckles crash home, and then he was standing above a prone form, with the wrath subsiding in him and remorse taking its place.

An outcry reached his ears. It came from Captain Cannon and the other men who were hurrying up. Dimly and vaguely, Big Mike realized that in laying out his son he had not only hurt someone who was dear to him, but had committed the unpardonable crime of striking a superior officer.

Dishonourable Discharge

A COURT-MARTIAL was the inevitable result of the quarrel between father and son, and the verdict was a foregone conclusion, despite the fact that young Mike Stone pleaded eloquently on the accused's behalf.

The youngster was ashamed of himself—not because of the manner in which his nerves had gone to pieces, but because of those cruel words he had spoken in the heat of altercation. And in the room where the court was sitting he told the whole story in frank and straightforward fashion, blaming himself for all that had occurred and asking his father's judges to show the prisoner clemency.

One of those judges was General Carter, and he for one would have longed to grant the plea. But the discipline of the Army could not take sentiment into consideration, and there was no clause in the regulations to justify a man striking a superior officer.

The fact that the principals in the case were father and son could have no significance, so far as the court was concerned. In delivering that blow, Sergeant Michael Stone had shown heinous disrespect to the uniform of the Service, and consequently there was no choice but to order his dismissal.

The sentence of the court was carried out a few hours later, when Big Mike

August 17th, 1935.

Stone was marched out on to the parade ground before the eyes of the entire personnel of the airport, and the hand that stripped him of his chevrons and other regimentals was one that trembled—for it was the hand of General Carter.

Big Mike could not meet the general's eyes—did not dare to, for fear of breaking down. Then, after the grim ceremony of degradation had been carried out, the sergeant returned to his former quarters to don civilian clothes.

He rigged himself out in a crude shirt, a pair of thick trousers and a hat that had seen better days. Then he said "Good-bye" to Joe Bags, and went forth to meet two other riflemen who had been detailed to escort him from the aerodrome.

Walking between them with drooping head and weary steps, Big Mike trudged along the main carriage way, a forlorn and miserable figure, heavy-hearted at the thought of bidding farewell to the Service he had known for thirty years.

Where the drive of the aerodrome met the public highway, the men of the escort halted simultaneously, brought their left hands across the stocks of their rifles, and then wheeled smartly to retrace their steps, leaving the degraded sergeant to proceed alone.

Big Mike turned his head to take a last look at Randolph Field, and then, stiffening his upper lip and wiping a hint of moisture from his eyes, he moved off down the road.

Two or three days afterwards, ex-Sergeant Stone might have been seen working on a dilapidated plane that he had bought with his savings, a second-hand crate which he hoped would gain an airworthy certificate when he had overhauled it.

He had also rented a shed in which to house it, and it was here that his son located him about a week later.

A placard had been nailed to the shed, and it advertised that the owner of the plane within was prepared to show Texans their native state from the air at the low cost of five dollars per head.

Entering the makeshift hangar, Little Mike found his father sprawled beneath the fuselage with a spanner in his hand, and the youngster could have wept to see him—a tourist aviator trying to eke out a living with a junk machine.

Big Mike crawled from under the ship as he beheld his son, and after a moment of awkward silence he smiled.

"How are yuh, boy?" the older man greeted.

"Dad," the youngster began huskily, "dad, I want you to know how sorry I am—about everything—"

"Aw, forget it," Big Mike told him with a fine attempt at cheerfulness.

"How's tricks? How's everything at the—at the field? Say, I understand there's gonna be general manoeuvres to-night—a sham engagement between attacking planes and anti-aircraft batteries. Are you gonna be in it?"

Little Mike looked at him uneasily.

"I'm supposed to drop flares on a battery at Eagle Creek, four miles downriver," he muttered, "but I won't be there."

"What do you mean—you won't be there?"

"I'm resigning," young Mike jerked. "I'm scared, dad, you understand? I've tried—tried hard—but every time I go up now I see Jaskerelli—burning—and I think of Phil."

His father laid a hand on his arm.

"Mike, you can't quit," he said in an agitated voice.

"I've got to, dad," was the answer. "It's no use, I've made up my mind. I'm through with flying. I—I just can't stick it, and they'll never get me in a plane again."

In vain the older man appealed to him. Lieutenant Michael Stone had come to a decision and did not intend to alter it.

"I'm finished, dad, and in resigning I'm doing the right thing. Dare agrees with me that I—"

"Dare, huh?" Big Mike cut in. "So you've been listenin' to her."

"No," his son protested. "She hasn't tried to put any pressure on me, although I figure she's glad that I won't be risking my neck any more."

"Listen," the ex-sergeant said hotly, "do you want to go through the rest of your life remembering that you ran out on your pals, remembering that you were a quitter? For Pete's sake, Mike! You can't do a thing like this."

"Nothing you say can make any difference, dad," the youngster rejoined in steady, deliberate tones.

Big Mike suddenly clenched his fists and thrust out his jaw.

"All right, then," he breathed, "you quit if you want to. I'll take your place."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm telling you that I'll be up in that sky to-night, with the guys that you're desertin'," he ground out. "I'll be up there doin' your job for you—yeah, Big Mike Stone that was kicked out of the Service. I know where I can get hold of some flares to drop on that battery at Eagle Creek. And here's my plane."

He pointed to the second-hand crate that he had purchased, and his son looked at him with horror and incredulity.

"You're crazy, dad," he said. "You couldn't make a power dive in that puddle jumper. It would break up in mid-air."

"Let it break up," Big Mike declared. "Maybe I won't finish in the Army, but I'll finish in the act of doin' an Army job. And that'll be better than eating my heart out because my son ain't got the right stuff in him."

He paused, and then tapped the youngster on the chest.

"You look over that Marshall dame's shoulder to-night and you'll see," he announced prophetically. "Maybe this flyin' assignment will be the last Army order that a Stone will carry out, but it's goin' to be done by one of us."

He sounded as if he meant every word that he had said, but, though he had been momentarily alarmed at the prospect of his father throwing away his life in the second-hand ship that he had bought, young Mike convinced himself that the threat was an idle one.

And that night, when he visited the hotel suite of Dare Marshall, Lieutenant Stone was still of the same mind. The "old man" had simply tried to frighten him into entering the manoeuvres, but—it wouldn't work.

"And you really do mean to resign?" Dare asked the youngster, when they were seated together on a chesterfield.

"Yes," her admirer told her, "I'm definitely leaving the Army."

"Then why not write out your resignation now?" she suggested. "Let me get you pen and ink and paper, Mike."

He nodded, and she crossed over to a bureau, returning presently with the writing materials and setting them down on a small table in front of him.

Mike began to write the letter of resignation, and was on the very point

(Continued on page 27).

A young man is murdered under strange circumstances in the grounds of a Casino. The police threaten to close the place, and the owner gets a free-lance detective to pit his wits against the police. A thrilling and gripping drama, starring Edmund Lowe



Strange Happenings

JARL DVORJAK, the internationally famous pianist, had just concluded the final concert of his tour at the Civic Auditorium in Boston. The papers announced that this was his last tour, but that had been said about previous tours.

The vast auditorium had been packed with people, and the majority were women. Dvorjak was a very handsome man, and the carefully-brushed grey hair gave an air of dignity to his well-built body.

Behind the stage a dark-haired, thin man, whose face looked lined from poor health, was chatting to a fat, complacent fellow.

"They adore him still," said the thin man, who was Dvorjak's business manager.

"They do, Mr. Williams, and to-night the house record has been broken," chuckled the theatre manager.

They watched the great pianist go back for bow after bow, and glanced significantly at each other when several ladies appeared in the wings. The Society ladies had come to pay court to the man they revered.

At last Dvorjak was allowed to leave the stage, and then like a king he bowed and thanked the ladies for the great honour they had bestowed upon him by admiring his playing. A great courier and flatterer was Dvorjak.

Hesitating in the background was a pretty, fair-haired girl, and it was obvious that Dvorjak was anxious to get rid of his admirers to speak to the girl. In his gracious manner he excused himself, and at last was able to talk to the girl. Williams winked at the manager.

"Kind of you to come. I played only for you," said Dvorjak softly.

"That's very flattering," laughed the girl. "Even if it isn't true."

"Let me prove it. To-morrow night my new piano-organ console will be installed in the music-room. Be the first to hear it." His words were eager and the eyes compelling. "I will have a few friends there."

"I should love to hear it. What time?"

"Shall we say—ten-thirty?"

"I'll be there!" The girl gave him her hands. "I must get back to my party. Good-night!"

"An revoir!" Dvorjak smiled at her ardently.

"Who's the dame?" whispered the manager.

"Mona Lewis, daughter of Clark Lewis—"

"You mean Gambler Lewis," interrupted the manager. "Phew! Now you have surprised me. Hallo, here's another!"

A tall, graceful woman, beautifully gowned and glistening with diamonds, swept into the scene and smiled in rather a curious manner at Dvorjak.

"Excuse me," whispered Williams, and added even more softly: "It's Madame Dvorjak."

"Charmion, my dear, this is a great pleasure." The pianist kissed his wife's hand. "I am touched—a little surprised—"

"You shouldn't be—I like my toast buttered—and butter seems to be going up—frightfully!" Her smile was mocking.

"I'll have Williams mail you a cheque."

"Thank you, Jarl." The woman gathered her magnificent ermine cloak more closely round her. "We really are a perfect married couple. Good-bye,

Jarl. You won't forget to remind him, Mr. Williams, will you?"

"Certainly, madame," answered the manager. "We shall hope to see you again, madame."

"That depends entirely on the cheques I receive," answered the beautiful woman. "Good-night!"

"I thought she would be around," Dvorjak muttered when he was alone with his manager. "I guessed she'd find out my tour had been a success. At any rate she won't worry me for a bit if I send her a cheque first thing in the morning. But one day, Williams, I shall put my foot down. To-night I feel generous, and I feel I am in luck." He smiled at a sudden idea. "We'll go to the Casino."

A luxurious car drove them to the Casino, owned by Gambler Lewis. A restaurant, dancing, gambling for high and low stakes, cocktail bars, lounges, reading-rooms, Gambler Lewis had made his Casino a very perfect paying proposition. A shrewd business man, and there was nothing phoney about the gambling.

Dvorjak and Williams heard on arrival from the talkative cloak-room attendant that someone on table five had broken the bank.

"A young man, and if I might say so a little merry," laughed the attendant. "They say he threw on his money in a most blapazard way and always found the winning number."

The two men laughed and went to get a drink.

Lewis had been told by one of his men about the young man's good luck, and he went across to see if everything were satisfactory. Lewis was a tall, broad-shouldered man—strong of body and strong of face. He found that a

boastful, excited young man by the name of Matthews had won the money.

"A perfect evening!" The young man held up a pile of chips and beamed triumphantly at the curious spectators. "Now I'm quitting. Where do I cash in?"

"Right over there," Lewis said politely. "I'll show you."

Over ten thousand dollars had been won by Matthews, and Lewis himself handed the young man his money.

"Would you like one of my men to see you home?"

"I think I can find my way." The young man's tone was most unpleasant. "I'm sticking to this dough."

"Are you insinuating that my men might rob you of your winnings?" Lewis said angrily.

"I wouldn't go as far as that!" laughed Matthews. "But I might drop it and they might pick it up." He patted his pocket. "I can well look after myself, thank you very much."

"Have it your own way," Lewis shrugged his shoulders. "I can give you a cheque if you don't like carrying all that money."

"Cheques are sometimes not met," sneered Matthews, and walked away.

Gambler Lewis shut his eyes for the moment because the temptation to hit the young man almost broke down his iron control. He opened them to find two of his plain-clothes attendants by his side.

"Say, boss, it would be a pleasure to toss that guy out on his ear," muttered one of them.

"I nearly gave myself the pleasure," Lewis laughed. "Know anything about him?"

"Registered as D. H. Matthews, and it was just luck got him that pile."

"Yes, the croupier told me that," Lewis scowled. "If he calls again let me know."

Dvorjak and his manager, coming from a drink to go to the tables, passed the cloak-room and bumped into young Matthews coming out. They started back and glared at each other.

"I believe the misunderstanding was that we were not to meet," Dvorjak spoke coldly.

"I didn't invite you here!" came the sneering rejoinder.

"You didn't even have the courtesy to use the seats for my concert."

"I don't go in for piano-playing. I'm not one of those dumb dames who listens to you with goggling eyes."

Dvorjak stiffened as if he would strike the young man.

"I see you've been drinking again. You're a disgrace!" With head erect he passed the grinning Matthews, who appeared highly amused.

"Don't let him upset you, Jarl." Williams took his master's arm. "He's not worth it."

Matthews, swaying a little, went out to a somewhat snappy two-seater car, waved aside the commissionaire and climbed in. The engine roared and he was off down the winding drive through picturesque grounds towards the main road.

Another car was coming towards him, and the headlights were suddenly switched on. The approaching car was right in the middle of the road. Matthews hooted, cursed and shouted to the driver to "Get over." A collision seemed inevitable. Matthews swung to the edge of the drive, and then as the two cars came abreast two shots rang out. Matthews slumped over the wheel, his car with brakes released went over a slight embankment and overturned. The body of Matthews was flung out.

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The car with the headlights backed, turned swiftly and was gone.

Someone shouted that there had been a collision, and officials from the Casino and guests hurried to the scene. Dvorjak was amongst them.

"What's happened?" He heard various remarks. "I think he was drunk. I heard two shots. It looks like murder. Someone forced him off the road—I was just leaving and I know."

Gambler Lewis pushed through the crowd, and Dvorjak was close to his heels. Lewis stooped down and felt the boy's heart.

Dvorjak gazed with awe at the face of the young man, with whom he had been quarrelling a few minutes before.

"I warned him not to go out with that money," cried Lewis. "I felt it was coming to him." He pushed open the dead man's jacket. "That's funny." And from the pocket he took out a great bundle of notes.

Lewis became aware that the pianist had taken his place by the side of the still figure.

"Did you know this man, Dvorjak?" he asked.

Dvorjak hesitated, then he got to his feet.

"No—I never saw him before in my life."

The sounds of several sirens told the horrified spectators and the Casino officials that the police had arrived on the scene of the murder.

Lewis Hires a Detective

NEXT morning Clark Lewis was summoned to police headquarters, where he was shown into the office of James W. King, chief of detectives.

King was a hard-faced, sneering person. He was on the side of the law, and not particularly fussy in his methods of getting information from a prisoner. His eyes would narrow and his teeth would be clenched on these occasions—amazing how he frightened the truth out of some poor wretches.

San Francisco was at the moment conspicuous for a crime wave, and King had had his knuckles rapped. The killing of Matthews enraged him.

"Lewis, I've sent for you about this killing in your grounds—"

"You can't pin this business on the Casino?"

"This guy was bumped off in your grounds," King rasped out. "Ain't that a fact?"

"Yes," admitted Lewis. "But all the money he won at my place was found on him. There's nothing on the Casino."

"I can't help that—we're closing you up!" King raised his hand against interruption. "I gotta hand it to you that the Casino appears to be on the level, but you've had one or two ugly scenes there. The papers are full of this crime wave, and places that encourage crime. The Commissioner gave me hades, and we'll have to close you down until we crack the Matthews' case."

"And what am I supposed to do whilst the Casino's losing from twenty to thirty grand a week?" Lewis argued. "I've at last got this place on the map."

"Practise economy," King turned up his lip. "I won't close you down for a day or so, but if the case ain't cracked pretty quick the Casino has to shut its doors."

"If I could locate Dynamite this case would be cleared up overnight."

"Don't get me hysterical!" guffawed King. "We threw that chiselling dick out of town six months ago."

"That was your mistake," Lewis answered. "Dynamite isn't above a bribe, but then who isn't? The police never do." He stared accusingly

at the detective. "Dynamite may be a rascal, but he's an amusing one, and, moreover, he knows his business. If you had a few men like him in the force this town wouldn't know what crime was. Where is he?"

"San Berdoo. He's opened an office and going straight." A chuckle. "Probably one of the town's most respected citizens by now. That dumb fool couldn't crack this killing."

"You wouldn't care to wager me a hundred bucks on that, would you?" asked Lewis. "No, I see you wouldn't. You wouldn't care to back the police to solve the mystery for a hundred dollars. Well, there seems no business, so I'll be going. I'm going to get Dynamite from San Berdoo."

Actually at that very moment Dynamite was shaking the dust of San Berdoo off his shoes. The detective stared out of the window at the receding town and sighed contentedly.

"You look as if you were pleased," grumbled the good-looking, intelligent woman by his side. "What for beats me. You get chucked out of the town, and we haven't a cent, so why laugh?"

The private detective was a bold-eyed, handsome fellow, and his grin was appealing.

"I laugh, sweetheart, because San Berdoo was about the dullest town I've known. I enjoyed that last show—first excitement for months."

"Why did you withhold that evidence?"

"Because I didn't like the cops and their methods. They wanted to put that poor little guy away for years for letting daylight into a skunk, and I had the evidence that would have sent him for a vacation." He shrugged broad shoulders. "I admired the little fellow's pluck, and so here we are."

"I can't understand you." The woman looked discontentedly at the countryside. "If you had been paid big money to withhold that evidence I could appreciate this line. You're slipping, Dynamite. All this while in San Berdoo and we haven't a dime. Where do we go next?"

"Lynne Marlo, I have no idea." Dynamite picked up the paper. "I know San Berdoo have given us a ticket for any station on this system, and the farther away the better they'll be pleased. Perhaps the paper will give me an idea. Relax, girl, and let the master mind concentrate."

"You're crazy!"

"Young man seeks honest employment," he read out. "Guess I'm on the wrong page." He turned it over. "Ah, a grand murder mystery." He read a few lines, then nudged his secretary. "Wako up and listen to this. Matthews murder baffles police. District Attorney threatens to close Casino. You remember Clark Lewis' place? I've done one or two jobs for him. I bet you anything you like he'd jump for joy if I were to walk into his office. Toots, we're going to San Francisco!"

"We've been thrown out of San Francisco," Lynne reminded him. "We shall probably be thrown out again."

"This train stops for twenty minutes at some junction to pick up some connection—I'll get through on long distance to Lewis." He chuckled. "And break the news to him."

Dynamite was rubbing his hands together when he joined his secretary some time later.

"Lewis is having red carpet put down at the station, and the mayor is organising a reception committee," he told her. "The streets will be lined with cheering throngs—"

"You're delirious." Lynne gave him one look. "And I'm starving. Try and

talk the conductor into letting us have a free-meal ticket. And when we get to Frisco I pray the reception won't be from the police."

A Bad Loser

THAT very same night Dynamite and his secretary walked into the Casino as if they had bought the place. Both were in evening dress, and Lynne looked really beautiful in a black satin dress and a white cloak trimmed with white fox fur.

"Stop worrying," he whispered to her. "Clark Lewis is at the back of all our purchases."

"You told him you needed office supplies." She fingered her cloak. "I suppose this comes under the heading of a blotter?"

"It looks grand on you." He smiled at her, then became serious. "Let's have a look round before reporting to Lewis."

Hearing voices raised in anger they went into the baccarat-room, and saw two attendants gripping a gentleman firmly by the arms.

"That's Jarl Dvorjak," Dynamite told his secretary. "Our foremost concert player. Seems as if he's lost more than he can afford. Always did hear he was a poor sort of fish. Amuse yourself for half an hour, girl, I'll go and find Lewis."

Clark Lewis was in his office, and glowered at his visitor.

"You've been in this town about five minutes and you've opened largo accounts at several stores in my name. What's the idea?"

"Oh, I just gave your name as reference," was the bland answer. "I'll pay the bills."

"How?"

"Out of your retaining fee."

Lewis smiled.

"You're a chiseller, Dynamite, but I admire your nerve. You've got brains, and I need them. The D.A.'s threatening to close me up. I want to know who bumped Matthews off, and I want action."

"And I want four thousand bucks to oil my brains," boldly answered the detective.

"I'll give it you right now," Lewis went to a wall safe. "You solve this murder and you'll find me generous. You can come as close as you like. Don't bother to memorise the combination of this safe—we change it every day."

"Nice guy, but so suspicious," Dynamite laughed. "Lucky I've got a hide like a rhino. Thanks, Lewis, now, first I intend—" He broke off.

Outside the door there was shouting and scuffling. Then it was flung open and the two attendants forcibly escorted the great Dvorjak into the room.

"Take your filthy hands off me!" the pianist shouted.

"What is the matter, Mr. Dvorjak?" Lewis asked politely.

"I wish to protest against your methods and establishment."

Lewis glanced at his attendants, and one stepped forward. "He tried to start a riot, boss."

"I've lost forty thousand dollars," Dvorjak was pale with anger. "Lost at your tables in the last three nights—I doubt your croupier and your wheel."

"We're carrying his paper for eight grand." The attendant winked significantly at his chief.

"I do not intend to pay," Dvorjak sneered. "Why should I pay for the privilege of being cheated?"

"I don't take that sort of accusation passively, Mr. Dvorjak," Clark Lewis answered.

"So I perceived the night of the Matthews murder," the pianist laughed unpleasantly. "Fortunately, I do not leave your grounds alone and unprotected."

"We don't cater here for welters."

"May I impress upon you that the District Attorney is a friend of mine." The pianist straightened his dinner jacket. "A very close friend."

Lewis gave a slight sign, and one of the attendants opened the door. Dvorjak walked out.

"That guy is trying to pull a bluff to keep from paying off," the attendant said, after shutting the door.

"Give him time to cool down," Lewis ordered. "Then pay him a visit. A hint that the Press might like to hear the facts will soon make him pay up. Throw a seare into him—but no rough stuff."

"You know us—we work delicate," the attendant answered with a grin. "You leave him to us, boss."

When they had gone Dynamite, who had stood in the background, came to the side of the big desk. "That's the wrong way to handle that guy. If those two mugs should try rough stuff this dump will be closed for ever and a day."

"You find out who killed Matthews," angrily cried Lewis. "I'll handle the rest of my business."

"Well, I don't think much of the handling up to date," mocked Dynamite. "I'll be seeing you."

Lynne was busy gambling and most annoyed when he insisted that she come away at once.

"And I was on a winning streak," she grumbled. "Where are we going?"

"For a drive, so put on your cloak."

"Why a drive?"

He smiled mysteriously.

"To satisfy my curiosity about concert pianists."

The Second Mysterious Killing

JARL DVORJAK went straight back to his modern luxurious villa. In a small sitting room he found a large, fair haired middle-aged Dutch woman fast asleep. He shook her gently.

"Wake up! Jan, wake up!"

The woman opened her eyes, gazed at him for a moment uncomprehendingly and then got to her feet.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Mr. Dvorjak, but I fell asleep. I've had a tiring day, sir."

Dvorjak studied his watch.

"The other servants out, Jan? And they won't be back till after midnight?"

"I told them midnight."

"Has the young lady called?"

"The young lady was expecting guests, but only Mr. Williams showed up."

Dvorjak pondered.

"Where are they?" he asked at last.

"The lady's in the music room and Mr. Williams is in the library," answered his housekeeper.

"Very well I'll look after them."

Dvorjak said with a decisive nod. "You're tired, so off you get to bed."

Dvorjak went to the library where he found his manager seated at a desk studying an evening paper.

"I was out when you called, Jarl," Williams smiled ingratiatingly. "When I got the message I came round at once."

"A little matter of business," Dvorjak's voice became sharp. "I find myself ten thousand short on the proceeds of the tour."

"That's impossible."

"I have definite proof in my safe."

"May I see it?"

"Not now, because I have company." The pianist eyed him coldly.

"I shall expect your cheque to-morrow to cover the deficit."

Williams' attitude changed to defiance.



Lewis became aware that the pianist had taken his place by the side of the still figure.

"Don't you think ten thousand is cheap for my silence, Jarl?"

"That sounds like blackmail."

"The papers would call it news."

"To-morrow I shall wish to see your cheque." Dvorjak held open the door. "You realise that this terminates our association?"

"I will be here in the morning when we can destroy the evidence you say you have," Williams laughed. "But I don't intend, Jarl, to pay you ten thousand."

"We shall see. You know your way out," Dvorjak smiled. "And I advise you to pay up, Williams, or else I may call in the police. Good-night."

Dvorjak went to the music-room, where Mona Lewis was waiting. The girl rose nervously at sight of him. There was fear, and yet adoration, in her expression.

"It was very kind of you to come, my dear. My other guests are inexcusably late."

"Perhaps I'd better go, Jarl."

"No, no, no!" He took the two slim hands in his own. "I beg you to stay. Before they come, let me play for you alone. A love song that you will be the first to hear. It is almost as lovely as you, my dear."

Dvorjak seated himself before the piano organ, smiled at the girl, and began to play.

Two men muffled in coats came stealthily along the street. They went up the stone steps of the porch, and one was about to press the bell when the notes of the organ rang out. They glanced round and saw the lighted windows of a big room—there was a low balcony.

"Fancy playing at this time of night."

"Let's climb on to that balcony and see what's going on."

"Okay," agreed the first speaker. "Can't understand how some folks like that sort of music."

They scrambled on to the balcony by means of the ivy, and peered into the music-room. Then they looked at each other.

"Do you see who it is?" one whispered.

"Sure I see." A chuckle not very pleasant. "And somebody might pay us well to keep a still tongue."

A sound of a car pulling up made the two men duck down beneath the balcony.

Dynamite helped Lynne out of the smart two-seater car he had hired by using Lewis' name.

"See those two guys on the balcony," Dynamite said softly. "Of course you didn't see them. Well, I did, and I know who they are." They heard a rustle and a faint oath. "That is the same two climbing down the other side of the balcony. Any moment they will be running for dear life."

"You're too clever to live," mocked Lynne. "In all probability they're just ordinary thieves."

"They're ordinary enough, but—" Dynamite broke off because clearly he had heard a shot.

"The organ's stopped!" gasped Lynne. Dynamite hastened up the stone-flagged pathway and his hand reached out for the bell when the door flung open. A very pretty, but distressed young woman stood there. She recoiled at sight of him. She tried to rush past him, but his arms held her.

"Just a minute, little girl. What happened?"

"Let me go! Let me go!" The girl twisted like an eel. Like a wildcat she sank her teeth into the hand that gripped her left wrist. Dynamite gave a cry,

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and next moment the girl was free and scurrying down the path. Lynne made a futile, ineffective attempt at stopping the girl.

Dynamite hastened to Lynne's side. "Why the dickens didn't you hold her? That dame—"

"Look!" Lynne cried, and he swung round in time to see someone muffled in a cloak slip out of the door.

Dynamite rushed after the man, who dived round the house. Like a cat the cloaked figure sprang for a wall and was on top when the detective arrived.

"Wait a minute, you!" Next moment Dynamite was flung backward by a wild kick from a swinging leg.

Dynamite cursed when he got to his feet—two valuable witnesses had escaped. He had a hunch that something had happened inside Dvorjak's house, and if he only knew who these two people were it might make such a difference.

"I suppose he escaped?" Lynne said sharply. "Just as I expected."

"Cut out the wise-cracking!" rasped Dynamite. "We're going inside!"

"Suppose the police should come?"

"They won't be here till someone calls them," was his reply. "Besides, I've got to take chances. Come on, and don't argue."

Slumped over the keyboard of the piano they found Dvorjak. The detective lifted the limp hand and then gave a significant shake of the head.

"Is he dead?" whispered Lynne.

"If he isn't he's giving a swell imitation," Dynamite answered callously.

"He stopped a dose of lead in the head. I wonder which of those two did it? I wonder what connection this has to do with young Matthews?"

Very quickly the detective went round the room, but there seemed nothing that indicated a clue.

"We can't stay all night" Lynne urged. "Also, the sight of that dead man gives me the creeps. You ought to ring the police."

"Okay; I'll warn them." Dynamite came and stood by the piano. "Guess I'll take this music."

"What ever for?"

"Because I can't see a vestige of a clue anywhere else." He rolled the music and placed it in his pocket. "Also, this music has a lot of personal notes, and they might give me a line. Now I'll call the police."

Madame Dvorjak was in bed when the telephone bell rang and her maid answered it. The police were calling.

"You'd better come over right away," drawled Detective King. "Your husband's met with an accident."

"Not a serious accident?"

"I'm afraid so—he's been shot."

"You mean he has shot himself?" Madame asked.

"As there ain't a gun lying around it don't look like it." King rasped into the 'phone. "It looks more like murder. I'm sending a car round to your hotel. Better get down here right away."

"Oh, my poor husband! This is terrible. I can't believe it possible. Yes, yes, I will come at once. Good-bye." Madame hung up. "I've got to go over to the house. My husband's been shot. I think I'll wear my grey suit, Marie."

Blackmail

CLARK LEWIS was at his breakfast when the 'phone bell went. He listened and muttered imprecations. When he hung up, his face was the picture of anger and dismay. The headlines of the papers—"Jarl Dvorjak

Murdered at His Home!" "Famous Concert Pianist Mysteriously Shot!" made him seew.

A discreet cough, and there stood the grinning Dynamite.

"How much do the boys want?" he asked with a grin.

"Twenty grand. How did you know they wanted money?" Lewis cried suspiciously.

"Deduction, just simple deduction." Dynamite helped himself to a piece of toast. "Your worthy butler admitted me, and one could hear your voice all over the house. You called your friends rats and other names. Moreover, if you pay it you'll have two dependants for life. You sent them round there to collect and they were there when Dvorjak was shot. If they said you had sent them it would be good-bye to the Casino—am I right?"

"You've got most of it," admitted Lewis. "But how are you wise?"

"I called about three seconds before someone shot Dvorjak," Dynamite answered. "The boys didn't do it—they're just after easy money."

"Then find the real murderer—don't sit there munching toast!" stormed Lewis. "Any clues?"

"Yes, but nothing definite. I saw your two thugs, heard the shot, and the door opened—" A violent shake of the head by Lewis quietened him, and he glanced round for the reason.

A charming, but pale, young woman.

"May I come in?"

"Of course, dear," Lewis smiled at her fondly. "Mona, dear, this is Dynamite—you've heard me speak of him."

"How do you do, Miss Lewis?" Dynamite glanced at his hand.

The girl gave him a frightened glance. "How do you do?" she whispered.

"I'm grand. Hand hurts a bit." He grinned. "Scraped it against something tough—I'm a careless sort of chap. Won't you sit down?"

"No, thank you very much." The girl smiled nervously. "I'll come back later when you've had your talk."

"Mona doesn't look very well this morning." Her father stared after his daughter. "Too many late nights."

"The Casino's no background for a nice kid like that."

"I'm sending her to Paris to study."

"Good idea, and while you're about it, send those two mugs abroad as well," the detective suggested. "They didn't do it as I told you, but if they tell the police you sent them to collect from a corpse it won't sound too good."

"Maybe you're right," agreed Lewis. "But I'm not paying 'em twenty grand."

"You go to one of your numerous safes, take out some money whilst I'm not looking and let me have it." Dynamite's eyes twinkled. "I'll put such a scare into them that they'll be pleased to take a couple of grand. You go and get the dough."

Directly Lewis had gone, Dynamite hastened out on to the balcony and looked round eagerly. Sure enough, there was the girl, almost hidden behind a large ornamental tub containing some sort of palm. She was dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief.

"Crying isn't going to help." Dynamite made his words as friendly as he could manage. "Suppose you talk to me?"

"What do you want of me?"

"I'm going to ask a few questions, and, for your own sake, please answer them." He drew a chair close to her. "You didn't tell your father about last night?"

"I don't know what you're talking about." She edged away.

"I should, because it would be better to talk to me than the police."

"The police?"

"They're bound to ask questions, and I'm the guy to tell you the answers." He patted her hand. "Don't bite, lass, and be sensible. Did you tell your father?" She shook her head. "Did you shoot him?"

"I had nothing to do with it. Why should I kill him?"

Dynamite stared at her intently.

"I believe you, but hundreds wouldn't. You've got to come clean if you want me to help you. Who else was in the room?"

"Nobody."

"Nobody?"

"We were alone in the room; he was playing for me. Suddenly there was a shot. It seemed to come from nowhere. I looked round, but the room was empty." She leaned forward, "That's the truth."

"Were the doors closed or open?"

"Closed," she answered. "I opened the door I had come in by and ran out blindly. Then you stopped me."

"Yeah, I remember that part." He glanced at his hand. "Why did you go to see Dvorjak?"

"Because I'm crazy about music and he fascinated me," she admitted. "I was thrilled to be his friend. He told me there were going to be others present, but they must have been delayed. Then he began to play and I had to listen. You do believe me?"

"Calm down, Mona, and get a grip on your nerves," Dynamite said sharply. "Not a word of this to a soul—not even to your father."

"You'll help me?"

"Yes. This looks like one case I'll do for your father without a retaining fee; but"—he paused significantly—"you've got to do exactly as I tell you without a single question. Is it a go?"

"It's a go!" A tremulous smile appeared.

"Then you go off and powder your nose and try to look as if you haven't a care in the world." Dynamite stood up. "Stay around this joint and wait till I 'phone. Now I must get back to your father. Mind, not a word!"

A smile and he hurried back to the breakfast-room. Lewis was there and gave him a suspicious glance.

"Just been admiring the view. Grand place you have here, Lewis." Dynamite spoke easily. "Got the money?"

"Two grand, and you'll find the boys at the Golden Gate Hotel. Don't slip up on this, Dynamite."

"I'll have 'em heading for the Philippines within twenty-four hours," was the confident assertion.

But Dynamite found it was not going to be so easy. He had left Lynne outside in the car, and she had witnessed the police swoop down and collar Lewis' two men.

"King or some flatfoot must have sent men down here to watch Lewis' house," Dynamite mused aloud. "Maybe we got here before the cops. Lewis' pals came here to be certain of their money, and the cops must have decided to collect them. Why?" He considered that for a moment. "King has found out that Dvorjak lost money gambling and sent them to watch for suspicious characters or any clues. These two birds don't usually come to Lewis' place, and so the cops collect them on suspicion. Also, some patrolling cop may have spotted them in the vicinity of Dvorjak's place." He started the engine.

"Where are we going?" Lynne demanded.

"Police headquarters." He grinned at her. "And if you're a good girl I'll introduce you to the chief."

"If it's just the same to you, I'd rather be introduced to some breakfast," Lynne said significantly. "Drop me on the way to gaol."

Squealers

BY various methods the police got Lewis' men to admit that they had gone to Dvorjak's house, but they said nothing about seeing Mona. If they did, what chance was there of collecting the twenty grand? They admitted they had been detailed to watch Dvorjak's house, as the pianist owed their boss money.

"Take 'em away!" King ordered. "I'll talk to the scum later. Show that guy Williams into here."

Williams was brought in.

"I sent for you because you were Dvorjak's manager," King leaned back in his chair. "From your lodgings I got wise to something else—Dvorjak sent for you. What were you doing there at midnight?"

"We often spent the evening together. I was his friend as well as his lawyer and manager," Williams answered.

"No trouble about money?"

"Certainly not."

"You talked with Dvorjak, then what happened?"

Williams smiled slightly.

"He did not wish for my company that night. We arranged a meeting for the morning. You see, there was someone interesting waiting for him in the music-room. A lady, but I had no chance of finding out who she was."

"That checks with the housekeeper's story," King nodded. "She did not know the lady's name."

"I presume it could not, therefore, be Mrs. Dvorjak?"

"She was at her hotel in bed," King answered. "We rang her and got her over. She was most upset. She knows nothing about any other dame, but she hinted that she and her husband were very good friends, but no more. Joe!" He shouted. A thin, dark, fierce young man answered the call. "There was a dame at Dvorjak's place, as the housekeeper stated. Those rats of Lewis' may have seen her. Do your stuff!"

"We'll have a work out," Joe smirked unpleasantly. A policeman entered and touched his helmet. He handed over a card, which King scowled at.

"Who's T. N. Thompson?"

"He said that if you were to say that I was to add Dynamite," the policeman explained.

King sat up with a jerk.

"Dynamite and trouble arrive at the same time. Blast him in!"

Dynamite entered, beamed at King and glanced sharply at Williams.

"Morning, chief! You're taking on weight, aren't you?"

"I've thrown you out of Frisco once and I'll do it again, but harder!" King banged his desk. "What are you doing here?"

"Legitimate client—Clark Lewis by name."

"Oh, so he found you after all!" King chewed at his cigar. "If that's on the level, you can stay; but no funny business."

"Okay!" Dynamite calmly helped himself to a cigar before glancing at Williams. "How are you?"

"Do you know Williams?" King sharply asked.

"Oh, yes—yes! We've kicked around together, haven't we?"

"Yes, indeed," Williams answered smoothly. "I must get in touch with you and talk over old times."

"I'm at the St. Francis." Dynamite's eyes were expressive. "You should come and see me."

"I'll give you a ring," Williams glanced at the chief detective. "Do you want me any more, Mr. King?"

"Not for the moment, but don't leave town!" King rapped out.

"And if you need any help you know where to find me," Dynamite added, with a slight wink. He waited till the door had closed on the manager, then tantalisingly lit the cigar. King sat back and watched him with angry gaze. A contented puff. "So you have two murders on your hands. Well, it's nice to see that business is looking up."

"Why have you come to see me?"

"To see how you're getting along on the Dvorjak case."

"Listen, you stick to Matthews. I'll let you stay on if Lewis wants you, but don't butt into anything else. I'll 'phone Lewis."

"Promotion hasn't improved your suspicious nature," Dynamite answered. "You have my word I'm for Lewis, so save your breath 'phoning. Also Dvorjak's all yours."

"All right, I'll take a chance that you're not lying." King was somewhat appeased. "What do you want to know?"

"Will you tell me what they found on the body of Matthews? King, I've cracked a lot of cases. I don't want to fight you, I want to work with you, so give me a break."

"All right, I'll play ball with you." King pulled open a drawer and took out a satchel. "Here's what they found on Matthews, and it won't help you much."

"A pair of pliers." Dynamite picked them up. "Curious thing to carry about. A key ring—doesn't seem much to that. Money, and plenty of it. I presume his winnings. Theatre tickets." These he took up. "For the Dvorjak concert. Why didn't he use them?"

"We'll dig him up and ask him," jeered King.

"A connection between these murders ever strike you?"

"Matthews escaped from the morgue, came over and shot Dvorjak, and then went back for his own funeral," said King with bitter sarcasm.

Dynamite was unperturbed.

"Who was Matthews?"

"Don't know. Popped up about four months ago. Had a shack at Aptos—doing some sort of work there. No criminal record we can find. Matthews was an alias."

"Trace the car he was driving?"

"Rented—wrong address. No clue there. Anything else you—" The dictagraph buzzer interrupted him. He switched it on. "Yes?"

"Okay, chief," it was Joe's voice.

"They've spilled. The girl was Mona Lewis."

"Great work!" King grinned exultantly. "Hold those two mugs. Pick up a warrant and bring in Mona Lewis."

"What do you want her for?" Dynamite asked.

"Nothing much," King answered.

"Just a simple charge of first degree murder."

"So you're planning to arrest her." Dynamite picked up the pliers, examined them, and put them back. "Think she did it?"

"Sure, jealousy. Think you can do anything with the Matthews case?"

"I'll have a try." Dynamite pocketed the concert tickets. "I'll ring you up

some night if it won't disturb your beauty sleep. So long, chief."

Outside, Dynamite moved quickly to a telephone-box and rang Lewis' house. To his relief Mona answered.

"Don't get shaky and just do as I tell you," he spoke swiftly. "Meet me outside Post and Powell's store within twenty minutes. You must be out of the house within ten minutes. Don't tell anyone where you are going."

"But, Dynamite, I can't leave without telling dad where he can find me."

"He'll find you at the county gaol if you don't move quickly," was his stern retort. "Did you or did you not agree to trust me? Stick to it!"

"But where are you taking me?" Mona was uncertain.

"Where the cops can't find you," he told her. "There's a warrant out for your arrest. Now will you hurry?"

"But why should they want to arrest me?"

"Because they think you killed Dvorjak, and I've got to keep you in hiding whilst I find out who did do it. Now hurry, Mona. All answers when I see you. Twenty minutes at Post and Powell's store, and try to sneak out without anyone seeing you. 'Bye!'"

The Shot

LYNNE MARLO smiled politely when Dynamite walked into her suite of rooms with a pretty girl. She was extremely fond of Dynamite, but she knew how susceptible he was to youth and beauty. Moreover, Lynne had stood by the detective when he was down to his last cent and she did not welcome the intrusion of a young woman.

"This is Mona Lewis, and we've got to hide her. Listen!"

Briefly, the detective explained all that had happened, and how the squealing of Lewis' two men had necessitated this drastic action.

"Why?" Lynne wanted to know. "Because Mona did not kill Dvorjak and she's too nice a girl to get into the hands of King and his toughs," replied Dynamite. "We know their methods of intimidation and third degree, also Mona, free, may have drastic results."

"Such as all of us going to prison for years and years?" Lynne smiled blandly.

"You haven't gone to prison yet," he reminded her. "Mona, free, might upset the plans of the real killer, because I've a hunch the death of Matthews has something to do with the Dvorjak case."

"What's the next bright idea?" Lynne asked.

"To find the connection between the two cases. I believe—" The 'phone bell rang. "Excuse me."

"Hallo, hallo, Thompson speaking!" "This is Carey Williams. I must see you at once. It's most important."

"You haven't wasted much time, Williams," Dynamite chuckled. "What can I do for you?"

"There's something you should know." The voice was hoarse with excitement. "Valuable information on the Dvorjak case."

"I'll come and see you at once. Where are you?"

"At—" The sound of a shot came distinctly over the line.

"That was a shot!" gasped Lynne.

"Hallo, hallo!" shouted Dynamite. He turned quickly. "Get on the 'phone in the next room and trace this call whilst I keep the line open." He proceeded in this endeavour by talking into the 'phone. "Yes, yes, I'll be there. What time suits you best. I hope—" He put back the receiver. "That's funny!"

"What's funny?" asked the horrified Mona.

August 17th, 1935.

"You can tell by the noises on the wire if a line is clear," he explained. "That line was clear till a few seconds ago when there came a distinct click. Someone at the other end put back the receiver."

Lynne bustled into the room. "The call came from the Dvorjak house."

"Guess I'll have to go out." Dynamite grabbed up his hat. "Put Mona up for the night, and sit tight here. Don't go out of this room, answer the 'phone or go to the door."

"What do we do for food?" Lynne demanded.

"Bite your nails," was his sarcastic answer. "They say the polish is very nourishing."

Dynamite went straight to the Dvorjak house and rang the bell. Jan, the housekeeper, answered.

"What do you want?"

"Mr. Williams, where is he?"

"In the book-room, but he gave orders no one should disturb him."

"Don't worry, auntie, no one will." The detective pushed past her. "Better come with me."

On the floor of the book-room lay Carey Williams. Dynamite knelt and made a swift examination.

"What do you know about this?" He turned on the woman, who was staring down with sorrowful expression.

"Poor man—he's always been sickly."

"Well, those days are over. You been here all afternoon?"

"I've been downstairs in the laundry."

"Did you hear a shot?"

"I didn't hear nothing till you rang the bell." She pointed at the body.

"You don't think that Mr. Williams is very bad, do you?"

"I don't think—I know," Dynamite said tersely. "You say you heard nothing till I rang the bell—how did you hear that?"

"The bell is connected with the laundry."

The front bell rang, and both glanced round.

"Jan, bring whoever it is in here. The police are behind me, so do as I say," he ordered. "And don't say anything."

The fat Dutchwoman waddled away, and swiftly Dynamite ran his practised hands over the body. Like a flash he searched a pocket-book and put it back, then his sharp eyes spied a piece of paper in the dead man's hand. Carefully he removed it, and found that it was covered with figures. A frown of perplexity, and then the paper he placed in his pocket. A glance at the telephone, and Dynamite was certain that the killer was clever and that there would be no finger-prints.

Voices and footsteps. Dynamite turned expectantly.

"Leave the bags, Jan," said a clear, refined voice. "I'm going to 'phone all the servants to come back. Yes, I'm going to live here now."

"But, madame—"

"You seem worried, Jan. What's the matter?" Madame Dvorjak asked, and then saw the tall man. "Oh!"

"How do you do?" The detective stood as much in front of the body as he could.

"May I ask who you are and what you're doing here?"

"Well, it seems to me that up till now, I'm the official body finder." Dynamite stepped to one side and pointed.

Madame Dvorjak stared, her eyes opened wide, and then a terrible scream came from between those red lips. She swayed and collapsed in Jan's arms.

Dynamite went to the 'phone and got in touch with King.

"This is Dynamite. I'm over at Dvorjak's—there's been a murder. What? My boy, that was yesterday—this is another. You'd better come over right away."

Who is Boris?

MADAME DVORJAK was somewhat recovered by the time that King and his special henchman, Joe, arrived on the scene. Another car arrived a few minutes later, with several policemen and a doctor.

King would not hear anything till he had got the doctor's verdict. Shot through the heart at fairly close range—death instantaneous. After that, with Joe, he made an examination of the book-room, and found two of the three doors were locked.

"Someone shot Williams from that door," King stated.

"How did you deduce that?" jeered Dynamite.

"Mister Clever, you got a lot of things to explain," rasped King. "I told you to stick to the Matthews case. How did you get in here?"

"Williams rang me, wanted to talk over old times, and was cut off. I heard the shot, came right over, and like a good little boy rang you at once. Anything else, sir?"

"I'll check up on you later," King turned to the pale, but conscious, lady on the couch. "Suppose you tell us, Mrs. Dvorjak, how you spent the afternoon."

"I've been out at Carmel to friends. I don't remember the exact time I left their place, but if you care to ring them they can tell you. It was not long after lunch. The rest of the afternoon I spent driving to town."

"And what time did you arrive?" asked King.

"This gentleman can testify." She indicated Dynamite. "He was here."

"Pardon me, madame, my name is T. N. Thompson." A deep bow. "My friends know me as Dynamite."

"How do you do?" Madame extended a limp hand.

"When you've all finished I'd like to ask a few questions," King said with heavy humour.

But his questioning did not solve who had killed Williams, or even disclose any sort of clue. After a while Madame Dvorjak showed signs of fainting again.

"I was coming back to this house," she said in a weak voice. "Now, I never want to come here again. Can I go to some hotel?"

"Go where you like, as long as it's in the city limits and I know where you are," King agreed.

"I'll be at the St. Francis."

"Splendid, Madame Dvorjak, that's where I'm staying," Dynamite grinned affably. "I shall take the liberty of calling on you, madame, some time, and I trust you will honour me by receiving me."

"Perhaps," madame smiled pathetically. "You give me a ring."

King took his arm.

"Outside, you!" he ordered. "And just remember you're nothing more than a detective, and not a very good one at that!"

Madame Dvorjak beckoned to the Dutchwoman.

"See the gentlemen out—then I want you."

Madame Dvorjak was sitting up and sniffing at snelling-salts when Jan returned.

"You are better, madame?"

Charmion Dvorjak put the stopper

back in the bottle and then eyed the housekeeper intently.

"Jan, who killed him?"

"I tell the truth—I hear nothing!" gasped the woman.

"You let someone in—who was it—Boris?"

"No—no—no!" The Dutchwoman shook her head in denial.

"You'd lie for him—you always have," madame said fiercely.

"He wasn't here." Jan shook her head even more vigorously. "I haven't seen him for weeks. I swear it."

"All right, Jan, help me to my feet." Madame staggered up. "I'll go now. I'll send for my trunks. Any messages will find me at the St. Francis."

Nearly Caught

LYNNE was a fine secretary, a believer in Dynamite, had faced poverty with him, and loved him. Who can blame her if she were not frightfully friendly to Mona, who she could tell was fascinated by Dynamite. Also, to her way of thinking, it looked as if harbouring a girl, for whom there was a warrant of arrest, would mean several years for those responsible. She made this quite clear to Mona, who was a high-spirited and perhaps a trifle spoilt young beauty.

All that evening Mona thought over the problem. She was placing Dynamite in danger, and yet he had forbidden her to tell anyone where she was. Surely her father was to be trusted? At midnight she decided to 'phone her father.

Mona had vanished, so the Lewis household was alive with plain-clothes men, and the things that they had to check were telephone calls. Joe was in charge, and when the 'phone went he instructed the butler to be discreet.

"I'm listening-in," Joe said, with a slight nod, as he picked up a special receiver. "You behave like you know we want you to act."

"Hallo, Quiney, is dad there?"

"No, Miss Mona."

"Get in touch with him. Tell him I'm with Dynamite and to come and get me. Hurry!"

"Very well, Miss Mona." The wretched butler hung up the receiver.

In the head detective's room at headquarters, at midnight, that great personage was doing his best to bully and bluff the truth out of Clark Lewis.

"Are you gonna come clean or not?"

"I tell you I don't know where she is."

"You knew she was at Dvorjak's the night he was killed!" King shouted. "That's why you sent those two pigeons of yours over. Maybe to help her."

"What a malicious lie!" Lewis had a temper. "Mona knew Dvorjak, but she never went to his house."

"She went that night, and we can prove it!" King was red in the face. "Why did she kill Dvorjak?"

"Three can yell louder than two—let me join in," said a cool, mocking voice. "Do you know where Mona is?"

King swung round. "You were here when I ordered her arrest. Better talk—talk fast—whilst you're in condition."

"Well, I rushed outside and hired an aeroplane," Dynamite said very seriously. "I flew over Lewis' place and let down a rope-ladder. The rest you can guess?"

"Stop fooling!" King's eyes narrowed. "How do you know Mona Lewis has disappeared?"

"You may have told your mugs to keep it under their hats, but one took



"Is he dead?" whispered Lynne.

off his hat," laughed Dynamite. "It's all over the city."

"Are you sure you know nothing of Mona's disappearance?" demanded Lewis.

"You engaged me to find out who killed Matthews. If I'm supposed to abduct your daughter, I'm getting my cases all mixed up."

Lewis looked suddenly very old as he got to his feet.

"I'll get back to the house. There may be some message."

"Stick around—my men are all around your shack," King snapped out, and laughed harshly as the door slammed. Then he eyed Dynamite balefully. "We've got Lewis cold—either it was his girl or his two bouucers who picked off Dvorjak."

"I'm all against these correspondence courses," jeered Dynamite. "They get you boys so mixed up."

"All right, Mr. Fresh Guy, let's see you get Lewis out of this jam."

"Okay!" Dynamite comfortably seated himself. "Matthews was shot with a thirty-two bullet and someone had a nice boufire in his shack. Are those two facts correct?" King nodded. "Now, what did you find out about those ashes?"

"They were sheets of music," King opened a drawer. "One was almost untouched, and we could tell that the rest of the ash was music like this."

"Probably his favourite tune—can I borrow it?"

"Going to play it?"

"For my own benefit," was Dynamite's dry answer. "Well, I think that will be all." He selected a cigar from a box, and grinned at King's auger. "So long."

Dynamite arrived at his hotel, took the lift to the sixth floor, and found two men waiting for him.

"We had an idea you'd be breezing along," smirked Joe.

"Great of you boys to come round to see me!" Dynamite beamed at them. "We got a marvellous restaurant in this hotel. Come down and see the grill. I could manage some supper."

"We'd rather see suites seventy-eight and nine," Joe smiled. "One is where

you work and sleep, and the other where our secretary lives. We don't mind which we see first."

"Why this eagerness to see over my rooms? Thinking of staying here?"

"Your bluff's no use, Dynamite. Mona Lewis 'phoned home, said she was with you," Joe sniggered triumphantly.

"You boys will clown." Dynamite did not betray himself. "Someone's having a joke with you."

"You open up those rooms and sharp," hissed Joe, and out flashed a gun. "Get going!"

Now, Lynne had found out from Mona what the girl had done, and she was worried. She kept mighty close to her door, and so she knew the cops were there because Dynamite was speaking so loudly—trying to warn her.

Dynamite conducted the two policemen round his rooms.

"You're doing all right, Dynamite," Joe glanced round. "There ain't a gaol like this in California that I know of. Well, let's go and see your secretary." He gave Dynamite an admiring glance. "She's clever. I thought she might try to walk out whilst we were here, so I hid another man in the corridor. She didn't fall."

"I shall protest strongly to the governor," Dynamite told them. "Mona Lewis isn't here or with my secretary. You want to stay in the force, I suppose?"

"You can't bluff us. Get going!" shouted Joe.

Lynne was there, but no sign of Mona. And Lynne gave the two cops a rating for daring to push into her rooms.

"Why not try the bath-room?" suggested Dynamite. "You might try a bath at the same time." He wondered where Lynne had hidden the girl.

"She's here and we'll find her!" Joe was livid with rage.

Those two ransacked the place, but no sign of Mona, and the more they searched the more Dynamite jeered at them.

"Serves you right for snooping on 'phone calls," he told them. "Maybe someone played a trick, as I hinted. It might have been Lynne, or it might have been someone who wanted to get a

couple of dumb elucks away from Lewis' house. That makes you think."

The other man drew Joe to one side. "King'll yell his head off if he finds out we left Lewis. Dynamite's right—someone's pulled a fast one. We oughta get back and see what's happened with Lewis. Come on!"

Dynamite could hear the whispering. "Have a drink, boys, before you go?"

"It's going to be a pleasure to walk you out of this town," Joe scowled. "One day it'll be our turn to laugh."

When Dynamite was certain they had left the hotel he looked at Lynne and smiled.

"Where is she?"

A cupboard full of dresses and cloaks. Dynamite peered round. "I don't see her."

Lynne pointed to a number of zip-fastener hold-alls for dresses.

"Four of them contain dresses, but the fifth." Lynne ripped down the zip-fastener, and inside the hold-all was Mona.

"You Houdini!" shouted Dynamite. "Be gosh, you had me beat." In his joy he kissed both the women, and for once Lynne was not jealous. Maybe the gleam of appreciation in her chief's eyes had appeased her.

"I'm a fool to have done it," Lynne said. "Because now I'll get a life sentence."

"Maybe." Dynamite winked at her, and then fished out the roll of music. "Stop being the strong woman and look at this. Sing it!"

"Are you all right?" Lynne asked. "There's method in my madness," was his reply. "Just hum this music, and I want you, Mona, to listen carefully."

"I'm not a nightingale," argued Lynne. "And it's after one in the morning."

"Just to please me, sweetheart," he begged. "Just hum it, but be tuneful if you can."

So Lynne hummed it, and Dynamite watched Mona. A puzzled frown appeared on her forehead, and then the dawn of recollection.

"That's what Dvorjak was playing when he was killed!" she cried out excitedly.

"The answer to the problem." Dynamite rubbed his hands together. "I've not got all the links in the case. What Mona has said completes everything. Now we've got to get busy."

"At this hour of the morning?"

"Yes, Lynne, at this hour," he told them. "Put on warm things because it's cold outside, and get over as quickly as you can to Dvorjak's house. I got a key out of Jan. Use it if you can't wake her. Go into the music-room and wait for me. I'm going to phone your father, Mona, and call King. You get ready whilst I get these calls—I must get everyone to complete the case. Don't argue, girls, but hurry!"

The Hidden Gun

DETEKTIVE KING and his men arrived at the Dvorjak house. Lynne and Mona were there—he placed them under arrest. Clark Lewis appeared and King had to arrest him. Last of all Dynamite appeared with Madame Dvorjak.

"Dynamite—you're under arrest!" snarled King.

"Why not be original and shake hands?" jeered the detective. "I've got this little gathering together to try to clear up a problem that has completely baffled you, and which if not cleared up may cost you your job. I've brought Madame Dvorjak here because August 17th, 1933.

I thought she was entitled to hear what I have discovered."

"Well, if you've discovered anything, let's get at it!" shouted King. "And make it snappy!"

"Follow me to the music-room." Dynamite waved them forward, and when everybody was inside the room: "Better close the doors."

"Why?" King wanted to know.

"If I fail you can do the talking, King," the private detective said tersely.

"To prove my case I must be allowed to proceed without interruptions."

"Okay, I see you getting about twelve years."

Dynamite grinned and turned to Mona.

"Miss Lewis, I want you to go to the exact spot you were standing when the shot was fired." The girl stood by the piano. "Lynne, will you please sit at the piano." He placed the music before her. "I want you to pretend to be Dvorjak, and all you have to do is to play this tune to the best of your ability."

With a resigned shrug as if she thought Dynamite crazy, Lynne sat down at the piano and began to play. The notes of the organ swelled and billowed in the music-room.

Dynamite went over to the organ reeds and placed his ear close to each one in turn. Supposing the mechanism of these pipes went wrong, how could one examine them? The walls were oak-panelled, and that gave him an idea. He peered closely, and then ran his fingers over the woodwork—he pressed a knot and there was a click. A panel had snapped open. The detective pushed it open and flashed a torch. He was looking at the pipes and the mechanism of the organ. His eyes found what he was expecting—a gun.

Dynamite dived out of the panel and held up his hands.

"Stop, Lynne—stop!"

"Don't yell!" Lynne shouted back at him. "I'm doing my best. It's a grand piano."

Dynamite dived across the room, and to the amazement of everyone gave Lynne a violent push. Next moment a shot rang through the music-room and a bullet ricocheted off the walls. King, Joe and two of his men drew their guns, and glanced round to see who had fired.

"Are you all right, Lynne?" Dynamite asked of the angry woman, who sprawled on the floor. "You'd have been shot otherwise."

"Why didn't you let King play Dvorjak?" was her answer.

Dynamite helped her to her feet, and then went over to the panel that led to the organ loft. "King, Joe—here's your murderer!"

"A set-gun!" King was astounded. "Gosh, I've got it! The gun fired at a certain note on one of the organ pipes. Better remove it, Joe."

Madame Dvorjak stepped forward, in spite of the Dutchwoman clinging to her arm.

"Only one person could have thought out that trick." Her face was white.

"Jarl had a son by a former marriage," explained Madame Dvorjak. "A gambler and a spendthrift. Jarl paid him an allowance and forbade him the house and the use of his name. Boris hated his father."

"So he planted the gun to inherit the entire fortune?" questioned Dynamite.

"Yes!" The woman laughed shrilly. "But what he didn't know was that Jarl had legally disowned him. Boris killed his own father without reason or benefit. I brought him up when he was a little baby, and he often came here when his father was away on a

concert. Jan must have been letting him in lately, and I've known nothing about it. Boris was a clever engineer and musician—now you understand how the gun was fixed to the pipe."

"And I'll tell you, King, something else," added Dynamite. "This Boris was Matthews. He dabbled in engineering, electricity and radio. That accounts for the laboratory at Aptos and the pair of pliers that was found on him. He perfected an electrical cell device that would react to the vibrations of certain combinations of tones, and would move the trigger of that set gun. That music was an old favourite of Jarl's, and one he was remodelling as a new composition. The boy knew it. Probably hid in the organ loft and heard his father play on many occasions. Boris had to get a number of copies printed for his own experiments, hence the burnt music ashes. He planned to remove the gun when all the outcry had died down." He paused. "Unfortunately someone got him first."

King stiffened.

"Yes, who did shoot him? Who shot Williams?"

"Don't rush me, King. You mustn't spoil my dramatic effect." The detective produced a piece of paper. "This I took from Williams."

"Thanks for not taking the body," sneered King.

"On the paper are written a word, some figures and some letters," the private detective explained. "The word is centre." He went to the middle of the room. "You observe the floor is done in black and white squares like a chess-board. After centre there is a W and a figure 4. That means west four squares." He walked to this square.

"Then it says S. 3, and we move south three squares." He pointed down at a black square. "This should be the one." He examined his watch. "Joe, will you open the doors and see if your namesake has arrived?"

Sure enough a little wizened fellow with sly eyes had been detained by police guarding the house. King ordered that he should be brought into the music-room.

"Why, that guy is Chiseler Joe," King gasped. "You're under arrest!"

"Chiseler, don't take any notice of him," Dynamite elucked. "If you do what I want King will give you a free pardon and a hundred bucks as a reward. I want you to open a safe, and I think it's underneath this block of wood."

How they gaped when the block of wood came away and there was a safe in the floor. Chiseler Joe got his nimble fingers to work, and at last it was open.

"I'll tell you what that safe contains without you looking, King," the private detective stated. "Divorce papers. Williams knew they were there because he put them there for Dvorjak. Somebody wanted those papers to inherit a fortune and tried to buy Williams. He got scared and phoned me—it was his death warrant."

"For the love of Mike who did kill him?" King almost screamed.

"Dvorjak's son Boris, alias Matthews, and this unknown worked together. When the unknown knew that the gun was set, then someone was hired to bump off Boris. Plenty of guys in this town, King, would do the job for two or three hundred bucks. The problem was the gun in the organ loft. It must be left there until the hue-and-cry has abated before removal." Dynamite spoke tantalisingly slowly. "The other problem is the safe. The unknown doesn't know where the safe is, but knows what it contains. Williams was a

(Continued on page 29)

Into the jungle came men of the wild white youth's own race and colour, and he found himself the chief actor in a strange and perilous drama. A terrific serial story of a \$500,000 quest that revealed a lost kingdom and restored to the world a medical formula of the first importance to humanity. Starring Noah Beery, Jun., and Dorothy Short



Episode 2—"Captured by Cannibals"

READ THIS FIRST

In the hope of obtaining a cure for infantile paralysis, the Carnafellow Foundation sends two American specialists and their assistants to an experimental station in darkest Africa.

Dr. Trevor is one of them, and he and his assistant, Carl, are interested only in benefiting humanity. Not so their two colleagues, Bracken and Phillips, these being more interested in a \$500,000 reward which has been offered for a cure.

Trevor discovers an antidote, and Bracken and Phillips attempt to secure the formula of it. To outwit them, Trevor writes one half of the formula on a parchment, and engraves the other half on a wrist-band worn by his little son, Jan.

At the experimental station there is a menagerie packed with wild animals, used by the doctors in their research. That same night these break loose, and in the excitement young Jan is led into the jungle by Chiema, a tame chimpanzee which has been his playmate.

Trevor follows them. His wife is slain by the escaped animals, and so is his assistant. Bracken and Phillips survive, and return to America, but fifteen years later they come back to Africa, learning that Trevor has suddenly shown up at the home of a trader named Andrews.

They reach Andrews' remote trading station only to discover that Trevor's mind is a blank.

About that same time Chiema and Jan, who is now grown to manhood, are captured by the crew of a steamer on which Andrews' daughter, Mona, is travelling. But the craft later runs

into a storm and springs a leak, and in the resultant confusion Jan and his chimpanzee are assisted by Borno, a seaman who is something of a mystery.

Suddenly there is an explosion in the boiler-room!

Now read on

The Survivors

THE explosion that ripped the deck of the Natal was followed by another blast that spread further destruction, and as a result of this second concussion the occupants of the lifeboat amidships were pitched head-long into the sea, one of the davits having snapped as the craft was being lowered over the side.

Meanwhile, Jan Trevor and the ape Chiema had leaped overboard, and the pair of them were being lifted on high upon the crests of the great waves when the white youth was swept against a floating hatch that had been hurled from the doomed ship.

It formed a kind of raft and, clambering on to it, he pulled Chiema after him. Then all at once, in the glare of a burst of lightning, he beheld the face of a man who was swimming near by.

Jan recognised him as Borno, who alone amongst the Natal's crew had shown him any kindness, and he made haste to reach out and clutch the older man, hauling him on to the raft.

In that same flash of lightning Jan had desecrated a girl struggling in the water a few yards farther away. She was Mona Andrews, who had been tipped from the lifeboat with Mrs. Torrance, the other woman passenger, and several of the ship's company.

Simple and uncultured as he was, Jan's instinct was to help a fellow-creature in distress and, sliding back into the sea, he struck out towards the girl and seized her. Then he fought his way to the raft again, and Borno assisted him to drag her on to the comparative safety of the floating hatch.

They crouched there in the storm-racked night, while their makeshift raft rose and fell with the vast motion of the sea. Now they would be carried upward on the summit of a mountainous, liquid ridge dappled with foam, then they would sweep downward into a deep, smooth trough, and all about them the wind howled, the thunder pealed, and the air was charged with elemental fury.

They kept a look-out for others to whom they might be able to render aid, but failed to discern anyone. While riding the crest of a wave, however, they looked back to gain a last impression of the shattered vessel from which the surge of the ocean was driving them—and they saw her go down by the bows, with forked fire from the heavens playing upon her luckless hull.

With the disappearance of the Natal they felt strangely alone—alone in the dark immensity of the ocean—and for hours they lay upon their raft wondering what their ultimate fate would be. They could not sleep, and indeed they did not dare to let themselves sleep, for they had to remain awake and alert to avoid rolling or slithering into the sea.

Actually they were not many miles off the coast, and they were being urged slowly yet surely in the direction of land. But there was a glimmer of dawn

in the sky before they were finally cast up on a stretch of lonely beach.

Abandoning the raft, they waded through the shallows and then collapsed on the sands, where, in sheer exhaustion, they slept like logs through day-break, sunrise and the early hours of the morning.

Chiema was the first to awake. He had curled himself close to Jan, and upon opening his bright, intelligent eyes he lost little time in arousing the white youth, slapping him comically and almost humanly upon his muscular chest.

Jan pulled himself to his feet with a yawn, and Chiema began to caper around him, chattering the while. It was the ape's chattering that presently disturbed Borno's slumbers, and he struggled up, this strange man of European complexion but Moorish costume.

Jan moved across to him and, indicating his mouth, spoke in monosyllabic English. It was as if he had never known any but the simplest words in that language, and even forgotten many of these. Yet though the sentences that he spoke were child-like in their construction, his voice was deep and melodious and manly and, strangely enough, there was a faint trace of an American accent in his pronunciation.

"Eat," Jan said. "Chiema and I—we go find food."

Again he touched his mouth, and for the first time Borno noticed that he was wearing a bracelet on his wrist, an ornament fashioned from some flexible but hard-wearing substance.

The flexibility of that bracelet had allowed it to expand as the years of Jan's childhood had passed, years during which he had grown tall, stout and strong. And upon the bracelet was still inscribed, in legible engraving, a number of medical symbols that would have meant nothing to Borno, but a great deal to two men named Bracken and Phillips.

Jan turned now and, bidding Chiema follow him, began to make his way towards a scowling wall of jungle that overlooked the beach, dark and menacing above the golden sands.

The white youth and the chimpanzee disappeared amongst the trees and thickets, and after a moment Borno walked across to where Mona Andrews was lying, still fast asleep.

She was stretched out on her back, and her arms were wide-spread, the hands open. Looking down at her, Borno thought how beautiful she was, and he was gazing at her in admiration when all at once he observed that curious mark tattooed in one of her palms.

As he beheld this mark the bronzed features of Borno underwent a startling change of expression—an expression that was transformed from keen admiration to sheer amazement.

Stooping, he peered at the girl's hand intently, and then, more surprising still, he suddenly dropped on one knee and made an obeisance that was slave-like in its humility.

"The Royal Lotus of Mu!" he breathed. "Princess, I salute thee!"

Had Mona Andrews awakened then, she would doubtless have eyed Borno in complete bewilderment. But she did not awaken for another half-hour, and on raising herself she found him standing near by with folded arms.

For a moment she could not imagine where she was or what had happened, but ere long the events of the preceding night came back to her, and she stood up.

The heat of the sun had dried her August 17th, 1935.

clothes upon her, and she felt little the worse of her experiences. It was with a pang that she thought of Mrs. Torrance, however, and all those others who had doubtless perished in the storm.

Then she remembered Jan and Chiema. "Where is that queer white boy?" she asked Borno.

"He has gone to search for food, and has taken the ape with him, princess," her companion rejoined.

Before Mona could comment upon the manner in which he had addressed her, Jan and Chiema reappeared on the edge of the jungle, the former being laden with fruits from the forest.

He hurried down the beach to where Mona and Borno were standing, and now, for the first time, he seemed to take particular note of the girl, eyeing her as if she had been some creature from another world—impressed by the loveliness of her features, watching how the sunlight seemed to play in her blonde hair. Then he gave her some of the fruit that he had gathered from the jungle trees.

"Thank you," said Mona.

"Thank you?" Jan repeated vaguely.

"Er—me Jan. You 'Thank you'?"

"No," she answered with a smile, shaking her head. "My name is Mona. You Jan—I am Mona. Listen, I want to thank you for saving my life last night."

"Life?" Jan had not heard that word "Last night?"

He was still staring at her, seemingly unable to take his eyes off her, and she turned to Borno.

"He puzzles me," she murmured. "He acts as though he had never seen a girl before."

"No doubt he has never seen a white girl before," Borno suggested.

He was right. Jan had never been close to a settlement until yesterday, when he had been captured not far from Pangani. Prior to that he had lived right in the heart of the jungles, seeing no other human beings except the native tribes, and he had long since learned that it was wise to keep away from these.

"Yes, princess," Borno went on, "you are probably the first white girl he has ever set eyes on."

"Princess!" Mona exclaimed. "That's what you called me a few minutes ago. Why the high-sounding title?"

"You are a princess," Borno answered gravely.

During her cruise on the ill-fated Natal, Mona had quickly come to the conclusion that Borno was an odd, but likeable, individual, and she felt she had reason to endorse that opinion now. She merely decided, however, that the seaman had taken a fancy to her, and that in calling her "princess" he was passing some word compliment.

"All right, then, Borno," she said in a merry tone, "I'll be a princess on one condition—that you take me to my home. We can't be so very far from it."

"Yes," Borno murmured, "I will take you to your home."

"You will?" Mona rejoined. "You know where my father's trading post is?"

"I know where your home is," Borno said ambiguously, "and it is my sacred duty to take you there."

Sacred duty. The words echoed in the girl's mind. What a queer man this Borno was, to be sure—with his "princess" and his "sacred duty." She began to think that he was a little crazy, and living in some world of his imagination. It might be as well to humour him.

Her reflections were interrupted by

Jan. He had been listening closely to the conversation between Mona and Borno, and had singled out one word which was familiar to him.

"Home," he said.

"Yes, Jan," Mona said. "After we've eaten I'll set out for home. Can you understand me? I—go—home."

"You go?" Jan said. "Then me go, too? Chiema go?"

"Why not?" Mona declared. "Yes, we'll all go. Borno, I think my father and mother would be interested in this white boy. How old would you say he is?"

"About your own age, princess," Borno opined. "Perhaps a year or two older."

"I wonder where he picked up the few words that he speaks," the girl mused. "I'd love to know his past history—how he came to be running wild in these jungles—and who his parents were."

Borno gave her a strange, penetrating glance.

"There are many who do not know their parents," he observed, and the conversation closed with this cryptic remark, which Mona did not attempt to comprehend.

Attacked in the Jungle

HAVING satisfied their hunger with the fruits from the tropical forest, the survivors of the Natal plodded across the beach and penetrated the dense thickets above the sands, Borno leading the way, Mona following him and Jan bringing up the rear with Chiema.

Borno seemed to know the jungle like the palm of his hand. Indeed, he knew it almost as well as Jan, and in some ways was even more familiar with it. Tramping on with purposeful stride, he never once was confused by the maze of paths that threaded it.

Towards noon the heat intensified, and, although sheltered to some extent by the foliage overhead, the travellers elected to call a halt and rest.

Borno and Mona sat down in the shadiest spot they could find, and Jan settled himself beside them. But the white youth possessed an amazing vitality, and ere long he was on his feet again, capering around with Chiema, tweaking the ape's ears, wrestling him and rolling with him on the ground.

A strange picture they made, the hirsute chimpanzee with its ungainly legs and trailing arms, Jan with his fine, straight limbs and sunburned body, muscles rippling with his every movement.

With interest, amusement and admiration Mona and Borno watched them.

Chiema seemed to be enjoying the game as much as his human companion, and, suddenly veering off, he began to lead Jan a dance, springing for the looped vines that festooned the trees.

Jan gave chase merrily, and the pair of them climbed and swung to and fro among the high boughs and the tough creepers. From the ground below, Borno and Mona continued to watch them, marvelling at the white youth's agility.

"He's as much at home amongst the tree-tops as the ape, isn't he?" Mona commented. "I—"

She stopped short, for in turning to speak to Borno she had detected a movement in the undergrowth some twenty or thirty paces away. Next instant a tawny figure breasted the vegetation and stalked into full view—the form of a young and powerful lion.

For a moment Mona was too confounded to utter a sound, and then she gave vent to a sharp cry.

"Borno!" she gasped. "Look!"

The man at her side turned his head to glance in the direction she had indicated, and he, too, was rooted to the spot as he saw that monarch of the jungle. Then all at once the brute came padding towards them at an ever-quickening pace, growling as it advanced.

A scream broke from Mona, and it was the sound of her voice that caused Jan to check himself in his headlong pursuit of Chicma through the tree tops.

Looking back and down, he saw the girl and her companion—saw the hungry lion that was making for them—and with a shout he spun around on his toes and leaped from the branch on which he had paused.

His sure hands clamped fast on a hanging vine, and he plunged through space in a long, sweeping arc, dropping lithely to another tree-bough thirty yards away. He was then above the spot fifty feet above them, to be exact—but he caught hold of another creeper and slid swiftly towards the ground.

The lion was bounding forward now, desperate to claim a human prey, roaring fearfully. Mona was cowering back in terror, and Borno was making frantic efforts to pluck out a knife that he was carrying—but the weapon would not come free, and the approaching brute was very close.

It seemed to single out Mona, and sprang for her, but even as it did so a hundred and ninety pounds of brawn and bone hurtled down on it from aloft in the shape of Jan Trevor, and, balked in its jump, the lion missed the girl.

Man and beast came down in a heap, and a fearful snarling filled the air as they rolled to and fro over the ground, Jan with his hands buried in the savage creature's thick mane, the lion striving to tear at him with its fangs. A few feet away, Mona screamed in terror as she watched the deadly combat, and her voice was punctuating the roaring of Jan's infuriated antagonist in shrill accents when Borno succeeded in extricating his knife.

"Jan!" he cried out hoarsely, and threw the dagger towards the white youth.

The knife fell beside the son of the jungle. He was sprawled under the lion's body, still clutching the animal by its mane and forcing its slaving muzzle away from his throat; but as he saw the glint of the blade on the ground close by, he let go of the monster's hair with one hand and snatched up the weapon.

Next second he was plunging it deep into the lion's body. Again and again he struck, until the roaring of the brute had sunk to a faint gurgle—until its last breath was drawn and it lay a dead weight across his chest.

He heaved the carcass aside then, and, scrambling to his feet, moved over to Borno and handed him back his blood-stained knife with an appreciative nod. Meanwhile, Chicma had descended from the tree-tops, and was now running forward to fling his arms around one of Jan's muscular thighs, as if thankful that his human comrade was safe.

Mona stumbled towards the white youth. She was as pale as death, and the hand that she laid on his arm was trembling violently.

"Jan, are you all right?" she faltered. "Simba—fight," Jan said grimly, glancing at the carcass of the lion. "I fight better—with Borno's knife."

"You saved my life, Jan," Mona breathed. "Borno, let's get on our way. The sooner I reach home, the better I'll be pleased."

But the girl's desire to make for home without delay was not to be fulfilled. For—unbeknown to her, unbeknown to

Jan, Borno or even Chicma—other eyes had witnessed the scuffle between man and beast.

The eyes of black warriors of the bush, who had been attracted to the scene by the roaring of the lion and the screams of Mona!

The savages had crept towards the spot through the trees and the undergrowth, and now they were peering intently at the survivors of the Natal. All told, the bushmen numbered a score—a hunting party from a tribe inhabiting the wilds—and they had been engaged in a quest for meat.

It was animal meat that they had been after, but the tribe to which they belonged possessed cannibalistic tendencies, and as they gazed through the foliage at the white girl and her companions they held a whispered consultation—a consultation that was brought to an abrupt close at a signal from one who appeared to be their leader.

Next second they were charging from the thickets, black demons of the jungle, intent on securing three victims whose capture would be an occasion for a grim feast in the kraal of their people.

So sudden and unexpected was the onset that Jan, Mona and Borno were surrounded and seized before they could raise a hand to defend themselves, but Chicma came to the aid of his comrade, and created a diversion that enabled the white youth to recover himself and show fight.

Battling tooth and nail, Jan flung his assailants to right and left. In the meantime, those of the savages who had flung themselves upon Borno and Mona were having less trouble with their victims.

Already Mona had been overpowered and was being bound with thongsthings which had been intended for use in carrying the carcasses of slaughtered animals. As for Borno, he had been knocked to the ground in the first moment of the attack.

He tried to rise and offer some resistance, but he was held down and made fast; and both he and Mona were helpless prisoners when a file of men suddenly appeared round a bend in the jungle path.

These, too, were natives, but they were obviously employees of some trader, for many of them were carrying hales of merchandise on their heads and others were armed with rifles of the latest pattern.

At sight of them the cannibals were thrown into confusion, and those who had secured Borno and Mona made haste to drag their captives off into the thickets. The group which had pounced on Jan attempted to follow suit, and managed to pull the young white man clear of the jungle trail, but in the thick of the vegetation he broke away from his assailants, and they abandoned him as too much of a handful.

Glaring after them, Jan saw them overtake their fellows, and within a few seconds the whole party of cannibals had disappeared with Mona and Borno in their midst. Nevertheless, Jan had no intention of losing track of them, and ere long he and Chicma were up amongst the trees, swinging through the high foliage and shadowing the pack of hostile warriors, whom they were now able to see distinctly from above.

Back on the jungle trail where the attack had taken place, the gang of natives who had interrupted the scuffle were holding an excited council.

They were headed by ono Kutu, and Kutu was an under-foreman in the employ of Trader Andrews, Mona's father. But he had not recognised his master's daughter in the brief glimpse that he had obtained of the cannibals and their prisoners.

The clearest impression which he had gained had been of Jan, as the latter was being hauled into the thickets, and he imagined that the white youth was



He tried to rise and offer some resistance, but he was held and made fast.

still a captive in the hands of the savages.

"We are strong enough to fight that one party of warriors," Kutu said to his co-workers, speaking rapidly in the native dialect. "But if we follow, we may run into an ambush. No, it is better that we should hasten straight to the trading post and report this thing to Bwana Andrews."

The Watchers in the Trees

AT the trading post occupied by Andrews and his wife, Bracken and Phillips were making repeated efforts to revive Dr. Harry Trevor's memory. Right now they were seated in a back room with the derelict surgeon, plying him with questions, striving to draw the veil from his mind.

"Even if you can't remember Phillips or me," said Bracken, "surely you can remember the Carnafellow Foundation."

Trevor looked at him dully, and all at once Phillips cut in with a sharp query. "Listen," he snapped impatiently, "what have you done with the formula? Your formula for the cure of infantile paralysis?"

"Formula?" Harry Trevor repeated, and then suddenly it was as if some vague recollection was stirred in his brain.

"My formula," he breathed, reaching into one of his pockets.

Bracken and Phillips exchanged swift glances, and next moment the senior member of that crooked partnership was leaning forward eagerly.

"Here, give it to me, Trevor!" he commanded.

A queer light dawned in Harry Trevor's eyes. He looked at Bracken steadily for several seconds, and then withdrew his hand from his pocket, empty. But if some slight understanding of the past had come to him, it was only temporarily, and in another instant his mind was a blank again—a blank except for wild, disconnected thoughts that sped through it.

"Jan gone!" he said. "Everything gone!"

He began to mutter incoherently, and gradually his voice rose until he was crying out in loud and anguished tones. In vain Bracken and Phillips tried to calm him. He struggled to his feet and flung away from them, blundering aimlessly to and fro with the sweat of fever on his brow and his face twitching.

"Jan!" he shouted. "Jan, where are you?"

His cries brought Mrs. Andrews and her husband, and the wife of the trader wrung her hands as she saw the derelict's condition.

"The poor man's having another one of his spells!" she said distressfully. "They usually lay him up for days."

"Don't worry, Mrs. Andrews," Bracken said quickly. "I think I can do something for him. Help me to get him to a room where I can be alone with him. Phillips, get the medicine chest!"

By main force Bracken and Andrews dragged Trevor into another apartment and put him to bed. Then Phillips appeared, and, after helping his senior to give the sick man a palliative, he retired with Andrews.

The trader went off to attend to his own affairs. Mrs. Andrews had already gone back to the kitchen, where she was generally kept busy looking after the black servants of the ménage. Phillips remained outside the apartment where Bracken had been left with Trevor, and he was still kicking his heels in the vicinity of that room when his confederate emerged half an hour later.

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"Well?" Phillips asked.

"That draught put him to sleep," Bracken said in a tone of satisfaction, "and gave me a chance to run through his pockets."

"You found the parchment?" Phillips jerked.

"Yes," answered Bracken. "One half of that five-hundred-thousand-dollar formula is ours. And now we've got to keep plugging away at him until we can make him remember the other half of it."

Phillips pursed his lips. "I wish we knew where that flexible bracelet was," he muttered. "You remember? The other half of the formula was engraved on it."

"Yes," Bracken grunted, "and it disappeared that night fifteen years ago—on the wrist of the boy Jan."

It was at this juncture that the pair of them heard a commotion outside the building, and, making their way to the stoep, they discovered Andrews in the act of haranguing a party of clamouring bearers who had just arrived at the post.

"For the love of Mike stop your jabbering!" he was shouting at them. "Cool off, will you? Cool off! Hey, Kutu, you do the talking. What's the trouble, anyway?"

The native whom he had singled out proceeded to explain, and, when Kutu had finished his narrative, Andrews glanced at Bracken and Phillips.

"What's up?" the latter inquired.

"These black boys of mine say that they saw cannibals making off with some prisoners," Andrews rejoined. "One of them was this wild white boy who lives deep in the jungle."

Phillips gave a start.

"A wild white boy?" he echoed. "Who is he? Have you ever seen him?"

"No," the trader answered, "and I never expect to. I think it's a silly legend."

"Maybe not," breathed Phillips. "Your men say they saw him, anyhow. Bracken, do you suppose—"

He did not finish the sentence, but Bracken knew what he was thinking.

"It's worth investigating," he said curtly. "Andrews, do your men know where that cannibal village lies?"

"Yes," came the reply. "There's only one bad bunch of niggers in these parts. They're the people who live near the river."

"Will these blacks of yours lead Phillips and me to this cannibal kraal?" Bracken asked.

Andrews frowned.

"They'll lead you close to it—but not too close," he murmured. "I wouldn't advise you to go, though. You'd be taking your lives in your hands. What's this wild white boy to you, anyway—even if he really does exist?"

"We can't stop to explain that now," Bracken said. "Will you tell your boys what we want them to do?"

Andrews reluctantly agreed, and with still more reluctance his employees prepared to take the trail. It was clear that they did not relish the business, and looked upon their master's two guests as foolhardy.

As for the Americans, their mood was one of intense excitement and expectation. They were alive to the dangers ahead of them, but were willing to undergo any hazards if there were a chance of obtaining the other half of Trevor's formula and the five hundred thousand dollars that the complete script would bring them.

How they were to gain possession of the missing half of that formula if the youth who innocently carried it were in

the hands of a hostile tribe—this they did not know. Nor was it a question that occupied them yet. They would have to wait and see how events turned out.

Fifteen minutes later, Bracken, Phillips and the gang of natives in Andrews' employ were trekking into the jungle, Kutu acting as guide. They were also accompanied by Allen, the trader's right-hand man, who had volunteered to join the expedition.

At the close of the afternoon they were still on the march, and Bracken and Phillips were showing signs of fatigue.

"How much farther?" Bracken demanded of Kutu.

"One more hour to village nebbe," the native headman replied, glancing uneasily to right and left. "But no go too far."

"You'll go as far as you're told," cut in Allen, to whom the Americans had made themselves particularly amiable. "You're headman to the black boys, but you take your orders from me—"

He paused, for at that moment a weird and awesome sound came to the ears of the travellers, a sound that was borne from afar—throbbing through the hot, breathless air.

"What's that?" said Bracken.

"Jungle drums," Allen vouchsafed. "Seems like the people of the river are getting ready for a fiesta."

He and his party were not the only ones who were listening attentively to the savage rhythm of those tom-toms. Several miles away a youth was harkening to them grimly—a youth who had posted himself high up in the fork of a tree not far from the kraal of the cannibals.

He was Jan Trevor, and with him was Chicma. They had been there for some time—ever since the hunters of the tribe had gained the village with their two captives.

Unseen amid the foliage of the trees, Jan had been close up with them when they had arrived at their destination, and from the lofty eyrie which he now occupied he had watched the welcome they had received, a welcome that had become clamorous when the news had spread throughout the tribe that prisoners had been taken.

He had been watching, too, when Mona and Borno had been dragged off to a hut, to be closely guarded until the hour fixed for their doom was at hand.

With the setting of the sun, the village had become a scene of great activity. Men, women and children had mustered in the dusty patch of ground enclosed by the huts, and had begun to dance to the throb of drums beaten by supple fingers.

Jan looked down upon that fearsome spectacle. He saw strange rites performed, ceremonies that were prolonged into the twilight of evening and the gloom of night, when the flare of torches lent an even more sinister aspect to the proceedings.

The burning brands gleamed upon the faces of the milling savages, gleamed upon the dark river that flowed near the kraal—and shone blindingly in the eyes of Mona Andrews and Borno when man and girl were brought forth into the open.

Amid a tumult of shouts and yells the prisoners were dragged across to two stakes that had been driven into the ground at one side of the village, and, struggling vainly, they were made fast to these.

Borno looked about him with awe-stricken gaze. The muscles of his face were working, and the blood in his veins was running cold. He was no coward,

but a great fear was upon him, and it was sheer will power that kept him from crying out. He must not lose grip of himself, he kept thinking. Whatever happened, he would show these black scum that he knew how to die.

He turned his glance towards Mona, a few yards away from him. Her body seemed limp and slack in the imprisoning thongs that lashed her to the stake. Her eyes were closed, and her breath was coming in spasmodic, half-strangled sobs.

Borno forgot his own terrors then, in sympathy for the girl who was sharing his plight.

"Courage, princess," he called out to her hoarsely. "Courage!"

Her eyes opened and her head moved round. She tried to steady herself, and her teeth bit into her quivering lower lip.

Some of the cannibals had hurried across to the edge of the encroaching jungle a few minutes previously, and these now began to reappear with masses of dry brushwood in their arms. The vegetation was soon being piled around the two captives, who then divined the fate that was to be meted out to them.

They were to be burned alive.

The brushwood in position, two witch-doctors advanced with blazing torches and began to caper in front of the prisoners mockingly, going through the movements of some wild, barbaric death-dance. Borno remembered that these creatures had been with the party which had captured Mona and himself—probably accompanying that party so that good fortune might attend the hunters.

Well, good fortune had certainly attended them, according to the lights of the tribe. A human sacrifice was more to the liking of these savages than the slaughter of mere animals.

While the assembled cannibals looked on, the witch-doctors pranced and postured before their victims, making as if to plunge the burning brands into the brushwood from time to time. But they did not let the flames touch the masses of twigs and foliage heaped around the stakes.

It was as the fiendish tormentors were carrying out their ritual that Jan started to work closer to the village, leaving Chicma and stealing from bough to bough until he was actually above the huts of the kraal.

He was then considerably nearer the ground, though still some fifteen or twenty feet above the heads of the savages, and still hidden by the thick greenery of the trees.

He was bent on a desperate plan—to risk his life by staging some sort of diversion, a diversion that might possibly provide him with a chance of cutting Borno and Mona loose.

Jan lowered himself carefully to a far-reaching branch that extended above the stakes to which the prisoners were tied. Then he proceeded to crawl along the bough, but, unfortunately for him, it was rotten through and through, and suddenly it snapped under his weight.

A sharp cry escaped him, and next second he was plunging through space, to crash into the pile of brushwood in front of Mona Andrews.

For a moment there was a blank silence, witch-doctors, warriors, women and children seeming too astonished to make a movement or utter a sound: and then a great howl went up and there was a concerted rush towards the sprawling figure of Jan Trevor!

(To be continued in another splendid episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Noah Beery, Jun., and Dorothy Short.)

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"Behind The Evidence."

"WEST POINT OF THE AIR"

(Continued from page 12)

of attaching his signature when the steady drone of a squadron of bombing planes became audible to him.

He paused, hesitatingly, uncertainly. Then, with a furtive glance at Dare, he wandered over to a pair of french windows that opened on to a balcony.

She followed him out on to that balcony and found him gazing up at the sky. There was a wrapt and thoughtful expression on his handsome face. He was remembering how he had once looked forward to becoming an ace flyer—how hard he had studied at West Point so that he might fit himself for the Army—how keen he had been when he had graduated and come down to Randolph Field as a student-pilot.

He had been brought up in the atmosphere of aviation. It had been instilled into his blood. Ever since childhood days it had been his ambition to earn his wings.

He would never earn them now.

Miko suddenly realised that Dare's eyes were upon him, a pensive look in them.

"The note of those motors still gets you, doesn't it?" she said shrewdly.

He could not deny it. Lately, he had tried to tell himself that he hated the sound, but it was not so. Despite everything, the drone of the aeroplane engine could still quicken his pulses and send some queer, remote thrill through him.

"I wonder if it will always be the same," Dare went on slowly. "I wonder if I'll always be afraid of losing you—every time you hear a squadron passing overhead."

She was sincere enough in her affection for him. When she had first met him, she had perhaps been attracted by him because he was in the public eye. But since then she had learned to care more deeply—as deeply as she could have cared for anyone, for Dare Marshall's love was essentially selfish. She had wanted him to give up flying because of the risks, and, if he had still been keen on that career, she would have done all in her power to tempt him away from it.

Young Mike had told his father that Dare had put no pressure on him to regard to his resignation. Neither had she, but now that she sensed there was a danger of him wavering from his decision she began to use persuasion.

"Mike," she said, "let's go away from here. Let's go to some place that's as far away from any military aerodrome as possible."

He drew back into the room with her and closed the french windows deliberately.

He strode across to the table where he had written the letter of resignation, and, picking up the pen again, he scrawled his signature. Then he turned to her once more.

"I'll take this to Randolph Field right now and hand it to General Carter personally," he announced.

She kissed him, and he made for the door. In the very instant that he opened it he came face to face with a flushed and breathless girl—Skip Carter.

"Mike," Skip gasped, "I thought I'd locate you at Dare Marshall's place, and I managed to find out where she was staying."

"Why are you here, Skip?" he asked her.

"Listen, Mike," she said, "this even-

ing I brought Phil away from the hospital. He wanted to wish you luck in the manoeuvres, and I took him straight to your quarters. You weren't there, of course, and when we asked one of the boys about you he told us that he didn't think you'd be flying to-night—that you'd mentioned something about resigning your commission."

"Well?"

"Mike, it isn't true!" Skip exclaimed.

"It can't be true."

"Yes, it's true," he answered tersely, showing her the document he had just written. "This is my official resignation, and I'm going to hand it in right now."

"But, Mike," she protested, "won't you take a little more time to think it over?"

He shook his head.

"I've done all the thinking I need to do," he told her.

"But it isn't fair!" Skip cried. "It isn't fair to yourself—to your father. It isn't fair to my father, who helped you in your schooling. Those two men had ambitions for you, Mike—ambitions that you once shared as well."

Dare Marshall came forward. She spoke to the younger girl coolly.

"Don't you think, Miss Carter," she observed, "that Mike is at liberty to suit himself?"

"I think he ought to consider his duty to others, and to the army," Skip retorted. "But I wouldn't expect you to know anything about that."

Dare shrugged her shoulders, and glanced at Mike. The latter was beginning to look uncomfortable.

"It's no use talking," he blurted suddenly. "Skip, Dare is right. I'm at liberty to make up my own mind, and I've reached my decision. I'm going to hand in that resignation now!"

He brushed past her, and she was left alone with Dare Marshall, who now regarded her with a slightly mocking smile on her features.

For a moment Skip looked at the other girl steadily, and then she turned into the hotel corridor to make her way downstairs. When she reached the street she found Mike standing on the kerb, his arm raised to beckon a passing taxi.

Skip moved up to him and plucked at his sleeve.

"Mike," she urged, "won't you—"

"It's no use, Skip," he cut in. "I'm through with the Service!"

He had scarcely spoken the words when he again heard the note of a plane's engine, a note that swiftly developed into a roar as a machine swooped above the roof of Dare Marshall's hotel, flying low.

In the upflung glow of street lights and electric signs young Mike Stone recognised the decrepit "puddle jumper" that he had seen in his father's shed earlier that day.

Aghast, he watched it circle the hotel three or four times. Then it veered off in the direction of Randolph Field.

So his father was making good his promise! He had known where his sor-was likely to be—had come to the vicinity of the hotel to show him that he meant business—and was now on his way to the locale of the manoeuvres.

"It's dad all right!" young Mike panted. "I didn't think he'd do it!"

"Do what?" Skip Carter demanded. "Never mind!" he jerked. "We've got to get to Randolph Field as quick as we can! Come on!"

Power Dive

GENERAL CARTER and a number of his staff were assembled on the landing-ground at Randolph Field, and in the beams of shifting search-

lights they were watching the groups of fighting planes that had been ascending at intervals into the air.

Close by, Phil Carter was leaning on a pair of crutches, dividing his attention longingly between the departing squadrons and a number of machines that had still to take off, their pilots awaiting the signal to leave.

It was as he was eyeing these remaining planes that a taxi appeared, and as the cab drew up outside the officers' quarters young Mike Stone and Skip Carter emerged from it.

Phil caught sight of them, and as he recognised them he hobbled across to the carriage-way, reaching it just as Mike was paying off the taxi-driver.

"Mike," the crippled youngster ejaculated, "what's this rumour I hear about you handing in your resignation?"

His chum had turned towards him. There was a gleam of resolution in his eyes—and Phil noticed, too, the light that was shining in Skip's.

"You'll find my resignation on the floor of that cab, in forty pieces," Mike rapped out. "Phil, I'll see you later. I've got to grab myself a flying suit."

He dashed off, and, with Skip accompanying him, Phil returned to the spot where General Carter and his staff were gathered. As they approached the group, the two of them saw that their father was pointing up at the sky and talking in a startled tone to Captain Cannon, chief instructor.

"There it is again," the general was saying. "Look, it's caught in that searchlight beam!"

"Yes, that's it!" exclaimed Cannon. "And it's some crate of a civil plane right enough. I thought so when I got a flash of it a few minutes ago, only I couldn't believe that I'd seen aright, sir."

"Tell them to keep a searchlight trained on it," General Carter ordered testily. "The fool, he's probably some civilian amateur who's liable to get mixed up with our men and do some damage before he breaks his own neck."

The general might have expressed less anxiety but more surprise if he had learned that the "civilian aviator" in question was none other than ex-Sergeant-instructor Michael Stone, better known as Big Mike.

Up there in a gloomy void that was patterned by moving beams of saffron, Big Mike had been circling high over Randolph Field for some little time. He was taking a last look at the only home he had known for thirty years, believing that never again would he see it after to-night's work was done.

He continued to fly above it for several more minutes, and then he struck southward on his fatal mission. What was there to live for, anyway—with the army no longer wanting him and his son a quitter?

About the time that Big Mike turned to make for Eagle Creek, the last of the machines from the aerodrome took off. Among these was one piloted by the ex-sergeant's son, and from the cockpit of his plane the young lieutenant saw his father's craft limned in the ray of a searchlight.

Little Mike climbed rapidly and veered in the direction that the civilian ship was taking. When the latter slipped the searchlight beam which had held it, the pursuing youngster was close enough to keep track of the "crate."

He was gaining on it, for his army plane was much the faster, but Eagle Creek was only two or three miles from the aerodrome, and the civilian craft was still slightly ahead when the objective was reached.

Big Mike pushed the stick forward, and with open throttle swooped toward the creek in a fierce power dive. He saw the guns of an anti-aircraft battery on the banks of the water, and dropped his flares—in lieu of bombs that would have obliterated the artillery if this had been genuine warfare and not a sham action.

A split second afterwards young Mike was dropping similar flares, for he had followed his father downward in a terrific, headlong rush.

And then all at once, as it roared over the heads of the gunners below, the older man's frail ship seemed to crumple sickeningly, and next instant it was falling into the waters of the creek.

Right there and then it came to the mind of Lieutenant Michael Stone that he had seen, a week or so before, a magnificent example of a pancake landing. Gliding out of his dive, he attempted that same feat with the black sheen of the tributary lying below him—attempted it with his hand gripping the control-stick and his teeth clenched hard.

Afraid? Yes, he was afraid, and had felt the restlessness of fear from the time when he had begun to taxi across the turf of Randolph Field a little while ago. But it was an emotion that he had fought down resolutely, and now, with his father's training standing him in good stead, he brought his plane down on the gleaming surface of the water flat and square.

The craft started to sink, and he scrambled out of it, flinging himself into the creek and swimming to the sagging wreck in which the older man had come down. As he gained it he discovered a huddled and insensible figure in the forward cockpit.

The personnel of Randolph Field was on parade before General Carter, and the men assembled there were about to witness two momentous ceremonies—the reinstatement of an instructor who had been dismissed the service, and the presentation of winged badges to a file of that instructor's former pupils, these having passed all tests to qualify as full-fledged pilots.

The name of Sergeant Stone was called, and Big Mike stepped forward—as smartly as a stiff leg would permit, for he had only recently come out of hospital.

He was in uniform again, and, advancing to General Carter, he saluted the commanding officer.

"Sergeant Stone," the general said, "it is our business at Randolph Field

to make flyers and men, and the full facts having come to light, there is no doubt that you contributed largely to making a man and a flyer on the night of the manoeuvres."

He paused, and then: "I am glad that the Secretary of War has seen fit to restore you to your former grade," he added.

A few minutes later, Big Mike was carrying out the task of tendering his students their Service wings, personally affixing a badge to the tunic of each young officer as name after name was read out by the general.

Among those names was that of Lieutenant Michael Stone, and from a vantage-point not far away a girl looked on with pride as Big Mike presented his son with one of the coveted badges.

That girl was not Dare Marshall, for she had returned to New York following a quarrel, during which Mike the younger had lost his infatuation for her.

The girl who watched the ceremony that was now being enacted was pretty Skip Carter, and she was waiting for Little Mike when the parade was over.

They met near the corner of one of the aerodrome buildings, and, believing that they were free from inquisitive eyes, they kissed each other fondly. But two interested parties had discerned them, these being none other than Little Mike's father and Joe Bags.

"Y' know," Joe Bags declared, "the general's daughter wuz born under the planet Jupiter, and, takin' all the circumstances into consideration, I've figured out from the book that she'll pick a winner for a husband."

Big Mike gave him a sidelong glance. "For once, Joe," he said, "I'll admit that there's some sense in this stargazin' racket of yours. But let me tell you that my boy Mike will be pickin' a winner for a wife, on the day he asks Skip Carter to marry him."

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Co., Ltd., starring Wallace Beery and Robert Young.)

We all know that horrible feeling when we see another fellow's speed-boat ploughing merrily along and our own lagging behind. Well, here is a tip to put you right on top! Send to Meccano, Ltd. (Dept B.D.), Binns Road, Liverpool, 15, for their full range price list of Hornby speed-boats and racing-boats. Hornby racing-boats, with their excellent turn of unattained speed, good steering, and steadiness in the water will give you untold pleasure and satisfaction.

"MR. DYNAMITE"

(Continued from page 20)

double-crossing, spineless twister, and out for money, but Williams guessed who was the real brains of this little party, got scared of getting a long sentence for accessory to a crime, and phoned me. Bang—that was Williams."

King shook both fists under Dynamite's nose.

"If you don't say who it was I'll punch you into a jelly." They crowded round Dynamite, who stared at them all mockingly.

"At the back of the organ loft is another door," he told them. "Someone could leave this music-room by the panel I opened, and then out by the other door. A minute ago this room had nine people—now there are only eight."

The express moved out of Frisco, and it took Dynamite and Lynno Marlo. They left quietly and without any ceremony. The main reason being that King had declared that Frisco could not hold two brilliant detectives, but Dynamite did not mind. He had collected a nice sum from Lewis, and through allowing King to take most of the credit for unravelling the Dvorjak mystery he had turned an enemy into an ally.

Lynno opened the morning paper and pointed to the headlines.

"So your unknown escaped justice after all," she said. "Deliberately drove in a car over a precipice to an instantaneous death. I believe you knew more about that escape than you care to say."

"Sometimes it's as well not to see everything that's happening, and what has happened—something like I expected—is for the best," Dynamite relaxed. "Let's talk about something else. Such as going to Atlantic City."

"To open an agency?"

"No, not yet, anyway. I thought it would be a good idea if we got married there. What do you think?"

"Dynamite! Now, I know you're not crazy!" And Lynno flung her arms round his neck much to the amusement of other passengers.

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Edmund Lowe and Jean Dixon.)

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No. 819. EVERY TUESDAY August 24th, 1935.

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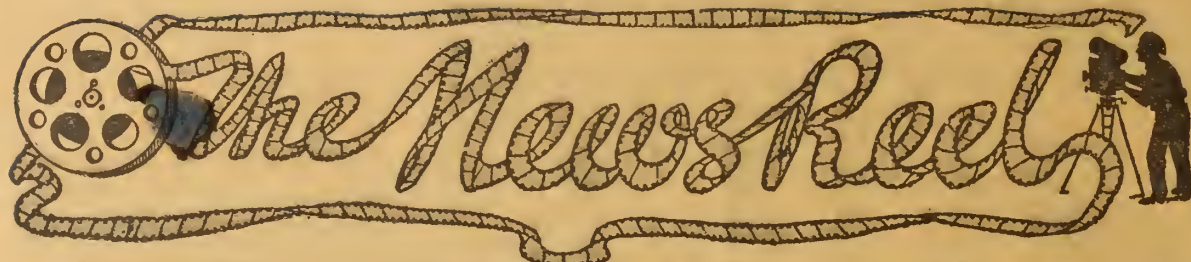


"FOUR HOURS TO KILL"

Starring

*A Drama of a
Gangster's Revenge*

**RICHARD
BARTHELMESS**



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

They Missed Him

There are many tales current about the "discerning" movie executives who casually drop in on amateur performances and immediately find unknowns who boomed overnight as motion-picture stars.

But those discerning executives must have been away on a holiday when Joe Morrison first visited the American film capital.

Morrison, who has made sensational progress in his brief year in the films (his latest film is "Four Hours to Kill"), is no stranger to Hollywood. In fact, if producers were as astute as legend tells us, then Morrison might have been procured for the screen years ago.

At that time Morrison was featured in a musical show called "The Nine O'Clock Revue," which played a successful run in a Los Angeles theatre. Virtually every important person in the cinema city went and saw the show, but not one considered Morrison as a film prospect, or had the temerity to make an offer for his services.

It remained for Morrison to return to New York and rise to world-wide fame with his singing of the song, "The Last Round-up," before Hollywood took him back amid shouts and hurrahs.

Hectic Gambling

Vast fortunes are being made—and lost—in Samuel Goldwyn's Hollywood studios. But Sam himself is quite un-concerned and goes on his lawful occasions in a perfectly normal manner, despite the unaccustomed tension and excitement.

The reason for his placidity is simply that the financial fever is confined to the set on which "Barbary Coast" is being made.

The scene is a garish, noisy gambling casino where the size of the stakes would make the eyes of a Monte Carlo croupier bulge with mingled envy and incredulity.

At the cry of "camera!" the dice roll—and a dollar millionaire becomes a pauper. The roulette wheel spins, and a woman, laughing hysterically, grabs a fortune with eager, jewelled hands. At another table sits a group of hard-faced men playing poker with grim determination and stacks of chips a foot high.

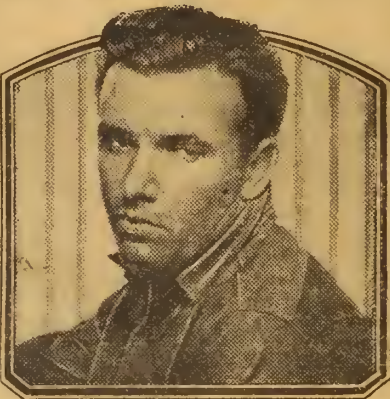
A little way off, out of focus of the camera, another game of poker is in progress. But the gamblers are playing for pennies. You see, they are merely extras, whiling away the time until the camera should claim them.

Fast-moving Action

The oft-expressed idea that "moving pictures should move" has reached its ultimate in execution in the latest feature film to go into production at a Hollywood studio. It covers a period of eight hours and crams hectic events that crowd those eight hours into an hour and a quarter of screen entertainment. Studio executives believe that it is one of the fastest pictures, in point of lightning-like succession of action, ever made.

August 24th, 1935.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG FILM THRILLERS



PRESTON FOSTER

—IN—

"THE PEOPLE'S ENEMY"

Thirty-four times George Stuart, a clever attorney, had managed to save his gangster client, Vince Falcone, from the clutches of the law; but the law triumphed in the end, and Falcone—in gaol—became convinced that Stuart had double-crossed him and swore vengeance upon his benefactor.

"STRANDED"

The man was a builder of bridges, the strong, fearless he-man type, and the girl was the mainstay of the Travellers' Aid Society. Both were independent and strong-willed, and but for a gang of crooks they might have been "stranded." Starring Ray Francis and George Brent.

"BULLDOG JACK"

Bulldog Drummond is incapacitated by a gang of crooks and Bulldog Jack nobly promises to undertake a difficult and dangerous commission. A comedy thriller centring round a girl in distress, a valuable necklace and a deserted underground railway station, starring Jack Hulbert and Fay Wray.

Also

Another splendid episode of the thrilling serial of jungle adventure:

"THE CALL OF THE SAVAGE."

Starring Noah Beery, Jun., and Dorothy Short.

This is "Woman Wanted," which George B. Seitz is directing for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Maureen O'Sullivan and Joel McCrea are teamed for the first time. In it Lewis Stone starts the new contract that marks his twentieth year on the screen. The cast also includes Adrienne Ames, Ralph Morgan, Louis Calhern, Claude Gillingwater and Robert Craig.

Events crammed into a single evening's entertainment in the action of the picture include a girl's conviction of murder; wrecking of a police car by criminals to aid her escape; breathless

escapes from pursuing detectives in her lawyer's apartments; wild chase with police to trail the real murderer; kidnapping of the heroine; battle on a boat in the harbour; raid on secret hide-out of criminals; re-enactment of a crime, and amid all the action several comedy sequences are introduced!

In the New Tarzan Film

Jock Buckler, the heroic Ham Peggotty of "David Copperfield," won a long-term contract with the studio that raised him to film fame—and the rôle of Major Fry in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's new Tarzan picture.

Buckler's part in the new jungle film is second in importance to those of Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan, who again portray the famous Edgar Rice Burroughs characters, Tarzan and Jane.

Since "David Copperfield," Buckler has appeared in two pictures, "Eight Bells" and "Black Room Mystery."

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Buckler toured the British Colonies all over the world with his father's company, then went into American repertory companies and finally on to the Broadway stage, with Katharine Cornell in "The Green Hat."

The opening sequences of this new Tarzan film begin with under-water swimming shots of Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan, the latter now an accomplished swimmer under her co-player's tutelage. Animals galore and an entire tribe of African pygmies are features of the new production.

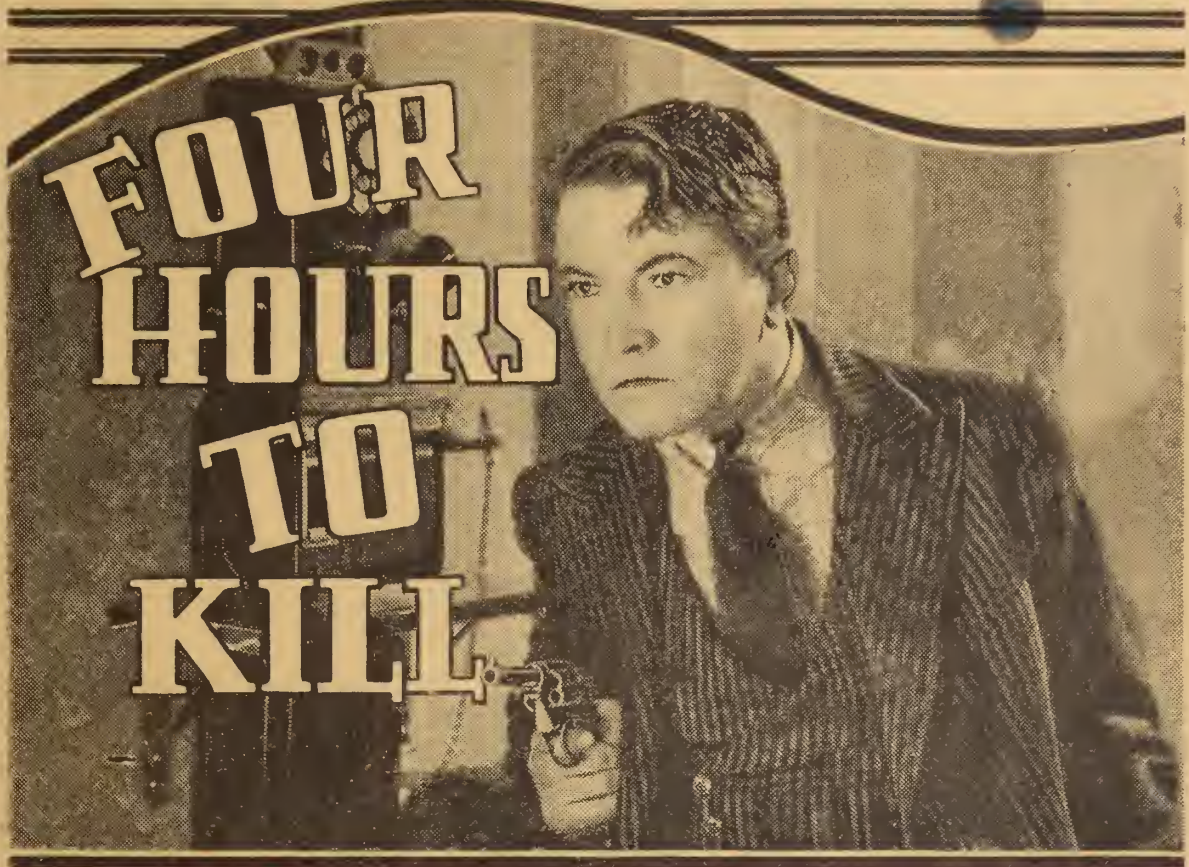
THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"FOUR HOURS TO KILL"—Tony Mako, Richard Barthelme; Eddie Miller, Joe Morrison; Sylvia Temple, Gertrude Michael; Helen, Helen Mack; Mue Danish, Dorothy Tree; Carl Barrett, Ray Milland; Detective Taji, Charles Wilson; Mac Mason, Henry Travers; Anderson, Noel Madison; Captain Seaver, Paul Harvey.

"The SILVER STREAK"—Tom Caldwell, Charles Starrett; Ruth Dexter, Sally Blane; Allan Dexter, Hardie Albright; B. J. Dexter, William Farnum; Bronte, Irving Pichel; Crawford, Arthur Lake; Tyler, Theodore von Eltz; Higgins, Guim Williams; O'Brien, Edgar Kennedy; Dr. Flynn, Murray Kinnell; Lowry, James Bradbury.

"DEATH FROM A DISTANCE"—Detective-inspector Ted Mallory, Russell Hopton; Kay Palmer, Lola Lane; Jim Gray, George Marion, Sen.; Professor Trowbridge, John St. Polis; Professor Ernst Einfeld, Lee Kohlmar; Regan, Lew Kelly; Langsdale, Wheeler Oakman; Morgan, Robert Frazer; Gorman, Cornelius Keefe; District Attorney Captain E. H. Calvert; Ahmed Haidou, John Davidson.

A gangster is betrayed to the police, but while being taken by a detective on his last journey an unexpected delay gives him a chance to escape, and he has four hours in which to get his revenge. An amazing thriller, starring Richard Barthelmess



Mako Tells His Story

TWO men sat in a crowded theatre watching a performance. One of them was a big burly man with a square jaw, yet kindly eyes which every now and again strayed to the man at his side, when they wore a rather troubled expression.

The latter, a much smaller man, though of sturdy build, was obviously in the early twenties. He was gazing stolidly at the stage, but his thoughts were evidently not on the piece. For his thin lips were set in a hard line and his eyes were sullen and resentful. He gave the impression that he was miles away in thought brooding revengefully over some very definite wrong.

He addressed his companion abruptly, but in low tones.

"Say, Mr. Taft, can we get out of here for a bit? It's devilish hot, and this show ain't mighty interestin' up to now."

"Goes with me," replied the big man. "I can find out about our train to Wyoming at the same time."

Had anyone been watching them closely they might have noticed that the big man, before they moved from their seats, took some little trouble to arrange his macintosh which lay between the two of them; and that when they quitted their seats they were apparently arm-in-arm and the macintosh was still between them, covering their arms. Though had that same watcher followed the pair outside to the telephone-box he would have noticed even more than this. And he would have registered considerable surprise.

For he would have seen that both of

them entered the telephone-box. And the smaller man was closely handcuffed to the big one!

They came out of the box together.

"No train to Wyoming for four hours," said the big detective with a frown. "We'll have to hang on for a while, Mako. There's four hours to kill."

The other shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"I'd love a smoke, Mr. Taft," he said.

"You can have one. May as well come and sit down."

In a quiet corner they sat down side by side together. The detective produced cigarettes and matches and lit the other's cigarette for him.

"Thanks, Mr. Taft. I reckon you're a bit different from most cops."

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the good of hitting a man when he's down?" he asked. "What did you break prison for, Mako? You might have guessed that you wouldn't have a chance, with no one to help you make your get-away."

The other laughed sullenly.

"I broke prison because I couldn't stiek it any longer," he replied. "It was just drivin' me plumb crazy. It was the waitin' that was doin' it. I was for the chair—I knew it. Not that I cared a row of beans for that, for I ain't got nothin' I want to live for. But as I saw never a chance of gettin' that, I just wanted to die, and die quickly."

He puffed moodily at his cigarette gazing stolidly in front of him.

"I guess you don't know what it's like sittin' and waitin' for the trial that's

comin' along, knowin' they're goin' to take days fightin' over legal points, and the chair waitin' for you at the finish. You die a million times, I reckon, while you're waitin' for it. I used to try holdin' my breath, but it wouldn't work."

He paused again, eyes fixed on the carpet in front of him.

Then he went on:

"When the chance came to break prison I jumped to it. Most chaps, I reckon, break prison for the chance of life and freedom. I didn't. There were only two things I wanted. One was to kill Anderson, and the other to die myself when I'd done it. And if I could get the first"—he smiled grimly—"I reckon I'd die real happy."

The detective's face was expressionless. He actually felt sorry for the little man by his side because he knew that Anderson, one of his partners in many a shady transaction, had sold him to the police originally.

"Afraid I can't give you your wish, Mako," he replied.

The other laughed.

"No, I reckon you can't," he said. "Let's talk of somethin' else."

The conversation drifted away then into other channels. Mako wanted to know all about Taft's private life, and became quite interested when the latter acquainted him with the fact that he had a daughter aged nineteen who apparently was the light of her father's eyes.

"Must be fine to have a daughter," he said. "Guess you're mighty proud of her."

The detective admitted the fact—added

August 24th, 1935.

that it was her birthday on the following day, though he hadn't been able to make up his mind what he should buy for a birthday present.

Mako sat silent for a while.

"Say, Mr. Taft," he said presently, "get your hand into my breast-pocket and take out my pocket-book, will you? There's something in it I want."

And when the other had drawn it out he went on:

"Inside it, Mr. Taft," he said, "you'll find three hundred dollars and—"

But the detective interrupted him, shaking his head.

"Lay off that, Mako," he said. "It's not a bit of use tryin' to get me to—"

"Oh, you're barkin' up the wrong tree, Mr. Taft," broke in the other. "I ain't tryin' to bribe you. That three hundred dollars ain't no good to me now. I want you to take it and buy a real swell present for that kid of yours, and—"

"But, Mako, I can't take it—I really can't!"

"Stuff!" retorted the other. "You've got me, and I'm sure for the chair. Well, what's the good of three hundred dollars to me? I can't take it with me, and if I did I reckon it would only melt. Why not take it and buy a swell present for that kid of yours? There's no need to tell her where it came from if you don't want to. Say you'll do it, Mr. Taft! It will be real nice of you if you do."

He got his own way at the finish, and the detective slipped the notes into his cigarette-case.

"It's fine of you, Mako," he said. "I only wish I could do something for you in return."

"If you'd give me a chance to kill Anderson," replied the other grimly, "I'd be real grateful. But you can't do that and I know it. Let's go back and see a bit more of the show. We've got the thick end of four hours before our train goes."

Eddie Miller Gets a Shock

YOU can have your choice—two hundred dollars by to-morrow morning, or marriage."

"But, Mae, you're crazy. I couldn't possibly find it."

"Please yourself. It's all the same to me, whichever I get."

Eddie Miller stared blankly after her as she strolled away across the foyer of the theatre. His face had gone very white. But he pulled himself together with an effort as a beautifully dressed girl strolled lazily across to the cloak-room of which he was in charge and handed him her big fur coat. Mechanically he took it, gave her a check, and saw her drift away.

But he started as a soft voice sounded at his elbow.

"Eddie, what's the matter?"

He swung round in a moment. At his side stood a young and pretty girl; but her brown eyes were very troubled.

"What's Mac Danish been saying to you?" she demanded.

And then as he hesitated she added in gentler tones:

"You needn't be afraid, old boy. I know it's all over now between you two."

"I thought it was, too," he said miserably. "But I reckon you've got to know, Helen. She's just told me that—she's going—to have a baby. Unless I pay her two hundred dollars by to-morrow morning I've got to marry her."

"Oh!" Helen gave a little frightened cry, and all the colour drained from her cheeks.

"I can't possibly raise it," he went on dully. "You'd better let me go, Helen. I'm no darned good to you."

Her small hands clenched.

"I won't let you go!" she exclaimed viciously. "She knows we love each other—she can't mean to do this thing. I believe she's only trying to blackmail you. Wait here a minute."

She went swiftly across the foyer, and Mae Danish turned and gazed coldly at her as she approached. She was a slender, fair-haired girl, very smart, very sophisticated.

"Well, want me?" she demanded.

"Yes, I do! Eddie's just told me what you've been saying to him. You can't do such a thing. You know perfectly well that he means nothing to you—that he and I are engaged to be married. Besides, I don't believe a word of your story."

The other girl shrugged disdainful shoulders.

"If you want him so much," she retorted, "you'd better tell him to find the two hundred dollars. My story happens to be true."

"You know perfectly well he can't find such a sum."

Mae Danish laughed scornfully.

"Can't he?" she retorted viciously.

"Then you can take it from me that he's got to marry me. And I hope he drops down dead after the ceremony."

Without another word she turned on her heel and walked away. For a few moments Helen stood there with her eyes fixed on her. Her little hands were tightly clenched and her breath was coming fast.

Then, very slowly she walked back towards the cloak-room.

"What did she say?" asked Eddie anxiously.

"She refused," answered Helen very slowly.

And then, forcing up a smile, she went on:

"Don't worry, Eddie. We'll find a way out of it somehow. I—I must be going now. But I'll try and look in before the show's over."

He stood gazing forlornly after her.

Then slowly he turned back into the cloak-room, but as he did so something caught his eye as it lay glittering on the floor.

Stooping he picked it up and stood staring at it as it lay in the palm of his hand. He knew in a flash where it had come from. He had seen it when the girl had given him her expensive fur coat.

He gave a quick glance round him. His breath was coming fast. He had never stolen a thing in his life before, and the idea of doing it now horrified him.

But there rose up before him the vision of a smartly-dressed, fair-haired girl with hard eyes and a gloating smile. And once again he could hear her scornful tones.

"Please yourself. Two hundred dollars by to-morrow morning—or marry me."

With his breath coming even faster he stood staring at the jewelled brooch in his hand. Anyone would give him two hundred dollars for this pretty toy, and it would be so easy to say that he'd never seen it.



Mako crouched down inside the telephone box, his gun ready in his hand.



"How d'you like it, Anderson?" snarled Mako. "You're going to die—die!"

Mako Sees His Chance

It was while Taft and his prisoner were strolling through the lounge of the theatre that Taft was hailed by the commissionaire, who knew the detective well.

"Hallo, Mr. Taft, how are you?"

Taft pulled up his prisoner. The macintosh that hid the handcuffs still lay across their arms, and he could see from the commissionaire's face that he had guessed nothing of the relationship in which he stood to Mako.

"Hallo, Mac, how are you?" he queried.

"Been in to see the show?" queried the other.

"Sure. Came out for a drink and just going back."

Mason started to grumble. It seemed that one of the telephone boxes had got out of order, and though the electricians had been working on it, they had so far failed to discover what was wrong.

Mako was standing quietly, but suddenly he gave a perceptible start, for down the staircase had come a girl, a fair-haired, smart-looking girl, with rather hard eyes, who had never even glanced at them, but had gone straight down the staircase.

"What's up, pal?" asked Taft, addressing Mako.

"Thought I knew that dame," replied Mako quietly.

"You might," replied the commissionaire. "She's Mae Danish—well known here to everyone. She's one of the ushers."

"Then I don't know her," replied Mako, but if Taft had seen the sudden gleam which had come into his eyes he would have known that he was lying.

"You were saying, Mae?" went on the detective.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Taft," replied the other. "I was just sayin' what queer times we live in these days. Even I have to carry a gun. The boss has got a permit from you folks, and I always go heeled these days."

He pulled a gun out of his jacket pocket and Taft nodded approval.

"Don't blame you, Mac," he said. "You never know."

The other replaced his gun. Mako's eyes followed every movement intently. Then, as the two started talking again, leaving him entirely out of the

conversation, an observer might have noticed that though his eyes seemed to be following the conversation, his hand was stealthily creeping round to the pocket where the commissionaire had just deposited his gun.

"Well, I must be off, Mr. Taft. So-long," said the commissionaire at length.

"So-long, Mac!"

As the commissionaire walked away the detective addressed his prisoner.

"Shall we go back to the show?"

"Sure, but I'd give something for a sluice down. I'm feelin' sort of faint-like."

"That's easily done," replied the detective.

He steered his prisoner into the little room where there were a couple of wash-basins. As he switched on the electric light his trained eye noted the fact that there were no windows in the room, only an electric fan.

So secure did he feel of his prisoner that he unlocked the handcuffs from his own wrist, leaving them dangling to Mako's. Then he strolled to the door.

"Don't be long, Mako," he said.

He walked up and down the lounge. His hand was in his pocket and it was fingering his gun. For though the room in which he had left his prisoner had no exit of any sort, and though there was no other way out of the corridor where he was standing except past himself, being a good detective, he was leaving nothing to chance. For he had searched Mako when he had first arrested him, and he knew well enough that no weapon was on him.

He glanced at his watch. Five minutes had elapsed.

"Quite long enough," he muttered as he strolled to the door.

But he stiffened in a moment and, with a quick exclamation dashed down the corridor towards the door, for, from inside the room where he had left his prisoner had come the sound of things breaking, and breaking furiously.

The Escape

Mako broke off in his washing the moment Taft left the room, gazing hurriedly and anxiously around him. Then he tiptoed over to the door and, opening it an inch, peered anxiously out. Down the corridor,

thirty feet away, he could see the broad back of the detective.

He closed the door and stood for a moment gazing at the ventilating fan which was whirring softly round. His gun that he had stolen from the commissionaire was in his hand and his breath was coming fast. It was a desperate venture that he was going to risk—he knew that well enough.

"But it's worth it," he muttered as he caught up a chair and proceeded to attack the ventilating fan with furious blows.

As it gave way under his frantic attack he leaped up and swung himself up into the shaft, though his heart was thumping like a sledgehammer. For he had staked everything on the fact that there was a passage on the other side, in which case his chances of getting clear were materially increased.

He saw in a flash that he had been right in his surmises, and his heart leaped with grim delight. To force himself down the narrow shaft would be easy; but he knew his liberty hung on seconds. The noise that he had made would surely bring up Taft.

What followed then was merely a series of impressions. Already three-quarters of his body was down the shaft, and only his head and arms were exposed to view. But the lavatory door at that moment burst open, and as he gave a last convulsive wriggle he saw Taft's gun spring up and a stinging pain shot through his arm.

He dropped into the passage beyond, holding tightly to his gun. There was no one about, one quick glance told him that as he scrambled to his feet. But from the other side he could hear shouts and running foot-steps and knew that already they were after him. Outside he saw a fire-escape, and flinging open the window he was on it in a moment.

When a desperate criminal is obsessed with the idea of killing—even at the cost of his own life—the man who has betrayed him to the police, he will always take the most incredible risks in order to accomplish his ends.

So now with Mako. For the moment he had seen Mae Danish in the theatre—Mae Danish, whom he knew to be Anderson's wife—hope had leaped up once more into his heart.

Opportunity then had offered him another chance when Mason had produced

his gun, and he had not hesitated to take advantage of it.

Now temporarily free, and with a loaded gun in his hand, his one aim was to get to the telephone and ring up Anderson. If he could manage to do that, get him to the theatre, and meet him face to face for just one minute, nothing else would matter, he told himself.

He risked discovery a dozen times during the next half-hour. Detectives, it seemed, had been called up in bunches, but while some of them were searching the building, most of them were guarding every possible exit under the belief that their man would try to bolt for freedom.

But Mako, in that well-nigh impossible journey to the telephone, neither hurried nor took risks unnecessarily. It meant hiding behind pillars, dodging round corners, slipping behind furniture. But he managed to gain the floor on which there was a telephone box at last.

So near to his longed-for goal now! With the telephone receiver to his ear and shooting glances quickly and continually all round him, he gave in his number, telling the operator to hurry, as it was important.

"I want to speak to Mr. Anderson. Will you tell him I have a message from his wife. I'm speaking from the theatre."

Nearer still now to his goal, and the light of triumph in his eyes as he waited! But even then he forgot nothing. And as he heard Anderson's voice from the other end he whipped out his handkerchief and spread it over the transmitter.

"Is that Mr. Anderson?" he queried, disguising his voice. "That is good. Your wife is rather queer, Mr. Anderson, and she asked me—I am one of the attendants here—to ring you up and ask if you would come and take her home. She hopes you will come at once."

Ho hung up the receiver. He had done it! The man he had sworn to kill had said he would come round at once. And he, Mako, knew that to get down to the theatre where Mae Danish was, Anderson would have to pass this way!

Yet where should he hide? Not in this telephone box, for someone else might want to use it.

And then suddenly, as he glanced at yet another telephone box that stood in the far corner, his heart gave a bound. For on it was a notice written and pasted on: "Out of order."

In another minute Mako was across the floor and crouching down inside the box. And his gun was in his hand and his eyes were on the staircase. Cold, gloating triumph and incredible hate lay in his eyes as he fingered his gun.

The Chief Gets Busy

CAPTAIN SEAVER was very angry, and when Captain Seaver was very angry, those who were his subordinates generally experienced an uncomfortable time. He was a tall, soldierly looking man of smart appearance and fine build, but he was known as a bully and his fists were always as quick as his tongue.

And now he was listening while Taft endeavoured to excuse himself over Mako's escape.

"What I want to know," he snapped, "is how the blazes he managed to get hold of a gun? Didn't you search him when you first arrested him?"

Taft explained quietly that he had done so; that Mako was not then in possession of firearms of any sort.

"But I fancy he managed to steal it from Mason, the commissionaire, chief, August 24th, 1935.

while the three of us were standing down below talking together."

"A darn fine detective you are!" snarled the other. "Your prisoner, according to your account, is handcuffed to you, and yet—"

He broke off and glared at the detective.

"Perhaps you'll be good enough to show me," he said sarcastically, "exactly how you think he did it."

"I was standing, say, here," said Taft. "Mako, handcuffed to me, was standing next to me on my right-hand side—"

But that was as far as he got, for the other broke in fiercely:

"Oh, he was, was he?" he exclaimed. "And since when have the rules of the force told you to chain a man to your right hand?"

"I happen to be left-handed," replied Taft quietly.

The other coloured up. "Get on with your story," he growled.

He was still holding suspicion in his eyes when Taft came to the end of his story.

"You'll get into trouble over this, Taft," he said, "and serve you right, too. You'd got no business to unhandcuff your man, even to wash. And you had still less business to leave him alone—I don't care what the room was like."

Taft shrugged his shoulders. Seaver could make it exceedingly uncomfortable for him, and he knew it. But he knew equally well that it was no use arguing with him.

He took out his cigarette-case, entirely forgetting the notes that Mako had given him. But Seaver's eagle eyes lighted on them the moment he flicked his case open.

Ho snatched it sharply out of the other's hand. His fingers extracted the notes and ran swiftly over them.

Then his eyes bored Taft. "Come into a fortune, Taft?" he asked in a soft voice that held a very ominous ring.

"I don't know of any police rule, sir, that prevents a man from carrying his own money about with him," replied the detective.

Seaver glared at him. "Since when have you, on twenty dollars a week, been in the habit of carrying three hundred about with you?"

And then, as the detective hesitated, he went on:

"So now we know how Mako got away," he snapped.

The other coloured up.

"If you're insinuating that he bribed me," he said hotly, "it's a lie."

"Then where did you get all this money from?"

"That's my business."

"And it's goin' to be mine, too," snapped Seaver, as he started to go downstairs, followed by one of his men and Taft.

In the lounge below there was at that moment a third drama being played out. Eddie Miller was present, looking strangely uneasy, for the girl who had given him her fur coat had sent for him. She had lost her diamond brooch, and she and the well-dressed young man who was with her were both questioning him about it.

Actually, had he known it, Eddie was not the only uneasy one of those three. The girl, Sylvia Temple, was uneasy because she had slipped away to the theatre to meet the young man who was her lover. And if she failed to find her brooch she knew she would have to tell her husband, and the young man—Carl Barrett—would be drawn into it, too.

Carl Barrett was uneasy on the same account. He was equally anxious that the brooch should be found without calling in the police.

And Eddie, though he had hidden the brooch upstairs, was, at the moment, denying that he had found it. For Mae Danish and the two hundred dollars that she was demanding of him were hanging like a horrible cloud over him.

So, for a time, he had persisted in saying that he hadn't seen it at all, though when Carl Barrett had declared for the last time that he was going straight to the police, Eddie had thrown up the sponge and had said that he hadn't stolen the brooch, but that he had put it on one side and would produce it if nothing more was said about it.

And it was at that moment that Captain Seaver, his man and Taft came clattering down the staircase.

They all pulled up short. Seaver had heard something of Eddie's last remark, and his suspicions were alive in a moment.

"What's going on here?" he demanded sharply.

There was an ominous pause. Eddie was shifting uneasily on his feet. It came to him as very cruel that the police should have butted in just at this particular moment. Carl Barrett would have taken the brooch and the matter would have ended there. But now—

To his utter relief and amazement, however, Carl Barrett answered in smooth tones.

"As a matter of fact," he replied, addressing Seaver, "this lady has just lost a brooch. But this young man says he's found it, and we were just going upstairs to see if it's the right one."

Seaver frowned heavily. He had not failed to notice how uncomfortable Eddie looked, and at the thought that the three of them were trying to hide something from him his temper was flaming up again.

"Where did you find it?" he asked truculently, addressing Eddie.

Eddie, even more uncomfortable, explained that he had picked it up on the floor of the cloak-room.

"And if it's the missing one," said Barrett, "then everything is all right."

Seaver's eyes flashed ominously. He could see they were trying to hush something up.

"Go upstairs and get and bring it down to me," he snapped. "All three of you, I mean."

"But surely—" began Barrett, when the other interrupted him.

"Do as I tell you!" he exclaimed harshly.

He turned to his man.

"Go with them," he said.

The Finish of It

LEFT alone with Taft, Seaver stood for some moments scowling fiercely at the carpet.

"There's something goin' on here that I don't understand—" he began, but the sentence was never finished, for at that moment both caught sight of a man who had slipped out of one of the passages and was trying to get away up the staircase.

In a flash both of them were after him, and, as the man tripped, Taft was on him, had hauled him up by the collar and brought him to where Seaver was standing.

The latter surveyed him with gloating triumph.

"So you're in this, too, Anderson, aro you?" he exclaimed. "I was sort of expecting you would be."

(Continued on page 27)

They said it was a freak train, but after he had rushed it half across a continent in nineteen hours to save the lives of men, they changed their tune! When once he had started, nothing could stop Tony Caldwell—not even a crazed murderer. Starring Charles Starrett and Sally Blane.



Tom Caldwell's Plan

B. J. DEXTER, president of the G. B. and D. Railroad, glanced at the sheet of figures his secretary had put before him, and frowned. The G. B. and D. was doing badly; had been for the past two years. In a few minutes he was to preside over a board meeting, and he would have the same sorry tale to tell—freight returns down, passenger receipts down.

"This isn't going to make our directors feel any happier," he announced glumly. "I was hoping we might have some good news to tell them for a change."

The door had opened while he was talking, and a fresh young voice said:

"Well, dad, at any rate I've got some good news for you."

He wheeled in his chair, and his eyes lit up as he saw his daughter Ruth. She was so pretty, so gay and light-hearted, that the sight of her always cheered him up.

"Well, what is it?" he grinned, as she came over and ruffled his hair. "I'm afraid I haven't much time."

"You remember that respirator that we persuaded you to buy for the railroad hospital last month?" she began.

He nodded. "You mean the thing you called an iron lung?"

"Yes. Well, this afternoon they brought in a little girl who had run into a live wire. She was playing around some construction work back of the round-house."

B. J.'s face hardened. "How did a live wire happen to be unguarded?" he almost snapped.

A stern disciplinarian, he reached for the telephone to institute immediate inquiries, but Ruth's hand on his arm stopped him.

"Never mind that now," she said. "Listen. The child was paralysed from

the shock and hardly breathing when we brought her into the hospital, so Dr. Franklin put her right in the iron lung. It was really too marvellous. The bellows did all the breathing for her; actually took the place of her own lung muscles, and in a little while she regained consciousness, her pulse came back, her colour returned, and now—"

"Well, I'm glad to hear that," interrupted Dexter, who had little patience with anything new. "I didn't think it would work. I was afraid it was just another of those new-fangled gadgets we have to put up with."

Again the door opened. This time it was his son Allan.

"Hallo, sis!" greeted the newcomer, with a friendly smile at his sister.

"Have you come to spread happiness and light amongst the railroad department?"

"Right, Mr. Assistant to the President," countered the girl.

Allan laughed and turned to his father.

"Dad, the board's waiting."

As the older man excused himself and made his way towards the board-room. Allan gave his sister a meaning glance and jerked his thumb towards a door leading to the ante-room.

"Tom's in there," he whispered, with a knowing wink. Then he turned to follow his father.

J. B. Dexter had never liked board meetings, and he felt that this was going to be a more than usually unpleasant one. As he looked at the shrewd, hard-headed business men gathered round the long table he knew they were expecting him to announce a dividend. And there was no dividend. As he went into details, explaining how the returns had unavoidably declined, he saw their expectant smiles fade.

One of the directors, blunt and disapproving, rose to his feet.

"Mr. President, skipping dividends has become a habit of this railroad," he remarked coldly. "Now, before it becomes a tradition, I would like to know what plan, if any, you have for increasing our freight and passenger revenue."

Allan got to his feet and spoke to his father.

"Let me tell the board about Tom Caldwell's plan," he suggested.

Dexter hesitated. He hardly knew what the plan was, and he was not enthusiastic about anything new. But it might keep 'em quiet for a bit.

"Um," he muttered, stroking his chin thoughtfully. "there is a plan, but owing to my recent absence I believe my son can present it better than I can."

All eyes were immediately turned upon Allan. The young man cleared his throat, and spoke confidently.

"Gentlemen," he announced, opening some folders on the table before him, "at least one department of the G. B. and D. Railroad is definitely looking into the future. For several months the mechanical department has been working on an idea designed to bring back to the railroad some of the passenger business we've lost to the automobile."

The directors looked at each other inquiringly. What had this youngster got up his sleeve?

"Some time ago," went on Allan, "we were fortunate enough to employ Tom Caldwell, winner of the Shottswell Prize for Mechanical Engineering. What he had done for us already seems to justify the award. Thanks to his resourcefulness we shall once again be able to put travel by rail where it belongs—at the head of all recognised means of transportation. Excuse me a minute."

As he left to fetch Tom he heard a buzz of conversation break out behind him, and he knew that he had at least aroused their interest. When he pushed

open the door of the ante-room he surprised Tom and Ruth on the floor, apparently looking for something.

Allan grinned.

"May I ask if you're here for business or pleasure?" he asked Tom, with mock severity.

The couple laughed and climbed to their feet.

"I was showing Ruth my fraternity pin," explained Tom, "and one of the pearls fell out. We can't find it anywhere." He was tall, broad-shouldered and dark, and when he smiled his teeth gleamed white in the sunburn of his face.

"Come on, Tom!" urged Allan. "I've got 'em all set. Bring your drawings."

Tom's brown eyes widened.

"Fine!" he exclaimed.

Ruth caught his hand, and her frank gaze held his.

"Best of luck," she said softly.

"Thanks," murmured the young engineer. "Wait around for the triumphal return, will you?"

She nodded and smiled, and it was with a feeling of elation that Tom followed his friend into the board-room.

"This is Mr. Caldwell," said Allan, leading him to the top of the table next to B. J. Dexter. "Go ahead, Tom. You tell them all about it."

At first Tom felt a bit nervous, for so much depended on his making a good impression. He felt implicit faith in his own invention, but it wouldn't be easy to convince these hard-boiled, unsympathetic business men.

"It seems to me," he told them, "that in order to bring back the passenger traffic to the railroad we must give the public more frequent and better train service."

"More service!" interjected an impatient voice. "They won't use the service we're giving them now."

"With the present-day, heavy-weight passenger trains which are so expensive to operate," Tom explained, "it might seem impractical to increase the service, but"—he stopped to unroll a large drawing—"a train like this is light and inexpensive to operate."

The directors stared in amazement at the queer-looking steel monster depicted in the drawing. Never before had they seen anything like it. The front part sloped backwards like a receding forehead; the wheels were almost invisible, covered by a hood-like shell of steel.

"Train!" grunted the director who had interrupted before. "Preposterous! It looks like a fish!"

Somebody laughed, and someone else said:

"Why, it looks like something hideous out of the magazine section of a Sunday paper!"

Tom felt a stab of disappointment. His idea wasn't getting much of a reception. Still, they hadn't heard it all yet.

Doggedly he went on:

"Built of new high tensile steel, it can, by reason of streamlining, be driven at speeds above one hundred miles an hour."

"Why, my boy, you can't keep a train on the rails at that speed!" broke out a fat man who, up till now, had seemed half asleep.

"Pardon me, sir, but that is one of the principal advantages of streamlining," pointed out Tom. "The centre of gravity is lower, so that it hugs the rails and can negotiate curves much easier. And this slanting nose and high bulge on the top of the front car builds up a tremendous downward air pressure which hold the train on the tracks."

The fat man snorted.

"Heaven help us when we have to rely upon air pressure to hold our trains on the rails!"

August 24th, 1935.

Tom smiled and appealed to Dexter himself.

"What do you stop 'em with?" he asked.

Dexter, somewhat taken aback, took the cigar out of his mouth.

"Why—uh—air pressure!" he admitted.

"Exactly," returned Tom. "And that same air pressure is what keeps a streamline train on the tracks."

The men around the table shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads, and, looking at them, Tom knew that he had lost.

B. J. Dexter rose and addressed the others with an apologetic air.

"Gentlemen, I had, of course, some previous knowledge of the employment of this young man, but I had no idea his efforts would result in anything like this. Why, I am no more in accord with this absurd plan than you are!" He turned to Tom, disapproval and impatience on his rather hard features. "Young man, this is not the sort of thing in which we're interested. It is impractical, costly—"

"On the contrary, sir," interrupted Tom, "this train is driven by Diesel power with a fuel saving of seventy-five per cent. It is what the railroads will come to sooner or later."

"Oh, thank you, but I don't need any prize scholar with the ink still wet on his engineer degree to tell me what the railroads will come to!" bellowed Dexter, purpling with anger. "May I suggest that you devote your time as an employee of this railroad to more useful and less visionary fields of inquiry?"

Tom flushed and his mouth set hard.

"Very good, sir," he said quietly. He felt like telling the whole bunch of them just what he thought of them, but he held himself in, rolled up his drawing, and, with a sardonic: "I'm sorry to have taken up your time!" he strode out, followed by Alan.

An Old Friend

"WELL, where are the trumpets?" inquired Ruth as they came into the ante-room. "You hardly look like conquering heroes."

"We didn't even take the first trench!" returned Tom bitterly.

"Oh!" exclaimed Ruth, her face falling in disappointment.

"It's a rotten shame!" burst out Allan. "They could have listened, but father and the other mossbacks just blinked their eyes, pulled their heads back in their shells, and then pulled their shells in after them."

"Well, they've made it impossible for me to stay here, Allan," pointed out Tom, shrugging. "I've no choice but to resign."

"Resign?" Allan stared at him.

"You can't do that!"

"I can't do anything else," persisted Tom. "Your father and I just can't think the same."

"I know," admitted the girl. "He's frightfully conservative."

"Conservative?" snorted Allan. "Say, he must be slipping into his second childhood. The next thing you know he'll be running round naming Pullman cars!"

Ruth flared up immediately, for she would never hear a word spoken against her father.

"Has it ever occurred to you that father might be right?" she demanded hotly.

"He's right only because he's head man," retorted Tom. "Anyway, it's no go. I'm through!"

Ruth tried hard to conciliate him, and suggested that she might be able to get on the right side of her father, but Tom was stubborn.

"No, thanks," he told her, with the square set of his jaw that she knew so well. "The idea doesn't require any favours. I'll take it to some firm that isn't still living in the past." He made for the door, but as he reached it he turned and looked at her. "I'll call you—when I'm on someone else's pay-roll." When he had gone, Ruth shook her head rather sadly.

"I thought I liked independence in a man," she murmured, fingering the fraternity pin, "but now I'm not so sure."

For a long while she thought things over. She was determined to help Tom, and at last she had an idea. She would see an old friend of hers, Mr. Tyler, head of the Tyler Locomotive Works, which was a subsidiary of the G. B. and D. He was a much younger man than her father, always on the look-out for new ideas, and he, at least, would be sure to give any friend of hers a fair hearing.

She called on him that same afternoon, and he, as always, was pleased to see her. He was a well-dressed man of about forty-five, with a keen, intelligent face, full of force and character. His shrewd, but kindly eyes regarded her affectionately.

"You're looking prettier than ever," he told her.

Sitting on the edge of his desk with the familiarity of an old friend, she smiled across at him.

"Listen," she said. "How would the president of the Tyler Locomotive Works like to subscribe to a good idea?"

He raised his eyebrows. "Well, that depends. You're not trying to get me interested in a charity bazaar or a little theatre movement or anything like that?"

She shook her head. "The other day a certain young man was showing dad plans for a new kind of fast train. I happened to be in the office. Oh, it was a beautiful-looking train, Mr. Tyler, all streamlines. Of course, I don't know much about the technical side of it, but he said something about using Diesel engines."

"Diesel power," muttered Tyler thoughtfully, a sudden gleam of interest lighting up his eyes. "What did your father think of that?"

"Oh, you know what dad is! He wouldn't even listen to Tom."

"Tom, eh?" Tyler looked amused. "So that's the good idea."

"Nothing of the sort," declared Ruth, blushing. "My interest in him is purely scientific. If Tom's—if the boy's idea is good, I'm doing you a favour."

"Well, if you'll give me this purely scientific young man's name and address, I'll send for him," promised Tyler.

"His name is Caldwell. I've got his address right here in my purse." She handed him a card. "Thanks a lot, Mr. Tyler. You're a dear. And when you find I'm right you may send me orchids!"

Tyler was as good as his word, and in answer to his invitation, Tom called on him two days later. The young engineer, quite unaware that he owed his chance to Ruth, was naturally excited at having a man like Edward Tyler interested in his work. As for Tyler, he was impressed by the plan from the first moment that Tom unrolled his drawing. Not only that, but as a judge of men he took a liking for Tom for his determination and frankness.

Tom explained the economy of the scheme—how the proposed train ran on far fewer wheels, thus saving weight and wear and tear on the track; how it would run smoothly and save fuel. But, above all, he stressed the factor of

speed—speed that would revolutionise train construction.

"Yes, I think this looks like a step in the right direction," said Tyler. He appealed to Maclean, a shrewd old Scot, who was his consulting engineer, and who, so far, had remained silent. "What do you think about it, Mac?"

"I like it," grunted Mac. "I like it."

Tyler knew that this, coming from Mac, was unheard-of enthusiasm.

"Of course, there's one great difficulty," pointed out Tyler. "Finance. Although this company is a subsidiary of the G. B. & D., I'm given a pretty free hand when it comes to spending money. But we can't put this over with the directors until we actually show them one of your trains. Railroad directors have to see, feel, and smell a thing before they'll believe it. That's certainly true of Dexter." He turned to the Scot again. "How much would this cost us, Mac—roughly?"

Mae thought for a bit, and made a few calculations on the back of an envelope.

"We could save something by using our new Diesel plans," he muttered. "Uh, it would work out around two hundred thousand dollars."

"Umm!" Tyler looked thoughtful. "You know, we have the outstanding Diesel engine man with us now," he told Tom. "He's working on some new experiments. We'll have him in on this." He spoke into the dictagraph. "Send Mr. Bronte up to my office right away."

"Bronte?" The name roused a chord of memory in Tom. "There was a Bronte who built aeroplane engines in Europe."

"Doubtless the same man," said Tyler. "And to my mind they don't come any better on Diesels. But don't worry—if we go ahead with this plan,

you'll be in charge of construction. We'll make this an all-American train."

"Nothing would suit me better, sir!" exclaimed Tom, highly elated. Once again things seemed to be coming his way. There was Ruth, too. If he made good on this he would have something to offer her then.

Bronte came in and was introduced to Tom. He was a foreign-looking man of about forty, with dark hair brushed back from his forehead, blunt features, and a strange, masked expression in his rather oblique eyes. He showed immediate interest when Tom's scheme was explained to him, especially when he saw the drawing.

"It ought to be right up your alley," Tyler told him. "Mr. Caldwell is recommending Diesel electric power; the main generator to be run with an eight-cylinder, two-cycle Diesel."

Bronte nodded approvingly. "Great efficiency with a minimum of weight," he remarked, speaking with a slight guttural accent. "I designed one once for the high command, to be used in—well, no matter." He broke off abruptly, as though he had let his tongue run away with him, and had suddenly realised he had said too much.

The three discussed the details for a long time, and after Bronte had gone Tyler turned to Tom.

"Some modification will be necessary, of course, but I'm going to try this idea, Caldwell," he announced. "Barney Dexter will be certain to oppose it, but he's only one member of the board, and I'm sure I can convince the others."

Tom flushed with pleasure, and tried to stammer his thanks, but the words stuck in his throat.

"Mae, you can arrange for what shop facilities Caldwell needs," went on Tyler, "and Bronte can build his engines."

"Ay, sir," assented Mac.

The Trial Run

THE ensuing months were the busiest Tom Caldwell had ever spent, but they were also the happiest. He threw himself into his work with an enthusiasm that infected everybody under him, and made friends of all with whom he came into contact. There was one exception, and that was Bronte. Not that he found an enemy in the Diesel expert, for Bronte proved himself a keen and willing worker; it was just that Bronte seemed too reserved and taciturn to make friends with anybody, and at times Tom found himself speculating about the man's past. There was something unfathomable, mysterious about him.

Among Tom's most faithful henchmen were a strangely assorted couple who were almost inseparable—Higgins and Crawford. Higgins was a big, ruggedly built man, slow thinking and rather simple, but a good mechanic. Crawford was a weedy, bespectacled youth who took his job very seriously and studied hard. Of an intelligence beyond the ordinary, his speech was full of technical terms, and it used to amuse Tom to hear him discoursing learnedly of "aerodynamics" and "equations of motion," whilst his stolid partner, making no attempt to listen, would get on with the work in hand.

Gradually the shining steel monster took shape, the generators were mounted, and at last the great day arrived when the Silver Streak, as Tom had named it, was ready for its trial run.

It was arranged to start the run from the station at Franklin, and to time it from a point some miles west of Maryville. On this, its first trip, the Streak was to carry only a handful of passengers, among whom were Tyler, Dexter himself, Allan and Ruth. Tom was to be at the controls, and with him



"Smokey's still comin'!" crowed Lowry. "He's gonna pass you, sure!"

in the operators' compartment were Bronte and Lowry—a man who had been sent over by the superintendent to act as pilot. The passengers were in the luxuriously fitted solarium in the rear car.

The trial was supposed to have been kept secret, but somehow the news had leaked out, and a cheering crowd had gathered at Franklin to see the start.

When Tom climbed aboard Ruth came up to him. Although he had shown her around the works many times, and although she had shown great interest in the building of the Streak, he still had no idea that he owed everything to her.

"I'll be thinking of you," she told him. "Good luck!"

"I'll be thinking of you, too," he said. "This means an awful lot to me." Then he added meaningly: "To us."

Leaning through the open window, he held out his hand, and her soft fingers closed over his. Then she turned back to join the others in the solarium.

Tom waited a bit before taking his place in the driver's seat. Behind him Bronte was attending to the engine. Lowry, the pilot, seated beside Tom, looked about him with contemptuous amusement.

"Funny kind of train," he grunted. "I suppose she's fast?"

"Tie your hat under your chin," returned Tom grimly. "You're going to see plenty!" With the words he jerked the whistle cord twice and pushed over the starting-lever.

As the motors purred into life and the Silver Streak moved forward smoothly, Lowry muttered a scornful: "Oil engines, huh? You can't beat steam."

Tom smiled to himself. He'd show him!

Back in the solarium B. J. Dexter was still sceptical.

"Well, Ed," he said to Tyler, "in a few minutes you'll either be famous or foolish."

"In a few minutes, B. J.," retorted Tyler, "you'll be sorry you ever turned down young Caldwell's idea."

Dexter shrugged his shoulders and looked unconvinced. Tyler rang for the waiter and ordered two "highballs."

When they came he lifted his glass. "Here's to Tom Caldwell and the Silver Streak. A fine lad and a fine train."

"I hope you're right, Ed," said Dexter, as they both drank. "Here's luck!"

The Streak moved easily, almost silently, but some minutes passed and still it was not going particularly fast. Suddenly Ruth, gazing out of the window, gave a little cry of astonishment.

"Look! That—that freight train is overtaking us!"

The others followed her glance and saw an engine, belching black smoke as it hauled a long line of flat-cars on the neighbouring track, gradually catching up with them.

"Huh, Ruth's right, Ed," grunted Dexter. "That Red Ball freight is climbing up on us."

"That doesn't mean a thing, B. J.," returned Tyler. "The minute Caldwell opens her up she'll make that freight look as if it were running backwards."

"Sure he will," put in Allan reassuringly.

The seconds passed, but instead of being left behind the freight drew steadily nearer.

"How about it now, Ed?" demanded Dexter ironically. "This new-fangled contraption of yours doesn't look as though it's going to break any records—not if it can't even hold a heavy freight!"

A puzzled frown corrugated Tyler's August 24th, 1935.

forehead. He fidgeted uneasily, then got to his feet.

"Guess I'll go up ahead and see what's wrong."

Failure

MEANWHILE, in the driver's compartment, Tom was getting worried. From the first Lowry, an unyielding disciple of steam, had waxed sarcastic.

"Don't sound like you got much power in that oil engine," he had remarked before the Streak had even covered a mile.

"When I build an engine you don't have to worry about the power," retorted Bronte harshly. "It has plenty."

"You've done a fine job, Bronte," said Tom to soothe the expert's ruffled feelings.

"It's taking a lot of time to get up speed," persisted Lowry.

"It's doing all right," countered Tom. "I haven't opened it up yet."

A little later it was Lowry who first saw the freight.

"Hey, here's 'Smokey' Bishop comin' with Number Seven!" he chuckled gleefully. "He's goin' to pass you."

Tom's mouth tightened. "I don't think so," he said quietly, and his hand pushed the control lever right over.

His eyes were on the speed dial, and gradually the hand turned from thirty to forty. It climbed a little beyond forty, wavered, then stuck there. For the first time Tom felt the icy fingers of apprehension, and his eyes clouded with worry. Surely the Streak was capable of more than forty miles an hour!

"Smokey's still comin'!" crowed Lowry. "He's gonna take you, sure!"

"Something's wrong," muttered Tom through clenched teeth. He turned to Bronte.

"How's the engine?" "Nothing wrong here," was the answer.

It was a bitter moment for Tom when he had to sit helpless and watch the Red Ball overhaul him steadily. As the freight passed, the engineer on her opened her exhaust and let loose a screeching blast of steam right in the Silver's Streak's path, just like a man blowing a cloud of cigarette-smoke in another man's face.

Tyler stepped in through the communicating door just at that moment. "What's wrong, Tom?" he wanted to know. "Is this the best you can do?"

"Seems so," admitted Tom, the picture of dejection. "I have her wide open."

Tyler's face fell. "This is a terrible disappointment. I'll never hear the end of it."

Lowry put his spoke in. "This speed demon turned out to be a tortoise," he scoffed.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Tyler!" burst out Tom. "I can't figure it out."

Tyler shrugged resignedly.

"Well, you might as well stop at the next station."

"It's like I said," grinned Lowry. "You can't heat steam."

Tom felt like smashing his fist in the jeering pilot's face, but he held himself back. Defeat was bitter in his mouth, and the worst ordeal was yet to come. There were the others to face; excuses to be made, explanations. And the worst of it was he had no explanation to give.

When he stopped the Silver Streak at Marshalton and got out, Ruth was the first to descend from the passenger car. She ran to meet him.

"What was the matter, Tom?" she asked anxiously.

Tom shook his head.

"I certainly wish I knew." She saw the look in his eyes, and her glance softened.

"Oh, don't take it so hard!" she pleaded. "You did your best."

"But it wasn't good enough," Tom said. "I don't know why. There must be something we've overlooked that caused its failure. I checked and re-checked the plans and specifications. It stood up under every test while we were putting it together."

He saw Dexter alighting from the solarium, and decided to take the bull by the horns. "Well, come on," he urged, walking forward. "Your father will be saying plenty. I want to get it over."

As it happened, B. J. Dexter was torn by conflicting emotions—chagrin at a subsidiary company of the G. B. & D. having wasted a lot of money, and gratification at having his own judgment vindicated. At first he ignored Tom completely and addressed his remarks to Tyler.

"Well, Ed," he said, "I told you this toy was nothing to sink money into."

"Maybe you're right, B. J.," admitted Tyler reluctantly. "But it was a good gamble on paper. If the Streak had been successful, passenger traffic would have been revolutionised."

"Well, we all make mistakes," responded Dexter with irritating condescension. "Even I do. But I was smart enough not to make this one." He gave a short laugh. "Silver Streak, eh? Silver Freak'd be better!"

"Don't rub it in now, B. J.," said Tyler. "The board will do enough of that at the next meeting."

"You'll have plenty of explaining to do all right. Going the whole hog on this boy's crazy theory."

"Don't blame Tom too much," pleaded Tyler. "The idea is still good, even though it isn't completely worked out."

Dexter shook his head. "You can't tell me that. It was never any good."

Tom stepped forward. He saw that he had a staunch supporter in Tyler, and it hurt him to think that he had put the man who had backed him into an awkward position.

"That was a pretty bad showing, Mr. Tyler," he said apologetically, "but if you'll only give me a couple of weeks I'm sure I can find out the trouble and correct it."

Tyler hesitated. "Well, Tom—"

"Ed, you don't mean you would consider throwing any more money into this crazy scheme?" interrupted Dexter, seeing that Tyler was in two minds. "I'm sure I speak for the rest of the board when I tell you to drop this idea wholly and completely. Don't spend another cent."

"That's unfair!" broke out Tom heatedly. "Just give me a little more time, and—"

"You have already had more time than the experiment warrants," snapped Dexter.

"Listen, Mr. Dexter," persisted Tom, his jaw thrust forward pugnaciously, "this is not an experiment. We're living in a new age that requires drastic change. You can't keep on running railroads by tradition. Your passenger traffic is off over eighty per cent, and no hope of getting it back. That's what your obstinacy has done!"

"Tom, please!" put in Tyler, trying to quieten him down.

"Tom! Come on!" urged Ruth, taking him by the sleeve and pulling him away.

As he allowed himself to be led off, Tom heard the president of the G. B. & D. and D. spluttering and choking with anger. Ruth, too, was indignant.



Ruth caught a glimpse of a man being laid on a stretcher.

"You mustn't talk to dad that way!" she reproved him.
 "I mustn't? Why not?" demanded Tom. "He is stubborn, and he is unfair."

"And he is my father," pointed out Ruth, the colour rising to her cheeks.

"Well, that's your misfortune!" flared Tom. "He's a self-satisfied, conceited, opinionated old fogey!"

"Do you mean that?"

Ruth's voice was ominously soft.

"Yes, I mean it!" declared Tom defiantly, losing the last shreds of his temper. "It's the truth, and I don't expect to apologise, either!"

Ruth's chin came up.

"I'll not have you speaking to me like that!" she told him, her eyes blazing. "I thought you were a man, but you're behaving like a spoilt child. I'm sorry, but this is 'good-bye,'" and with the words she turned and left him.

Watching her go, Tom felt tempted to run after her, to apologise. Then the stubborn streak in him stopped him. Why should he? He was in the right, and he wouldn't take back a word he'd said. If she wanted to end things between them, that would be okay with him! She'd been mighty sweet at times, but women caused more trouble than they were worth, anyway.

Meanwhile, Tyler had succeeded in calming Dexter down, pointing out that Tom was young and enthusiastic, and had been carried away by his feelings.

"Well, if you still want to keep him in your employ, that's your look-out," said Dexter. "As for this monstrosity—and he jerked his thumb at the train—" "I shall recommend to the board that we send it over to the Century of Progress Exhibition. Call it an experimental model in streamlining; call it anything you please. I only hope it gets sufficient publicity to justify charging off at least a part of the cost to advertising."

"Oh, father, be reasonable!" protested Allan, who was still loyal to Tom.

Tyler, however, eventually acquiesced. "I see your point, B. J.," he said, "however much I may differ with you on the fundamental principle. Under

the circumstances, this may be the wisest thing to do."

Tyler saw Tom standing where Ruth had left him, and, going over to him, he told him of their decision.

"But," he added, to soften the blow, "I'll arrange for you and your mechanics to take it over to the exhibition and to stay in charge of it."

"Thanks, Mr. Tyler," returned Tom gratefully. "It'll give us a chance to work on it." His mouth tightened in determination. "I'm not licked yet. I'll find out what's wrong with the Silver Streak if it takes the rest of my life!"

"I'm Leaving To-day!"

ONE evening about a week later, B. J. Dexter was lounging in an easy-chair, smoking an after-dinner cigar, when Allan came in and started to walk up and down in a fidgety way, obviously with something on his mind. Ever since the fiasco of the Silver Streak's trial run, Dexter had noted a change in his son's manner.

Suddenly Allan startled him with the blunt announcement:

"Dad, I'm through with railroading."

Dexter took the cigar out of his mouth and sat up. He stared, hardly knowing what to make of it. Then he nodded.

"I see," he said slowly. "You're still a little displeased because I wouldn't undertake to rebuild the railroads of the country in accordance with your young friend's unsubstantial dreams, eh?"

"That's only part of it, dad," was the answer. "It's your general attitude to progressive, new ideas. You go on in the same old way, year after year, even though we're losing money. Every suggestion I make—air conditioning, coast to coast trains—you veto simply because it's never been done before."

Dexter shook his head.

"You're wrong, Allan. My argument is that you're attracted by anything new just because it is new. Anyway, our system has stood the test of time. My father, your grandfather, started to build railroads over this country when the

only people living here were Indians in tepees."

"I admit all that, dad, and I, too, want the pride of building something. Something that will go on serving people; something that will endure."

Dexter looked puzzled.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I've taken a job with the Six Companies," replied Allan. "The construction firm at Boulder Dam."

It was a hard blow for the older man, and the suddenness of it left him dazed. He had a great admiration for the Boulder Dam project—one of the most stupendous pieces of engineering ever attempted in America. But railroading was in B. J.'s blood, and Allan was his only son. It was some time before he could find anything to say.

"My son," he said at last, "there has always been a Dexter at the head of the G. B. & D. Railroad, and I had hoped there always would be. Go to Boulder Dam if you want to; but if you do you'll be tearing down something that two generations have been building for you."

"No, dad; the building has stopped. There is really nothing for me to do here." Allan held out his hand. "Good-bye, dad."

Dexter got up, staring at his son, bewildered.

"You don't mean——"

Allan nodded.

"I'm leaving now."

He gripped his father's hand hard, then turned and walked out quickly, as though he did not want to prolong the leave-taking.

Dexter went back to his chair, a stunned look on his face. Gradually doubts began to assail him, and he wondered whether, after all, there might not be more than a little truth in Allan's accusations. Maybe he was a bit of an old fogey in his ideas. And you couldn't cramp a youngster; you had to give him his head.

Then, only a few days afterwards, he received another blow, for he came on Ruth sitting at the piano with her head buried in her hands.

"What's troubling my little girl?" he asked.
 August 24th, 1935.

asked her, putting his arm around her shoulders.

"I'm afraid it's heart trouble, dad."

She looked up, and he saw that her eyes were bright with unshed tears.

Dexter rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"I think I understand. You were rather keen on that Caldwell boy, weren't you?"

Ruth nodded.

"I need a change," she told him. "I want to take a trip west, to California. I could visit Myrtle in Santa Barbara."

Dexter sighed.

"Of course, it'll be mighty lonesome in this big house without you and Allan," he said regretfully. "However, if you've made up your mind to go, I'll arrange transportation. When do you want to leave?"

"Right away—to-morrow."

"As soon as all that?" A shadow crossed his face. He was losing both his children in the space of a few days. "All right, Ruthie, I'll see to it."

Meanwhile, the Silver Streak, on exhibition, was proving a great attraction, rivalling the other shows, and people thronged to see it. But the atmosphere of the exhibition ground, the raucous voices of the barkers, the blare of music, the crowds all irked Tom Caldwell. He had planned and built something that he had hoped would make railroading history, and here it was, little more than a side-show at a circus! Moreover, though he had checked and rechecked the engine, he knew no more what was wrong with it than he had when he started.

Eventually it was a pure stroke of luck that put him on the right track. He happened to be passing when Crawford was holding forth to his pal Higgins upon some abstruse question dealing with electricity. He heard one or two words—something about "distance between the poles" and "saturation"—and he pulled up short.

"Wait a minute. What are you trying to say, Crawford?" he asked.

Crawford was only too pleased to explain.

"I was just telling Higgins that the induction index of the magnetic fields is the saturation rapidity of the gap between the poles."

"That gives me a hunch!" exclaimed Tom, gripping Crawford's arm. "Come on—bring those test-meters!"

Approaching the problem from an altogether new angle, Tom soon saw that the root of the trouble was a minor error in the adjustment of some of the parts. When he corrected this, and tested the amount of power generated, he found that he could get twice as many volts as before. Elated by his discovery, he wired to Tyler, who came along that same afternoon.

"This was a factory assembly, and we assumed it was all right," explained Tom, "but the gap between the rotor and the field was three thousandths too wide."

"A manufacturer's error that wouldn't happen oftener than once in a hundred times," marvelled Tyler.

"The only possible adjustment that could have escaped detection so long," added Tom. "Watch that voltmeter."

Tyler watched whilst the needle climbed past the seven hundred mark.

"Well, that certainly looks as if you've found it," he admitted.

Tom got to his feet and wiped his hands on a piece of cotton waste. His eyes were shining with excitement.

"Now may I have another trial and take the Streak out of the dog-house?" he pleaded. "It's for your sake as well as mine, Mr. Tyler."

"Sure you can," agreed Tyler enthusiastically. "But let's wait until this fair is over. It won't hurt to keep it August 24th, 1935.

dark for a while—or not exactly dark," he corrected himself.

"What do you mean?" Tom wanted to know.

"Well, Ruth might like to hear the good news."

Tom shook his head.

"No, I don't think so," he said a bit wistfully. "Not after what happened on the trial run."

Tyler smiled at him—a rather strange smile.

"Tom, did you ever wonder how I happened to send for you?" he asked.

"Sure, I thought you'd heard about my streamline plan."

"Exactly," said Tyler. "You see, Ruth has a pleasant little habit of dropping into my office to see me every once in a while."

"You mean it was she who told you?" broke out Tom, realisation flooding over him. He owed everything to her, and like a fool he had quarrelled with her, insulted her! If he had only known! "Excuse me, Mr. Tyler! I'll be right back!" he jerked out, taking a flying leap out of the door.

Pushing through the jostling crowds, he made for a telephone booth. He'd phone her and make a date with her. She was a good sport, and she wouldn't refuse to see him. And when he did see her, when he got face to face with her, he would explain then. He'd apologise, ask her to forgive him. It was no use writing; he had to see her.

But when he got on to the Dexter home he found he was too late. Ruth had left an hour before for California.

Bad News

THE train in which Ruth was travelling to Santa Barbara was some way east of the California border when the conductor ushered an old lady into the Pullman. She sat by herself in a seat almost opposite Ruth's, and after a while Ruth saw that she had her handkerchief to her eyes and was sobbing.

There was nobody else in the Pullman, and, moved by pity, the girl went over to her.

"Is there anything I can do?" she inquired gently.

The old lady looked up at her through her tears.

"Thank you, miss," she said brokenly, dabbing at her eyes. "I just got word about my boy. He—he's been taken down with infantile paralysis."

"Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"He's at Boulder Dam," the old lady went on. "Last night they wired the station agent to tell me. They're afraid it's going to spread to the other men."

Ruth's thoughts immediately flew to Allan, and she felt an unreasoning stab of fear. She knew what a terrible scourge infantile paralysis was, and how hard it was to get it under control.

"Oh, my—my brother's there!" she exclaimed.

"Then get him away from there, miss, as soon as you can," urged the old lady. "Before it's too late."

There was nothing further Ruth could do for the weeping mother, so she went back to her own seat. Worried and anxious, she mullied things over in her mind. Should she go to see if Allan was all right? Could she get him away from Boulder Dam before the danger spread, or would he laugh at her? At length she sought out the conductor and asked him where she could change for Boulder City.

He stared at her in mild surprise.

"Why, Miss Dexter—"

"I must get there right away," she broke in impatiently.

"Well, the dam is thirty-five miles

from Las Vegas," he told her. Knowing that she was the daughter of B. J. Dexter, he saw that he would have to do everything he could for her. "I can wire ahead and arrange for a motor-car to meet you at the station."

"Please do," she requested. "And get the fastest car you can."

He hurried off to obey, and Ruth waited impatiently for the train to reach Las Vegas. It seemed to her to crawl, as did the car which was awaiting her, and it was early afternoon before she alighted at the offices of the Six Companies on the edge of Boulder Canyon.

In front of her, rising from the canyon bed and completely blocking the immense gap between the rocky walls, was the huge dam. From it came a bedlam of sound—the clang of mighty hammers, the scream of winches, and the rattle of the elevators that carried men and material. A mile from the workings a veritable town of huts and buildings had sprung up.

Inquiring for Allan, she was told that he was over at the upper concrete-mixing plant, and that she would have to get a pass from the engineer's office. Whilst she was waiting for the pass she overheard two men in conversation. One of them was obviously a man of some authority, and he addressed the other as "doctor."

"Maybe it started in town," he was saying.

Ruth immediately pricked up her ears, for she knew the "it" was the outbreak of infantile paralysis.

The doctor shrugged.

"Well, we don't know where it started, of course," he replied, "but we must assume that everyone here has been exposed. I'm sorry, Morgan, but a quarantine is necessary. Any delay is dangerous."

"But, Dr. Flynn, we've got to bring in material by rail in order to keep working," protested Morgan.

"All right, but you'll have to load across the river and carry no one but the train crew," the doctor told him.

"Remember, no one will be able to enter or leave Boulder Dam after four o'clock!"

Ruth had been listening in ever-growing alarm, and her one thought was to find Allan as quickly as she could. After getting the pass, she travelled down to the canyon floor on one of the elevators, and was directed to a gang of men working about half a mile away. As she approached she heard the screech of a siren, and a lot of gesticulating and shouting from a "skip," or swinging platform, that was carrying men to the top of the dam. Immediately the skip was lowered, and when it reached the ground other men, their heads covered in steel helmets to protect them from falling stones, crowded round.

"Man hurt!" Ruth heard someone shout.

In less than a minute an ambulance swept up, and two white-clad ambulance men pushed through the knot of men. They went on to the skip, and Ruth caught a glimpse of a man being laid on a stretcher. He was borne quickly to the ambulance, which sped off as swiftly as it had come.

Ruth felt a terrible premonition clutch at her heart, and she hurried up.

"I'm looking for Mr. Dexter," she told the staring men.

For a moment they were silent, looking at one another awkwardly; then one of them said:

"Gee, I'm sorry, miss, but we've just sent him to the hospital."

Ruth's hand went to her throat.

"What—what happened to him?" she gasped.

"We don't know," was the answer. "He seemed all right, and suddenly he started gasping for breath. Then he just collapsed."

Ten minutes later, white-faced and shaken, the girl was in the hospital which lay on the far side of the workmen's huts. Confronting the doctor in charge, she demanded to be taken to see her brother. Gently, but firmly, the doctor refused permission.

"I understand just how you feel, Miss Dexter," he told her, "but we can't permit you to expose yourself. Your brother has contracted paralysis."

Ruth had expected this, and her eyes searched the doctor's kindly face.

"He's going to live, isn't he?" she asked fearfully.

The doctor's glance showed pity, and his voice was grave as he answered:

"Well, the paralysis germ has affected his lungs. Now he'd have every chance in the world if we could provide artificial respiration for him until the serum takes effect. There are machines for that purpose, but, unfortunately, we have none of them here, and all those in San Francisco and Los Angeles are in use."

"I know—the 'iron lung,'" exclaimed Ruth, her mind going back to the little girl who had been nearly killed by the live wire.

"Yes, that's it."

"Oh, I can have one shipped here in twenty-four hours by 'plane,'" Ruth told him, hope welling in her. "It'll arrive in time to save Allan's life; perhaps the lives of others."

"The doctor shook his head sadly.

"Twenty-four hours will be too late for your brother. He should be in a respirator now, or at least before tomorrow noon."

Ruth refused to lose heart.

"Planes are fast," she insisted. "They can get here from Chicago in time if they start at once. Let me telephone my father."

There was a telephone on the table, and, seizing it, she dialed long distance, and in a minute was through to her father.

The Silver Streak Gets Its Chance

ON receipt of the dire news, B. J. Dexter acted with characteristic energy. He telephoned the nearest airport to send a truck to the railroad hospital where the "iron lungs" were kept, and himself hurried to the hospital to supervise their loading.

He was met by an official of the airport, to whom he explained what he wanted done.

"Get this machine over to the airport at once and load it on the fastest 'plane you have,'" he told him.

The official looked at the "iron lung"—a huge, case-like machine—and shook his head.

"Sorry, Mr. Dexter, but it can't be done," he announced.

"What!" bellowed Dexter, seizing him by the lapels of his coat and shaking him. "It's got to be done! My son's life is at stake!"

"We have the largest transport 'planes in the country,'" protested the startled official, "but even those are not big enough to handle this machine."

As Dexter released him he continued: "I tell you what you could do—take the machine apart and we could handle it."

"Oh, but you can't do that!" interposed a young doctor standing near.

Dexter wheeled on him.

"Why not?" he snapped.

"Well, because this machine is welded

around its delicate mechanism to make it airtight," was the answer. "It wouldn't operate otherwise."

B. J. Dexter was nothing if not a fighter. He turned to his secretary, who had accompanied him.

"Call the train-master," he directed. "Tell him to make up a special with my car at once. Highball it through all the way."

It was in an early edition of an evening paper that Tom Caldwell first read the news. The thick, black lettering of the headlines seemed to dance before his eyes.

"BARNEY DEXTER RUSHES SPECIAL TRAIN TO BOULDER DAM WITH 'IRON LUNGS' TO SAVE SON'S LIFE!"

The young engineer read on; then, flinging down the paper, he charged out of the door of the control compartment of the Silver Streak, nearly knocking over Higgins and Crawford in his haste. Stopping only to telephone Tyler and to explain what he proposed to do, he caught a down-town street car and went straight to Dexter's office. Dexter, harassed and angry, refused to see him, but the youngster forced his way past the protesting secretary, and before Dexter could order him out, Tom managed to blurt out his proposition: namely, that the Silver Streak should be used to transport the "iron lungs."

"What!" roared Dexter. "Have you come here at a time like this to worry me with a fool scheme like that?"

"But Mr. Dexter," protested Tom, "we've discovered what was wrong. Now the Streak is three times as fast;



"Got you!" growled Higgins, seizing Bronte by the throat and hauling him to his feet.

speed enough to get to Boulder City before noon to-morrow."

"Do you think I'm mad enough to depend upon that crazy train of yours to save my son's life?" demanded Dexter. "I know what steam can do, and that's what I'm going to bank on." "Mr. Dexter, you've got to believe me!" pleaded Tom.

"I've told you I want nothing more to do with that train," reiterated Dexter stubbornly.

Just then the door opened to admit Tyler, and Tom appealed to him.

"Mr. Tyler, he won't listen to me. Tell him about—"

"Oh, please, please!" entreated Dexter, lifting his hands to his ears. "Ed, this young idiot is worrying me to death about the impossible speed of his train."

Tyler crossed over to his friend's desk, his face deadly serious.

"I don't know what Tom has told you, B. J.," he said quietly, "but I do know the way to get 'iron lungs' to Boulder City in time to save Allan's life; and that's on the Streak."

Dexter got up out of his chair.

"Are you crazy, too, Ed?" he muttered.

He took a turn up and down the room, and it was obvious that Tyler's sincerity was beginning to make an impression upon him, even though he hated to admit it.

Tyler pressed home his opportunity.

"Barney, you've got to take a chance," he pointed out. "No steam locomotive can make two thousand miles in nineteen hours. You've got to gamble, B. J. It's the only chance Allan's got."

"I'm afraid to take a chance, Ed," groaned Dexter, "and I'm afraid not to." Suddenly he threw his arms out in a gesture of resignation. "All right, you win. Bring on your Silver Streak!"

Having once made up his mind, the hard-bitten old railroader became the man of action again. He wheeled on Tom.

"I'll get every 'iron lung' in the hospital trucked over to the exhibition ground right away," he snapped. "And you'd better have that darned train of yours ready by then!"

"Okay, Mr. Dexter. We'll get there in time. You'll see."

"Tom, I'll run you back to the ground in my car," volunteered Tyler. "Let's go!"

Arriving back at the Silver Streak, Tom found the two inseparable mechanics, Higgins and Crawford, playing cards.

"Higgins, go and find Bronte," he ordered. "Round up the crew. We're leaving for Boulder City just as soon as we can get rolling!"

"Dead Men Tell No Tales"

AT the very time when Higgins was searching for him, Bronte, at a loose end, was wandering about the fair. Suddenly a man caught him by the arm.

"Bronte! Captain Bronte!"

Bronte wheeled, and as his startled glance rested on the man's soldierly figure and scarred, hard face, he stiffened.

"Vasczunsko!" he gasped. Automatically he started to bring his hand up in a salute; then he stopped.

"I'm glad you remember me, Bronte," returned Vasczunsko with a thin smile. "I've been looking for you for a long time. You know why, don't you?" His slate-grey eyes were cold, implacable. "The General Staff is quite interested to know why your plans

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of an armoured aeroplane fell into the hands of an unfriendly Power."

Bronte changed colour.

"But Vasczunsko," he stammered, "I—I—"

"Do not tell me," snapped the other. Then, in a purring voice: "You come back and explain to the High Command."

Bronte, knowing that he was cornered, shrugged fatalistically, and as Vasczunsko moved off, he fell into step beside him.

For a moment he thought of bolting, but he knew that once Vasczunsko had trailed him down he would never be able to shake him off. And though the High Command had no legal power to take him back, anyone who disobeyed them was as good as dead. They had agents, well-paid agents, who would see to that. What a fool he had been ever to sell those plans!

To avoid the crowds Vasczunsko led the way behind some booths in a quieter corner of the grounds, heading for a side exit. To reach it they had to pass by a narrow alley between a skating-rink and a large marquee. A little way up the alley a mallet, apparently used for hammering in the pegs of the guyropes, lay on the ground.

Bronte's eyes fastened on the mallet. He gave a quick glance round. There was no one about. And with Vasczunsko out the way he would be safe!

One tigerish spring, and Bronte had an arm about Vasczunsko's neck, choking the cry that rose to his lips. Vasczunsko struggled madly, but Bronte bore him to the ground, his free hand groping for the mallet. The engineer's fingers closed over the handle, and he struck once, twice, and yet again—vicious, murderous blows.

Vasczunsko crumpled up and lay very still, a thin trickle of blood oozing from his head. His eyes were fixed in a terrible, glassy stare.

Bronte rose to his feet, brushed the dust off his knees and picked up his hat. Quietly he slipped out of the alley, but hardly had he gained the shelter of the crowd when he heard a woman's scream, followed by an excited shout. He swore beneath his breath, cursing the ill chance that had brought discovery of the body so soon. Had anyone seen him? And if they had, would they recognise him as one of the engineers on the Silver Streak?

Trying to look calm and unhurried, he threaded his way through the crowd and arrived at the rear of the Streak. As a hand fell on his shoulder he started, but it was only Tom Caldwell.

"Bronte—gosh, I'm glad you're here!" exclaimed Tom. "I was afraid they wouldn't find you."

"Find me?" Bronte looked puzzled. "You were looking for me?"

"Yes, we've got our great chance. Non-stop run to Boulder City—two thousand miles by noon to-morrow!" Tom was almost breathless with excitement. "Go ahead, climb on and turn 'em over. This time we'll show 'em what speed really is!"

Bronte, climbing into the control car, smiled to himself. Fortune was favouring him after all. He had wanted to get away, fast and far, and chance had taken the matter out of his hands!

Whilst Bronte was overhauling the engine, the trucks arrived with the iron lungs, which were soon put on board; B. J. Dexter and Tyler spurring the men on and getting the last ounce out of them.

Just before the train was due to start Dexter brought along a bald-headed man in engineer's overalls whom he introduced to Tom as Dan O'Brien.

"Dan's an old-time engineer," he told Tom. "He knows every inch of the track from here to the coast. He'll ride up there with you and try to keep you from smashing us up."

Tom shook hands. He remembered Lowry, who had ridden with him before, but Dan looked a different type, and he took a liking to him.

At the last moment newspaper reporters crowded around Dexter and Tyler, clamouring for a statement for their papers.

"You can say for me," replied Dexter, "that this represents the only possible chance of saving the lives of my son and others, and we are going to try it regardless of any risks."

The two men climbed into the passenger car, in which were a doctor and nurse, who were being rushed off to Boulder City to help combat the epidemic, and Higgins and Crawford. There came the screech of a whistle, and slowly the Silver Streak backed out of the siding.

A Race Against Death

ONCE Tom had got the Streak past the Harrison Street Station and on to the main line he put the control lever over and soon proceeded to show what his train really could do. Fields, houses, telegraph poles—all flashed by in dizzy procession as the Streak sped like a bullet along the humming rails. At Marsden Centre the speedometer needle hovered round the ninety mark; at Crayvill it was ninety-five.

"It's fast," admitted Dan, a trifle nervously. "Yes, siree, it certainly can travel!"

The train carried a radio, with a loud-speaker extension into the control car, and suddenly the voice of an announcer was heard, telling the world the story of the Silver Streak's epic attempt.

"Tracks have been cleared over the whole distance to allow the Silver Streak to try a non-stop run at speeds never before dreamt of in railroad history. To achieve its mission the train must maintain an average of more than one hundred miles per hour for the whole distance, regardless of the many cities, mountain grades and curves it must traverse. Hourly bulletins of its progress will be broadcast from this station."

Tom glanced at his watch.

"I guess I'll have to open it up, or we'll never make it on time," he remarked.

Dan shrugged.

"You're drivin'. I don't know a thing about these Diesels."

In a few minutes they were doing well over one hundred and ten miles an hour, and Tom began to notice a buzzing in his ears induced by the terrific speed.

Gradually darkness fell, and on and on through the gathering night swept the Streak. Bronte, Higgins and Crawford took it in turns to watch the engines and nurse them along, but for Tom there was no rest. He took risks several times an hour; had to take them. When Dan implored him to slow down for a dangerous curve, Tom did so grudgingly, and even then took it at a speed that had the old engineer clinging to his seat, muttering incoherently. From time to time they heard the voice of the announcer blaring through the loud-speaker.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the Silver Streak is now approaching the Mississippi River. In the last two hours it has travelled two hundred miles. Remarkable as this speed may be, it still is not fast enough to reach Boulder Dam by to-morrow—the dead-line set by the

(Continued on page 26).

During a lecture on astronomy there is the sound of a pistol shot and when the lights are turned up an eminent doctor is found dead. Lieutenant-Detective Mallory finds himself up against a maze of conflicting evidence when trying to unravel the crime. Starring Russell Hopton



A Strange Murder

PROFESSOR TROWBRIDGE had conceived the idea of erecting a huge, up-to-date observatory, and had found many eminent astronomers and scientists willing to back the project. As a result, the Trowbridge Planetarium was erected on high ground on the outskirts of Washington. The observatory had a sliding roof that enabled scientists to study the skies with the third largest telescope in the world.

One evening a very select audience of men and women were listening to the pleasant, clear-carrying voice of Professor Ernst Einfeld, who was considered one of the most learned men of the age.

And, as he talked, an almond-eyed Egyptian took a gun out of his pocket and hid it under a handkerchief before pointing the weapon at the man he had come there to kill.

"I always considered that one of the most interesting of the stars is Arcturus," Professor Einfeld smiled benignly at his audience. "This star is forty light years away from the earth, or, in other words, light from the star, travelling at the amazing speed of 186,000 miles per second, takes forty years to reach us here—"

The sliding roof rolled back at a signal from the professor to the man seated by the control board. It was this official's job to lower the lights and work the mechanism of the telescope. The lights already had been dimmed, but now sank to a mere glow, so that the audience could stare through the open roof at the gleaming stars. A small reading lamp and a light reflected on the telescope gave an unusual effect.

"This calculation sounds fantastic and absurd." The professor gave a quiet

laugh. "But many of you here know that some stars are even farther away from the earth. But though Arcturus is so far away, the ray from that star is very powerful. I must compliment Professor Trowbridge on this planetarium projector that enables us here to see so easily. This complicated optical mechanism projects a moving image of any selected group of stars visible from the earth. In other words, you are gazing at a much magnified sky. I am not clever enough to reveal how this miracle comes about, but I believe Professor Trowbridge intends very soon to lecture on this very subject. Isn't that so, Professor Trowbridge?"

A laugh out of the darkness. "I am considering the matter, but I shall have to get my lecture sanctioned by the inventor. Thank you for your remarks on my observatory."

"I seem to have wandered from my subject," continued Einfeld. "But I felt I must say a few words about this marvellous observatory. And now to return to Arcturus. At the recent Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago a ray of light from this star, operating a photo-electric cell, opened the proceedings at a given hour. Arcturus, forty light years away, actually opened that great exhibition. It is incredible, but a fact."

He raised a long pointer. "I will now point out Arcturus to you. To-night she is very clear and easy to discern. You observe the Great Bear and Little Bear; well, you will notice a large star—"

Crack!

The roar of an explosion drowned the voice of the professor.

The official switched on the lights and jumped to his feet. Everyone was star-

ing round to see the cause of the explosion.

"It sounded like a gun," Professor Einfeld exclaimed. "But that is impossible."

A woman screamed and all eyes were focused in her direction. She was pointing to one of the seats on the platform that encircled the walls of the observatory. A figure was sprawled there, and an ominous stain was seeping down the wooden steps. One of the audience had been murdered.

A Maze of Facts and Suspicions

IT was Professor Trowbridge who restored order and took charge of the proceedings. He was a shrewd, alert man, with commanding blue eyes that were particularly stern as he gazed at the frightened people through the powerful lens of his spectacles.

"Ladies and gentlemen, silence, please. Something terrible has happened. I am now going to call the police, and I regret that no one can leave this room until permission is granted. Please do not touch anything."

Detective-lieutenant Ted Mallory was instructed by Headquarters to proceed at once to the observatory and take charge. Mallory was considered one of the smartest of detectives. Within ten minutes of the professor's call he was at the observatory.

This clever, strong-featured man of thirty listened quietly to the few words of explanation from Professor Trowbridge, and silenced with a gesture a huddle of voices and questions.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I've got to detain you all. It appears that Dr. Stone has been murdered, and it is a simple deduction that the murderer is in this room. Professor Trowbridge,

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have you a big lecture hall or room handy?"

"Yes, I have."

"Good, Regan"—he beckoned a gaunt plain-clothes man—"you will see all these people taken to that room. Professor Trowbridge and Professor Einfeld I wish to remain. Directly I have made some inquiries I will allow all you ladies and gentlemen to proceed to your various homes, but, at the moment, I must detain you. Okay, Regan."

The audience filed towards the door, anxious to get away from the grim spectacle, and old Jim Gray, the round-shouldered doorkeeper, silently pointed the direction they should go.

A pretty, dark-haired girl rushed up to Mallory and smiled at him.

"You don't want me, do you?"

"You were at the lecture, weren't you?" He did not like her assurance.

"Yes, but I've got to 'phone."

"Phone?"

"Yes, I got to spill this story. Gee, I'm lucky!"

"You're lucky—someone else wasn't." Mallory glanced significantly at the still figure, over which the police doctor was bending. "I don't know what you're talking about, but you've got to go with the others."

"But I'm Kay Palmer, of the 'Record,'" cried the girl. "I've got to tell the editor my story. This is a great news scoop."

"Someone in this room killed a man, and because you're a reporter doesn't say you didn't do it. You're as much under suspicion as any of the others!" rasped the detective. "I'm sorry, but I can't do otherwise. Now if you'll kindly go—"

"I think this is absurd," stormed the girl. "The grandest murder story this town's had for years, and you try to tell me I can't 'phone my editor. You know very well—"

Mallory, turning, saw that Regan was back in the room.

"Regan, just take this lady away, please, and watch her."

Mallory's train of thought was distracted by the sound of scuffling and a girl's voice raised in anger. Outside the doors of the observatory he found his man Regan reposing on the ground, whilst a police-officer and Jim Gray, the doorkeeper, stared at the angry girl reporter.

"She smacked my face, chief," moaned Regan.

"A swell-headed flatfoot trying to lay hands on me," stormed the girl. "You haven't heard the last of this!"

"If you don't go away you won't get any dope on this business at all," Mallory said significantly. "If you're wise you'll beat it."

Kay Palmer opened her mouth and then thought better, but she glared at him as Regan escorted her from the room.

"Now that's over we'll get busy."

Mallory leisurely went over to the scene of the crime. He stared down curiously at the body of a middle-aged man. A neatly trimmed black beard; smart, rather foppish clothes, and a monocle.

"What's the report, doc?"

"Shot through the heart, death instantaneous, gunshot wound at close quarters; that seems all."

"What do you mean by close quarters?" questioned the detective.

"Within a few feet?"

"No, no sign of powder burns." The doctor waved his hand vaguely. "A matter of yards—the limit of this room."

Mallory prowled round the room,

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glanced at the telescope and looked at the switchboard, then he got Professor Einfeld to show the place he was standing at the moment of the shot.

"The dim lighting would make it difficult for you to see anyone move," the detective remarked. "You have volunteered the information that you saw and heard nothing."

"That is so—the lightning makes the audience completely in shadow," Einfeld answered. "Nor did I hear anything."

"Get the engineer or electrician here that worked the switchboard," directed Mallory. "I'd like to ask him a few questions."

Mr. Gorman was a thin-faced, tall man, whose hair was thin, and his eyes would never look squarely at a person. Mallory listened to all that he had to say.

"You also do work here as under-manager," stated Mallory. "And Professor Trowbridge tells me you sent out the invitations for this lecture?"

"That is so. One hundred were sent out and eighty accepted."

"Were there eighty present at the lecture?"

"Eighty invitation forms were handed in to Gray the doorkeeper, who placed them in my office."

"Well, I guess we'll have all of them back in here," Mallory decided.

"Regan, fetch 'em back."

When all were in the room they glanced expectantly at the lieutenant. They were relieved to find that the body had been removed. They were asked to take the same seats that they occupied during the lecture.

Mallory questioned them, and found that several people were of opinion that someone had been moving about in the audience—one swore it was a woman, whilst another swore it was a man. Several people had felt the draught of the bullet and were certain the gun had been fired close to their ears.

"Professor Trowbridge and Mr. Gorman." The lieutenant detective beckoned the two officials. "You two should know a good bit about those people invited to this lecture. Is there anybody here who was not invited?"

"I can vouch for a great number, but Mr. Gorman handles the social side and would know more than I do on this point," Professor Trowbridge said nervously. "There are one or two faces here that seem strange to me, but I've not a good memory for faces."

Mallory glanced at Gorman, and thought the man seemed nervous.

"There is one person here who was not invited!" someone shouted. "That man over there!"

Mallory turned quickly to stare keenly at a youngish man, whose top lip was adorned with a small black moustache.

"Who are you?"

"John Morgan, and I was confidential secretary to Dr. Stone," was the reply. "I came here because Dr. Stone has had several threats made against his life."

"Now we're getting at something," Mallory came across and studied Morgan closely. "Why did you come here?"

"I thought the threats were idle ones, but I wanted to be on the safe side," Morgan explained. "I watched everyone carefully, and especially that man. I know he hated Dr. Stone."

The detective lieutenant followed the direction of Morgan's gaze and beheld the Egyptian, who leaned back in his seat without displaying any great interest in the proceedings.

"What is your name?" Mallory asked.

"Ahmed Haidru," said the man in a soft whisper, and almond eyes looked at the detective defiantly.

"I know he was not on the list for invitations," cried Trowbridge. "You

never sent him an invitation, Mr. Gorman?"

"N-no," Gorman answered. "Certainly not."

"You've got a gun," the detective accused the Egyptian. "Hand it over."

A shrug of the shoulders and Ahmed Haidru produced the gun, which was wrapped in a silk handkerchief. All barrels loaded. Mallory removed the bullets and examined the gun closely. This weapon had not been fired for weeks. The Egyptian seemed amused.

"I came here with that gun and I waited my time. I would shoot the man who cheated me of my money," The Egyptian shrugged his shoulders. "I told him he should die, and I came here to kill him with this gun, but someone else robbed me of my revenge."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that I did not shoot Dr. Stone, and I am very sorry that someone deprived me of the pleasure." The Egyptian smiled sadly. "You can use your third degree or any method you like—I did not kill Stone, but I did come here to kill him."

"Regan, take this man," Mallory snapped out. "Detain him on a charge of unlawful carrying of firearms."

The Egyptian seemed resigned to what fate had in store for him, and with head held high was marched out by Regan.

Mallory had had several years of crime investigation, and had met all types of crooks and killers. Was this Ahmed Haidru telling the truth? An unbelievable story, and somehow for that very reason Mallory felt Dr. Stone had not been killed by this man. He instructed Regan to hand him the report on the rest of the audience. Regan, acting on instructions, had obtained particulars when the audience had been herded into the next room.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I won't detain you any longer," Mallory told them. "But if you have business out of town I recommend you to notify the police of any change of address. Mr. Morgan, I should like a few words with you."

The detective went across to Professor Trowbridge.

"I have noticed one man, who is one of your officials, and no doubt he is above suspicion. He helped me have the body removed and assisted Regan to get all those names and particulars of your audience."

"That's Langsdale," Trowbridge explained. "He holds no definite post here yet, but he assists both Gorman and myself. I shall give him a position some time in the near future."

"Then Langsdale's a new man?"

"Yes, I took him on a few days ago." Trowbridge peered intently at the detective. "I have known of Langsdale for years, and have great belief in his abilities."

"Okay!" Mallory signified that that line of questioning was at an end. He turned to beckon Morgan, and found Kay Palmer looking at him with mocking though angry eyes.

"I presume I may telephone the story to my paper now?"

"You may," Mallory decided that when angry this girl looked most attractive, but like most journalists a little queer.

"Thanks, and will I give them a story?" Kay Palmer paused at the door. "Of all the incapable people you take the prize. You've footled around asking asinine questions, and where are you? Nowhere!"

"And what's your theory?" A smile twitched the strong mouth.

"You know the direction of the shot, and it must have come from someone on that side," Kay Palmer answered. "That Egyptian was sitting in the place

from whence the shot was fired. But why should I tell you your job? Good-evening."

"Good-evening to you," grinned Mallory. "I'll enjoy your story."

Morgan's cough reminded him that there was still one witness.

"You carry a gun?"

"Yes." Morgan produced the weapon. Mallory examined it.

"Loaded. You have a permit?"

Morgan handed over a permit.

"The second person with a gun at a lecture on astronomy, and I think one can assume that there was a third person with a gun. Yet no one of the audience had a gun besides you and Ahmed Haidru. Curious."

"Examine the gun, and you'll find the barrels spotless." Morgan was not perturbed. "That gun hasn't been fired this evening."

"Dr. Stone received threatening letters—got any of them?"

"No, the doctor destroyed them all. He used to laugh over them and put them in the fire."

"And yet you thought these threats so serious that you came to this meeting armed?"

"I did not think much of the threats until that Egyptian came to the office a few weeks back. Haidru has been there several times, and though not present I heard them rowing, and when the Egyptian left he shouted that he would kill Stone very soon. And believe me the look in that slit-eyed guy's face wasn't nice."

"How long have you been with Stone?" questioned the officer.

"Six months. A good boss, but close with his money. Besides doctoring he was a drug manufacturer, and because of some drug this Egyptian had it in for Stone." Morgan gave a significant nod. "Stone was pretty sharp at business, and maybe he did do this Egyptian fellow out of some secret process. That's only an idea."

"Thanks for all you've told me." Mallory handed back the gun and permit. "One last word—don't leave town."

Only Trowbridge remained, and after a final look round Mallory decided to do no more till morning. The old doorkeeper got up as the two men came out of the observatory.

"Shall I lock up, sir?" he asked in a hoarse, tired whisper.

"Yes, Jim, lock up," answered Trowbridge.

"You're Jim Gray, the doorkeeper." Mallory stared at the old fellow. "Did anyone leave the observatory during the lecture?"

"No one, sir." A shake of the big head, with its mop of untidy grey hair. "I was sitting just inside the door, and no one attempted to leave. They could not have opened this door because it was locked. Whoever did it, gentlemen, must have been inside that observatory, and no person got past me."

The Missing Page

MALLORY was not pleased when he read the headlines of the "Record" on the Planetarium Murder Mystery. A scathing article on the inability of the police to find the criminal and methods used by their detectives. He was not surprised to have a call from the District Attorney.

"The elections are coming on, Mallory, and this case will give the opposition a handle if it isn't cleared up sharply," said the D.A. over the phone. "You've read the 'Record' this morning?"

"Yes, and I know the reporter who is responsible. If she weren't a dame,

I'd feel like socking her!" Mallory granted back.

"Don't give her or her paper a chance of any more wisecracks." The D.A. was emphatic. "Any clues on the case?"

"Ahmed Haidru seems to be the guilty person, but I haven't proof positive. I'll come round and talk the case over."

After an unsatisfactory interview with the District Attorney, he decided to see the Egyptian—that did not help him much. Dr. Stone had stolen some secret process that the Egyptian considered of great value. His story was the same as last night.

At the Planetarium Mallory first saw Trowbridge, but gained no information of any value, then he went to see Einfeld in the office that had been set aside for this important little foreigner.

"Did you know this Dr. Stone, professor?"

"I have heard of him for his interest in drugs, but I do not know him," was the reply. "I had no idea he was a student of astronomy. I gave Professor Trowbridge a list of some well-known people I wanted invited, and Trowbridge added a few names on his own."

His next interview was with Gorman. "How did Ahmed Haidru get that invitation?"

"That's a mystery to me."

Gorman gave the detective a furtive glance.

"It's no mystery to you," Mallory answered. "You sent the Egyptian that invitation. Why?"

Gorman hesitated, then faced his accuser.

"Yes, I lied just now. I did send Haidru that invitation. The man came to me and said he was very interested in astronomy and especially in the star Arcturus. I thought he was genuine, and as one ticket had come back I let him have it."

"Without getting Trowbridge's sanction, and thus endangering your own position here," Mallory shook his head. "Wasn't there something more to this act of generosity?"

"Haidru offered me a hundred

dollars," Gorman admitted. "I was desperately hard up because my wife has been very ill. A hundred dollars staved off my creditors until my next month's salary comes due. The man seemed genuine, and I took the chance of being found out."

Mallory went off and made a few inquiries about Gorman, but could not tie up any other connection between the official and the Egyptian. Seeing old Jim Gray shuffling around he inquired where Langsdale could be found, and was shown the latter's office.

"You have just joined the staff at this observatory. Have you always been interested in the stars and their courses?"

"I've always been a delver into the unknown." Langsdale glanced frankly at the detective. "I've dabbled in science and engineering, and in my time tried many kinds of jobs. If I lost this job and someone offered me another with an insurance company I'd take it. Beggars can't be choosers, but I prefer something interesting and baffling like astronomy."

"What was your previous job?"

Langsdale took so long to answer that Mallory's interest quickened.

"Guess I've been dreading that question like going to a dentist." The official gave a wry grin. "I was in my last job five years, and I didn't enjoy it. Prison isn't a pleasant place."

"Prison?"

"Got six years, but good conduct reduced it to five. My name isn't Langsdale, but Weston."

"Does Professor Trowbridge know this?"

"Oh, yes, he's known me since I was a youngster!" Langsdale explained. "But for Professor Trowbridge, I should be lining up with other tramps for food and a place to sleep."

Mallory studied the ex-convict closely. "What is your real name, and what was the reason of the sentence?"

"Name is Weston, and the reason assault with intent to kill." Langsdale laughed bitterly. "Sounds bad, but when you're up against a man who has a fortune and all the lawyers in the



"A swell-headed flatfoot trying to lay hands on me!" stormed the girl. "You haven't heard the last of this,"

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world behind him, it is possible for an unfortunate like myself to be framed. I admit that when I attacked this man I was mad with rage and wanted to do bodily harm, but to kill is another matter. Any rate, the other side laid it on hot and strong for me, and I got a heavy sentence."

"Why did you attack this man?"

"Because he had robbed me of a valuable formula," said Langsdale with a shrug of his shoulder. "But I've only my word for it and not a scrap of proof. They laughed at my story. One day, Mallory, I'm going to meet that guy again, and I may fix him for keeps. Foolish thing to tell a police officer, but that man robbed me of a fortune and made me give up the girl I was going to marry."

"Who is this man, and where is he now?"

"The name is Harold Skinner," Langsdale confessed quite frankly. "But I have no idea of his whereabouts. I've made inquiries because I intend to get something for the secret that made thousands for Skinner, but he's vanished, and, more than likely, changed his name."

"Thanks for telling me, Langsdale." Mallory eyed the self-confessed criminal. "Of course I'll have to keep my eye on you, for this assault and crime sheet bring you under suspicion. Stick around."

Lieutenant Mallory went to see Professor Trowbridge to demand why the professor had said nothing of Langsdale's criminal record.

"Because I hoped he would tell you himself. If you had come to me and Langsdale had not told you, then I should have done. I have complete trust in the man."

"Well, I hope your trust isn't misplaced," Mallory said significantly. "By the way, have you a book on Arcturus? I'd like to read about that star."

"No, I haven't, but there are sure to be books about Arcturus in Professor Einfeld's room."

Mallory went along to the professor's room and found old Jim Gray tidying up the place.

"Jim, is there any book here on that star Arcturus?"

"Arcturus?" Jim Gray rubbed his wrinkled chin. "Not that I know of, sir. I'll have a look round."

Mallory also had a prowling round the book-shelves, and found nothing of any importance. He looked round to find that Jim Gray had gone, and he was glad, because that enabled him to look through the professor's papers. The first book he saw on the desk was on astronomy, and the index gave two pages dealing with Arcturus. He opened the book to find that two pages had been torn out hurriedly.

"That's mighty funny."

Mallory's eyes narrowed. He flicked over the pages, and a picture dropped out.

"To my old friend, Professor Einfeld," and it was signed by Dr. Stone.

"And he told me he had never met Stone," Mallory spoke softly. "There's some funny business going on."

A Threat on Einfeld's Life

NEXT morning the headlines of the "Record" startled Mallory, and he was reading what Kay Palmer, special correspondent, had written with bulging eyes when the D.A. told him to come over right away, and make it snappy.

The D.A. was in a furious rage.

"What's all this about Professor Einfeld knowing the person who killed Stone? What's it all mean?"

"That's what I would like to know."

August 24th, 1935.

Mallory shook his head. "I did not grant the girl an interview, and I know she hasn't seen Einfeld. She must have seen someone to get this extraordinary story."

Mallory was accompanied by Regan, and chance made the lieutenant glance at his assistant. He knew the slow-witted detective and his habits, and Regan was at the moment registering acute uneasiness.

"Regan, do you know anything about this?" he asked.

Regan shuffled his feet, grinned nervously, twisted his hat in his hands, and was speechless.

The District Attorney now observed the signs, and scowled.

"Regan, did you talk to Kay Palmer of the 'Record'?" The wretched man nodded. "Then what in thunder did you say to her?"

"Well, sir, it was a joke. I was kidding her, same as Mallory kids people," Regan admitted. "I was round at the observatory, and they told me the dame wanted an interview with someone in authority, preferably someone intelligent, and she didn't wish to see Mr. Mallory. So I saw her."

"If I weren't a cop," groaned Mallory. "What did you tell her, you big egg?"

"She kinda wheedled round me for a story, so I used my inventive faculties," Regan admitted. "She fired questions at me, and among others wanted to know if Einfeld had any theories, so I laughed and said that maybe Einfeld might know. Maybe the professor has a past, and he ain't letting on that he knew Stone. Maybe he didn't like Stone, and was glad to see him bumped off, or maybe he saw an enemy of Stone's there, and when the deed was done didn't like to say anything lest he himself be implicated. I thought she knew I was kidding her."

"You and your maybes," raved Mallory. "She's swallowed all you said and added plenty. According to the 'Record,' Einfeld knows the name of the killer. Of all the dud cakes you're the prize."

"I'm sorry, boss."

"The deed's done," Mallory turned to the D.A. "This has changed my plans. I've got to get busy. Regan and this girl have got the old professor in a jam. I'll go and see that clever dame."

Kay Palmer was proudly triumphant when Mallory came into the reporters' room and strode up to her desk.

"I hope you're proud of what you have done," he said harshly. "First of all Regan was trying to kid you. That big sap knows nothing. Moreover, you've endangered a man's life."

"What do you mean by that? Your slow, stupid methods—"

"Shut up!" Mallory interrupted.

"You don't think Einfeld killed Stone, do you? No, I see you don't. Then why sentence the old boy to danger? Terrible danger, Miss Palmer. This mystery is a baffler, and yet you say in your rag for all to see that Einfeld knows who did the deed. The real murderer will read that, and though I know your story is a lot of bunk, the murderer won't know that, and he'll think he's heading for the chair. What will he do to save himself? He'll try to kill Einfeld. Now, perhaps, you realise what your cleverness has done. If Einfeld should be killed one person is to blame. Think it over. Good-morning!"

Without a backward glance Mallory strode from the room, leaving behind a white-faced, horror-stricken girl.

His next call was at the hotel of Professor Einfeld, and he told the reception

clerk that he didn't care if the professor was in bed, he was going to see him.

Without his teeth and his hair all awry the professor looked a strange spectacle. The funny little man was peering and blinking at that morning's paper.

"I'm so glad to see you," he beamed his relief. "Do you see what they're saying in the papers? I know who killed the poor man—but I don't. You don't think I know, do you, Mr. Mallory?"

"Did you know Dr. Stone?"

"No—no! You asked me that once before." The professor blinked his eyes.

"Why?"

Mallory produced the photograph and the professor denied that he had ever seen it before. He did not know Stone, so why should Stone send him a signed photograph?

Mallory peered closely at the picture and the writing—the ink seemed very fresh—he would have an expert examine it. He explained to the professor that the papers had made a big mistake, but did not say that his fool assistant and a charming high-spirited girl were the cause.

"You're angry, professor, because the papers print a wrong statement, but I'm annoyed because it puts you in danger."

"Danger? Me?"

"If the killer thinks you know his identity he may have nasty intentions towards you," Mallory said grimly. "From now on you're going to be guarded night and day."

The telephone rang beside the bed, and the professor answered the call. Mallory was looking round the room when a startled exclamation made him turn. The professor was shakily replacing the receiver, and when he looked at Mallory his face was drawn and white.

"What's wrong?"

"My life is in danger."

"What do you mean?"

"A strange voice on the wire. Threatening me with death if I dared to squeal."

"Did you recognise the voice?"

"It was a man," the professor replied. "But very husky and hoarse as if he were trying to disguise his tones."

Mallory sprang to the 'phone.

"Trace that call. Police orders!"

Ten minutes passed and Mallory again went to the 'phone. It was a new girl who answered; the other had gone off but left no message. Vehemently Mallory explained.

"I expect she thought you were having a joke with her," came the reply. "Or else the call came from a booth."

"In every direction I am baffled or else balked by imbeciles," Mallory cried, after ringing off. "Regan, get hold of the management, take him by the scruff of the neck and make him conduct you to the exchange. Get the name of the girl who has gone off duty and find out what happened."

"I have to return to Germany in a few days, and there are many things I must do before then." The professor shook his head gloomily. "I can't stay in this hotel all day. I must go about my business even if my life is in danger."

"Research work?"

"Yes, at the Planetarium."

"You don't want to spend the rest of your life wondering if someone is going to shoot you or jump on you from behind with a knife, do you?" Mallory said suddenly. "You'd like this business settled and so would everybody else. This killer has got to be found. This newspaper report we can use as a trap, if you'll allow yourself, professor, to be the bait."

"The cheese for the mouse?"

"That's the idea," Mallory smiled.



"Loaded, eh?" said Mallory. "Have you got a permit?"

"You want to work at the Planetarium. You shall at six this evening. Two of my boys and an armed motor-cycle escort will bring you over to the Planetarium, and I'll get the Press to announce that the brave professor has gone back to his studies in spite of the fact that his life has been threatened."

"I am not very brave, and perhaps

"Professor, leave this to me." Mallory was confident. "The killer won't get away with it a second time."

The Second Shot

MALLORY sent word to the observatory that he was coming over to see Professor Trowbridge, to whom he explained all that he wanted done.

"I'll get all Professor Einfeld's papers and his desk moved into the observatory so that he can continue his studies. If you'll excuse me I'll see about that at once."

When Professor Trowbridge had gone Mallory walked across to the large desk and idly glanced at the various objects. His attention was attracted by an open telephone book. Open at the Su's. Curious, because Professor Einfeld's hotel was named Sutton. More curious still when Mallory saw a faint pencil mark under Sutton Hotel. Trowbridge had a voice that varied in tone and would be easy to disguise.

At how many more was the finger of suspicion to point?

In the observatory he found Jim Gray placing the desk near the great telescope.

"How will this do here, sir?" cried the old fellow. "The professor will be as safe as houses with the doors closed and your men mounting guard. All the professor's papers and books are here."

"Thank you, Jim. That will be all."

Mallory made another close study of the observatory, and for some while found nothing unusual. Near the desk was an old box, placed by the side of the platform, to which the base of the telescope was fixed. Probably placed there because the step was a high one. Mallory believed in searching everything and inside the box was a gun.

Mallory broke open the gun and found one chamber fired and the rest loaded. Thoughtfully he placed the gun where he had found it and stood by the desk. He made a motion of falling, and shook his head. He went nearer the telescope and did the same trick—that seemed to satisfy him. One more look round, and then Mallory went down to the main hall to wait the arrival of Professor Einfeld.

Regan and other detectives were waiting around. Except for certain officials there were no others in the building, nor would anybody be admitted unless with a police pass. Mallory instructed them to watch the roof.

"When they want to observe the stars part of the glass roof slides back. I don't think any danger will come that way, but one must be on the alert. Professor Trowbridge, Gorman, Langsdale and old Jim are the only officials in the building. Keep tab on them so we can check their movements should anything happen."

"Do you think anything is going to happen, chief?" asked Regan.

"I think someone will try to kill the professor," was the grim answer. "And that reminds me. Ring up that dame at the 'Record' and ask her to come across. I'd like her to see how her clever remarks endangered a man's life."

Kay Palmer was over within ten minutes and not quite so sure of herself. She had to admit that she had been a bit hasty, but it was nice of

Mallory to have her over on the chance of a story.

"Let's hope it isn't another killing," Mallory added significantly. "And remember you're here on the understanding that you do as you're told and no wild ham-scarum stories to the editor. Ah, here is Professor Einfeld."

Mallory took the professor to the observatory, and he was careful to lock the door. On the desk was the book on astronomy, and Einfeld was very angry when he found the torn-out pages.

"It seems to me that somebody doesn't want to know anything about this Arcturus star," Mallory said. "Professor, will you give me a brief talk on this star?"

The professor slid back the roof, remarked that they were fortunate to have such a clear sky, and showed him the crescent-shaped Arcturus. He talked about light taking forty years to reach the earth, but what interested him most was the use made of the star to open the Century of Progress Exhibition at Chicago. He got the professor to explain that in detail.

"Professor, have you had your life threatened before?"

"No, no, I can't say I have." The professor shook his head. "But I have been in many countries and been in very lonely places, and often my life has been in danger from bandits and such like. I have a gun." He laughed. "Thank goodness I've never had to fire it—I've never fired one in my life."

"You carry the gun on you?"

"Oh, no, I keep it in my desk." The professor opened a drawer. "That is very strange—the gun has disappeared."

"Not so strange as you think." Mallory went to the box. "Is this your gun?"

The professor nodded and looked at the detective in amazement.

"Your life is in great danger, and I don't quite know how the person who shot Stone plans to get you. I've an idea, but I'm not sure. Before I leave you to get on with your studies I want to be sure no one is in the observatory, and that you are quite safe."

Fifteen minutes later Mallory opened the observatory, and shouted for Jim Gray. The old janitor could not be found, and none of the detectives knew where he had gone. The mystery was soon explained when Trowbridge reported the District Attorney on the line.

"I've got Jim Gray here," the D.A. explained. "It's been on his conscience to reveal some facts that he has kept back because of the observatory. He knows that Professor Einfeld and Dr. Stone were intimately acquainted, and that both men knew Ahmed Haidra."

"Best thing you can do, sir, is to come over here and bring Jim Gray with you," suggested Mallory. "I daren't leave here, and I'll be obliged if you'll hurry. 'Bye!'"

Mallory found Kay Palmer and smiled at the girl reporter. "You stick around with me, and maybe I'll get you an exclusive story."

"I'm very dubious about this attempt on the professor's life," she said with a flash of her old spirit. "I think you're imagining all this danger."

"You know how a train starts—slowly at first." He smiled at her. "And how it gains speed later. Well, just imagine this night as a train and this place the station. The red light is at danger and yet the wheels of the train are slowly moving. Kay, by that I mean that things are moving."

They were on the roof, looking at the stars and talking about various subjects of interest when distinctly they heard a shot.

"The observatory!" shouted Mallory. "Come on!"

They found several of the detectives trying to open the door, which was locked. They were thinking of breaking down the door when Professor Trowbridge appeared.

"Have you got a key that fits?" The professor hesitated.

"Yes, I have."

"Thanks," Mallory opened the door. "All you boys guard this door well and no one to come in. Professor, you will accompany me." He saw two figures hurrying to the scene. "Langsdale! Gorman! You come in with the professor."

The place smelt of powder and the lights were out. Mallory switched them on and gave a gasp of horror. He pointed across the room at the prone figure.

"The professor!" shouted Langsdale. "They've got him!"

Mallory was first beside the body.

"Stand back, gentlemen, please. Don't touch anything."

"There's a gun near his hand!" gasped Gorman.

Mallory examined the body.

"Gentlemen, I regret to say that Professor Einfeld is dead."

"Dead?" they cried.

"Yes, dead!" Mallory got up.

"Who killed him?" shouted Trowbridge. "Aren't you going to have the place searched?"

"He shot himself," Mallory explained. "I think we shall find that Professor Einfeld killed Dr. Stone."

The expressions on the faces of those three men interested Mallory very keenly.

"Trowbridge, no one must know of this yet. Will you please get through to police headquarters and ask the coroner to come here at once. No, don't use this 'phone. It may have finger-

August 24th, 1935.

prints. Langsdale, will you go downstairs and wait for the D.A. to arrive, and bring him here as soon as he appears? You can tell him that the professor has been shot. Gorman, I'd like you to go downstairs and keep any Press hounds at bay. Tell Miss Palmer that if she wants to make a big scoop to wait, and if she attempts to 'phone the 'Record' stop her."

Directly the officials had gone Mallory locked the door. He clapped his hands, and then the body of Professor Einfeld moved.

The Time Gun

LEUTENANT MALLORY helped Professor Einfeld to get to his feet.

"You played the part magnificently," the detective enthused. "Trowbridge and those other two thought you were dead. Tell me what happened?"

"After you left me I lay down by that box, upsetting the box and pushing out the revolver so that it lay close to my hand. Then I remembered about the lights, and I quickly put them out and lay down on the floor. It was very eerie lying there and hardly breathing. I got such a pain in my neck after a while that I turned my head very quietly and looked round, but all I saw was the open roof with the stars." He gave a shaky laugh. "And Arcturus looked so big and strange, as if the star laughed at me."

"Then what happened?"

"The crash of an explosion almost in my ear and I think I really am dead, but then I moved and knew that I'm not touched," the professor said excitedly. "I keep very quiet as you tell me, but there is not a sound. Then a few moments later you come into the observatory with the others. Thank goodness they did not look too close—I was shaking from head to feet."

"The crash of the explosion almost in your ears," Mallory looked round. "As if the killer were standing over you?"

"Yes, but I heard no one."

"Because no one was here!" The detective jumped on to the platform of the big telescope. "This is where we're going to find your killer."

"I see no one." The professor was alarmed.

Mallory pointed to the telescope.

"This is the fellow we're after. Come closer, professor."

Professor Einfeld climbed on to the platform.

"The smell of powder is very keen."

"Yes, and if you'll glance at the telescope you'll see marks of a powder explosion and you'll also see something else. Look!"

"What is that thing?" The professor peered through a powerful eyeglass.

"This is something I have never seen before. It is not part of the telescope, and yet it is fixed with wires. It looks like—like—"

He gaped at Mallory.

"It's a gun!"

"A time-gun." Mallory climbed up for a better look. "Painted the same colour as the telescope and easily fixed. You mentioned the photo electric cell that was used for opening the exhibition at Chicago, and here's another. But instead of opening gates this cell is connected to a trigger of a gun, and when Arcturus is in a certain position the star's ray is taken by the telescope to the cell. The time of the gun-shot was, roughly, eight forty-two, and in a few minutes I'm going to ask you, professor, to move the telescope so that the ray will again cause that cell to function, firing the gun."

"Why?"

"Just to give the murderer the shock of his life," grimly smiled Mallory.

"Let's take the direction of the shot." He went over to the steel walls and made a close examination. "Ah, here's the mark."

"But I don't see how that gun could get me?"

"Professor, the murderer knew that, when working, most of your time would be spent close to the telescope. If you had been using the telescope to look at Arcturus at the time that gun went off, the bullet would have lodged in the brain. Why did the killer know you would be using the telescope at eight-forty-two?"

"Because I have notes stating when Arcturus is best observed," instantly answered Einfeld. "For instance, tomorrow the time would be nine-five—all the officials know of these times."

"So you're beginning to suspect someone at the observatory," Mallory chuckled. "Your gun was hidden by that box and, when you fell, would have been revealed. The idea being to make it look as if it were suicide. Remorse on your part for killing Stone, and the murderer confident that the only person able to reveal his secret dead. Ingenious. The set gun would have killed you at close quarters, and your gun lies on the floor with one barrel fired; you would have fallen near the box, and the natural assumption would be suicide. A somewhat clumsy deduction on the killer's part—he thinks the police have no intelligence."

"You know who tried to kill me?"

"One of four persons, and I think I know the one," Mallory pointed to the telescope. "It is now nearly nine-fifteen. I want you to make careful adjustments so that the gun would fire again at nine-forty-five. Can you do that?"

"Certainly," the professor answered.

"I'll do it now."

The telescope was in its new position when there came a rapping on the outer door. Regan bellowed so that Mallory could hear—the D.A. and the coroner were outside.

"Wait a few minutes!" the detective shouted back.

"Sham death again, and don't get up till I give the word," he whispered to Einfeld. "I'm going to let them all in, and I hope to get proof positive on the identity of the murderer. Curiously enough, I can't find the motive for the crime by the suspected person. One of my four suspects has a motive, and yet I don't think he did the deed. All I can surmise is that the murderer is crazy or that there is something I don't know. So please act nicely, professor, and maybe we'll find out everything. Don't forget to keep your knees from shaking."

"I'll do my best." The professor got down on the floor. "I shall be glad, my friend, when all this acting is finished."

The Four Suspects

THE people crowded into the observatory and Mallory took up his position near the prone figure.

"You kept us outside a long time, Mallory," complained the District Attorney.

"I didn't want anything disturbed until I had made a thorough search and investigation," the detective explained. "It was important that I should take these precautions. I should like the coroner to examine the body."

The D.A. came nearer.

"A grave risk you're taking, Ted. Suppose Professor Einfeld was only badly wounded—they might hold you

(Continued on page 25)

Into the jungle came men of the wild white youth's own race and colour, and he found himself the chief actor in a strange and perilous drama. A terrific serial story of a \$500,000 quest that revealed a lost kingdom and restored to the world a medical formula of the first importance to humanity. Starring Noah Beery, Jun., and Dorothy Short



Episode 3.—“Stampeding Death”

READ THIS FIRST

In the hope of obtaining a cure for infantile paralysis, the Carnafellow Foundation sends two American specialists and their assistants to an experimental station in darkest Africa.

Dr. Trevor is one of them, and he and his assistant, Carl, are interested only in benefiting humanity. Not so their two colleagues, Bracken and Phillips, these being more interested in a \$500,000 reward which has been offered for a cure.

Trevor discovers an antidote, and Bracken and Phillips attempt to secure the formula of it. To outwit them, Trevor writes one half of the formula on a parchment, and engraves the other half on a wrist-band worn by his little son, Jan.

At the experimental station there is a menagerie packed with wild animals, used by the doctors in their research. That same night these break loose, and in the excitement young Jan is led into the jungle by Chiema, a tame chimpanzee which has been his playmate.

Trevor follows them. His wife is slain by the escaped animals, and so is his assistant. Bracken and Phillips survive, and return to America, but fifteen years later they come back to Africa, learning that Trevor has suddenly shown up at the home of a trader named Andrews.

They reach Andrews' remote trading station only to discover that Trevor's mind is a blank.

About that same time Chiema and Jan, who is now grown to manhood, are captured by the crew of a steamer on which Andrews' daughter, Mona, is travelling.

The craft is afterwards wrecked, but

Jan, Chiema and Mona Andrews gain the shore, together with a seaman named Borno, who is something of a mystery. Later, Borno and Mona fall into the hands of cannibals, and in an attempt to save them Jan drops down into the native village from the trees.

Now read on

The Burning Village

AS the mob of cannibals rushed towards him Jan sprang to his feet and, on the spur of the moment, he leaped upon one of the two witch-doctors, who had been capering in front of the prisoners, Borno and Mona.

Acting like one inspired, Jan seized the witch-doctor wrested from his hand the blazing torch that he was carrying, and then hurled the native to the ground. Next instant the young white man was making for the trees, with a swarm of blacks in full cry.

He plunged into the darkness of the thickets, and heard the spears of his foes come slashing through the foliage. Yet it was as if he bore a charmed life, for none of the missiles struck him, and escaping with a grazed shoulder, he jumped for an overhanging bough and pulled himself upward.

He was climbing high into the trees when his pursuers appeared below him. They could tell where he was by the flaming torch that he was now grasping in his fist, and with insensate yells they hurled more spears at him, endeavouring to bring him down, but the shafts were turned by the branches amidst which he was clambering.

Suddenly he began to work back towards the village, swooping through the trees with the rapidity and the agility

of an ape, and all at once he was immediately above the outer ring of huts.

Before the confused and scattered savages knew what was happening he had set fire to the thatched roofs of some seven or eight of the dwellings, and then, flinging the torch aside, he vanished into the upper foliage of the trees again—vanished almost as swiftly as he had appeared.

The huts into which he had thrust the burning brand were soon ablaze, and a wind that was blowing through the jungle carried the gathering flames to adjacent hovels. Meanwhile, anxious groups of natives were running to and fro in utter consternation, some striving to save the dwellings that were now alight, others doing all they could to prevent the conflagration from spreading.

To fight the blaze they had to fetch water from the river, and the delay caused in hurrying back and forth rendered their efforts futile. Indeed, a trained brigade of firemen could scarcely have hoped to quell the inferno, so quickly did it sweep from hut to hut.

The warriors who had pursued Jan into the thickets were back in the village by this time, helping to wage war on the fire. Almost every man of the tribe, in fact, was engaged upon this task, as well as many of the women and children. But they could do nothing to stem the surge of the flames through the close-grouped dwellings, and in the space of fifteen minutes half the kraal was burning.

From a leafy cyrie high above the scene of destruction Jan watched the efforts of the natives and awaited his chance, and at last, when he judged

that the moment was ripe, he began to lower himself quietly from bough to bough.

Reaching the ground, he crouched down in the undergrowth on the fringe of the clearing, and directed his glance towards the bound figures of Borno and Mona, lashed to a couple of stakes not far away.

Complete chaos reigned in the village, and the cannibals seemed to have forgotten their captives. Taking full advantage of the situation he had created, Jan braced himself for action and made a dash towards the abandoned prisoners.

Unnoticed he won his way to the spot where they stood, and was about to untie their thongs with his hands when he discerned a knife lying close by. It must have been dropped by one of the natives and, snatching it up, Jan speedily cut the bonds that fastened Mona and Borno to the two wooden posts.

Mona was in a fainting condition, and slumped to the ground just after she had been released. The instant he had set Borno free, Jan wheeled to raise her in his strong arms and lift her across his shoulder; then he made for the jungle with the other man close behind him.

It was as they were on the point of entering the thickets that a party of warriors saw them, and with angry shouts these gave up the vain fight against the spreading fire to take after the escaping captives and their rescuer.

Jan and Borno dived into the heart of the vegetation, but had only gone a few paces when the older man laid a hand on his companion's arm.

"Jan," he gasped, "you save the girl. She is precious—more precious to me than my own life. I'll try to lead the cannibals away from you, and if it is my lot to survive I'll meet you near the spot where Mona and I were captured."

Without waiting for a reply he struck off to the right and, as he vanished amidst the thickets, Jan turned in the other direction.

He did not keep to the ground, however, but pulled himself into the trees, and so great was his strength, so lithe the rippling muscles of his clean-cut body, that the dead weight of the girl who lay across his broad shoulder seemed scarcely to hamper him.

He was moving almost silently through the upper foliage of those jungle trees when the pursuing band of savages gained the spot where he and Borno had separated, and as they heard the seaman threshing through the underbrush somewhere ahead of them they pushed forward determinedly.

Keeping to the tree-tops, Jan continued his strange journey with the unconscious daughter of Trader Andrews, and presently he was joined by Chiema, who must have kept track of his activities. Together the young white man and the chimpanzee then passed rapidly from bough to bough, making use of trailing vines to swing themselves through space wherever there was a gap too wide to jump.

They were sure of foot—Jan equally as sure as the ape. Never once did the son of Harry Trevor slip or falter, and never once was Mona Andrews in danger of crashing to the earth away below. Whether he was treading the branch of a tree, or swooping through mid-air with one hand clasped on the fibrous tendril of a creeper, his hold on the girl was tight and secure.

Behind them the shouts of the cannibal villagers died away, and in the sky the lurid glow of the doomed huts faded gradually into the star-spangled

darkness. Then at last Jan reached the locality where Borno and Mona had first been taken by the savages.

Mona was now beginning to recover consciousness, but her rescuer had descended to the ground with her before she was fully in possession of her wits.

"What happened?" the girl asked tremulously. "Where's—where's Borno?"

"Borno, he come here later," Jan replied, hoping against hope that the seaman would be able to give his pursuers the slip.

He smiled at her reassuringly, and then proceeded to gather a quantity of twigs and fronds, providing her with a makeshift but comfortable bed.

"Mona sleep," he said to her. "Jan keep watch."

He persuaded her to lie down, and before long she was slumbering from sheer exhaustion. Close by, with Chiema squatting beside him, Jan sat with his broad back against the bole of a tree, and his arms folded across his deep chest.

He did not sleep, but remained on the alert, ready for any emergency.

The Taking of Borno

ABOUT the time that Jan was rescuing his friends from the clutches of the cannibals, the search-party, headed by Bracken and Phillips, was some three or four miles from the native village, and as the Americans and their followers marched onward through the jungle they presently beheld that dim glow thrown up into the sky by the blazing huts.

Allen, the foreman of Trader Andrews, was walking abreast of the two doctors, and he volunteered a comment.

"According to Kutu, that's the direction in which the cannibal kraal lies," he said. "I wonder what's happening there."

"That's what we've got to find out," Bracken rejoined. "Do you think you can get our men to go much farther?"

Allen looked grimly at the negro employees of Trader Andrews. All of them were armed, some with spears, some with bows and arrows, others with rifles; and the expedition was sufficiently strong in numbers to give a good account of itself. Nevertheless the black boys were clearly ill at ease, Kutu especially.

"I'll talk to them," Allen declared. "Don't worry, they'll stick with us all right after I've had a word with them."

He mastered the kafirs around him and harangued them in vigorous tones. Meanwhile, Bracken and Phillips drew aside, and the former addressed his colleague guardedly.

"Whatever else happens, we've got to lay hands on Jan Trevor," Bracken said. "Once we have possession of that bracelet on his wrist, the formula is ours."

"And the five-hundred-thousand-dollar trust fund that goes with it," breathed Phillips. "But we can't be sure, Bracken, that this mysterious white youth is the fellow we're after."

"It's Jan Trevor all right," Bracken retorted. "From what Kutu told us, I'm convinced of it."

"Kutu said there were two other people with the wild white boy when he saw him fighting that bunch of cannibals," Phillips observed. "A man and a girl. I wonder who they were?"

"I don't know," growled Bracken, "and I don't much care—"

He paused as he realised that Allen was approaching. The Andrews' foreman had finished talking to the natives,

and there was an expression of satisfaction on his countenance.

"They don't like the idea," Allen stated, "but I've told 'em that there's to be no turning back, and I've promised 'em that there will be plenty of trouble for them if they desert us."

The journey was now resumed, and before another mile had been covered the moon was up. Then all at once a commotion reached the ears of the three white men and their negro companions, and the whole party came to an abrupt standstill on the edge of a big clearing.

"Look!" Phillips jerked suddenly, and with outflung arm pointed to a track at the far side of the jungle glade.

Down that track Borno was coming at full pelt, running as hard as he could, and some distance behind him was a group of savages, bent on overtaking the fugitive and slaying him.

"Say, that man is wearing a queer kind of get-up," Bracken ejaculated, peering at the advancing figure of Borno, "but he looks to me like a European, all the same."

"He's not Jan Trevor," Phillips avowed. "That fellow is a man of our own age, if not older. Kutu, do you know who he is?"

"No, bwana," the guide answered. "Maybe he is the one I saw with wild white boy—I cannot tell."

By this time Borno had gained the clearing, and, without noticing the party at the other side of it, he struck across to the left, disappearing into the thickets.

Bracken spoke swiftly.

"You're right, Phillips!" he growled out. "That man isn't Jan, but he may be able to give us some useful information concerning Harry Trevor's son. Kutu, take one of the boys with you and trail him—then send back word to us when you have found out where he goes to. Allen, the rest of us will drive off that bunch of cannibals. There's enough of us to handle them!"

Allen nodded briskly, and next instant he had given a terse command to the native employees of Trader Andrews. In swift response to that command they prepared themselves for action, and as Borno's pursuers swarmed forth into the glade they were met by a volley of lead and arrows.

Three or four of the cannibals pitched to the ground, and the others recoiled in alarm. Then a chorus of angry yells went up, and the band of savages rushed forward to the attack, hurling spears as they came on, and shouting in vengeful accents.

A fearsome spectacle they made as they dashed across the clearing, the moonlight playing on their black bodies and throwing their hideous, tattooed features into sharp relief. But the odds were completely in favour of the party headed by Bracken, Phillips and Allen, and, as the jungle echoed to the blatter of firearms again, still more of the savages bit the dust.

The onrush of the cannibals was checked, the survivors wavering uncertainly. Then a third volley was poured into them, and those who were left standing at once spun around and took to their heels, fleeing back in the direction whence they had approached.

"Come on!" shouted Bracken. "Keep them on the run!"

Revolver in hand, he led his companions across the glade at the double, and a few seconds later the party from the trading post was pressing forward along the jungle path down which the remnants of Borno's pursuers were speeding.

Firing at the routed cannibals, Bracken and his followers continued to harry them until the thickets had

swallowed the last of the savages. Then the victors retraced their steps to the glade when the sharp engagement had taken place.

As they entered the clearing they saw two or three of their foes crawling away into the undergrowth, badly wounded. Several others lay silent and inert in the moonlight, never to move again.

"Well, what do we do now?" Allen demanded of Bracken.

"Wait to hear from Kutu," was the reply. "Let's hope he doesn't miss the trail of that queer-looking bird the cannibals were chasing."

At that very moment, away in the heart of the jungle, Borno was sinking to the ground in a state of complete weariness. He had heard the shooting that had broken out just after he had struck across the clearing, but he had kept going almost mechanically, until now he was at the last gasp.

He had reason to believe that he was no longer being pursued, but even if those black demons of the bush had still been on his track he could not have taken another step, and it was with a groan that he stretched himself out beside a fallen log, filling his lungs with great gulps of air, resting his aching muscles.

It was thus that Kutu found him—Kutu and the other black whom the guide had selected as a messenger; and from behind the fronds of a tropical plant the two natives gazed at Borno's recumbent form.

"Go back to Bwana Allen and the white doctors," Kutu whispered to the other negro in the Bantu dialect. "Bring them here. If I am gone when you return, you will know that the man over there has moved on, and that I am following him. Go, Kala."

Kutu's companion stole away, and some time later he was back in the glade where Bracken, Phillips and Allen were waiting with the rest of the natives.

"White man lie down," Kala reported. "Kutu, him watch. I lead you to Kutu."

"Good," Bracken said. "Go ahead, then."

Kala conducted the party through the thickets of the jungle, and at length they came to the spot where Kutu was keeping his solitary vigil.

"Where's our man?" Bracken asked softly.

"He sleeps," was the answer. "Look—over there."

Kutu pointed, and, glancing in the direction indicated, the American saw the prone figure of Borno lying beside the fallen tree.

"All right," said Bracken, "close in on him."

They moved forward in a body and surrounded the sleeper. Then Bracken stooped and gripped him by the arm, and, awakening at the touch, Borno sprang up with a cry.

"Take it easy—take it easy!" Bracken growled. "We're not going to harm you. Kutu, is this the man you saw with the wild white youth?"

"Yes, Bwana," the negro answered. "I am sure of it now."

Bracken looked at Borno again. "Where is that wild white youth?" he demanded.

The seaman kept silent. He did not know what Bracken wanted with Jan, but imagined that the American might wish to capture him in order to sell him to some circus—just as the skipper and mate of the ill-fated *Natal* had planned to do. And though Borno had been compelled to assist in that scheme, he was now determined to be no party to the seizure of the youngster.

Jan had become his friend, and he made up his mind there and then that nothing would cause him to betray his whereabouts.

It was in vain that Bracken strove to make Borno talk, and at length he instructed three or four of the blacks to take the seaman prisoner and bind his hands behind his back.

As the natives closed in on him, Borno promptly showed fight, but he was overpowered by weight of numbers, and his wrists were tied in accordance with the American's directions. Then Bracken turned to Phillips and Allen.

"In an hour or two it will be daylight," he said. "As soon as dawn breaks we'll scour the district, leaving this fellow in charge of some of the boys. If we fail to locate Jan Trevor, we'll come back here and find a way of forcing our man to talk."

Phillips and Allen agreed to this proposal, and at break of day they set out with Bracken and a number of the

safari, ordering the rest of the natives to stay with Borno.

The Jungle Pool

WHEN Mona Andrews arose from the couch of dry twigs and ferns that Jan had made for her the sun had risen above the horizon and the creatures of the bush were beginning to greet a new day.

Up in the trees the birds were singing to the morn, and the apes were chattering with animation. Mona, however, was scarcely aware of these sounds. She was looking at Jan, who had dropped off into a light slumber, from which he awakened as soon as the girl began to move about.

He stood up, and almost at the same time Chicma dropped to the ground beside him from the fork of a tree near by, the chimpanzee having climbed thither at some time during the night.

"Jan," Mona said anxiously, "Borno hasn't showed up yet."

"You mean—Borno—not here?" Jan murmured, and then shook his head with a frown.

Perhaps Borno would come yet, he reflected. Perhaps he had escaped from the cannibals, but lost his way and decided to wait until morning before attempting to find Mona and himself.

"Maybe Borno—show up—later," he volunteered in his queer, halting way. "Meantime, Jan get food. You—stay here."

The girl nodded, and Jan moved off, Chicma shambling after him. Soon they were out of sight, and, still wondering what had become of Borno, Mona wandered a little way along the jungle track.

Presently she saw a pool glistening through the trees on her right, and the freshness of the water induced her to take a dip. She did not bother to undress, for her clothes were already tattered, and she knew that they would dry on her very quickly in the tropical heat of the sun.

Threading her way through the trees she entered the pool and started to swim towards the far bank. It was a pool of some size, and when she had covered a distance of sixty or seventy yards she was still only half-way across it.

She was pulling herself through the water with clean, lithe strokes when she detected a movement on the opposite



"Look!" Phillips jerked suddenly, and with outflung arm he pointed to a track at the far side of the jungle glade.

bank, and suddenly her pulse missed a beat as she recognised the loathsome form of a crocodile sliding from a muddy lair that had been partially hidden by overhanging foliage.

Turning, Mona swam back in the direction whence she had come, but as she looked round she saw the gruesome head of the reptile cleaving the surface of the pool. The brute was after her—was travelling much faster than she—and as she realised her peril so the movements of her limbs became less expert and skilful.

Terrified, she felt that she would never gain dry land in time, and a sob escaped her as she visualised the awful jaws of the reptile closing upon her and dragging her down.

Actually she could have reached the bank with yards to spare, even though she was swimming with ever-increasing awkwardness. But when she was only a stone's-throw from the edge of the pool, and just as she was beginning to take more heart, a dappled figure padded into view from a belt of undergrowth.

It was a dreaded serval, better known as the African tiger-cat, and it had come down to the pool to slake its thirst; but at sight of the girl in the water it showed its fangs in an ugly snarl—a snarl that seemed to challenge the pursuing crocodile for the right to seize the human prey.

With the big "cat" standing there on the bank and the monster of the pool cruising towards her from the rear, Mona lost her nerve completely and uttered a piercing, agonised shriek. Then she began to flounder, and with her arms thrashing the water into foam she screamed again and again.

Her cries were heard by Jan, for, luckily, he was not far away. He was up among the trees at no great distance from the pool, in fact, and was engaged in the task of gathering fruit from the boughs when the voice of the pan-stricken girl reached his ears.

In swift response the young white man bounded in the direction from which Mona's horrified shouts were coming, and, springing from branch to branch, swooping through mid air via the festoons of creepers, he found himself overlooking the pool within a few seconds.

He took in the situation at a glance and plunged from a high branch, the clean swoop of his dive carrying him far down towards the bed of the jungle lake. Then he rose to the surface, his head breaking the water quite close to the struggling girl.

He caught hold of her and struck off to the left, swimming parallel with the bank. Instantly the tiger-cat leaped into the pool, hungering for a kill, and at the same time the crocodile altered its course to follow Mona and her would-be rescuer.

Each bent on an identical purpose, the serval and the reptile met in the wake of man and girl, and each saw in the other a rival that must be exterminated before the human prey could be taken. Next instant a fierce battle was in progress between the two monsters, a battle that proved the salvation of Jan and Mona, for the big cat and the hideous denizen of the pool abandoned all thought of their quarry in the terrific conflict that they waged.

A ghastly snarling arose from the throat of the tiger-cat, and the tail of the crocodile lashed to and fro. With the sounds of that primeval combat in their ears, Jan and Mona swerved in towards the bank, and, scrambling thankfully from the shallows, they blundered away through the thickets of the forest, the white youth almost carrying his half-fainting companion.

They never learned the outcome of the August 24th, 1935.

fight between those two jungle brutes, though Jan fancied that the serval would finish second best, since the crocodile was in its natural element. As for man and girl, they did not stop running until they were back at the spot where they had parted some time previously.

Mona was badly shaken, and an interval of several minutes elapsed before she fully recovered from the ordeal through which she had passed. Then Jan spoke to her a little breathlessly.

"Mona stay here," he said. "I go look for food again. Mona no swim—stay here."

"Mona no swim," she answered fervently, and with a smile he turned away, striding off into the undergrowth once more.

The girl awaited his return, and a quarter of an hour must have passed by when she heard the snapping of twigs. Someone was approaching, and, expecting to see Jan, she looked round quickly. But the man who stepped into view was not the wild white youth whose acquaintance she had made. He was a man twenty years Jan's senior, tall and sallow and clean-shaven, wearing helmet, shirt, breeches, and field boots.

He was Dr. Frank Bracken, late of New York, an authority on that dreaded malady known as infantile paralysis.

There was a loaded revolver in Bracken's hand, but at sight of the girl he lowered the gun and stared at her agape, astonished by the unexpected encounter.

"Gee," he breathed, eyeing her with candid admiration as well as surprise, "I didn't think to see a pretty face like yours in this cursed jungle! Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

Before Mona could offer a reply, Bracken's companions appeared on the scene. These included Phillips, Allen, and Kutu, and, on seeing the daughter of their employer, foreman, and guide, uttered startled exclamations.

"Wamunke—Mona!" Kutu gasped. "Wh-why, Miss Andrews!" Allen stammered.

"Say, what is this?" Bracken interposed. "Will somebody let me in on it?"

The girl turned to him. She looked prettier than ever now, for her face was flushed with pleasure and excitement.

"I'm Mona Andrews," she explained. "These men who are with you—they work for my father."

"So you're Andrews' daughter," the American declared. "Well, my name is Bracken—Dr. Bracken—and this is my assistant, Dr. Phillips. We're staying at your father's trading post just now, looking for an old colleague of ours who has been missing for fifteen years."

Allen came forward at this juncture and addressed Mona in a tone of concern.

"Miss Andrews," he said, "I can't understand what you're doing out here in the wilds—alone. What happened? You were supposed to disembark from the Natal at Mombasa and put up there until your father could find time to come for you and bring you home."

"I know," the girl replied, "but the Natal was wrecked two nights ago, and since then a lot has happened. But, thanks to Jan and Borno—"

"Jan!" Phillips ejaculated involuntarily.

"Yes, a strange young white man who seems to have been brought up in the heart of the bush," Mona said. "He saved Borno and I from a pack of cannibals last night."

"Cannibals!" Allen struck in. "Then it was you whom Kutu saw! By gad, if he'd recognised you and brought back news to the post that you were in the hands of savages, your father and your mother, too, would have been with us."

Meanwhile, Bracken and Phillips were looking at each other in a significant fashion, and presently the former addressed himself to Mona again.

"Miss Andrews," he said, "I think this man Borno must be the fellow we ran across last night. We've left him with some of our party a mile or two north-east of here."

"Then he did escape from the cannibals," the girl breathed. "Oh, I'm so glad!"

"But this youth Jan whom you've mentioned," Bracken observed guardedly, "Where is he?"

"He was here only a little while ago," Mona declared, "but he went off to look for food. He's been wonderful. I wouldn't be alive now if it weren't for him."

"Your father will want to thank him," said Bracken with cunning. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll have Dr. Phillips take you back to the trading post with some of the boys, and the rest of us will wait here for your friend Jan. Then we'll follow on with him when he shows up."

Innocent as she was of the American's real intentions, Mona readily agreed to his proposal.

"All right," she murmured, "and you'll bring Borno, too?"

"Yes, we'll bring Borno, too," Bracken rejoined.

A minute or two later Mona was setting off along the jungle track with Phillips and a handful of the blacks, and when the girl and her companions had disappeared from view Bracken spoke to Allen and Kutu.

"Apparently this wild white youth is kind of elusive," he mused. "No doubt he mistrusts human beings when he sees them in fairly large parties. I think it would be a good idea if we concealed ourselves."

They took to the undergrowth with their followers, crouching in readiness to surround Jan the moment he returned; and they had been skulking there for some little time when a strange medley of sounds reached their attentive ears—sounds that came from afar, a confused tumult that gradually became more and more distinct until the listeners were able to distinguish the trumpeting of wild animals, the clangour of many instruments beaten by human hands, and the less penetrating tones of human voices.

"What does it mean, Allen?" Bracken demanded.

"An elephant drive," the foreman said. "A crowd of native hunters are urging them through the jungle, probably towards some distant stockade where they intend to imprison them. It sounds to me as if we're right in their path, and I don't like it."

"You mean the hunters may belong to that cannibal tribe?" Bracken asked, but Allen shook his head.

"No, the cannibals look upon the elephants as sacred," he informed the doctor. "It's not the beaters I'm afraid of—"

He stopped short, for at that very instant a tall, strong figure appeared on the jungle track thirty or forty yards away. It was the figure of Jan Trevor, and, peering searchingly for Mona, he moved nearer to the spot where Bracken's party was hiding.

On perceiving the young white man, Bracken had forgotten the elephant drive. The doctor was now gazing through the fronds of the shrubbery before him, his eyes fastened upon Jan's wrist—fastened upon the flexible bracelet that the youth was wearing.

Bracken waited until Jan was only a few paces away, and then he leaped to his feet and sprang into the open, with

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"DEATH FROM A DISTANCE"

(Continued from page 20)

— He frowned because Mallory had winked. "Oh, well, have it your own way!"

As the coroner was about to bend over the body, Mallory touched him on the shoulder. "This piece of paper was found in the professor's hand."

The coroner had difficulty in concealing his surprise.

"This is a fake killing. The professor is shamming death. Examine body carefully and then declare that in your opinion it is an obvious case of suicide."

The coroner was a great admirer of the young detective and acted his part well.

The professor had died instantaneously and, in his opinion, a clear case of suicide.

"Suicide?" The D.A. was astounded. Mallory was watching the faces of his four suspects.

"I found this picture of Dr. Stone in one of the professor's books," Mallory handed it to the D.A. "That seems to indicate that Einfeld did know Stone. Einfeld shot Stone, and then, unable to forget, shot himself. Who would suspect the worthy Professor Einfeld of having a gun and killing Stone? What do you think of that for a deduction, Professor Trowbridge?"

"I don't believe you're right," Trowbridge was emphatic. "I don't believe Einfeld knew Stone, and I can't imagine Einfeld having the nerve to take his own life."

"Naturally, several people were suspected, and you amongst them, Professor Trowbridge," Mallory stated. "On your desk is a telephone directory, and there is a mark under the name of Sutton Hotel. Why did you mark the number?"

"Because I was going to ring the professor and tell him his life was in danger." The professor spoke sharply. "It seemed obvious to me that the Press reports would place him in danger. Then I thought it would look queer if I rang him up, and thus did nothing in the matter." A gloomy shake of the head. "Maybe if I had rung the hotel the professor would have been alive now."

"Maybe." Mallory smiled and glanced at Gorman. "Naturally, I had to suspect many people, and for a little while I wondered if you, Mr. Gorman, had anything to do with this murder. I make a point of studying faces, and I'm glad to say that you are no longer suspected."

"Thank you."
"Then there is your ease, Mr. Langsdale." The detective glanced at the ex-convict, who wondered if he were going to be exposed. "You told me a most interesting story, which I checked and found correct. There was a certain person, in your ease, against whom you had a grudge. Naturally, I suspected you when I found that Dr. Stone was an assumed name—his real name was Harold Skinner."

"Harold Skinner!" Langsdale had gone very white. "But the Skinner I knew hadn't a beard, and—"
"Did you see the dead man and look closely at the face?"

"Yes, I helped carry him out." Langsdale frowned thoughtfully. "I did think the face was familiar, but I can't believe—"

"The dead man's hair was dyed, the beard was another disguise, and plastic surgeons had experimented with the features. Dr. Stone had no desire to be recognised as Skinner. I'm afraid, Mr. Langsdale, that you will never be able to settle your quarrel with Skinner. Perhaps it is as well for you."

The phone bell rang. It was Regan. "You told me that calls could come through to you once everyone was in the observatory. This is a call from an outlying station and concerns Morgan."

"Put the call through," Mallory smiled as he heard a gruff voice.

"Just picked up Morgan going out of town. Tried to give us the slip, but we got him. He seems to be carrying a lot of money."

"Hold him and bring him to the D.A.'s office in the morning," said Mallory, and hung up. "Gentlemen, that completes another link. A great number of people dislike Dr. Stone, and John Morgan might easily have killed his employer. Morgan came here with a gun, and his story was thin. Also he had been helping himself to his chief's money and was in fear of being found out. The speed patrol have just picked up Morgan going out of town with what was left of his chief's money."

Naturally, we couldn't allow that. Ahmed Haidru was so brazen in his statement that he had come to the observatory to kill Dr. Stone that I was forced to believe him. I think I have made it clear that the theory that Professor Einfeld killed Dr. Stone and then shot himself is not one that I am in agreement with. I mentioned a photograph of Dr. Stone, autographed and sent to Professor Einfeld and hidden in a book where I should find it." He smiled.

"That signed picture was a fake, placed so that I might think Einfeld in some way connected with Stone. He had never seen him in his life, and never will. Will you, professor?"

Professor Einfeld hoped that this was the signal.

"May I come back to life, please?"

"Help the professor to his feet, doc," Mallory called out to the coroner.

The District Attorney's eyes bulged, and so did all of them when Professor Einfeld stood up and dusted his trousers.

"I let you all think that the professor was dead for a purpose," Mallory explained. "I knew the murderer was in this room, and I wanted to watch how he would

behave. That brings me to my fourth and last suspect." He pointed an accusing finger. "Jim Gray, you killed Dr. Stone and attempted to kill Professor Einfeld!"

Arcturus Decides

JIM GRAY blinked at the detective as if he did not understand what was being said.

"It's no use you're trying to act, Gray!" Mallory rasped out. "You knew the power of the ray from Arcturus, and you fixed that gun so that it was pointing at the seat, which you knew had been allocated to Dr. Stone. You knew the time that gun would fire, and you planned a similar scheme for the professor, whom, you feared, had guessed your secret. You knew the professor was coming here to-night, and so you went to see the District Attorney so you should be a long way from the observatory when the second death occurred—your way of proving an alibi. You placed that forged picture in that book, you tore out the page from this book"—Mallory held up the book—"and you took the professor's gun from the drawer of this desk and hid it in that box by the telescope platform. There is a time gun on the telescope,



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and it fires by the rays of Areturus. The professor would have fallen, and it might have looked like suicide. I expected an attempt such as this—"

"Not a move from any of you!" came a harsh voice.

Jim Gray was pointing a wicked-looking gun first at the D.A. and then at Mallory.

"You needn't bother about demonstrating anything!" There was the light of madness on that wrinkled face and in the blazing eyes. "I shot Dr. Stone, who killed my son. Professor Einfeld I had to kill to hide the truth. I'm glad now that I failed. I killed the man who killed my son, so what more do I want?"

"Put that gun down, Gray!" ordered the D.A.

"I've got you all covered." The mad eyes were alert. "Not a move or I'll fire. I'm getting out of here, and then you'll never find me. You'd like to know why I killed Stone? He killed my only son. I was recommended to him by some fool. Stone was drunk and did something wrong. The knife slipped, and then he ordered them to give my boy more gas, so that he could finish his foul deeds. He mutilated my son because his drunken hands could not hold the knife steady, and my son died in agony."

Jim Gray was standing by the wall and cackling horribly.

Crack!

Kay Palmer screamed because she thought for a moment that the madman had shot Mallory. To her surprise, Jim Gray sank limply to the ground.

The detective was first at his side, and saw that ominous spreading stain.

"I'm glad—glad!" croaked Jim Gray. "Now I can go and see my son. My son, I'm coming to you. Help me on the way—"

Suddenly he stiffened in Mallory's arms and then went limp. "I got the professor to set the telescope so that the rays of Areturus would fire that time-gun," Mallory explained. "Just to demonstrate how the crime was committed. Fate stepped in and played a part. Guess Areturus did the right thing. We would have caught him, and though Gray was a murderer, he seems to have had some sort of justification—Stone was no loss."

And when Detective-lieutenant Mallory was on the final stages of the inquiry, he was told by Regan that the "reporting dame" was still hanging around.

"Thank you for letting me in on this scoop." Kay Palmer looked at the big man admiringly. "It was awfully nice of you not to say anything about me. I know now what a dreadful thing I did—I might have killed the professor."

"Incidentally, you helped to solve the case," Mallory assured her. "Your action in saying that Einfeld knew the name of the murderer brought instant action. I might never have solved the crime but for your help." He glanced at his watch. "It is now ten-thirty, and just the right hour for supper. Now supper is most dull alone."

"I've sent in my story." Kay Palmer's eyes twinkled. "I feel terribly hungry."

"Then supper it shall be," Mallory put an arm round her shoulders.

A discreet cough, and there stood Professor Einfeld.

"Areturus is very bright and clear." The professor beamed at them. "I was wondering whether you'd care to see the star for yourselves, but somehow I think it's the moon you want to see."

(By permission of P.D.C., Ltd., starring Russell Hopton.)

August 21th, 1935.

"THE SILVER STREAK"

(Continued from page 14)

doctors on the lives of those in hospital there."

Tom gritted his teeth.

"We'll do it!" he muttered. "We'll do it!" He turned to Bronte. "Switch in that subsidiary generator."

The Streak was fairly swallowing distance now. It flashed through Creston, Council Bluffs, and on to Lincoln, Nebraska. Dawn found it sweeping through Denver, where, in spite of the early hour, a huge cheering crowd had gathered to speed it on its way.

Higgins and Crawford were drinking coffee preparatory to going back to the control car when Bronte came in to snatch a few minutes' rest. Instead of joining the two mechanics he dropped into a seat near the door. From the loud-speaker came the announcer's voice:

"Nine-thirty a.m.—The Silver Streak has passed Prove, Utah. It now has three hundred miles to go and only two hours and thirty-five minutes left. There still is a remote chance." There was a pause, and then: "Here is a news flash. Just before dying, the man mysteriously struck down behind the skating-rink at the World's Fair named Erdmann Bronte as his assailant. Connected with the building of the Silver Streak, Bronte is known to be on the train. The police at Boulder Dam have been notified."

For a few seconds there was a shocked silence in the car.

"Bronte!" gasped Tyler. "You!"

The engineer was on his feet and at the door in a bound. His face was livid. "I'm getting off this train, and I'll kill anybody that tries to stop me!" he snarled.

Higgins was the first to move, but as he jumped forward Bronte slid through the connecting door and barred it. Hearing a thundering on the door as those locked in tried to break out, Bronte hurried along to the back of the control-room, opened a switch-box and threw one of the switches.

Both Tom and Dan heard the snap of the switch, and whipped round, startled. They could not see anything, but felt the train slowing down.

"Something wrong back there," jerked out Tom.

"I'll go and see," volunteered Dan.

The old railroader left his seat and went back behind the long bulk of the generators. The next thing Tom heard was a thud, a muffled cry and the sound of a heavy fall. Slipping a band over the control button to keep it in place, Tom, too, hurried off to investigate.

As he rounded the main part of the engine he caught a glimpse of Bronte crouching in a corner, a heavy wrench in his hand, murder in his eyes. Stretched senseless on the floor was Dan O'Brien.

Almost before he could take in what had happened, Bronte leaped at him, wrench uplifted. Tom ducked, but only partially evaded the descending wrench, which caught him a glancing blow and brought him half-stunned to the floor.

Again Bronte lifted the wrench. With a superhuman effort Tom dived forward, his arms clamping round Bronte's knees in a flying tackle. Bronte went over with a crash, Tom on top of him. Together they rolled on the floor, fighting desperately.

Although the power had been cut off, the Streak was on a steep downward

grade now, gathering speed with its own momentum. With no one to control it, it thundered on, rocketing dangerously round some of the steepest curves it had encountered on the whole journey. The road-bed was in bad repair at this point, too, and Tom knew that it wasn't loss of speed he had to fear now, but the probability of the Streak leaving the rails and piling itself up.

Bronte worked his thumb round Tom's throat, jabbing it agonisingly into the youngster's Adam's-apple. With a desperate heave, Tom broke loose and grabbed for the wrench which had fallen from Bronte's grasp. His fingers had almost closed on it when Bronte managed to kick it out of his reach. Then, lowering his head, Bronte butted Tom in the stomach and forced him against the compartment wall, his fists raining blows upon the younger man.

The salt of blood was in Tom's mouth, and one eye was already closed. Bronte was more like a frenzied beast than a man, and Tom felt himself getting weaker.

In those red seconds Tom's thoughts centred on Allan Dexter and the others at Boulder Dam who were gasping their lives out, waiting for him to rescue them. He couldn't give in—he had to beat this devil! He had to!

Summoning every ounce of strength, every nerve and sinew, he brought his fist up and round in a smashing short-arm jab that caught Bronte on the angle of the jaw. With a little moan Bronte went limp and slid to the floor like an empty sack.

Tom staggered across the compartment and snapped back the switch which Bronte had thrown; then he made for the controls. Through the window he saw a freight yard which seemed to be rushing towards him, so fast was the Streak moving. To his horror he saw something else—a freight train on a converging line moving towards the main line. For a moment he hesitated. It was too late now to slacken speed; his one chance was to accelerate and get the Streak past the points ahead of the freight. He pushed the lever over, and the train shot forward at an incredible speed, the speedometer needle hovering around one hundred and forty. He saw the confused blur of the freight, heard the scream of a whistle—then he was safely past.

There was a noise behind him, and turning he saw Bronte struggling to his knees. At the same time the communicating door burst open and Higgins rushed in, followed by Dexter, Tyler and the others.

"Got you!" growled Higgins, seizing Bronte by the throat and hauling him to his feet.

"Are you all right, Tom?" gasped Tyler.

"Okay," replied Tom. "Nothing to stop us now. It's a straight run to Boulder City. We'll make it on time!"

It was twenty minutes before twelve when the Silver Streak pulled up at Boulder City, and hardly had the train stopped before men were unloading the "iron lungs" and rushing them off to hospital.

Dropping exhausted to the platform, Tom Caldwell saw a girl's trim figure hurrying towards him. It was Ruth.

"Thank Heaven you're in time!" she broke out. "Everything will be all right now."

"You bet it will!" murmured Tom. "Gee, honey, but I've missed you!"

The next moment she was in his arms.

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Charles Starrett and Sally Blane.)

"FOUR HOURS TO KILL"

(Continued from page 6)

The other stared at him as if hardly comprehending.

"What's this?" he queried. "Is it a frame-up?"

"Where's Mako?"

"How should I know? He's in prison."

The other surveyed him with bitter scorn.

"You don't, of course, know he's broken prison, do you?" he said.

"Of course I don't," retorted the other. "I don't know what the game is—"

But he didn't get any further, for at that moment Seaver leaped at him with the snarl of a tiger and shook him furiously as the words poured out of his mouth.

"I'll teach you to try and play about with me, Anderson!" he flung out fiercely. "If you don't come across, I'll break every bone in your miserable body, you miserable little skunk. Where have you hidden Mako? Come on, out with it!"

He hurled the other down on the sofa and stood glaring at him.

"You're wrong, you're wrong!" panted Anderson, with real terror in his eyes. "I don't know where he is—how should I? Mako hates me because I told you where you could get him."

"Then what are you doing here? Out with it!"

"I've got nothing to hide. My wife telephoned me to ask me to come over to the theatre and see her. That's why I came. Mako's the last person in the world I want to see—indeed he is."

Taft broke in, nodding.

"That's right," he said grimly. "Anderson's got no particular wish to meet Mako. I'm sure of that."

"We can soon check up on his story," replied Seaver. "Who's your wife?"

"Mac Danish. She works in this theatre."

While he had been talking, Sylvia Temple and Barrett had been coming down the stairs. But as Anderson said his last words Eddie gave a tremendous start of amazement and was rushing back up the staircase when Seaver hailed him.

"Come down here at once," he snapped.

There was another long discussion. Barrett assured Seaver that he was thoroughly satisfied now. The brooch had been found, he was certain that Eddie was guiltless, and, as far as he and Sylvia were concerned, the matter was at an end.

Finally Seaver seemed prepared to accept the explanation. He told them they could go, but that he was keeping the brooch and they would hear from him later. Eddie was apparently eager to follow them upstairs, but Seaver ordered him curtly to remain.

Then he turned to his man.

"Go upstairs and see this Danish girl and find out if she did really telephone her husband," he said. "Then come down and tell me."

But half-way up the staircase the man gave a cry.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Look at this!"

Seaver was by his side in a flash, so was Taft. Both of them were examining some stains on the thick carpet. Seaver had drawn his finger over them, and his

finger was now ominously and horribly red!

"Blood!" he exclaimed laconically.

He swung round to Taft.

"You hit Mako, you said, when you shot at him?"

"I'm sure I did."

"But he didn't come up this way?"

"He certainly didn't."

"Well, he seems to have come down this way. This blood is new."

"Then he's not far off," replied Taft.

He came slowly back to the lounge. Anderson was still cowering on the sofa. Seaver wiped the blood from his fingers.

There was a big frown on his face.

"I don't understand this—" he began, but in a flash Anderson was on his feet and had flung himself at him, clutching him in positive terror while the words came streaming out of his mouth.

"Don't you see what's happened?" he screamed. "It was Mako who telephoned me—he's trying to get me."

Seaver shook him as a terrier shakes a rat.

"Pull yourself together, you miserable little skunk," he snapped. "You told us just now that your wife telephoned."

"It was a man who telephoned," answered Anderson, whose trembling lips could scarcely frame the words.

"His voice was strange to me. He said he was telephoning from my wife and I had to come here at once. He'll get me—I know he will!"

"It would serve you darn well right if he did," retorted the other contemptuously.

"But he can't—he can't! You must hide me, arrest me, do anything you like with me! He's waiting to kill me—I know he is!"

Seaver, however, ignored him. His mind was busy now on the new and utterly unexpected turn which this affair had just taken. Just for the moment the affair of Eddie Miller, Carl Barrett and Sylvia Temple and her diamond brooch had drifted away into insignificance. If what Anderson had said was true, Mako, at large somewhere in the building and in possession of a loaded revolver, had now become a very serious menace. If it was indeed he who had faked the telephone message and fetched up Anderson, then it could be for one purpose, and one purpose only.

He swung round on Taft.

"Have you searched this building?" he rapped out.

"Your men are doing it now, chief."

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"I'm! You'd better bug up for a few more in that case. We can't call any of my men away from outside."

"But where can you hide me?" almost screamed Anderson, who had dropped into a chair and was positively trembling with fright.

Seaver hauled him up from his chair. "Keep with us," he snarled contemptuously. "You'll be all right."

"Let me hide over there in that telephone box," exclaimed the frightened man.

But even as he went quickly over to it he stopped suddenly and a frightened squeal left his lips. The door half opened and Mako slipped out of the telephone box, and he menaced the group with a revolver that was concealed in his jacket pocket.

Their hands went up in a flash. There was little else to be done. Anderson was gazing at Mako as a rabbit gazes at a snake. He seemed now to be almost petrified with terror.

The chief was glaring at Mako in sullen fury; but his hands remained above his head.

"Don't be a fool, Mako," he exclaimed. "You haven't a dog's chance. The place is surrounded and—"

But the other cut in swiftly.

"Keep quiet," he said sharply, "and you won't get hurt. I'm not bothering about you. It's this little rat I'm after."

He addressed himself once again to the terrified Anderson.

"How d'you like it, Anderson? How does it feel now you've got it coming to you at last? You're goin' to die!"

With a swift movement Mako jerked the gun from his pocket.

Crack! Mako's gun had spoken and Anderson staggered back. Crack again, and he sagged horribly to the floor.

"Too quick, far too quick," exclaimed Mako, and there was a dreadful smile on his face. "I wish I could have made it slower."

And then, once more, with his gun covering the others, he began to step back to the staircase.

"Stay where you are, all of you! The chair's waitin' for me and I know it. Any more murders are on the house," he said grimly.

Step by step he retreated to the staircase, backed slowly up with his gun still menacing them. But he had failed to see Taft, who had suddenly appeared at the head of the stairs.

The next moment a couple of sharp shots rang out, and Mako stumbled forward at the banisters. For a second or so he swayed there; then he toppled over and fell in a crumpled heap to the ground.

They gathered round him silently. Seaver had lifted his head. Taft, the smoking revolver still in his hand, was bending down over him.

Mako opened his eyes. They were already filmy with death, but there was a smile on his face as he gazed up at Taft.

"Thanks, old pal," he whispered, and fell back.

Seaver straightened himself up. Taft was still gazing down on the dead man.

"He said something," he murmured with a puzzled frown. "Did you hear what it was? I couldn't get it."

Seaver allowed a grim smile to flicker to his lips.

"He said, 'Thanks, old pal,' he replied dryly. "But I guess a lot of these guys wander a bit in their minds just before they hand in their checks. Good shootin', that of yours, Taft."

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring Richard Barthelme.)

August 24th, 1935.

"THE CALL OF THE SAVAGE"

(Continued from page 24)

Allen, Kutu, and the rest of the party close behind him.

As he beheld the strangers Jan recoiled. He had already had a sample of the treatment meted out by men of his own colour when the crew of the Natal had seized him, and even if the appearance of Bracken had been less threatening, the son of the jungle would have distrusted him.

As it was, he attempted to make his escape, but the doctor was on him in a flash, closing with him, grappling with him, striving to hold him until Allen and the other members of the safari came up.

Infuriated, Jan laid violent hands on Bracken and broke the man's grip. Then he lifted him high above his head and dashed him to the ground with an impact that drove the breath from the unscrupulous surgeon's body. Next second, however, the wild white youth was assailed by Allen and the blacks.

He fought like a maniac, beating down man after man, but the odds against him were too overwhelming, and at last he was borne to the dust, where he continued to struggle until a blow from the butt of a rifle scattered his wits.

By that time Bracken had picked himself up, and with an ugly expression on his face he elbowed his way through the circle of Jan's opponents as they were rising from his prone form.

"Murderous young savage!" he snarled. "I'd like to bind him to the nearest tree and tame him with a whip! If I had my way—"

The sentence was never finished, for it was at this juncture that the hush became alive with terror. Even while Jan and his antagonists had been fighting, the herd of elephants which had been stampeded through the forest had been drawing closer and yet closer, trampling the thickets, battering down the trees that stood in their way, sending flocks of startled birds into the air,

scaring off troops of monkeys that had inhabited the upper branches.

And now the foremost brutes of the maddened herd were bursting into view, grey mammoths of the jungle. On they came, charging blindly towards the locality where Bracken and his companions had attacked Jan Trevor, and the earth trembled under the drumming of their massive feet.

"Run for it!" Allen bellowed. "Run for your lives!"

He set an example by taking to his heels and striking off to the right. Bracken followed him, and at the same time the blacks scattered in all directions, fleeing hither and thither in abject panic.

Jan Trevor was abandoned. He lay there in an inert heap, directly in the path of those trumpeting, stampeding giants that were smashing their way through the tropical forest!

(To be continued next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Noah Beery, Jun. and Dorothy Short.)

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Anita Louise was born in New York in 1915, but I am unable to tell you which month, Louise Fan. I am sure that she will send you a photograph if you write to her. Her address is: c/o Fox Studios, Movietone City, Westwood, California, U.S.A.

Here are the casts you require, "Curious," "Son Of A Sailor," "Handsome," Joe E. Brown; Duke, Johnny Mack Brown; Helen, Jean Muir; Gaga, Frank McHugh; The Baroness, Thelma Todd; Armstrong, George Blackwood; Kramer, Walter Miller; Williams, Kenneth Thomson; Farnsworth, Samuel Hinds; Vincent, Arthur Vinton; "Society Doctor"; Dr. Morgan, Chester Morris; Madge, Virginia Bruce; Mrs. Crane, Billie Burke; Dr. Ellis, Robert Taylor; Dr. Waverly, Raymond Walburn; Albright, Johnny Hines; Frank Snowden, William Henry; Harris Snowden, Robert McWade; Telephone Operator, Louise Henry; Mary, Mary Jo Matthews; Dr.

Harvey, Henry Kolker; Mrs. Harrigan, Dorothy Peterson; Moxley, Donald Meek.

You are quite right in your surmise, Kathleen R. (Shrewsbury), "The Green Archer" was produced as a silent film, and here is the cast: Valerie Howett, Allene Ray; Jim Featherstone, Walter Miller; Abel Bellamy, Burr McIntosh; Julius Savini, Frank Laekteen; Fay Savini, Dorothy King; Walter Howett, Stephen Grattan; John Wood, William R. Randall; Coldharbour Smith, Walter Lewis; Spike Holland, Wally Oetzel; Butler, Tom Cameron; Elaine Holding, Ray Allan; Creager, Jack Tanner.

The two casts you are asking for, "Regular 'Boy's Cinema' Reader," are as follows: "Treasure Island"; Long John Silver, Wallace Berry; Jim Hawkins, Jackie Cooper; Billy Bones, Lionel Barrymore; Dr. Livesey, Otto Kruger; Captain Smollett, Lewis Stone; Squire Trelawney, Nigel Bruce; Ben Gunn, Charles "Chic" Sale; Black Dog, Charles McNaughton; Mrs. Hawkins, Dorothy Peterson. "The Riddle Rider"; The Mysterious Horseman, William Desmond; Nan Madden, Eileen Sedgewick; Julia Dean, Helen Holmes; Victor Raymond, Claude Payton; Jack Archer, William N. Goukl; Monte Slade, Ben Corbett; Willie, Hughie Mack.

I am afraid I have been unable to obtain the cast of the "The Jade Box," J. Joosub (Pretoria), and can only find out the players in "The Radio Detective" and not the parts they played. Here they are: Joe Bonomo, Margaret Quimby, Jack Mower, Alfred Allen, Eve Gordon, Francis Irwin, Howard Eustedt and Jack Murphy. The cast of "The Black Ghost" is as follows: Tom Kirby, Creighton Chaney; Betty Halliday, Dorothy Gulliver; Aggie Kirby, Mary Jo Matthews; Jeff Maitland, Francis X. Bushman, Junr.; Blackie, Joe Bonomo; Happy, Slim Cole; Rose Maitland, Judith Barrie; Lige Morris, Richard Neil; Buck, Leroy Mason; Hank, Pete Morrison; Colonel Halliday, Claude Payton; Wild Bill, Yakima Canutt; Jake, Benny Corbett; Tex, Bill Nestall.

The cast of "Sunshine Susie" is as follows: T. C. (Gorebridge); Sunshine Susie, Renate Muller; Herr Hasel, Jack Hulbert; Herr Arvay, Owen Nares; Klapper, Morris Harvey.

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BOY'S CINEMA

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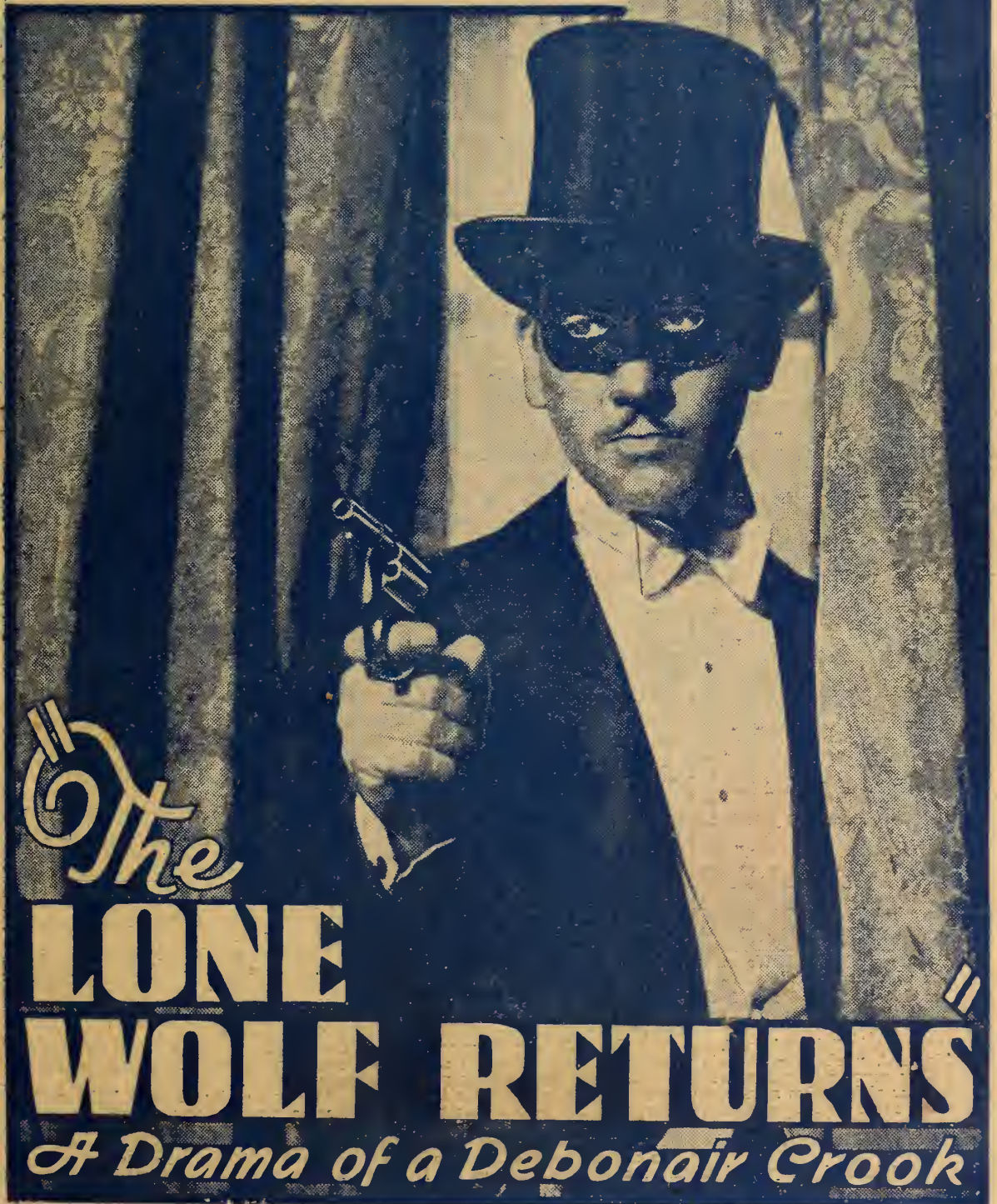
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The LONE WOLF RETURNS

A Way Out

"ALL these jewel jobs in the past three weeks," declared Angus McGowan, chief of detectives, addressing the plain-clothes men he had summoned to his room, "point to one man and one man only—the 'Lone Wolf.'"

Three pairs of eyes expressed surprise, if not, indeed, incredulity, and McGowan thumped his fist upon the desk at which he was seated.

"I'm not basing that statement on my own opinion," he rasped. "More than a month ago I had word from the Paris police that he was headed for New York."

Detective-Sergeant Benson, heavy of build, gruff of voice, and not half as capable a sleuth as he believed himself to be, said airily:

"I'd like to have a crack at your Lone Wolf, chief."

"You're gonna get it, Benson," retorted McGowan. "I've had a tip that the Lone Wolf intends to lift the Bancroft pearls."

"When?" asked Benson.

"To-night. So take all the men you need and surround the house. But lay low and get him coming out. We want to catch him with the goods."

Benson nodded sagely and rose from the chair which had been creaking beneath his weight.

"Don't worry, chief," he said with a wave of his hand, "he's as good as in the bag. They never get by Benson!"

The two other plain-clothes men went out from the room without comment, and Benson was more than half way to the door when McGowan called him back.

"Come here!" he said curtly; and as June 13th, 1936.

the ponderous detective returned obediently to the side of the desk, frowned up at him. "I said you were going after the Lone Wolf, the slickest jewel thief on the loose on either side of the Atlantic. Don't forget that!"

"I won't," promised Benson. "There was only one man who ever knew who he was, and that was Crane. I don't think he really knew—only had a hunch." McGowan compressed his rather full lips, then heaved a sigh. "If only Crane was in the force now!"

Benson liked that last remark not at all. He was sick of the name of Marmaduke Crane, a predecessor whom he had never seen, but of whom he had heard too much.

"Why don't you get him back, chief?" he asked.

"Maybe you think I haven't tried," McGowan growled. "When he retired he bought a little farm up-State, and it's mighty hard to separate him from his flowers." His voice became sharper. "So in the meantime, will you try to fill his shoes? Crane was a real detective. That's all, Benson."

Detective-Sergeant Martin Benson went off muttering to himself—a lamentable habit of his.

"Crane! Crane! That's all I ever hear! You'd think he was the greatest detective in the world. Crane! Crane! Ugh!"

The Bancroft pearls were famous. Their owner, a middle-aged millionaire, lived in a house of stately proportions set in its own grounds far back from the road in West 120th Street. At ten o'clock that night Benson stood in the shadow of a chestnut-tree on the front lawn of the house, his hands on his hips and a self-satisfied grin on his fat face.

"I've got a copper planted behind every daisy in this garden," he said to a plain-clothes man who was with him. "They never get by Benson!"

The house was in darkness, except for one window on the upper floor at the back; but heavy curtains screened the windows of the drawing-room, and in that room there was a man who had no lawful right to be anywhere upon the premises. He was tall, good-looking, and faultlessly dressed in evening clothes, with an opera-hat upon his head. The collar of his overcoat was turned up about his ears.

His name was Michael Lanyard, but the police of several countries knew him only as the Lone Wolf. Through underground channels it had reached his alert ears that the New York police expected him to steal the Bancroft pearls, and so he had stolen them.

To one so practised as himself, it had been easy enough to enter the house—and equally easy to open the wall-safe in the drawing room, after he had found it, to pull the curtains across the windows and light a reading-lamp which stood on a side table.

The most valuable of the pearls were in the form of a necklace. With the utmost composure he dropped the necklace upon the table to take a heavy silver cigarette-case from one of his pockets. One side of this case he opened, but not the side in which cigarettes reposed, and an empty cavity was revealed.

Into this cavity he stowed the necklace, a secret spring clicked, and the case was restored to his pocket. Then he switched off the light and strolled across a thick pile carpet to the french window at which he had made his entry.

He pulled slightly aside one of the curtains he himself had drawn, but immediately let it fall back into position. A uniformed policeman was standing on the terrace outside.

More cautiously he proceeded to another window, but through one of its panes he saw two policemen on a gravel path and a plain-clothes man on the grass close behind them. He went out into a dim and spacious hall, and from it entered the dining-room, which was in the front of the house; but from the windows of that room he glimpsed more policemen than ever.

Without a sound he returned to the hall and sped along it to the servants' quarters. He found the kitchen door open and stole across to a window overlooking a vegetable garden enclosed by bushes. There were almost as many policemen out there as there were cabbages!

Once more the Lone Wolf made for the hall, and as he reached it heard footsteps on the landing above. He whipped off his hat and flung it on a chair, and he turned down the collar of his overcoat.

Down the stairs lumbered an elderly man, presumably the butler, in dressing-gown and slippers, his hair untidy as though he had just deserted his bed, yet with a pair of pince-nez at an angle upon his nose.

Not till he had reached the foot of the stairs did this man become aware of the motionless figure in the doorway of the drawing-room.

"Mr. Baneroft," he quavered. "Is that you, Mr. Bancroft?"

The Lone Wolf stepped forward.

"You're being robbed," he said.

"Oh!" gasped the butler; and a gloved hand was clapped over his mouth.

"Stop that!" commanded the Lone Wolf in a very low voice. "There's a crook—a desperate criminal—in the house."

"Y-yes," faltered the butler, "but—but who are you?"

"Headquarters," was the reply. "We've got the place surrounded. They're coming up the front way, the back way, and around the side as well. I really hate to inconvenience you, but you see how it is."

"Yes, but—"

The butler was given no opportunity to complete whatever it was he intended to say, because a handkerchief was suddenly and none too gently used as a gag and knotted at the back of his neck.

He was deprived of his pince-nez and of his dressing-gown, and, in his pyjamas, he shivered more with fright than with cold. But the Lone Wolf invested him in a fur rug from the polished floor before he bundled him into a cupboard under the stairs and turned the key in the lock.

In the drawing-room, just inside the door, a bust of Julius Cæsar stood upon a wooden pedestal. Michael Lanyard draped his overcoat about that ancient emperor's shoulders, then carried bust and pedestal to the french window.

He enveloped himself in the butler's dressing-gown, roughed his hair with a hand, and adjusted the butler's pince-nez upon his own nose. Thus disguised, he went quite boldly to the french window, flung back the curtain, turned the handle, and stepped forth on to the terrace.

The policeman out there gaped at him; Detective-Sergeant Benson bounded up the steps from the garden with a plain-clothes man at his heels, and Benson had a gun in his hand.

"I hope I'm not interrupting anything," he said gruffly, "but I just want to take a look round."

"Why, I'm glad you've come, officer," declared Lanyard in a voice not at all like his own. "You know, I've been a bit uneasy all evening."

"There's nothing to fear. Why, nothing ever gets by—"

"There he is!" cried the other detective.

Benson fired through the glass, and the bust fell and the pedestal went

down with it. The two officers brushed past Lanyard into the room, and Benson groped for the light switches while his subordinate stood on guard.

"Did I get him?" asked Benson, as the room became flooded with radiance.

"You shot too late to get this guy Cæsar," gurgled his assistant, pointing to a noseless bust. "About two thousand years too late!"

Michael Lanyard, clasping his hands in apparent agitation, said to the policeman on the terrace:

"Oh, dear, this is dreadful! We can't stand here like this! You've got to tell Mr. Baneroft—he's at the reception next door. You've got to go!"

"I've got to go?" snorted the officer. "No, I'm stationed here. You go."

"Thank you, sir," mumbled Lanyard.

He descended from the terrace to the grounds, and he passed quite a number of policemen as he crossed a lawn on that side of the house and stepped through a gap in a hedge into the grounds of a brilliantly illuminated house next door.

In the cupboard under the stairs of the house he had left behind an unhappy butler pounded on the woodwork of a locked door. Detective-Sergeant Benson opened the door, and he and his companion stared at the strange figure that emerged from the darkness.

The handkerchief was ripped from the mouth it had gagged, and a pair of watery blue eyes blinked at the gun in Benson's hand.

"Please don't shoot, sir!" implored Lanyard's victim. "I'm the butler."

"Butler, eh?" said Benson incredulously. "That's all right with me, Tarzan; but just hold them hands up—and keep 'em up!"

The Pendant

SCREENED by the box hedge through which he had passed, Lanyard thrust the butler's pince-nez into a pocket of the dressing-gown, then took off the dressing-gown and rolled it up and flung it in amongst the bushes.

The imitation Sherlock Holmes swept forward. "Just a moment," he said, pointing a finger at Lanyard. "I think this gentleman is one of your friends I haven't met!"



He smoothed his hair and sauntered with cool assurance across a lawn and a gravel path hung with Chinese lanterns to a terrace that stretched along the side of the house for which he was bound.

Three french windows were wide open on to the terrace, and as he mounted broad stone steps, the strains of a Viennese waltz floated pleasantly out to him.

He approached the nearest of the french windows and peered round it into a ball-room where a number of masked people were dancing. Some were dressed as historical characters, others even more fancifully. A "man-ape" had a "Quaker girl" for partner; an obviously padded and perspiring "Henry the Eighth" was escorting an inevitable "Columbine" towards an improvised bar farther along the room.

Lanyard became particularly interested in a more or less convincing "Sherlock Holmes," complete with caped ulster and cloth cap, who was holding a magnifying-glass in his left hand and talking to a blonde girl just inside the doorway.

"Don't you think you're doing a lot of drinking for a working man?" asked the girl rather petulantly, as it seemed to the listener.

"Now don't hurry me," returned the pseudo Sherlock. "I told you it's the next dance."

"Why wait?" protested his fair companion. "There she is now!"

"Sherlock Holmes" followed with his eyes the direction indicated by a lace fan—and so did Lanyard. A black-haired girl whose perfect shoulders rose above a very low-cut gown of the Second Empire period had just entered the room.

"Well, here goes," said the make-believe detective. "Keep your fingers crossed."

"Crossed?" quoth the blonde girl. "I've got them clenched!"

"Sherlock Holmes," known under more prosaic circumstances as Geoffrey Mallison, reached the black-haired girl just as the "ape-man" deserted his partner to claim her.

"Throw him a peanut, Marcia," said Mallison. "I'm cutting in!"

"Oh, hallo, Mal!" exclaimed the girl, who was Marcia Stewart, owner of the mansion and orphaned daughter of a railroad millionaire, and she submitted to the arm that promptly encircled her waist.

They danced together, and Michael Lanyard deserted the french window for another one to watch their progress.

"I like your friends," Mallison presently remarked.

"Yes," said Marcia, with a little pout beneath her lace-fringed mask, "they're nice. Dull and respectable—they do the same things over and over in the same way."

Mallison had put the magnifying-glass away. His left hand swept clumsily across her neck, and Lanyard, now at the third french window, did not fail to notice that bungling attempt to secure an almost priceless emerald pendant.

Marcia stopped short, arresting the progress of several other dancers.

"My pendant!" she exclaimed.

"What? Mallison blinked at her.

"It's gone!" She felt something cold against her flesh inside her bodice, and she laughed in an embarrassed fashion. "Oh, it didn't fall all the way! I—I'm afraid I'll have to be excused."

She threaded her way to the door and disappeared. Mallison rejoined the blonde girl near Lanyard's hiding-place, June 13th, 1936.

and he heard that girl's scornful greeting:

"Your technique is rotten!"

He moved away from the window and looked up at the side of the house. There was a balcony above the terrace, and pillars supported it. Without the slightest hesitation he swarmed up one of the pillars and heaved himself over a rail.

On the balcony he dusted himself down, straightened his dress-bow, and stole to the open window of a lighted room. It was a bed-room of considerable size and elegantly furnished. On a chesterfield a youngish and quite good-looking woman was reclining at full length as Lanyard's head rose up over the sill, but the woman sat up as the door opened and Marcia entered.

"Oh, Julie, I'm covered with embarrassment!" Marcia cried.

"Proposed to again?" suggested the occupant of the chesterfield, who was, in fact, her aunt, though far too near her own age to be addressed as such.

"No, no, no!" Marcia laughed and plunged a hand into her bodice. "The emerald misbehaved!"

"What?" Aunt Julia Stewart jumped to her feet in dismay, but was almost immediately relieved to see the pendant, attached to a string of emeralds, which her niece retrieved and held aloft. "Oh, you startled me!"

"Something happened to the catch," said Marcia. "Will you help me fix it?"

"Of course." Aunt Julia took the pendant and passed it round a shapely neck. "Tell me, has that crowd of rascals down there become any more interesting than they were when I left them?"

"Oh, Julie, they're not half bad!" laughed Marcia.

"There's something wrong with this catch." As a matter of fact, the catch had been broken by Mallison's hasty grab. "I think I'd better put it away for the night."

"But what'll I wear instead of the pendant?" Marcia asked bleakly.

"You don't need a thing, my dear. You're a beautiful young woman!"

Marcia laughed gaily while her aunt, who was also her companion, went over to a little circular safe in the wall and put the emerald pendant away in it.

"And what's to be done about that?" she asked.

"What a silly question," rebuked Aunt Julia, shutting the safe and locking it. "You should fall in love."

"It's very simple to say 'fall in love,' Julia," sighed Marcia, "but it isn't something one can make happen."

She drifted to the window, and Michael Lanyard promptly backed away from it and crouched against the wall.

"Oh, what a lovely night!" she breathed, gazing up at a newly risen crescent moon and down at the lantern-lit grounds. "Far lovelier than the nights in Europe."

"Marcia," said Aunt Julia, following her to the window and standing behind her, "there's something on your mind. What is it?"

"Oh, a lot of vague things, Julia!" Marcia stretched out her arms and sighed. "Moonlit lake, perhaps—a song full of shining words—I don't know!"

"That settles it," decided her aunt. "You're in love! Who's the man?"

"But there isn't any man," lamented Marcia. "That's the trouble. Oh, a night like this, with a moon like that, and music! A night when you can almost breathe romance in the air. There should be a man, shouldn't there?"

"There are plenty downstairs."

"Yes," Marcia sighed again. "And they're all nice boys, too; but I want to meet someone who is as romantic as this night. If I do, and he smiles, I'll know he's the man."

Out on the balcony Michael Lanyard smiled.

"Well, you won't find him up here," said Aunt Julia, "and if we don't hurry downstairs we won't find any men down there, either. Come on!"

She picked up a mask from the dressing-table and put it on, and she and her niece went out from the room. Michael Lanyard was inside the room almost as soon as the door was closed, and he went straight to the circular safe in the wall.

It took him no more than a few minutes to work out the combination, using a handkerchief because he had left his gloves in the house of Melville Bancroft. With the handkerchief he fished out the morocco-covered case containing the pendant, and the pendant itself was in one of his tail-pockets when he sallied forth to find the stairs.

He reached the upper hall, and there a fat monk lurched up against him and clung to his arm. The monk had not merely a tonsure, but a head completely bald, and it was evident that he had been inbibing too freely at the bar.

"What a small and pleasant world," said Lanyard, and jerked the fellow's mask down over his eyes. "The last time I saw you was in—"

"Help!" exclaimed the monk. "Help! It got me! It got me!"

"What seems to be the trouble?" asked Lanyard.

"Trouble?" echoed the sufferer with a hicough. "My dear sir, I've gone blind! I can't see a thing!"

"At such an early age, too!" said Lanyard. "Now don't give up. Nowadays there's nothing that science and a little patience can't cure."

Through an open doorway he propelled the reveller into an unoccupied dressing-room, where he caught hold of his hands and swung him round and round till he was too giddy to stand.

"Whoa!" he said, after he had become a trifle giddy himself. "Sit down! That's it! Now everything's going to be all right. Shut your eyes!"

The monk, who had been dumped on a couch, obeyed. Lanyard unfastened the mask and removed it.

"Now open your eyes slowly," he directed.

A pair of bleary eyes were opened and blinked.

"Doctor, 'smiraculous," declared their owner thickly. "You saved my life!"

But Lanyard was no longer in the room. Having obtained the mask he needed to mingle with Marcia's guests, he had put it on and gone off to the stairs.

The Police Arrive

IN the hall, at the foot of the stairs, Marcia was talking to a Puritan.

Lanyard leaned over the banisters to listen.

"There are sixty reasons why, Terry," he heard her say, "and they're all over the house. I can't walk out and leave my guests just to marry you."

"Well, how about to-morrow?" asked the Puritan.

"I have to buy a hat to-morrow."

"Well, if you won't marry me, then dance with me."

"I'm sorry, Terry," she said, "but this dance is taken."

"Well, hero I stick till the taker comes!"

A very determined suitor, Lanyard gathered, and one whose attentions were not too welcome. Without a sound he

descended several stairs, then paused again.

"What's he dressed as?" he heard Terry inquire. "Come on, tell me!"

Marcia gnawed her underlip.

"It's a very difficult costume to figure out, Terry," she said slowly. "I don't know whether you'd call it the Duke of Wellington, or Sitting Bull, or—Uncle Tom, or—"

"There's no Uncle Tom or Sitting Bull at the party," the Puritan broke in, "and if there is, he's too late for this dance!"

Down the rest of the stairs flashed Lanyard and stood between the two.

"Beg the young lady's pardon," Terry, he said smoothly. "He has arrived." He bowed to Marcia. "Hallo! Sorry to have kept you waiting!"

Marcia smiled, and her brown eyes were very bright behind the slits in her mask. But the Puritan was distinctly annoyed.

"Who are you?" he demanded curtly.

"Uncle Tom," replied Lanyard. "In modern clothes, and without his cabin, but the same old fugitive."

"I'm glad you've come," said Marcia, and slipped her arm through his.

"Now, look here!" exploded the baffled Puritan; but Lanyard put his arm round Marcia's waist and danced her away. "All right, don't look here!"

Across the hall into the crowded ball-room Lanyard piloted his lovely partner to the tune of a slow fox-trot, and there circulated with her amongst the other couples.

"He takes hints very nicely, doesn't he?" said he.

"Yes," said she. "But who are you really?"

"Uncle Tom."

She laughed, but was not satisfied. He had the manners and the appearance of a gentleman, and he danced delightfully well, but she was almost positive she did not know him.

"Without sheriffs?" she challenged. "Without bloodhounds?"

"No, they're chasing me," he informed her. "They should be crossing the ice any minute now."

"Well, a crowded dance-floor's as good a place to hide as any."

"It's perfect," he assured her. "I've never risen to such heights before. It's amazing!"

"It's amusing," said she.

While they were drawing near to one of the french windows, "Sherlock Holmes" and the blonde girl reached the hall.

"Marcia's room is the first door on the left at the top of the stairs," said the blonde girl in a low voice. "And remember you climb stairs by lifting one foot above the other, not by kicking the stair-roads."

She turned back into the ball-room, and the man who was really her husband went up the stairs. Lanyard danced with his partner out on to the terrace, and all the way along it in the light of the Chinese lanterns to the far end. There they stopped, and Marcia leaned against a rail entranced with the beauty of the night.

"Oh, it's divine!" she exclaimed.

"You under-rate yourself," said Lanyard.

"Oh, I didn't mean the masquerade ball!" she laughed. "I meant the night. I hear they're getting shorter—it's a shame, isn't it?"

"A dreadful shame," agreed Lanyard. "Please will you forgive me?"

"For what?" she asked quickly.

"For kissing you."

"But you haven't—that is, you're not going to!"

"But I am."

"Are you?" She found herself in his arms with his lips on hers. Her hands



He removed the pendant from the handkerchief, and slowly, almost reluctantly, lowered it into the case.

went up to his shoulders. "And you did!" she said. "It was as simple as that. Well, it's partly my fault, but I can't forgive you."

"I don't want you to forgive me," returned Lanyard calmly. "I'm not sorry."

A white-haired butler, who had been searching for his mistress, coughed discreetly beside them.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Stewart," he said, "but I can't locate your aunt. There are two gentlemen to see her, and they say it's important."

"How important, Joseph?" asked Marcia.

"They're from police headquarters," replied the butler.

"I'll see them. Show them into the hall."

The butler bowed and disappeared. Marcia looked at Lanyard, who had not betrayed the slightest sign of discomposure.

"The sheriff!" she said.

"Uhuh!" nodded Lanyard. "With his bloodhounds."

"This should be fun."

Detective-Sergeant Benson was in the hall when they reached it, and another plain-clothes man was with him. Benson was staring at some of the strange characters through the doorway of the ball-room, and to the ape-man, who returned his stare, he said facetiously:

"I suppose you're gonna tell me you're the butler?"

The ape-man made himself scarce with his partner of the moment, and Marcia stepped forward.

"This is Miss Stewart," said the real butler, and Benson had the grace to remove his hat from his head.

"Sorry to break in like this, lady," he began in his gruff voice, "but the name's Benson, and I—"

"Are we making too much noise?" interrupted Marcia. "Did the neighbours complain?"

"The house next door's been robbed,"

said Benson. "We're looking for a dangerous criminal, and we think he might be hiding somewhere in the neighbourhood."

"Oh, I'm sure you'll find him here!" declared Marcia gaily. "The house is full of dangerous criminals. Just take your pick." She waved a hand towards the ball-room. "Now there's Captain Kidd in there, and Jesse James, and Ali Baba, and—"

"No, no!" broke in Benson's assistant; and Benson himself said brusquely:

"Will you have all your guests unmask, please? I just want you to identify them yourself."

"Why, of course."

Marcia led the way into the ball-room, where she went over to the conductor of the orchestra.

The music stopped abruptly, and the dancers stopped with it. A bugle call rang out, and Benson and his colleague stood beside the platform Marcia had mounted.

"By special arrangement with the police department," she announced, "we've decided to turn the clock ahead to high midnight. All those not instantly removing their masks will be arrested for carrying concealed faces! Masks off!"

While the guests were removing their masks the blonde girl drifted to the doorway and whispered to Geoffrey Mallison, who had just descended the stairs.

"Get rid of that emerald," she said.

"Get rid of it?" he returned bleakly.

"Somebody beat our time. It's gone!"

Her mask was off. He removed his own and they entered the ball-room. Lanyard was taking off the mask he had borrow from a fat monk now fast asleep on the couch upstairs, and she saw his face.

"You were right," she said. "I'm afraid somebody did beat our time!"

Detective-Sergeant Benson looked up at Marcia, whose beauty was now completely manifest.

"You know everybody here, do you, Miss Stewart?" he asked.

"Yes, everyone," she replied, and smiled with her eyes at Lanyard. "You may search the rest of the house now, if you like."

"Oh, no!" The detective shook his head. "That satisfies Benson, Miss Stewart."

She bowed mockingly to him, made a sign to the conductor, and stepped down from the platform. The music burst forth again, and the surprised guests resumed their dancing. Mallison and his companion retreated to the hall as they saw Benson and his colleague coming towards them with Marcia and Lanyard.

"What might his pedigree be?" Mallison inquired.

"One of the best in Europe," was the reply.

"We'll see about that!"

Benson and the others reached the hall, and Benson actually bowed to the girl whose party he had disturbed.

"We'll move along," he said. "Sorry to have bothered you."

The imitation Sherlock Holmes swept forward.

"Just a moment," he said, pointing a finger at Lanyard. "I think this gentleman is one of your friends that I haven't met, Marcia."

Benson stared, and Marcia was rather taken aback; but Lanyard did not turn a hair.

"You're quite right," he said blandly. "We never have."

"Why, this is Tom," said Marcia. "Colonel Thompson, of Kentucky. Mr. Mallison—Colonel Thompson."

"A pleasure," murmured the defeated Mallison.

"A great pleasure," bowed Lanyard.

"It's quite all right, gentlemen," said Marcia.

Benson turned away and received his hat from the butler who had taken charge of it. He and the other plainclothes man were conducted to the door.

"Dance?" suggested Mallison.

"Why, yes," agreed Marcia.

Off they went into the ball-room, and for a few moments Lanyard watched them as they danced together, then threaded his way to the bar and filled a glass from a punchbowl.

"Colonel, eh?" said a mocking voice beside him, and he looked round at the blonde girl. She was wearing a Grecian costume, and evidently represented Helen of Troy, but he remembered her face.

"Well, well, well," he said over the rim of the glass. "From the past!"

"Remember me?" she challenged.

"Of course I do." He smiled reminiscently. "Norah, and that little apartment on East Twelfth Street."

"It's Liane," she informed him. "and the apartment happened to be in Vienna, at forty-four Godignasse."

"Oh, yes!" He held the glass between his hands and nodded solemnly over it. "I remember now—except did I catch you going through my desk, or was it the other way round?"

"You caught me," she replied quite shamelessly.

"Oh, well, it all worked out very pleasantly. You've come into the higher brackets, haven't you? What happened to Mr. Powers?"

The police retired him. Geoffrey Mallison has a much better clientele, only he gets a little jealous."

"Jealous?" Lanyard raised his brows.

"Of Miss Stewart?"

"Oh, no!" she assured him. "The jealousy is purely professional."

"I see. Well, even so, that little scene just now was a trifle too dramatic, don't you think?"

June 13th, 1936.

"Forget it." She put a hand on his arm. "Now that I've found you I want you to join us."

"Join you?" He laughed slightly.

"Oh, no, no, I'm afraid I can't do that!" "You don't understand. I want you to join us for a small party to-morrow night at the Club Rendezvous."

"Morphew's place?" He shook his head. "Not interested."

"But you are," she insisted. "The party's for Marcia—and there are the Stewart jewels. Obviously you're interested in one or the other."

"Is it really as obvious as that?" He put down the glass, took out his heavy silver cigarette-case, opened it, and presented it to her. "Oh dear!"

She helped herself to a cigarette, and he took one for himself, then ignited a lighter.

"To-morrow night, then, colonel?" she said, blowing a smoke ring.

"All right," he surrendered, "to-morrow night, Mrs.—"

"Mallison," she completed for him.

"Is he the third husband?"

"The fourth."

He offered her the glass he had filled. "Have some punch," he said.

Nobody saw him steal upstairs to Marcia's room some little time later, and if anyone had seen him it was unlikely that they would have recognised him, for he was wearing the mask once more.

On an elaborate dressing-table stood a framed photograph of Marcia Stewart. He contemplated it for quite a while before he picked it up and opened the back of the frame. The photograph itself was stowed away in one of his tail-pockets, and from the other pocket he took out the handkerchief in which the emerald pendant was wrapped.

He had left the morocco-covered case on a little round table. He opened the case and removed the pendant from the handkerchief, and, slowly, almost reluctantly, he lowered the pendant into the case.

A few minutes afterwards the pendant was back in the wall-safe and he was back in the ball-room, claiming Marcia for a dance.

"Maggie!"

DETECTIVE-SERGEANT BENSON was not at all happy in the presence of his superior officer, Angus McGowan, next morning.

"So what?" snapped the chief of detectives.

"So I took a shot at him."

"And bounced a slug off Julius Caesar!" McGowan made a derisive noise in his throat. "Nice work!"

"How about that hat and overcoat I was telling you about?" asked Benson hastily. "I figured they ought to give us a swell lead."

"Well, figure again!" was the crushing rejoinder. "The hat comes from Budapest, and the coat from some London tailor who isn't even in the book! What about those footprints in the garden?"

"They don't help, either," growled the discomfited detective. "He must have had the soles of his shoes tricked up. One foot's larger and a completely different shape from the other."

"So he walked in and he walked out the same as he's been doing for weeks!" McGowan leaned over his desk, gripping the edge of it with both hands. "He's fast company, Benson, out of your league! This job needs a man like Crane. Since he left the department everything's gone wrong."

Benson writhed in his chair.

"I've got a plan," he stated defensively.

"That's fine! When you get it

finished make a dog-kennel out of it and crawl inside. That's all, Benson."

Benson rose and rammed his hat on his head.

"Build a dog-kennel out of it," he muttered as he progressed doorwards. "Who does he think he is, talking to me that way, eh? I don't have to stand for that sort of thing, not me. I've got a standing offer from a big city out West to take charge of their Peeping Tom problem, but not me—not me! I'm sticking to Mac. I'm the best man he ever had around here."

McGowan heard as much as he was intended to hear, but paid no attention whatever. The door was reached, and Benson strode out into a waiting-room and closed the door behind him.

"Why, even as a cop on the beat," he informed a police-sergeant who was writing at a desk, "I showed unusual ability."

The sergeant did not look up, and Benson became aware of a man, more heavily built than himself, who was sitting patiently on a bench and holding something wrapped in paper between his knees; a grey-haired man with a pair of very mild blue eyes.

"Stranger," he said, advancing towards the bench thoroughly upset, "I'm a man of reputation. Maybe you've heard the phrase 'They never get by Benson.'"

Apparently the stranger was not acquainted with the phrase, for he merely shrugged very broad shoulders.

A buzzer sounded and the sergeant at the desk looked round.

"Will you please go in, Mr. Crane?" he said.

Up rose the ponderous stranger and vanished into McGowan's room, leaving a very startled detective behind.

"Crane?" gasped the detective.

"Did you say Crane?"

"Yeah, Crane," drawled the sergeant. "A real detective, Benson. Have you ever seen one before?"

"Why didn't you tip me off?" Benson thrust his thumbs under his braces and projected his chest. "Now there's a man that's in my class," he blustered. "Me and him could have done each other a lot o' good, swapping ideas."

Beyond the closed door Angus McGowan beamed at his visitor.

"Sit down, Crane," he boomed. "I'm right glad you've turned up."

Crane deposited himself in a chair, holding with care the object wrapped in paper.

"D'you know what time of the year it is?" he asked discontentedly. "Mac, my garden's coming along. I work all May and June, and now that I've got a chance to see results you keep wiring me to leave it for this place. I wouldn't have come down here if we hadn't pounded the pavements together, Mac."

"I need you badly," said McGowan. "Well," announced Crane, "I'll help you if you'll help me with Maggie."

"Maggie?" Angus McGowan blinked. "Who's Maggie?"

A sheet of white paper was removed from a flower-pot in which a scarlet begonia flourished, and the flower-pot was set down upon the chief of detectives' desk.

"There she is!" proclaimed Crano proudly. "That little plant's going to take all the medals at the garden show, Mac. I didn't dare to leave her at home all day, so you'll have to detail a man to take care of her day and night."

"All right," gulped McGowan. "All right. I—er—I'll put Benson on it."

He went to the door and Benson was

called into the room. Crane had transferred the flower-pot to a table nearer the window than the desk.

"Don't you ever let any sunshine in here, Mac?" he demanded, proceeding to pull up the Venetian blinds that covered the window while Benson watched him open-eyed and open-mouthed.

"What do you know about flowers?" McGowan rapped.

"Flowers?" echoed Benson. "Oh, why Tiger Flowers, he was one of the greatest lightweight—"

"He'll do!" interrupted Crane, making for a filter at which he filled a glass with water for his precious begonia. "He'll do!"

The bewildered Benson was told to wait in the outer room.

"I'll give you the details of this assignment later," McGowan informed him.

"Well, what's troubling you, Mac?" inquired Crane, after the begonia's thirst had been quenched. "Your last wire sounded worried."

"I'm in a spot," was the reply. "In the last three weeks—"

"Just a second, Mac—just a second."

A gleam of sunshine was slanting into the room and the flower-pot had to be moved into its warmth. The chief of detectives became almost frantic.

"Crane," he exploded, "it was bad enough when you quit to take a sheriff's badge in some hick county and left me with a bunch of stooges who can't even catch a cold. Now you come in to do a tough job, and you bring a flower. What's the matter with you?"

"Say, you ain't sore about Maggie, are you?" asked Crane in a pained voice.

"Sore?" McGowan banged a fist on his desk. "Listen, the Lone Wolf's operating again."

"What's that? The Lone Wolf? What have you been wasting all this time for? He's the only man who ever got a decision against me, Mac. Come on, what are we waiting for?"

McGowan had no reason to complain of lack of attention on the part of the retired detective after that. Crane extracted all the information available concerning the Lone Wolf's activities in the past three weeks.

"I'll get him," he said, at the end of a quarter of an hour's talk.

Crane Pays a Call

IN the days when the Lone Wolf had before troubled the city of New York, Michael Lanyard had occupied an expensive flat on the fifth floor of an apartment-house in Park Avenue. Crane had always been convinced that Michael Lanyard and the Lone Wolf were one and the same person, but he had failed to prove it to the satisfaction of a judge and jury.

From headquarters he proceeded by taxicab to the apartment-house. An elevator whisked him up to the fifth floor, and in a carpeted corridor he rang the doorbell of the flat.

Lanyard's manservant, Jenkins, who was quite a character, was in his master's bed-room. He was in his shirt-sleeves and a green apron was tied round such waist as he possessed. He had been plying a feather duster, but had paused in front of a tall chest of drawers to pick up a heavy silver cigarette-case which was lying there, and he had opened first one side of the case and then the other.

He was contemplating the Baneroff necklaces with expert eyes when the doorbell startled him. He closed the case, restored it to its former position, picked up the feather duster and went out across the hallway of the flat to open the door.

Crane brushed past him without a word. He knew Jenkins, and Jenkins knew him.

"Well, of all the infernal effrontery!" exclaimed the servant, who was given to rather an elaborate mode of speech.

Crane bent with interest over a curious waxy plant in a brass-bound tub.

"Special type of tropical plant called the Ocuba," he remarked. "That's a good specimen, too. Where d'you get it?"

"That," replied Jenkins stiffly, "was a purchase."

"I suppose you're going to tell me the master's not at home?"

"Mr. Lanyard is not at home."

Quite calmly the detective walked into the bed-room and looked thoughtfully round it. The door of the bathroom was closed, but a sound of splashing was distinctly audible. Crane made for the door, but Jenkins reached it first and opened it. Michael Lanyard, perfectly naked, was in the bath.

"What is it, Jenkins?" he inquired, sponging his chest.

"It's Crane," replied Jenkins.

"Oh, dear old Crane."

"He's waiting for you out there. You don't want to see him, do you?"

"Jenkins, you take life far too mysteriously. Of course I want to see him. I've missed him."

Jenkins went back into the bed-room to find Crane rummaging in one of the drawers of the tall chest.

"Spending big, isn't he?" said the detective, displaying silk socks and a handkerchief of superb linen.

"It's not money," Jenkins retorted.

"It's a matter of good taste."

Marcia's photograph was propped against a vase on the dressing-chest. Her name was written across a corner of it as though she had intended at some time to give it to a friend. Crane studied the pictured face, then picked up the silver cigarette-case.

He opened it, helped himself to a cigarette and lit it, but to Jenkins' relief he put the case down again.

"Hi, Crane," shouted Lanyard from his bath, "everything's hidden under the carpet."

"Oh, I wouldn't think of taking up the carpet," said Crane, and crossed into the bath-room and seated himself on a chair. "Nice picture of Marcia Stewart," he went on, puffing at the cigarette. "A little different from the type you usually go for, isn't she?"

"She's a little different from any type I've ever met," said Lanyard.

"Yes, a little wealthier."

Lanyard groped for the soap.

"Now that's a detail I hadn't noticed," he declared. "I found the difference in her eyes. Gorgeous eyes! What colour would you say they are?"

"Off-hand, I'd say they were blue-grey."

"That's just what they're not," said Lanyard. "Crane, would you mind bringing me a cigarette?"

Quite readily the detective vanished into the bed-room and returned with the cigarette-case; and as Lanyard's hands were wet he himself opened the case, took a cigarette from it and put it between a pair of ready lips. He left the case on the edge of the bath to grope in his pockets for matches.

"You know, Crane," said Lanyard as the cigarette was lit, "you're getting harder to fool every day."

"I was wrong about the eyes," said

Having made two noughts and one cross on the smeared polish, Jenkins glanced artfully at the policeman.



Crane, "but I can't be fooled about the girl. She looks awfully nice, Lanyard."

"Nice? Man, she's perfect!"

"And the young lady has one of the finest emerald collections in the world."

"That remark, you old so-and-so, strikes me as containing malice aforethought."

"All right," laughed Crane. "I'll come to the point. They're talking about the Lone Wolf again."

"Oh, really?" Lanyard had completed his ablutions. "Say, you might stop playing detective for a moment and give me a hand with that bath towel."

Crane rose to get the indicated towel, and immediately the other side of the cigarette-case was opened and the stolen necklace disappeared into the depths of the soapy water. The case was back on the side of the bath when Crane returned with the towel.

"Headquarters has him spotted for the Bancroft job the other night," remarked the detective as Lanyard took the towel and began to dry himself with it.

"Well, it's a matter of opinion."

"That's why I dropped in to get yours. You never can tell who can give you the right steer. Besides, I wanted to greet an old friend, anyway, and see how he was doing, and to have a look at the picture of his latest girl."

Mild blue eyes and very keen brown ones met and challenged.

"All right, Crane," said the owner of the brown ones with an air of sincerity. "I have got a hunch. My hunch is that this Lone Wolf you're talking about is just about through. No more prowling. Done for. Finis!"

"Good!" said Crane emphatically.

"In all the years I followed this man I never did get to him, but there was always a hope that I might some day. It's become a sort of ambition, but if you say he's quit, I'll forget that ambition."

"You can, Crane," Lanyard stepped out from the bath, enveloped in the towel. "I finished him myself last night."

The detective jabbed the end of his cigarette in an ash-tray.

"I'm counting on you being right about this, Lanyard," he said slowly and significantly. "If you're not, I won't rest till I swap his name for a number. I'll be seeing you around, I hope."

"So-long," nodded Lanyard. "Glad you dropped in."

Jenkins was hovering in the hallway, only too eager to open the front door for the unwelcome visitor, and Lanyard had repaired to the bed-room, clad in a dressing-gown, when he returned to it.

"I still don't like that man," remarked Jenkins plaintively, and perceived that his master was swinging a necklace with his right hand. "Why, Mr. Lanyard—why, that's the Bancroft string, isn't it?"

"How did you guess?" rapped Lanyard.

"Well, I—er—I don't understand," evaded the servant. "Why, before you had your bath you were positively brooding—talking about your misspent youth, and repairing your ways. You made quite a little talk on the subject, sir, avowing in a manner of speaking that crime does not pay."

With his left hand Lanyard tossed the bath towel over his servant's shoulder.

"It does not pay, Jenkins," he said solemnly.

Jenkins looked thoroughly upst.

"I heard you make a solemn promise, June 13th, 1936.

his chair to scowl at her. "What's fixed?"

"Four of us will be here to-night to dine and dance and—"

"Four of us?"

Liane nodded. "The guests to-night will be Marcia Stewart, Geoffrey, myself, and Michael Lanyard."

"Lanyard? Who's he?"

"The smoothest and cleverest jewel thief on either side of the Atlantic."

Morphew sprang up from his chair.

"I'm not cutting anyone else in on this!" he raged.

"I'm afraid you haven't much choice," Liane retorted. "Miss Stewart has cut him in already. She likes him."

"I don't care how much she likes him!"

"But you don't even know him."

Liane blew some smoke from her painted lips. "Perhaps you'll be more interested when I tell you that Mr. Lanyard is the Lone Wolf."

Morphew's expression changed completely. Mallison's eyes widened.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he exclaimed.

"You shut up!" said his wife.

"Lanyard's the Lone Wolf?" Morphew rubbed his receding chin. "How do you know?"

"We once lived at the same hotel."

"And the Stewart girl likes him?"

Liane received a pat on the shoulder. "Smart girl!"

"Well," began Geoffrey Mallison, "I think that we should—"

"Save it!" Morphew curtly interrupted. "I'll do the thinking from now on."

The Club Rendezvous was situated in Sixth Street, near Broadway, and it had a very mixed clientele. Some of its regular patrons came only to dance and to dine in a rather garish restaurant on the ground floor; others came to gamble in rooms on the floor above.

The restaurant was fairly crowded with diners and dancers that evening when Marcia entered it in company with Liane and her husband, but the three were promptly provided with a table which had been reserved for them—a table on a raised portion of the floor from which the whole of the room could be seen.

Morphew joined them at that table, perfectly dressed and perfectly mannered. An excellent dinner was served, and Marcia thoroughly enjoyed herself; the presence of underworld characters intrigued her. Morphew, pandering to her mood, pointed out several notorious characters.

"That's 'Pinch' McCullough, the gambler," he said, indicating one of five men at a table near the orchestra. "He made a fortune, last week, at Pimlico."

"Not really?" breathed Marcia.

"And who are the men with him?"

"Well," laughed Morphew, "one of them is the owner of the other four horses in the race! The man on the right is 'Red' Dugan."

"Not the Dugan we read about in the papers?" exclaimed Marcia. "The gangster?"

"That's right," Morphew assured her.

"Oh, do you suppose you could get him to autograph a serviette for Aunt Julia? She'd be thrilled!"

"You'd be a cinch," said Morphew, "if he could write!"

Marcia turned excitedly to Mallison.

"Oh, Mal, this place is fascinating!" she cried. "I'm so glad you thought of coming here!"

"Suppose," suggested Morphew, "we go to one of my private dining-rooms

his chair to scowl at her. "What's fixed?"

"Did I?" laughed Lanyard. "Well, don't take it so to heart, Jenkins."

"Oh, I see!" The face of the servant brightened. "It was all a pleasantry. You didn't mean it, and everything you told Crane was just to mislead him. We're going on the same as usual, aren't we, sir?"

"No, Jenkins. As from to-day you and I are honest citizens."

Jenkins drew a long breath.

"Well, I'm sorry to hear that, sir," he said.

A Job for Jenkins

LATE that afternoon Angus McGowan, in his room at headquarters, flung upon his desk a special edition of the "New York Chronicle" in which he had just read that the Bancroft mansion had been invaded in broad daylight by someone who had returned the missing pearls.

"This is incredible!" he exclaimed.

Benson, instructed in his duties, was fussing round the begonia in its flower-pot; Crane was hovering beside him with his hands in his pockets. McGowan glared at them.

"You're worried about a begonia," he fumed, "and we're up against the toughest proposition we ever had. Here's a thief giving things away."

"What's troubling you?" asked Crane cheerfully. "He's taken himself off our hands."

"It's an act," snorted the chief of detectives. "Some kind of a build-up. They don't make a switch like that for nothing."

"I think you're wrong," said Crane.

"I still can't understand it. I wish you'd stick around."

"All right," said Crane. "I will. Benson, you'd better take Maggie up on the roof for her afternoon sun-bath."

While Benson was conveying the flower-pot and its precious contents to the flat roof of headquarters, Geoffrey Mallison stood beside a desk in a private office on the first floor of the Club Rendezvous.

Liane, his blonde wife, was perched on the arm of a chair, smoking a cigarette and seemingly quite undisturbed by the rage of the man who was seated at the desk. That man was Leonard Morphew, whose name Michael Lanyard had mentioned the night before, proprietor of the club and the acknowledged head of a gang of clever jewel thieves.

He was rather a sinister-looking person with a nose that contradicted the weakness of his chin and a pair of deeply set brown eyes. A little moustache failed to hide a mouth that suggested a thoroughly unscrupulous nature.

"I'm not interested in your explanation," he snarled at Mallison. "I don't care what happened last night. All I know is I spent a bank-roll paying your bills all over Europe. You meet a Society girl named Marcia Stewart in Paris, and you become friends. You get into a position to grab the biggest collection of emeralds in the country, and what happens?"

"Well," protested Mallison, "something went wrong last night."

"You don't have to tell me that."

"What happened was—"

"I don't care what happened last night!" roared Morphew. "All I know is that you fell down on the job."

Liane rose up and flicked ash from her cigarette on to the carpet.

"Stop crying, Morphew," she said calmly. "It's all fixed."

"Fixed?" Morphew slewed round in

for coffee, and make this an exclusive affair?"

"Let's do that," urged Liane, accepting her cue.

Marcia agreed, and Morphew rose. "If you'll excuse me, I'll arrange it," he said.

In a parking place outside the premises a very smart grey coupé had edged past a variety of cars to the only vacant space that was left. Jenkins was at the wheel, and Lanyard was seated beside him. The vacant space was a forbidden one, because it was too near a fire hydrant, but Lanyard had his own reasons for wanting the coupé to be parked there. He was quite well acquainted with the Club Rendezvous.

"Jenkins," he said, pointing upwards, "do you see that window on the corner?"

"Yes, sir," responded Jenkins. "Very beautiful, sir, but if I might say so, a trifle menacing."

"Right," agreed Lanyard. "Well, Jenkins, you keep your eye on that window, at present quite brilliantly lighted, and remember that on this occasion the play starts when the curtain comes down."

"Yes, sir. And what part do I play in this little drama?"

"You call the police."

"When the curtain comes down," nodded Jenkins. "And what shall I tell them, sir?"

"I'll leave that to you, Jenkins."

Lanyard descended from the coupé, crossed to the pavement, and disappeared into the Club Rendezvous. Jenkins tipped his bowler hat over his eyes and viewed the fire hydrant with some misgiving.

Sixth Street is not a fashionable thoroughfare. Some very untidy youngsters appeared round the corner, bent on mischief, and the drooping figure of Jenkins engaged their attention. From some neighbouring thoroughfare

of the Bowery they had armed themselves with discarded tomatoes and damaged eggs, the car park outside the Club Rendezvous frequently providing them with targets for such things.

An egg, the shell of which was already broken, smashed and splashed against the side of the coupé; an over-ripe tomato followed. Jenkins roused himself to rebuke the youngsters.

"Oh, you mustn't do that!" he admonished. "You'll scratch the car! Run along—run along! I polished this car this morning!"

"And he's going to polish it again, too!" shrilled one of the boys; whereupon another egg and two more tomatoes were hurled at the coupé.

Jenkins descended in wrath, and the youngsters made themselves scarce. Jenkins frowned at the mess they had made and reached under the driving-seats for rags and a large bottle of car polish. He wiped off a quantity of tomato juice and egg, and he proceeded to smear the body of the car with the polish.

Noughts and Crosses

LANYARD, having given his name to an attendant in the vestibule of the Club Rendezvous, was conducted up thickly carpeted stairs and through a number of doorways to a room in which Marcia was seated at a table with Liane and Geoffrey Mallison.

"I promised you a big surprise," Liane said to Marcia, "and here it comes!"

Marcia looked up, and her face flushed a little and her brown eyes sparkled.

"I hope I'm not intruding," said Lanyard, reaching her side and clasping the hand she offered him.

"Why, you're the big event of the evening!" she declared.

"It's a pleasure to have you with us, Mr. Lanyard," said Mallison, pronouncing the name very distinctly.

"It seems to be a pleasure every time we meet," returned Lanyard with calm, and he bent over Marcia. "Am I entirely forgiven?"

"For what?" she asked. "For your thievery? I was robbed last night! A picture of mine was stolen!"

"With so much treasure about," he informed her, "I couldn't leave the place empty-handed."

Down in the restaurant the orchestra began to play the slow foxtrot to which he had danced her away on to the terrace of her home the night before. She smiled at him, and he asked her if the music was familiar.

"I believe that's where we left off," said she.

"We might pick up again at the same place," he suggested. "Shall we?"

She rose immediately, and with murmured apologies took his arm. They went out from the room and down some stairs into the restaurant, and they danced together.

"I don't think Morphew will be able to do anything with him," grunted Mallison after they had gone.

On the polished floor in the middle of the restaurant, Lanyard informed Marcia that he had planned to telephone her that day.

"What changed your mind?" she asked softly.

"Oh, there were a lot of things I wanted to say that I'd rather say in person," he replied.

She wanted to hear those things, and she suggested that they should sit out the rest of the dance. An unoccupied table was quite near, and he led her over to it. A waiter almost immediately appeared with a Welsh rarebit which he set before them.

"Sorry it was delayed, sir," he said. "Is everything satisfactory?"

"Yes, fine, thanks," returned Lanyard.

He was hungry and the Welsh rare-



Mallison would have seized Morphew by the throat, but his elbow was gripped and his wrist was twisted downwards in a trick of ju-jutsu.

bit was delicious. The fact that there had been a card on the table announcing that it was engaged did not trouble him in the least.

"Tell me," he said presently, "how long have you known Mallison and Liane?"

"I met them in Europe several weeks ago," she replied. "Why?"

"They don't seem to be quite your sort of people."

"They're much more interesting than my sort of people."

"Do you think that's wise?" he asked gravely. "I mean, these sudden friendships?"

"After all," she retorted, "I've only known you through two foxtrots and a Welsh rarebit!"

An elderly man and an elderly woman, both of considerable bulk, bore down on the table and stared at the two who were seated at it.

"Of all the nerve!" bridled the woman.

Lanyard instantly rose and offered his arm to Marcia.

"Let's dance," he said, and, with a grin, addressed the fat and over-dressed woman. "Let me recommend the Welsh rarebit—it's excellent."

On the floor above, Morphew passed through several rooms to one in which there was a roulette table. Several patrons of the place were gathered round the table, and Morphew greeted them, then moved towards a divan on which two particularly ugly fellows were sprawling. They were in dinner-jacket suits—clothes that suited them not at all.

One of them was swarthy, thick-set, and rather deaf, and his name was Mastro; the other looked like a pugilist, and his name was Coster. Both could be dangerous when occasion called for rough stuff.

"Do you want me, boss?" inquired Coster, jumping to his feet.

"No," Morphew replied. "I just wanted to see if you could walk. Extend yourself and stay sober to-night. I might need you two and the other boys. Tell Mallison I'm all ready—he can bring the party up."

Coster moved across to a doorway and Mastro hurried after him.

"What did he say?"

"Never mind what he said," Coster shouted in the deaf one's ear. "You stick around."

Down in the car park, Jenkins, by this time, had covered the bodywork of the car with the polish and was about to clean it off again when a policeman sauntered up, seated himself on the top of the fire hydrant, and very significantly took out his notebook and pencil.

Jenkins, who had discarded his coat but was still wearing his bowler hat, promptly traced two horizontal lines with a finger in the smear of polish on the coupé door, intersected them with two vertical lines, and began to play the ancient game of noughts and crosses. Having made two noughts and one cross, he glanced artfully at the policeman, who was young enough to accept the mute challenge.

Deserting the fire hydrant, the officer traced a cross above the cross.

Jenkins let him win that first game, just to encourage him, and started another one. The policeman put away his notebook and his pencil, and, like two small boys, they played noughts and crosses all round the car, while in a room on the upper floor of the Club Rendezvous, Marcia tried her luck at the roulette board on a system Geoffrey Mallison recommended to her.

Again and again she won, while the June 13th, 1936.

others—including Morphew—looked on with interest.

"Oh, this seven system Mal gave me is marvellous!" she exclaimed. "And it's so simple, too! Seven, fourteen, twenty-eight and thirty-five—any multiple of seven."

"Sounds almost too good to be true," commented Lanyard sceptically, his eyes on Morphew; and Morphew said:

"Oh, you know how it is when you get a run on a certain set of numbers—it's almost uncanny. You wouldn't like to try it yourself, would you?"

"No, not for me, thanks," returned Lanyard.

"We have other games that might interest you."

A challenge, obviously. Lanyard turned to Marcia.

"Shall we try one?" he asked.

"No," she laughed. "I'm doing very well right here."

"How about you?" purred Morphew.

"I'll take a look," Lanyard decided.

He was conducted through other rooms into the private office. Lanyard looked round it and said:

"This is a nice place, but where's the game you spoke of?"

"Stop acting simple, Lanyard," returned Morphew coolly. "You know we're after the Stewart jewels, and you know we won't let you pull that job without a beef from us."

"Well, beef away," said Lanyard. "It's a free country. Or have you a monopoly on the jewel market?"

"This is no time for wisecracks. I'm making it easy for you. You're going to operate with me, and I'll declare you in for twenty-five per cent. But twenty-five per cent is tops, you understand. I've a lot of dough tied up in those emeralds."

"I'll bet you have," said Lanyard, rejecting a cigarette which was offered and taking one from his own case and lighting it. "Mr. and Mrs. Mallison must have run up a pretty expense account in Europe."

"When we do anything, we do it in a big way," boasted Morphew. "You'll do yourself a lot of good operating with me."

"No sale. I have a system of my own. I like it."

"But it's behind the times, Lanyard. You need a mob to-day. Organisation. I'm not making you a proposition. I'm telling you the way it's gonna be!"

"Really?" Lanyard smiled, but his eyes glinted. "I like you and I hate to turn you down, but I'm afraid I must." He pointed to the door. "Go ahead."

"Oh, no, Mr. Lanyard," said Morphew. "After you. If anyone does any back-patting to-night it's going to be me."

They went out from the office, Lanyard first, and they progressed through two crowded rooms and reached a third one.

"I wonder how difficult it is going to be to get out of this place," remarked Lanyard; and Morphew frowned at him.

"There you go, being stubborn again," he said. "What sort of a host would people think I was if I let you leave so early? We like you, Lanyard. We want to keep you here."

Lanyard knew the room he was in now. He turned suddenly to the window he had pointed out to Jenkins and pulled back a heavy curtain. Jenkins and his policeman were playing noughts and crosses on a sedan which had been smeared with polish.

"Don't start figuring that way," said Morphew sharply. "It's a long jump to the street!"

Lanyard pulled down the blind and turned away from the window.

Jenkins, who had just won another game against his policeman, had not failed to watch the window.

"Here's where the play starts," he announced.

"What d'you mean, 'starts'?" asked the puzzled officer. "We've been doing this for an hour!"

"And it would be a pleasure to continue," Jenkins assured him, "but it's way past Aunt Mathilda's bed-time, and the poor soul won't close her eyes unless I 'phone to wish her good-night. Believe me, sir, I am very happy to have met you in a social way."

A Game of Wits

MARCIA was still winning at the roulette board when Lanyard and Morphew re-entered the room. Mastro and Coster were looking on from a distance; Liane and Mallison appeared to have become rather bored.

Morphew stopped the game and suggested to the other players that they might meet with better fortune in one of the other rooms. Marcia gathered up her winnings.

"I wonder what Aunt Julia will say when she hears about this," she laughed.

"I wonder what Aunt Julia would say," drawled Morphew, "if she knew the sort of company you're keeping!"

"Oh, she'd love it!"

"I wonder!" The room had cleared, except for the four of them. "I'll wager it would bowl her over when she reads in the paper that Marcia Stewart, the owner of the famous jewel collection, has been running around with an international jewel thief!"

"Jewel thief?" Marcia echoed in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"The gentleman next to you will explain."

Marcia turned blankly to Lanyard.

"What's he talking about, Michael?" she asked.

Morphew, with a very evil smile, said blandly:

"Michael Lanyard is the name you know him by, but with us he's known as the Lone Wolf."

"Why, that's ridiculous!" she cried, staring at Lanyard's set face. "I don't believe it! It isn't—it isn't true, is it, Michael?"

But Lanyard bowed his head, and she knew that it was true.

"Liane, I want to go home," she said miserably, and Liane went out from the room with her.

"That wasn't a very nice thing to do, was it?" suggested Morphew.

"Oh, I don't know!" shrugged Lanyard. "It's a gentleman's privilege. He can introduce his guests any way he pleases."

"Will you have a drink?"

"Sure, I always like to drink to a winner."

Morphew called to Coster, who approached with his right hand in his dinner-jacket pocket.

"Give the gentleman a drink."

"If," added Lanyard dryly, "you can take your hand off that gun long enough to get it!"

Coster vanished, presently to reappear with drinks upon a tray; and Mastro was with him.

"I've another little treat in store for you," Morphew informed Lanyard as he handed him a whisky-and-soda. "A week-end visit to Jersey City."

"Oh," said Lanyard, "with the play-mates here? Either one of you two boys sing bass?"

Marcia had reached the restaurant with Liane when plain-clothes men and uni-

formed officers invaded the vestibule, and a red light flashed in each of the upstairs rooms.

"That's trouble!" exclaimed Morphew. "Go down and see what it is!"

Coster and Mastro obeyed, but they had not been gone a minute before a number of scared gamblers swarmed into the room, crying out that the police were raiding the place. The commotion already created in the restaurant had spread upstairs.

In the confusion, Lanyard squeezed through the crowd, reached the stairs, and sped down them to the vestibule. Police were guarding the front doors and plain-clothes men were trying to compel order. Lanyard caught sight of Marcia, near the open gate of an elevator, looking for Liane, from whom she had become separated. He swept her into the cage, slammed the gate, and pressed a button.

The cage shot upwards, but midway between two floors above the club he stopped it.

"There, now we're all right," he said. "Small world, isn't it?"

"I want to go," Marcia frigidly informed him. "I want to get out of here."

"Which way?" he inquired genially. "Up or down? The police are waiting at both ends, and from what I saw of that raiding party they're really not worth meeting."

"They can't be any worse than—" She broke off and bit her lip.

"Than the criminals they chase?" he suggested. "Marcia, I've got to tell you something."

"I won't listen!" she stormed, and turned her back on him.

"I'm afraid you can't help yourself. I want to tell you about the Lone Wolf. He doesn't exist any more."

"I can't believe that," she informed the wall of the cage.

"It's the truth," he declared earnestly. "It happened when first I met you."

"People don't change like that!"

"I know they don't," said he, "but this one has."

By the time the noise in the Club Rendezvous had died away he had convinced her because she wanted to be convinced; but it was not till the shriek of police sirens had faded away in the distance that he brought the cage of the elevator down to the level of the deserted vestibule.

All the cars that had been parked outside the premises had disappeared, save his own coupé. He helped Marcia into it and got in at the wheel, while Jenkins opened the dickey for himself.

The self-starter buzzed, the car swept out of Sixth Street into Broadway and joined the up-town stream of traffic.

"The Marines arrived almost too late, Jenkins," said Lanyard over his shoulder in the region of Union Square.

"I called the police, sir," responded Jenkins, "just as soon as the blind came down. I told them that Butcher Willinger, the murderer they wanted, was in the gambling den. They seemed delighted."

Times Square was reached, and then Lanyard spoke again to his servant.

"What are all those marks on the car, Jenkins?"

"Oh, a little game of wits, sir," was the reply. "We were too near a fire hydrant, sir, and were in danger of being charged with that offence against the regulations. But we defeated the enemy again, sir."

West One Hundred and Twentieth Street was reached, and the coupé came to a standstill in the drive of Marcia's home. Jenkins transferred himself from

the dickey seat to the driving-seat while his master escorted Marcia to the front door of the house.

She gave him her key to open the door, then retrieved it and entered the dark hall.

"Thank you," she said. "Good-night."

"Good-night," returned Lanyard desolately, and the door was closed upon him.

He stepped back on to the front lawn and looked at the unlighted windows of the ball-room. He wandered up on to the terrace, and in the light of the moon he saw her face at the french window beside which he had lurked the night before. He took out a handkerchief and affected to wipe his eyes with it.

She vanished, but not before she had smiled at him, and with hope in his heart he went back to the front door. It was open, and she was waiting for him on the top step.

"I can't have you prowling around," she said. "You'll have to come in!"

He entered the hall with her, and she shut the door, marched him over to the stairs, and pulled him down beside her on the second tread.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG FILM DRAMAS!



PRESTON FOSTER

—IN—

"WE'RE ONLY HUMAN"

As a detective, Pete McCaffrey was daring enough in tackling crooks, but that was because he did not know fear. A bullet that caused his eyes to be bandaged for a week reduced him to quivering cowardice—and then the girl who loved him stung him into facing the guns of a gang with true valour, because he was afraid. A gripping drama.

"ANNIE OAKLEY"

The shooting of this girl was so wonderful that the manager of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show signed her up. Toby Walker, the rifle champion of the world, was with the show and his arrogant, boastful ways made him far from popular. Eventually, Annie wrests the title from him and Toby starts on the down grade. In a contest, he wounds her and is fired by an irate Colonel Cody—they thought it was revenge! A smashing drama, starring Barbara Stanwyck and Preston Foster.

Also

Another grand episode of the serial of unusual adventure:

"FLASH GORDON"

Starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.

"I wish you'd tell me," she said wistfully, "why I shouldn't see you again—why I should never see you again."

"There are dozens of reasons," he sighed. "I've been notorious, I've been disreputable, I've been one step ahead of the police all my life, I've been—"

She put a very soft hand over his mouth.

"It's no use, Michael," she said with a little catch in her voice. "All those reasons don't mean a thing, somehow. I want to believe in you, Michael."

"Marcia," said he, "I've no right to be going on like this, but I've got to tell you that I—"

"I love you!" she breathed.

"Are you quoting me?" he inquired.

"No, I'm speaking for myself."

They sat there talking till a clock they could only dimly see struck four; then Marcia rose and tugged Lanyard to his feet.

"You'll have to excuse me for being such a wretched hostess," she said. "I've kept you in the hall all this time!"

"Nicest hall I've ever been in," declared Lanyard.

"Remember, on the way home, you're not to climb any porches. Promise?"

Lanyard promised.

"And no stealing milk, or morning papers!"

"You'll have to allow me just one more theft," he said, and kissed her on the lips. "That's it!"

He went out on to the porch and the door was closed. Across the grounds Morphew was lurking behind some bushes, and Coster and Mastro were with him. As Lanyard descended the steps he became plainly visible in the moonlight, and Mastro saw him.

"There's the Lone Wolf!" he said in a hoarse whisper.

"Good!" said Morphew.

Evidently Lanyard was in no haste to go home. He strolled over to a bench under a tree and sat down on it and lit a cigarette. Time passed, during which Morphew and his companions waited with more or less patience among the bushes. Coster glanced towards the road and perceived a dark car standing there with its lights out.

"There's a police car over there," he whispered nervously to Morphew; but Morphew seemed to be delighted.

"Perfect," he murmured. Crane was in the police car, watching Lanyard; a plain-clothes man was at the wheel. A second cigarette was half-consumed, then Lanyard tossed it from him on to the grass, stood up and stretched his arms, gave one last glance at the house, and walked slowly to his coupé. He got in behind the wheel without disturbing Jenkins—who was fast asleep—and drove off.

"Follow him," said Crane to the plain-clothes man as the grey coupé swung out from the drive into the roadway.

The purr of two motor-engines died away in the distance and the three lurkers in the bushes moved out from their hiding-place.

"Get me that cigarette," directed Morphew as they crossed the lawn. "No, that one!"

He pointed to the half-consumed cigarette Lanyard had discarded; but Coster went to pick it up with his fingers.

"Wait a minute," Morphew growled. "I don't want your finger-prints on it!"

He took a handkerchief from his pocket and picked up the end with it. Lanyard had his cigarettes made for him, and every one of them bore his initials. Most of the "M" and a portion of the "L" remained on this particular piece of one.

Crane Calls Again

CRANE, in the police car, followed Lanyard all the way to the apartment-house in Park Avenue, and from a discreet distance watched him descend and waken his man-servant.

"Drive on," he said; and Lanyard had no idea that he had been trailed till eight hours later, when the slow-moving, but fast-thinking, detective invaded his flat with a special edition of the "New York Herald" in his pocket.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Jenkins, "but Mr. Lanyard is—"

"Never mind the butler stuff!" rapped Crane, thrusting him aside. "Where is he? Where is he?"

Lanyard walked out into the hallway from his bed-room, clad in the waist-coat and trousers of a smart lounge suit and looking as fresh as if he had spent a full night between the sheets.

"Hallo, Crane," he said affably. "How're the posies?"

"Never mind the cover-up!" roared the detective. "I've seen some dirty, slimy tricks in my time, Lanyard, but you've beaten them all. I fell for that routine you handed me on the Stewart girl, but this is curtains."

He wrenched the newspaper from his pocket and opened it out for Lanyard to see the flaming headlines:

"STEWART JEWELS STOLEN.
"MARCIA STEWART'S HOME
ROBBED."

"You don't think I did this?" asked Lanyard after a moment's dead silence. "I've got a perfect case against you." Crane rammed the newspaper back into his pocket.

"Well, if you have it's a frame-up." "Sure!" scoffed the detective. "Sixty thousand guys sitting in gaol to-day and they were all framed. I've got you, Lanyard, and I'm sending you so far up the river that it'll be a mere trickle where you're going."

Jenkins dived into the bed-room and reappeared with Lanyard's coat into which he helped his master.

"Now listen, Crane," said that master gravely, "I can't deny I was in her house last night."

"We know all about it," Crane retorted. "Our records show that you left Miss Stewart at four o'clock, but we didn't pick you up coming out of the grounds until four-thirty. What did you do in that half-hour?"

"You won't believe it, but I sat up against a tree, smoked a cigarette, and watched the moon. Did you happen to notice the moon last night?"

"Lanyard," said Crane, "you're slipping. We found a cigarette-end, but it was in the same room with an open safe. It had your fingerprints on it and most of your initials. How did it get there? Maybe your man in the moon can explain that."

"Ho can make a guess," said Lanyard.

"Yeah? Well, I don't have to guess. Come on, get your hat on. We're going down to pick out a number for you."

Lanyard twisted the end of his tiny moustache.

"Now listen, Crane," he said impressively, "I'll take the rap for any case you've got against me, but not this one. I didn't do it. Give me a chance to prove that— Give me until midnight."

"You'll get your chance before twelve men and a judge," snapped Crane.

"It's no use, Lanyard. I told them I'd bring you in, and you're coming along."

"All right," Lanyard turned to Jenkins. "Bring me my hat and gloves."

June 13th, 1936.

"Very good, sir."

Jenkins went to a wardrobe cupboard in the hallway and returned with a bowler hat, upside down, and a pair of chamois-leather gloves.

Lanyard took the hat, and from it an automatic which he levelled at the startled detective.

"I'm sorry, Crane," he said regretfully. "I hate to do this, but I've got to clear myself. All right, Jenkins."

Jenkins retreated behind the detective and ran expert hands over his clothing. From a pocket he withdrew a long-barrelled six-shooter.

"You won't give me a chance," said Lanyard, "so I'm forced to take it. Go on, Crane—inside."

Crane, with his hands raised, advanced slowly towards the cupboard.

"You'll never get away with this, Lanyard," he said. "You won't get out of the city."

"I'm not going to try," Lanyard informed him. "I'm going to bring in the people who did this thing. I'm going to clear myself with you—and Marcia Stewart. If I don't I'll be in your office at midnight."

Crane entered the cupboard, and Jenkins shut him in and turned the key in the lock. Lanyard made for a telephone in the sitting-room and rang up Marcia's home, but it was Aunt Julia's voice that sounded in his ear.

"The idea of degrading yourself by falling in love with that man!" he heard her say, obviously to Marcia, and then: "Hallo!"

He slammed down the instrument. Crane was trying to burst open the door of the wardrobe cupboard as he went into the bed-room. Jenkins was packing a suitcase, and he asked him why he was doing it.

"We're leaving town, aren't we?" asked Jenkins.

"We may be leaving town," returned Lanyard, "but if we do it'll be after midnight to-day, and Mr. Crane will be buying the tickets."

Jenkins looked horrified.

"You're not going to be sentimental about keeping your word to Crane, are you?" he asked. "And if it's the girl, may I suggest that 'tis better to have loved and lost? Much better."

"Very good, Jenkins," said Lanyard, "but a trifle out of place."

"Then, sir, if you'll forgive my saying so, I humbly suggest that we scramble."

"You mean 'scram,' Jenkins. 'Scram.'"

"No one has greater faith in your ability than myself, sir, but it strikes me that a million dollars' worth of stolen jewellery in a large city is something like a needle in a haystack, if you follow me, sir. And we've just eleven hours and twenty minutes. Oh, I beg of you, sir!"

"Come on, Jenkins," said Lanyard calmly. "We're spending the afternoon housebreaking."

Obediently but reluctantly Jenkins got his bowler hat and accompanied his master from the flat to the elevator. Crane persisted with his efforts to burst open the door of the cupboard in which he had been imprisoned, but the door resisted those efforts for the better part of an hour, and by that time Lanyard and Jenkins were far away.

At two o'clock in the afternoon Geoffrey Mallison sprang up from an armchair in the sitting-room of a flat he and Liane had occupied ever since their arrival in New York City, and he faced the door with a gun in his hand because someone was turning the handle.

Morphew opened the door and looked round it.

"Put that down!" he commanded. "How—how'd I know it was you?" stammered Mallison, pocketing the gun.

"What's the matter with you?" Morphew entered the room, closed the door, and stood viewing his assistant with contemptuous eyes. "Gone all nervous?"

"Who wouldn't with all that jewellery about?" asked Mallison plaintively.

"Forgot it!" Morphew seated himself on a chesterfield and lit a cigarette. "By seven o'clock to-night we'll be on our way to Europe with nothing to worry about except getting seasick."

"Yes, but—but that Stewart collection's gonna be plenty hot," complained Mallison. "The police—"

"That's the Lone Wolf's worry. He's on the spot with the cops, not us. Besides, no one will connect us with the Stewart job when they find out who's going to Europe with us."

Mallison gaped at him. "Who is going with us?" he asked.

"Miss Marcia Stewart," was the reply. "The Miss Marcia Stewart. Liane will talk her into it; she's over with her now." Morphew laughed cynically. "The poor girl's so upset about the whole thing she'll be glad to get away."

"Are you sure she'll fall for it?" asked Mallison dubiously.

"So sure," declared Morphew, "that I'm going out to buy an extra ticket right now. You'd better come along and I'll buy you a drink. You look as though you need one."

Liane at that moment was doing her best to persuade Marcia to return to Europe. She had been at the house in West One Hundred and Twentieth Street for some little time.

"Sitting at home brooding won't help matters any," she wheedled. "The sooner you leave the quicker you'll forget all this trouble. By the time we've finished with Biarritz and got to Nice it'll be hard even to remember what happened."

"It certainly sounds very interesting," admitted Marcia with a sigh.

Marcia Decides

DAYLIGHT had faded into twilight that evening when Lanyard walked briskly out of East Forty-Sixth Street into Fifth Avenue and found Jenkins waiting for him at the corner in the grey coupé.

"Any luck, sir?" inquired Jenkins, as his master got in beside him.

"No."

"Then now we've got to leave town, sir! You found nothing in Mr. Morphew's apartment, and now you've searched the Liane person's room, and that was our last hope."

"There's one more chance," said Lanyard, "though it's a slim one."

"The Grand Central Station is just two minutes from here, sir. It's so beautiful out of town at this time of year. The leaves are turning—and then there's the shooting. You need a rest. Please let's leave town."

A policeman was walking along the pavement in their direction, and cars were not permitted to park on the corner.

"Let's leave here first," said Lanyard; and Jenkins hurriedly started the coupé and joined the down-town stream of traffic.

"If you were thinking of Mr. Morphew's office at the Club Rendezvous, sir," said Jenkins, after a while, "I've

(Continued on page 26)

Fighting a villainous gang of crooks with headlines instead of bullets! A drama of the power of the Press. Starring Franchot Tone, Madge Evans and Stuart Erwin

"EXCLUSIVE STORY"



The Numbers Racket

"FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO AND five hundred and sixty-four," muttered the nigger. "My friend he want thirty-nine and one hundred and ninety-seven."

The nigger shoe-shine wrote the numbers down in a book and held out his hand. Money passed. The other two niggers grinned and went on their way.

The customer, who had had to wait whilst this business was transacted, was interested. Ace Acello was an Italian half-breed, brown-skinned, wiry of frame, cunning of expression, with eyes hard and mocking and a soft manner of speech.

"Sam," he drawled, "what was that pretty little game? Nothing to do with horse-racing?"

"No, sah," Sam chuckled. "Just an easy game, sah."

Acello took out a new five-dollar bill. "Tell me more about it, you black imp."

Sam took the note avidly.

"All black boys like gamble, sah. For a few cents dey buy numbers. If numbers sold they take other numbers. Some weeks all numbers sold and other weeks all numbers not sold. The boss shake der numbers and the winning number it get paid six hundred to one. About six prizes the boss give every week, sah. Sometimes winning number never sold and boss take most of der pool."

"Yeah, I bet that happens pretty often," chuckled Acello. "A cute racket, Sam."

Some half-hour later Acello met one

of his cronies in a saloon and they repaired to a quiet corner.

"Most of the rackets in this burg are played out." Acello raised his narrow eyebrows. "Booze rackets, protection societies, gambling joints, smuggling Chinese and those easy-money games are played out. We've been up against it, Dan. The Press and the police have been running a campaign that ain't helped us any. Well, I got wise to-day to a racket that's so simple that it beats me no one ever thought of it. Money for nothing, and within the law."

"Spill it, Ace, I'm all of a fever," Dan demanded eagerly.

Quietly Acello explained the numbers racket that was so popular among the black inhabitants of Chicago.

"I know who is the black boss of this racket." Acello half-closed his eyes. "I think we can make him play ball."

The next day found Ace Acello in a down-town office. In a small room at a large mahogany desk sat a nigger. He was very fat and very greasy. He was dressed in a blue lounge suit minus the jacket, which was on a chair behind him, a stiff collar with bow tie, spats on his patent shoes, and smoked a smelly cigar. On the fat fingers glittered several diamond rings. He had listened in silence to Acello's proposition, and a sneering smile creased the thick-lipped mouth. Acello's proposition was that his company should take over the numbers racket and pay a comparatively small sum for the privilege.

"Well, what's the answer?" demanded Ace Acello. "Will you come in on the deal?"

"No!" The black boss spat out his words, and contemptuously puffed the smoke of his foul cigar in the other's face.

His action wrought a miraculous change. In a second Ace Acello had changed from a smooth, smiling man of business into a passion-distorted killer. On the table was a cut-glass water-jug. Acello picked this up and brought it down on the edge of the desk. Acello was skilled at tricks of this kind. He had broken off half of the jug, leaving an uneven surface of jagged glass. This he thrust forward until it was a few inches from the terrified nigger's face. Acello's expression was fiendish as he gripped the nigger's shoulder with his left hand.

"Now will you play ball?" he snarled out.

The black boss knew that refusal meant horrible mutilation. There was no time to shout for help, and if he did it would do little good, as a desperado of this character would have his men handy. Sick with fright he nodded his ugly fat head.

At once Acello's anger had vanished and he smiled. He put down the terrible weapon.

"I'm glad you've seen sense. I'll take over this joint this afternoon, and if you want to enjoy the rest of your days in peace don't try any funny business."

Acello took over the numbers racket and he did it on a much larger scale. He chose the number of people attending baseball meetings or race-tracks as the deciding factor, and when he did pay out made a great song about the fact, though often the winning number

was never taken. The price of the numbers was half a dollar each, and a winner got as much as six thousand dollars—sometimes. Acello began to advertise in the papers, and got agents to sell his printed tickets. Publicity was his undoing.

One month after taking over from the black boss he sat in the same office with his partner Dan.

Acello was busy with pencil and paper.

"A very pretty little sum." He sat back and chuckled. "We've re-decorated this joint, hired agents, had stacks of tickets printed, advertised in the papers and spent a small fortune, and yet on the first month's working we show a profit of a thousand bucks. Next month the expenses will be less and the takings more. We're on a fortune, Dan, and—"

The door burst open suddenly and unexpectedly. Four men stood there. Thick-set, ugly customers, and their expressions were foreboding.

Acce Acello's eyes narrowed, but he tried not to betray his fear. He grinned broadly.

"Come in, gentlemen. This is indeed an honour."

The four men entered, and they closed the door. Dan stood up, and one of the men at once hit him in the mouth with a cruel blow. Dan tried to get up and was crashed back again.

A huge man of similar origin to Acello leered across the desk.

"We're hornin' in on this racket of yours."

"But this is my business!" shouted Acello. "I ain't tried to horn in on your district. This—"

The huge man lashed out and hit Acello in the face. The four men joined in, and by the time they were finished Acello was a bruised, pitiable wreck. His smart clothes were in rags, one eye was blackened, and blood trickled from a cut face.

The four men leered at him.

"You play ball with us?" demanded the spokesman.

Acello knew that to refuse meant death.

That afternoon the numbers racket became part of the business of Martin Werther, politician, financier, and at that time the Underworld King of Chicago, and Ace Acello just became one of the many pawns among his chessmen.

Ace Acello at once resigned himself to the inevitable. He valued his life, and Martin Werther did not believe in bumping off people that were useful to him. With his powers this numbers racket could be made a big thing, and if Acello would in his turn play ball he could receive a percentage on the takings.

Thus a month after the visit of Werther's men to Ace Acello one might have seen a number of men drinking champagne in a luxuriously appointed office.

Martin Werther was a tall, powerfully built man with high cheekbones and an aggressive jaw. His nose was large through having once been broken. He sat at his huge desk—the King of the Underworld. Round him were grouped his chief men. Werther had rons in many fires—race-track, gambling, baseball, night clubs, and anything shady. Ace Acello felt no grudge against Werther and thought himself privileged to be there as one of the king's right-hand men. He felt no grudge because he knew the meaning of fear.

Werther waited till everyone had slaked his thirst.

June 15th, 1936.

"We have spent a lot of money lately, and the takings have not been correspondingly high. Every man must speed up the business which he is running." He glanced at Acello. "There are a number of stores that want hotting up, Ace. Get busy on them."

"I'll beat 'em up," leered Acello.

"Chief"—one of his men acted as spokesman for the rest—"you've told us a lot about this paint racket that's going to make thousands. When you gonna spill it?"

"Not yet," Martin Werther rapped out. "I am not yet ready. Never spoil a thing by haste. That's why I need every cent. This paint requires money and organisation. Everything is progressing satisfactorily, but I need money. That's why I've sent for you boys." His face hardened. "So all of you get busy and put on the pressure."

Acello Uses Threats

THE next morning Ace Acello strolled into the small store owned by Michael Devlin. The old Irishman gave his visitor a nervous glance. Ace helped himself to a packet of chocolate biscuits and insolently perched himself on the counter.

"Hallo, Ace," muttered Devlin.

The crook looked round the empty store and munched complacently.

"Business seems a bit slack, Mike."

"Never much doing about this time of the day." The Irishman gave a wry grin. "May look up a bit later."

"You're not selling enough tickets," Ace mentioned, and did not bother to see the effect of his words. "You gotta do better."

"I do my best," was the irritable answer. "I can't force 'em to buy, can I?"

"You can encourage them." Tired of the biscuits, Ace tossed them on to the floor and selected a cigar from a glass case. "Your sales have fallen off badly of late, and yet this numbers game is a greater rage than ever." He did glance now at Devlin. "What's the reason?"

"Maybe they're going somewhere else?"

An excitable Italian rushed into the store and asked for a certain number, and Devlin said it was sold. Ace suggested that he'd look to make sure. The number was not sold. Reluctantly the storekeeper took the money.

"The prize money is being doubled this week—so I hear." Ace smiled pleasantly at the buyer. "There are also prizes for mystery numbers. Five hundred bucks each, and a dozen of 'em. My friend, you want to have more than one chance."

So the Italian bought three tickets and hurried away with dreams of avarice.

"I hinted that you might encourage custom—you discourage," Ace remarked when they were alone.

"Those numbers are nothing but a ramp," stormed old Devlin. "That man, I know, is out of work. His family is starving. He got that money to buy provisions, and he spends it instead on these cursed numbers."

"Who cares?" Ace puffed at the cigar.

"You, for one, don't," snapped a voice.

Ace smiled round at an extremely pretty and clever-looking young woman. This was Ann Devlin, the storekeeper's daughter. She was a nurse attached to the personnel of a nursing-home.

"Hallo, Ann," drawled Ace. "How about making a date for to-night?"

"I heard what you were talking about and I saw old Mariano leave

here. He babbled something to me about winning a fortune." Her eyes blazed defiance at Acello. "The poor wretch has already spent most of their savings on this dirty numbers racket."

Michael Devlin looked anxiously at his frank-spoken daughter. He had been lured into selling numbers when his business was bad, but when he wished to discontinue selling he was told by Ace that it would be a pity if his store should be burnt down with him inside it.

"You are not in a good mood, my beautiful one," mocked Ace.

"It should be somebody's business to put you and your gang of thieves where you belong!" Her eyes blazed contempt.

Ace Acello was roused.

"Those are pretty strong words, sister," he spoke slowly. "If you was to take my advice, you'd stay out of this." He smiled and looked at the white-faced storekeeper. "You keep on selling numbers, understand, Devlin? And keep your daughter out of this. Wouldn't it be a shame if something happened to her pretty face?" He helped himself to another cigar and slid off the counter. "Think it over, Devlin. I'll drop in again, Ann. Maybe you might like then to make a date with Ace." A wave of his hands and he was gone.

"The oily swine!" muttered old Devlin. "If only I were ten years younger."

Devlin sighed despondently. He would have to do what the racketeers ordered—keep on selling "numbers" to people who could not afford the money. They would not hesitate about injuring Ann if she aroused their enmity.

But Ann Devlin was not going to see her father bullied by men like Ace Acello, and she was not afraid of their threats. In that morning's issue of the "Chronicle" there was a front-page article exposing a city-paving graft.

The story was the work of a reporter by the name of Timothy Higgins.

"Dad, don't look so dismal." She kissed her father. "Don't pay any heed to what that nasty piece of work says. He's small fry."

"I know, Ann," cried Devlin. "But the big shots are behind him. Men so powerful that they could burn up this city if they wished. What chance have you and I against them? Please, Ann, keep out of this. Ace likes you, and—"

The soft answer that turneth away wrath is something on the lines you mean," laughed Ann. "But if you expect me to kiss that mug, you're mistaken. Now, dad, I just got to run out for a moment. I've got to see about a little business."

"For the nursing-home?" he questioned sharply.

"How would it be anything else?" Her smile was so bright that he managed to smile back. "I'll be home for tea."

But when Ann Devlin was outside the little store she headed for the offices of the "Chronicle." Her face was very determined. These cheap crooks should feel the power of the Press.

The Climb-down

IN the editorial sanctum were five men. In the big swivel chair sat James Witherspoon, editor of the "Chronicle." Sprawled in an armchair was Martin Werther, and on a seat beside him was Daniels, his attorney. The dark, handsome young man swinging a golf club and looking bored was Richard Barton, youthful counsel for the "Chronicle." The bullet-headed,

thick-set young man standing near the editor's desk and looking as if he could murder someone was Timothy Higgins, special reporter.

Higgins was usually a good-natured and genial fellow, but he had been roused. He had carried out his editor's wishes in trying to expose the graft and corruption now rampant in the city. He had got a grand story about the paving-graft scandal, and now the editor was climbing down when Martin Werther threatened to bring an action. Werther was the contractor in the case.

"I shall bring a million-dollar libel suit on behalf of my client if an immediate apology is not published in the next issue," Daniels stated.

James Witherspoon turned a watery eye on his chief reporter. Could Higgins prove his statements? Higgins shouted loudly that what he had written was the truth, but he had to admit that his proof was not very strong.

At last, after a great deal of argument, the editor turned to the young fellow with the golf club.

"What's your opinion, Dick?" he answered, and then laughed. "Oh, I'm sorry. You mean this paving business. Personally, I think Higgins' article is correct. It's obvious that there's a distinctly bad odour to that paving deal."

"Is that final?" Daniels asked, with a glance at his chief.

"Oh, no." Barton shook his head. "I was merely expressing my personal opinion. As attorney for this newspaper, I'm forced to admit that Higgins' lack of positive proof does leave us open for a libel suit."

"Now you're talking sense," muttered Martin Werther with a triumphant grin. "I'm willing to be magnanimous in this matter. I admire the attempts of the 'Chronicle' to expose corruption, but not to blackguard innocent people like myself. Print an apology and there the matter will end."

"You'd better get busy on another story." The editor looked at Higgins. "I want all those statements in regard to Mr. Werther retracted. Get going, Higgins."

"I'll resign. That story's true, and I'm not taking back a word of it." Higgins was a stormy petrel. "I resign!" He stormed out of the editor's den.

"That'll be all right, Mr. Werther," the editor assured. "He'll write it. Dick, just go and have a word with Higgins, and tell him not to be more of an idiot than he looks."

It was unfortunate that Ann should choose that moment to enter the offices of the "Chronicle" and make her way towards the desk where Higgins worked.

Higgins slouched back to his desk and flung himself into a chair. Dick Barton perched himself on a radiator and grinned at the back of his friend's head.

"Tim, cool off," he murmured. "It's bad for your blood pressure. I know, Witherspoon knows, and lots of people know that every

word of your story is true, but you haven't any proof. With proof, old Withy would back you to the last cent, and so would the owners. The fact that Werther is willing to accept a retraction shows that he isn't too keen on the case going to court. I think we'd win, but it would stir up a lot of mud, so it's best for both sides to lay off."

"What a spineless policy!" sneered Higgins. "Every self-respecting citizen wants to see this racket smashed up, and at the first attempt we cry off like a bunch of frightened kids. Now I gotta do a lot of mush about Martin Werther and eat humble pie. Say what a bad blunder I've made, and all the other papers will scream their heads off at Tim Higgins having to write an apology."

"No, they won't, Tim. They know as well as you do that the story is on the level, and they'll be mighty sorry to see the 'Chronicle' climb down," said Barton. "If we could have carried on they would have tried the same line. At any rate, I don't believe in stirring up hornets' nests. Safety first is my motto."

"And every day Werther and crooks like him gain in power till this city won't be fit for a pig," raved Higgins. "Why—"

"Excuse me," said a soft voice. Ann had grown tired of listening to their argument. She hated to hear people admit defeat.

Dick Barton glanced round and saw one of the most charming girls he had ever seen. He gave her a friendly smile.

"Well, what do you want?" snapped Higgins, still very ruffled.

"I've come about that story you printed in the 'Chronicle,'" began Ann. "As you've exposed this paving graft I thought you might like to do something about the numbers racket, and—"

"Lady, not another word," blazed Higgins. "Not another word. I've heard quite enough to-day about

rackets. I'm through—in fact, I've just resigned."

"But aren't you Timothy Higgins? The man who wrote—"

"Yeah, I'm that unfortunate mortal," Higgins grinned angrily. "And if you want to know, I've now got to sit down and write a retraction of everything I said."

"But surely it was true what you printed?"

"What the heck difference does that make if you ain't got the proof?" He turned to his typewriter. "Lady, this lad is out of the crusade business. My efforts to clean up the city are not appreciated. I'm sorry, but you've had a wasted journey."

"My name is Ann Devlin, and my father owns a store." Ann looked at Barton for help. "He sells numbers and is forced to do it. I thought that if Mr. Higgins was starting a campaign against these crooks I might be able to give information—"

"Which you can't prove, and get me into a worse jam than before." Higgins swung round. "I got a wife and two kids to think about, and I'll sure lose my job if I try telling the truth. Lady, you're wasting all our time."

"Very nice of you to come forward, Miss Devlin," politely murmured Dick Barton. "But I would advise you to forget anything you know about this numbers racket. At any rate, for the time being. Mr. Higgins may get proof that will enable him to have another attempt at exposing the racketeers, and then he might like a talk with you. Maybe you could give him a card?"

Ann took a card from her handbag and placed it on Higgins' desk—mechanically he pocketed it. The girl looked at the two men as if she did not think very much of them.

"I don't expect to hear from either of you, and I think I've wasted my time," Ann said quietly. "It seems to me that the 'Chronicle,' that has done so much boasting about its principles, is a



"Now will you play ball?" he ground out.

worthless sort of rag. A turn-coat. Good-day!" Barton whistled softly as he stared admiringly after the girl. "There's spirit. I don't think, old pal, she's crazy about either of us."

"I'll go crazy if you don't leave me to write this cursed story," Higgins muttered. "In future I'm sticking to news, and if this city has got to be saved from going to the dogs, then let somebody else do it."

Ann went home in not a very good frame of mind. A couple of weak-kneed specimens she termed Barton and Higgins. Thinking of themselves first, and seared stiff at the first sign of trouble. She reached there just as a special edition of the "Chronicle" was on the streets. She bought a copy, and read with a bitter smile Higgins' apology and retraction.

It was a surprise to find her father all smiles and to notice a number of good things on the table.

"I've sold the store, Ann," her father cried.

"Oh, dad, I'm so glad." Ann flung her arms round his neck. "Who to?"

Michael Devlin hesitated. "Steve Comos."

"Comos?" The girl frowned. "Comos? Isn't that the man who tried to start a rival numbers scheme?"

"Sure, that's the man, but I don't know his business." Pa Devlin shrugged his shoulders. "I know he's an enemy of Acello. They were partners once and one double-crossed the other, but I ain't knowing a thing about it. Comos wants to muscle in on this numbers racket, and he's buying up a few places which he reckons he can use. He ain't scared of Acello and the others and he aims to sell his numbers from this store. That lets us out, honey."

"Are you sure, dad?"

"I ain't bound to stay here, loosing good money or refusing good offers, but while I'm here I gotta do what Acello orders as I'm a sort of agent. I don't know Comos' business, and if they say anything I just state that I've handed over to a new man. I asked six thousand for the store, and I've got three. We were loosing money fast, so it's a fair price. With that three thousand and my pension, honey, we can take a nice little vacation."

"You shall go on a cruise, pop," smiled Ann. "Ever since you retired from the Navy you've been itching to get back." She glanced at several models of sailing-ships and battleships that her father had carved and made. "You'll be able to walk the deck again."

At seven that night there was a ring at the bell.

"That'll be Comos with the money," cried Devlin. "He's early."

"I'll go and let him in," cried Ann.

Ann opened the door and gave a scream of horror as a figure swayed forward and sprawled full-length on the floor. It was the bullet-riddled body of Steve Comos. When Devlin rushed downstairs and saw the body a face flashed into his mind. He seemed to see the hideous, leering features of Ace Acello.

Timothy Higgins was playing with his two boys, aged six and four, whilst his attractive, pleasant-featured wife sewed and watched her husband crawling about the floor. A battle with model forts and soldiers was in progress. The telephone-bell shrilled.

"If that's the office they can ring till June 13th, 1936."

they're blue in the face," shouted Higgins. "I've done all the crawling—save on the floor here—that I'm doing this day. Answer it, Nell."

"Do your own dirty work," laughed his wife.

Higgins picked up the 'phone and heard the voice of Ann Devlin.

"What?" his wife heard him gasp out. "Steve Comos! I'll be round in five seconds. Listen, girl, not a word to the cops till I show up." He banged down the receiver and looked all round for his hat. "Gee, what a front-page story!"

"So you've changed your tune now a story has turned up." Tim's wife knew her man. "Who's the girl this time?"

"A blonde." Tim had found his hat and coat. He kissed his wife. "Back some time, old dear. Don't wait up for me. This may be the big thing in my life." He rushed out of the room, and his wife smiled as she heard him going down the stairs three at a time.

"Are You a Coward?"

THE sleuth in Timothy Higgins was aroused. He had hated having to retract on his paving-graft scandal, but in the killing of Steve Comos he had a grand front-page story. Witherspoon allowed him to play the story for all it was worth, as it helped to cover up the apology to Martin Werther. After seeing Ann and hearing the reason why Comos had wanted to buy the store he was convinced that in this girl he might gather information that might prove of great value.

In order to have a quiet talk with Ann he invited her to have supper with him at the most exclusive of clubs—the Pandora—on the evening following the shooting.

Over an excellent supper Ann told Timothy all she knew about the numbers racket and Ace Acello, winding up with the rivalry of Steve Comos.

"Ace ran the numbers racket on his own once," stated Timothy. "But we know the big shots are behind him these days. They must have kept a close tab on Comos and known his every move."

"Have the police any clue to the killing?"

"No, ma'am." Higgins shook his head. "If there were any witnesses they're far too scared to come forward, because to do so means finish for them. This bunch sticks at nothing. This killing has roused a wave of indignation, and I've got the okay from the editor to write articles demanding a clean-up of Chicago. I bet the gang will keep mighty quiet till this blows over, and it's my job to keep the affair alive. Still, we can't do any more for the moment, so let's dance."

When they left the dance floor they had to pass a table just occupied by some newcomers. Dick Barton, James Witherspoon jun., the editor's son, and a fashionably garbed, beautiful, but somewhat disagreeable young woman. Jim saw Higgins and hailed him.

"Hallo, Tim, you old scoundrel."

Timothy Higgins grinned and gestured towards Ann.

"Miss Devlin, this is James Witherspoon, my boss's son. Some day he'll inherit me and a lot of other junk."

Gallant young Witherspoon jumped up.

"And this is Miss Tess Graham, Miss Devlin. Won't you join our party?"

Dick Barton found a chair for Ann on his right side. He stared at her admiringly. She had been quite attractive when he had seen her at the "Chronicle" offices, but in this well-cut but simple white satin evening dress she looked stunning. Tess Graham, who

was engaged to Dick, curled her lips ever so slightly. Then she regarded Higgins with a sarcastic smile on her red lips.

"I thought you were a married man, Mr. Higgins."

Higgins chuckled. "I wonder who starts such rumours?"

Ann laughed gaily.

"It's all right. He's shown me the picture of his wife and his two sons. This is strictly business."

Barton stared at her with open amusement.

"I see you finally sold him in on your crusade, Miss Devlin."

"It's a good one, isn't it?"

Barton gave a dubious shake of his head.

"Tim'll probably get the sheet involved in a libel suit and then I'll have to go to work."

"You'll probably advise us to retract," retorted Higgins.

Barton smiled in his lazy way. "Isn't it a lot of fuss to make over nickel-and-dime gambling?"

At once Ann Devlin stiffened and her pretty features underwent a change. She regarded him with open scorn.

"Perhaps there is something funny about people being robbed and bullied and murdered." She spoke fiercely. "But I guess I haven't your sense of humour, Mr. Barton."

Dick Barton still smiled, but it was a sickly grin. He was a spoilt young man, and not used to being spoken to in this frank manner. The part that annoyed him was that he knew this frank-eyed young beauty was justified in her scorn.

"Look, Dick!" Young Witherspoon leaned eagerly forward. "Dad's getting the Governor to appoint a special prosecutor in the numbers racket. Why not you?"

"That's not an idea. That's a below-the-belt blow," Dick drawled with a twisted grin. "Besides being opposed to unproductive work in all forms, I have no desire to have underworld characters popping at me with machine-guns."

"Quite right, Dick," cried Tess, with a defiant glance round the table. "I don't want Dick mixed up in a mess like that. It's a silly suggestion."

"I can think of sillier things," Ann said quietly.

"What, for instance?" Tess asked, her eyes unfriendly.

"Being too lazy or indifferent to do one's duty."

Barton grinned at the open antagonism of young Ann. He still smiled.

"I can see that Miss Devlin is one of my staunchest admirers," he commented.

"Well, you ought to do something to earn your salt," Higgins said in his direct way. "Think of the publicity and what it'll do for your future."

"Dick doesn't have to worry about his future," indignantly spoke Tess.

"When we're married he's going to handle my father's estate."

"Besides," Ann added with a nasty little smile, "you've got to think of the machine-guns, Mr. Barton."

Dick was nettled by the scorn in her voice.

"Are you suggesting, dear lady, that I'm a coward?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Barton," mocked Ann.

"If I collected autographs of heroes I'd have you on page one."

Barton looked round the table and tried to read the expressions of Timothy and young Witherspoon. He decided that they looked decidedly doubtful. Tess looked anxious, and he knew the reason. She was, like himself, a spoilt child—one that considered herself before



"Dick, you can't go!" cried Tess Graham wildly. "I won't let you. It's too dangerous!"

anyone else. She wouldn't care what happened to anyone provided he was safe and she didn't have to suffer. He frowned—maybe that was love, and maybe it wasn't. Finally he looked at Ann Devlin. The cool, calm gaze from her beautiful blue eyes settled the argument.

"Well, just to surprise you all, I'll take that job. No one is going to doubt the courage of the Bartons. What do you think of that, Miss Devlin?"

"I think it's grand." Now those eyes were brimming over with admiration, and Dick Barton had a thrill that made him look speculatively at his fiancée. Tess seemed to him at that moment like a dark wild-cat.

It was a pleasant evening, but soon after midnight Ann insisted upon Timothy taking her home. She did not want to leave her father alone too long. The Comos affair had made the old man very jumpy.

Ann got home to find her father extremely merry—in fact, he confessed that he was a trifle tipsy.

"I've sold the business."

"What, again?" Ann was surprised.

"Yes, and I got four thousand," chuckled Michael Devlin. "No funny business about this. I looked in at the Marine Club like I told you, and a Captain Martin was introduced to me. We got talking, and finally he told me that maybe he could do something about selling the store. Not only did he sell the store for me, but I'm going back to sea." He seized his daughter's hands and waltzed her round. "That surprises you, don't it?"

"Not to serve as a mate?"

"Sort of caretaker job," gasped Michael, pausing for breath. "The man that bought the store does a lot of business in Cuba, and he's hired me to take charge of a shipment of paint that's to go on the steamer Mochado next week. I'm to deliver it personally to a man in Havana. At Havana I shall receive goods, which I have to bring back. Ann,

it's like taking a cruise with everything found. Gee, ain't we lucky?"

"When do you leave?"

"In a few days, Ann," her father told her. "Will you be all right, my dear?"

"Don't you worry about me, dad." Ann kissed him. "Our luck certainly has turned."

It is never wise to count one's chickens before they are hatched, or to talk of luck until absolutely certain that fortune has changed. If Ann and her father had known more about that consignment of paint they would not have been so happy that night.

Ship on Fire

MICHAEL DEVLIN sailed on the s.s. Mochado, and there was one small incident that was disturbing at the time but was soon forgotten. Timothy Higgins and Dick Barton had accompanied Ann to the docks, and they were waving farewell to her father as the gangways were being removed when Higgins thought he saw Ace Acello come out of the hold and leave by a staff gangway. Higgins rushed forward and darted among the crowds, but he returned to say that they must have been mistaken.

The incident was forgotten. Actually they had seen Ace Acello leave the Mochado.

A very pleasant fortnight passed for Ann. Timothy liked her, and Mrs. Higgins had no objection to her husband taking the girl to one or two places of amusement. Dick Barton usually joined them, with Tess. As Ann was so eager to help in the campaign against the racketeers, Higgins managed to secure for her a job on the "Chronicle," as his assistant. Tess was not too pleased, as this meant that Barton saw rather too much of Ann for her liking.

Then one evening there came through a message that the s.s. Mochado, on her return trip, was on fire off Cape Hatteras and ablaze from stem to stern.

A white-faced Ann hastened to the offices of the "Chronicle," where she found the reporter hard at work.

"The Mochado's on fire, Tim," she said in distressed tones.

"Lucky for you it didn't happen on the voyage out," was his answer. "She has eighty-five passengers on board and is in a bad way. The fishing-boat Addie is reported fifty miles from the stricken ship. I'm doing a story now. Why are you crying, Ann?"

"Dad cabled me he had some trouble and was coming back on it." Ann sank into a chair. "What can we do, Tim?"

"Gosh, your pop on that boat!" Higgins gave her shoulder a sympathetic touch. "Well, don't worry yet. It may not be so bad."

The next radio message reported that the Mochado was a mass of flames, but the Addie was within a mile of the blazing ship, and would attempt to get alongside. The city editor appeared and shouted at Higgins to write up an exaggerated story of eighty-five people trapped in a blazing inferno. It would sell the "Chronicle" like hot cakes.

"This girl's father is on that boat," Higgins pointed to Ann. "So you won't get any inferno from me."

"I'm sorry." The city editor turned to Ann. "Say, have you got a photograph of your father at home?" She nodded. "Good, I'll send a boy for it if you'll give me the key."

Dick Barton had been out to a night club, and was thinking of leaving when he heard from one of the attendants of the fire on the Mochado. He suggested to Tess that they go along to the offices of the "Chronicle" and get the full story. Tess tried to make reasons for not going, but he waved them to one side. After a great fight she had persuaded Dick that his first duty was to her first and the community last, and he had agreed not to accept the post of District Attorney, which had been offered him. He arrived at the "Chronicle" offices to find bustle and

June 15th, 1936.

excitement, and to hear with horror that Michael Devlin was on the Mochado.

The "Chronicle" was on the 'phone to the coastguard station. The Mochado was ablaze, but owing to fog it was impossible to give the exact location.

"We'll have to handle it from here," decided the city editor. "This is a big story, and we want to put it over big. Send someone out in an aeroplane. Get pictures! Do something!"

One of the sub-editors came rushing up to report that the coastguard station did not think anybody could be alive on the Mochado, as there had been no messages for over an hour.

"Higgins, take a cab to the airport," decided the city editor. "The 'plane'll be waiting to fly over the Mochado. Steve! Steve! Where's the photographer?"

A man in shirt-sleeves dived out of a room.

"There aren't any left, chief. You sent 'em out to get pictures of that train derailment."

"You can't handle a camera by yourself, Higgins." The city editor looked at the chief reporter. "What a chance for a scoop, and just because there ain't any gosh-darned—"

"How's the chances of horning in on this?" quietly spoke Barton. "I won prizes at college for photography." He glanced at the bowed figure of Ann Devlin. "I could take these pictures."

"Good for you, Barton," grinned the city editor, and bellowed for someone to bring a camera.

A boy appeared with a camera. "Sure you know how to handle this?" cried the city editor.

"Absolutely, chief." Barton squared his shoulders. It was a tonic to see the admiring looked that flashed from Ann Devlin's eyes. There was something in this hero stuff. Pity he had to turn down that job as D.A. How would Ann take it?

"Dick, you can't go!" Tess Graham rushed up to him and clutched at Barton's arm. "I won't let you. It's too dangerous!"

"Dangerous my eye! I've been up in the "Chronicle" 'plane a dozen times." He spoke a little defiantly. "It's the safest crate in town. I'm just going along for the ride. Now, don't you worry, Tess. If there were room enough I'd take you along, too."

Higgins got in touch with his wife, and that sweet woman insisted upon getting into a car and coming over to the office at once. She was glad Tim was going, because it was his duty, but she wanted to be at the office so she could hear how the night flight got on. It would not be possible to sleep when Tim was in danger. They waited till she arrived, then Tim and Dick left.

"The old girl will take care of Ann and Tess," Timothy panted as they raced down the stairs. "She'll be as worried as either of 'em, but she'll just smile to hide her anxiety."

Barton and Higgins got to the airport. They donned flying togs and each man was fitted with a parachute. They clambered into the 'plane, and the pilot took off down-field.

After two hours' flying the pilot pointed and they saw a red glow far below. It was the Mochado. The machine planed down through wisps of fog, and after a while they got a better view of the blazing ship. The stern was a roaring furnace, but the bow was not alight yet. The fog suddenly lifted and they got some wonderful pictures. They flew low and Dick managed to secure one of the large fishing steamer Addie, trying to get alongside the bow, June 13th, 1936.

where a number of people were waving their hands and screaming for help.

"We've got enough pictures," yelled Higgins. "Let's go home."

"Just one more," yelled back Barton. "I want to get people jumping from the Mochado to the Addie."

The pilot brought the machine round in a quick turn. Barton had handed the plates he had taken to Higgins, and now he leaned over the side to get a picture that would be a startler. He undid his waist-strap in order to lean farther over still, and at that moment a gust of wind or an air pocket caused the ship to roll. Dick Barton and camera slid over the side. Luckily his groping hands caught a guy wire, and he hung, dangling, in mid-air.

Dick knew he could only hold on for a few seconds.

"Let go and pull the ring!" bellowed Higgins.

Dick dropped and then jerked the ring of the parachute's rip-cord. He felt himself pulled up with an enormous jerk. Quickly he was dropping now towards the sea and the blazing Mochado. Higgins and the pilot saw the parachute flop into the water. The reporter gave a cheer as he saw the Addie appear out of the gloom and saw the white blob that was the parachute dragged to the side of the fishing steamer. The pilot hastened back to the city, and Tess Barton fainted when she heard the news.

The Mochado Fire

DICK was lifted on board, and except for the unpleasantness of wet clothes, was not hurt in the least. Providence had flung him out of that 'plane. He must try to get on board the Mochado and rescue old Michael Devlin.

The Addie came slowly near the blazing wreck. The heat was tremendous. He saw several people with their clothes alight leap into the sea. As the Addie drew nearer and nearer the bow of the Mochado, the people clustered there seemed to go mad with fear and excitement. They fought like wild beasts to get close to the rails. The crew were trying to keep order, but it seemed quite hopeless. Twice they heard the crack of a gun. Before the Addie touched, several people leapt, and several misjudged and fell screaming horribly into the sea.

The captain of the Addie had told his crew to hurry everyone aft as they scrambled aboard. That would enable the rescue work to proceed quickly, because it would be impossible to stay more than a few minutes, as otherwise his own ship might catch fire.

Barton had told the captain that he would volunteer for any work, and was detailed to assist the crew. Eagerly he scanned the faces of the people that swarmed aboard the Addie, but he saw no sign of Michael Devlin. Someone shouted that several passengers were trapped down in the cabins. Dick leapt from the Addie on to the deck of the Mochado. Several of the seamen bravely followed his example.

So fierce were the flames that already one of the life-boats swinging from the davits of the Addie had been licked by the flames and was blazing. Several men rushed along the deck. They were mad with fear and screamed horribly to be let pass. One man tried to fell Barton with a life-preserver. Dick landed two or three punches, and that checked that mad rush. There were still some women and children to be helped aboard the Addie—these scum could wait.

"Where's your captain?" Barton shouted at one of the crew of the

Mochado. "Are there any officers to control this mob?"

"The captain's dead," was the answer. "The other officers were the first to quit. I'm bos'n. There are one or two trapped below."

"I'll go with you," cried Barton. They dived into the smoke.

"Hurry! Hurry!" the captain of the Addie was yelling. "My boat'll catch fire. Hurry! Hurry!"

Down in the second-class saloon they almost fell over the sprawled figure of a man who groaned feebly. Barton managed to lift the body on to the seaman's shoulder.

"I'm all right," the sick man muttered. "Save the old man over there." Feebly he pointed. "He saved Pete and Hans, and was trying to help me when the smoke overcame us both. Over there—old man Devlin."

"Devlin!" gasped Barton. "I'll get him!"

"You can't make it!" cried the seaman.

"I've got to go. You take this fellow up and send help if you can."

The seaman staggered up the stairs, now well alight, and finally got through the smoke to the bow. The Addie was about to cast off as two of her boats were alight. Willing hands relieved the seaman of his burden.

"They're all out!" shouted someone.

"Cast off!" ordered the captain.

"Wait! Wait!" hoarsely panted the seaman. "Two men are below deck!"

"I've got to think of my ship and the passengers," the captain yelled back. "I'll have a small boat stand by."

In that hell of flame and smoke Dick Barton groped round till he found the prone figure of Michael Devlin and managed to get the heavy body across his shoulders. As he reached the stairs the Addie backed slowly away from the blazing Mochado.

The pilot got Higgins safely back to the airport, and the reporter rushed off to the offices of the "Chronicle" to report all that had occurred. Tess made an awful scene and swore that Dick had been killed and that it was all Higgins' fault. It was Mrs. Higgins who managed to calm the distressed girl.

On the teletype the names of the survivors came through, and Michael Devlin and Dick Barton were not on the list. Ann bit her lip and tried to be brave, but Tess sobbed like a child.

An hour passed and then a boy came in with a radio message. It was from Barton.

"Dick's safe and so is your father," Higgins shouted to Ann. "They've been picked up by the Addie. I'll read out Dick's message."

"Devlin saved two lives and then got trapped. I got him out. What he told me of reasons behind fire will melt your presses. Tell Witherspoon I withdraw resignation and will prosecute numbers gang to the limit."

Higgins finished reading out the message and stared in bewilderment at the city editor.

"What in the world could the fire have to do with the numbers gang?"

A Callous Crime

NATURALLY there was a large crowd present when the survivors of the Mochado were landed. Dick Barton seemed a changed young man. The fact that he had done something rather big had been like a tonic to him. He realised he had been lazy and useless. The chance to make a

name for himself had come and he was seizing it with both hands.

"Mr. Barton"—Ann gave him a glance that thrilled—"I won't even try to thank you. There are no words."

Dick grinned like a schoolboy.

"If you have any, use them on your father," was his answer. "He's the bravest man I know."

"Say, Dick," interrupted Higgins. "What did you mean by that message about the numbers racket gang?"

Barton was serious at once.

"I'll tell you later." He turned to Devlin, who seemed strangely quiet. "Will you come to the 'Chronicle' office when you get a change of clothes?"

"Yes, I'll be there."

Ann drove her father home to the new apartments she had rented, and he answered all her questions in monosyllables. Even when she showed him the room that was to be his den he took little interest in the carpenter's bench—he adored making model ships. He grinned and looked away.

"Something's worrying you, darling?"

Michael Devlin did not answer at once, but walked up to the bench where Ann had placed some of his models of windjammers. Viciously he knocked one to the floor and stared at it balefully. "Boats!" he muttered.

"Pops! Pops!" Ann was alarmed. "What is it?"

"You want to know what's the matter with me? I'll tell you. I'm responsible for the deaths on the Mochado. That's what!"

"You're out of your head."

"Oh no I'm not." His face seemed haggard with despair. "I might have known that Acello and his gang would be in on that paint deal. Only it wasn't paint."

"What do you mean—not paint?"

"It was liquid fire. They were selling it to be used in a labour fight in Havana," he told her. "I didn't know it till I got there. The agent was drunk, he thought I was one of the gang, and told me all about it. The

police became suspicious and the agent refused to accept the shipment. It had to come back. I didn't dare tell the captain what it was. I let them pile it on the rest of the cargo. The liquid fire got loose, and you know the rest. I told it to Mr. Barton and that's why he wants to see me. Now do you understand why I'm responsible for all that's happened?"

"Go and see Mr. Barton," Ann said after a moment's quiet thought. "He'll tell you you're not to blame. I know he will."

"I'm going to see him—it's the only thing I can do." He picked up the model from the floor. "I'll look in on Mr. Castello's son. The kid is sick and might like it. I'll drop it in on my way up town. I won't want it any more. I hope I never see another ship."

"Go at once." Ann fetched his raincoat. "It's eight o'clock, pops, and I'll have a nice supper ready by the time you return."

Clutching the model, Michael Devlin went out into the storm and slowly made his way up town. Behind stalked a menacing shadow.

At the offices of the "Chronicle" Barton had been recounting to Higgins the dramatic story of the burning of the Mochado. This story would appear in a special edition. Then he went on to explain his reasons for his message about the numbers racket.

"That's why I want a deposition from Devlin," he concluded. "Once I have legal proof I can give you a story that'll rock this city from stem to stern."

They had been discussing the affair for some time when Barton looked at a clock. Devlin was taking his time getting there. An hour passed, and Barton was just thinking of ringing Ann when the 'phone-bell shrilled.

It was a police message. Barton hung up.

"They murdered Devlin," Barton said slowly. "Shot down."

"Any arrests?" shouted Higgins.

"No, and no witnesses." Barton

sunk limply into a chair and stared unseeingly at the floor. "We've got to tell Ann."

Ann knew directly the two men came into her apartments that something was wrong. The expressions on their faces told. Very white and trembling was Ann when she had heard how the gang had murdered her father.

"With your father's deposition I could have acted quickly," Barton told her angrily. "Now I'm afraid it's going to be a long, hard fight. I'll have to ask you to do your part. Will you come to my office to-morrow and tell me everything that might help?"

"Best come along to my place, Miss Devlin," suggested the reporter. "Mrs. Higgins will be mighty glad to have you."

The next morning the "Chronicle's" front page was splashed with bold headlines:

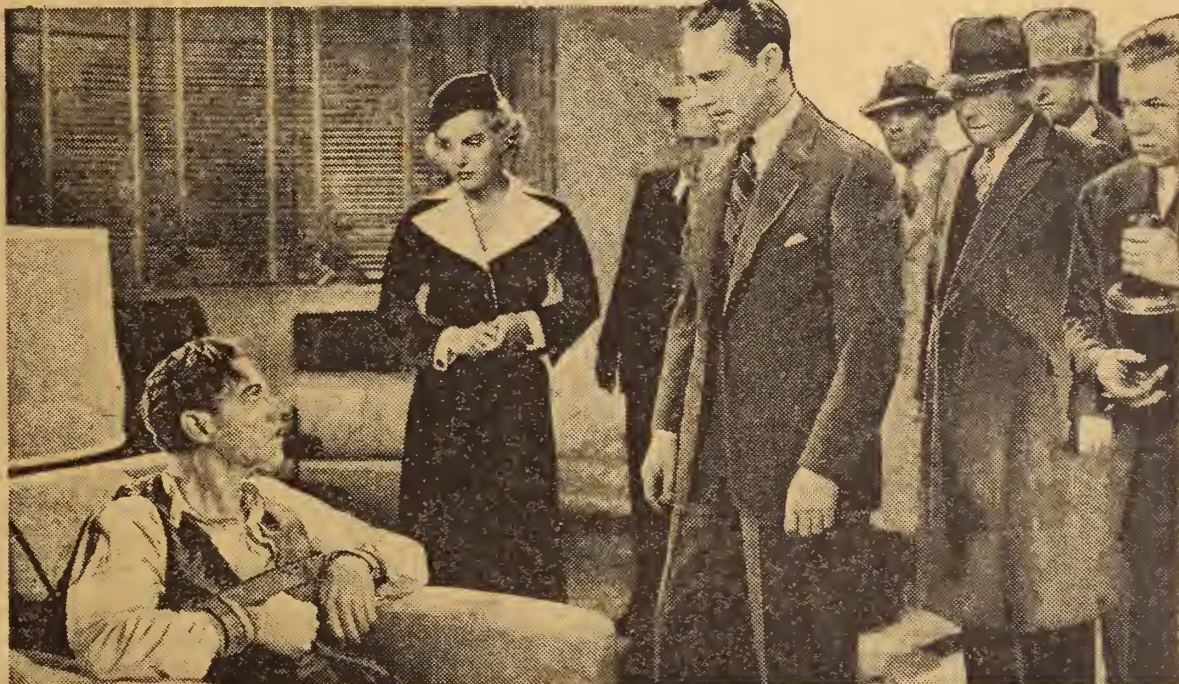
"RACKETEERS LINKED WITH MOCHADO FIRE. WAR TO THE FINISH DECLARED BY BARTON SENSATION PROMISED IN NEW CRIME DRIVE."

The Bomb and the Bombshell

REPORTERS from all the papers in the city came to see Dick Barton in the morning. They had to get an interview with the new D.A. and find out his views, to get a line on his crime drive, and to curry favour many brought gifts from their editors and themselves. Cigars, cigarettes, bottles of champagne, and even flowers. Some one even mailed a square packet, which Barton had not had time to open.

Finally the reporters were told the interview was at an end. Only three people remained. Dick Barton, Timothy Higgins and Detective-lieutenant Jim O'Neill.

Dick poured himself out a long drink. "Thank heavens that's over." He raised his glass to O'Neill. "Nice of the chief to send you along as a body-guard, but it was quite unnecessary."



"That looks rather like an electric chair," bit out Barton. "You'd look natural in the hot seat. Ace, we've got you right where we want you!"

"When you know the underworld as I do you'll think different." O'Neill gave an ominous shake of his head. "Desperate men will go to any extremes, especially if they look like being cornered."

"What's in that?" Higgins pointed to the square packet.

"Cigars, I expect." Barton reached out a hand and unwrapped the packet. "Hallo, a cardboard box." He held it to his ear. "Darn me if someone hasn't sent me a cloek."

"What?" shouted O'Neill. The officer leapt across the room, snatched the box from the surprised Barton and rushed across to a bucket of iced water that had been brought in for the champagne. They saw him submerge the gift.

"He's nuts!" Barton whispered to Higgins.

O'Neill made no answer, but hastened across to a small wash-basin. He filled a jug and poured a lot of water over the packet.

"Into the next room." O'Neill spoke sharply. "Come on—questions later. Get going!"

They obeyed in bewilderment.

"You may think me crazy, but I hate presents that tick." O'Neill gave a twisted grin. "I think you'll be surprised when you see the contents of that box."

Some ten minutes later Dick Barton found himself staring at the contents of that packet. There was a cloek right enough, but wires and tubes were attached to it. A time bomb.

"Phew!" Barton gasped out. "That was a close shave."

Ann arrived for her interview, and the first thing she saw was the now useless bomb. It looked sinister, so she asked what it could be.

"It seems that our friends, the racketeers, decided another little murder wouldn't do any harm," he told her with grim humour. "They picked me for it. It was all nicely wrapped up and mailed to me. When I opened it the thing began to tick. And, thanks to my bodyguard, who dumped it into water; it didn't go off."

"Thank heavens for that!" Ann cried, and in her anxiety she looked at him in a manner that caused the young man to leap forward and seize her hands.

"Would it mean so much—to you?" Ann looked away, then gently released her hands.

"Aren't you forgetting something? A lady, for instance?"

"Yeah, I'm forgetting that a long time ago a couple of families made a lot of plans and I took them for granted." He gave a sigh. "I'm sorry, Ann."

"There's nothing to be sorry about." She managed a smile. "Didn't you want to ask me some questions about the numbers racket?"

"I'll find Higgins." Barton rang a bell. "You're very brave to help. I'll try not to ask too many questions."

When Ann had told all she knew Higgins gave a shake of his head and glanced at Barton. She had told them a grand story, but it lacked proof. The phone-bell rang, and with a frown of annoyance Barton picked up the receiver. Ann and Higgins saw the startled look in Dick's eyes. After a while Dick spoke:

"All right, all right, but wait a minute—" He jerked the telephone bracket vigorously. "Try and trace that call."

"What's the matter?" questioned Ann.

"They've kidnapped Tess," Barton June 13th, 1936.

told them. "They got her last night. They have given me five days to drop my investigation. If I don't, they say I'll never see her again."

"What are you going to do?"

Barton gave a despairing gesture.

"Well, what would you do? I've got to quit, of course."

"You're not going to let them get away with this, too?" Ann's voice had hardened.

"Well, what else can I do?"

"Well, you can fight, can't you? You've got five days, haven't you? Can't you do something in that time?"

Barton looked at her as if she did not understand.

"But they've got Tess."

"And they got my father, too!" Ann's voice was hoarse and her eyes were blazing. "They got Steve Comos and they got those fourteen people on the Mochado. There's no telling how many more they'll get. Wouldn't Miss Graham be willing to sacrifice a few days of her freedom in order to help end this murder racket? Do you propose to fight back, or act like a jellyfish?"

"You have an uncanny way of getting through my thick skin," Barton told her sharply. "I'll not have anyone call me a jellyfish."

"Then you're not going to quit?"

"Not for four days, at least."

The Dope Victim

IT was the morning of the fourth day. Barton had done everything possible, but they had not been able to find where Tess had been taken. They could not find out who had killed Devlin, and it looked as if the D.A. would have to abandon his crusade.

"Can't think what's become of Ann," Barton muttered gloomily. "That girl always has a lot of sound ideas, but she seems to have lost interest. I haven't seen her for two days. I've phoned her several times, but she has been out. Can't understand her."

There was a rap at the door and a messenger entered. Barton opened a letter and stared across at Higgins.

"This comes from the Bellevue Hospital. Ann wants to see us there at once."

"Let's not waste time thinking—let's scam!" cried the practical reporter.

They were shown into a private ward and there they found Ann seated beside the bedside of a patient—a dark-skinned man, who moaned and tossed restlessly. Higgins gripped Barton's arm. "It's Ace Acello," he whispered.

"What's the matter with him?" Barton whispered to Ann.

"He got an overdose of dope."

"Dope!" Barton exclaimed. "How did he get hold of the stuff?"

"I gave it to him," was the calm answer. "I expect you may have wondered where I've been the last two days. When I realised that we were getting nowhere and time was urgent, I decided on a desperate means to an end. Ace Acello always tried to flirt with me when he came into my father's store. He gave me a restaurant where he often dined. I found him there and renewed our acquaintance."

"Gosh, I admire your pluck." Barton stared at her with awe. "But you with this swine—it's horrible to think about."

"I was very elusive." Her smile was hard. "I made him think it was just a chance meeting. I told him that I thought my father had been killed by one of the Comos gang, because they thought dad was responsible for their leader's death. To have been very friendly would have made him sus-

icious, but I allowed myself to be persuaded into dining with him last night. Now you know how he got doped. Got him here about two in the morning as a fever case. I worked for a doctor, so I knew the ropes. When I saw signs he was coming round I sent for you—people under dope often talk."

"Has he talked yet?"

"Not a thing, except burbling a lot of meaningless words and names," Ann said with a gloomy sigh.

Acello began to mutter, but all his incoherent talk was worthless, and except for crying Ann's name, did little else but groan.

"How long will it take him to come out of this?" Barton asked after a while.

"In about three or four hours he will be normal."

"When he does he'll be all shot to pieces, won't he?" Barton asked, and Ann nodded. "It gives me an idea. An idea that with my authority I can carry through. It's a desperate chance, but worth trying. Tim, fetch in O'Neill. We've got to get this guy up to my apartments."

"What are you planning to pull off?" Higgins wanted to know.

"A stunt to make this crook talk," answered Barton. "Go fetch O'Neill, and jump to it."

Desperate Measures

WHEN Ace Acello recovered his senses he found himself in a room with several men, obviously plain-clothes detectives, guarding him. When he cursed and railed and demanded why he was there no one answered him.

At last big O'Neill marched into the room and gave a significant gesture. Two men seized Acello and yanked him to his feet. The crook cursed and O'Neill struck him violently in the face with a clenched fist.

"I'll cut your ears off for that, copper!" snarled Ace.

They dragged Ace into the next room and flung him into a chair. He glared round and saw at an open doorway Ann and Higgins, and at sight of the girl a cruel grin showed.

"So you double-crossed me, sister, eh?" he leered. "When these mugs —"

O'Neill struck him again, and now Ace Acello cowered back.

"Going to try to beat me up, are you?" he rasped. "When I get through with you flatfoots there won't be much of you—" His voice trailed away, because Barton had appeared. The young attorney carried leather thongs.

"What are those for?" He started out of the chair.

Roughly Barton hurled him back, and then men seemed to converge on Ace from all quarters. He struggled futilely as they pinioned his arms, and then he was strapped up securely.

"I might have known you wasn't on the square!" Acello shouted defiantly at Ann. "You wait till I get out of this!"

"If!" significantly interrupted Barton, and grinned down at his victim. "That looks rather like an electric chair. You'd look natural in the hot seat. Ace, we've got you right where we want you."

"You can't bluff me!" Ace cried, but beads of perspiration stood out on the crook's forehead.

"Did I say anything about bluffing? Why do you think I had you brought here?" asked Barton.

(Continued on page 25)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

A strange planet, hitherto unknown, has shifted from its orbit and loomed into the view of the peoples of the earth. It is the planet Mongo, and its overlord is Ming, a sinister figure who has probed the fundamental secrets of Nature.

Dr. Zarkov, an American scientist, sets out in a rocket ship to penetrate the stratosphere. He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart, but they reach the new planet only to be seized by Ming.

Flash and Dale escape with the aid of Aura, Ming's daughter, who is attracted by Flash. They are also assisted by Thun, a prince whose father rules a territory on Mongo which has not yet been subdued by Ming.

Dale and Thun, however, are captured and carried off by winged men in the pay of King Vultan, who dominates an amazing sky-city poised thousands of feet above the surface of the great planet.

Meanwhile, Zarkov finds an ally in Barin, rightful heir to the throne that Ming occupies. They locate Flash and Aura, and in Zarkov's rocket ship they make for King Vultan's sky-city in the hope of rescuing Dale Arden and Thun.

But as they approach Vultan's aerial stronghold a powerful ray is directed upon them from a lofty turret, and with its mechanism paralysed the rocket ship falters, then drops at an amazing speed towards death and destruction!

Now Read On

**EPISODE 6:—
"Flaming Torture"**

In Vultan's Power

THE ray that had struck the rocket ship had left the occupants of the machine unscathed. It was clear that it did not affect the human body. But it had rendered the motor of the craft useless, and to Flash and his companions this in itself spelled disaster and death.

For the vessel was falling, plunging swiftly to destruction upon the stones of that wondrous and uncanny city of the skies which lay below.

Flash and the others were thrown together in a heap and lay huddled in the forward portion of the ship as it nose-dived through the void. But suddenly the rapidity of the machine's descent was checked, and the motor became audible again sputteringly.

The ship seemed to level itself, and, unable to guess the reason for this occurrence, Flash and Zarkov struggled to their feet. And the instant they looked out through the windows the truth dawned upon them.

The vessel had dropped out of the ray that had been trained on it from the palace turret, and since the light-beam was no longer focused upon it, it appeared as if the craft might yet be saved.

"The controls, Doctor Zarkov!" Flash shouted. "Get to the controls! And if they try to play that beam on us again do your darndest to keep clear of it!"

Zarkov stumbled to the switchboard of the rocket ship, but even as he did so Barin and Aura joined him.

They had risen from the floor shakily, and their faces were white.

"We are lost, doctor!" said Barin. "The beam may no longer be upon us, but the damage has already been done."

"But the motor is operating again," Zarkov retorted. "That shows there is still power in it."

True the motor was in action once more, yet how uncertainly it functioned, missing its stroke, hesitating, faltering in an ominous manner. At one moment it would burst out triumphantly, in the next fade away to a broken chatter of mechanism; and the ship was going down, slowly, perhaps, and on an even keel, as it were, but going down nevertheless.

Zarkov could not recover height for all his efforts with the controls. He could not even arrest the gradual descent, and was forced at last to seek a landing-place in the hope that he could bring his craft safely to rest.

The ship was now within a few hundred feet of the sky-city's roofs. When first the party in the vessel had appeared over the metropolis they had seen it as a fairy realm riding on a carpet of fleecy clouds, clouds through which the distant plains and peaks of Mongo's surface were dimly visible far down. But by this time they were so near to Vultan's amazing domain that they could see nothing else but that great panorama of stately dwellings and a network of streets in which throngs of winged citizens were gathered with upturned faces.

Meanwhile the ray from the turret of Vultan's palace had been extinguished, the men who had directed it obviously being confident that the rocket ship could not escape.

They were right. Zarkov could do no more than guide it towards an open space which the turret overlooked, a kind of courtyard on which the ship finally grounded with a faint jar.

Light as the impact was, the inmates of the vessel were sent staggering. Yet thankful to be alive, it was with feelings of indescribable relief that they blundered towards the door in the ship's side, which Zarkov made haste to open.

One after another they emerged from the craft, and Flash, the last to step forth, had scarcely set foot on the paving-stones of the courtyard when a band of Hawk Men came running across from the palace.

They were armed, and looked threatening enough, even when Aura moved forward and attempted to address them imperiously. Brushing her aside they closed with Barin, Flash and Zarkov, and next second an ugly scuffle was in progress.

Zarkov was quickly overpowered, and if the Hawk Men found it more difficult to deal with Barin and Flash the odds that favoured the attackers at length prevailed, the athletic American and his stalwart companion being mastered after a fierce tussle.

The three prisoners were panting from their exertions, but helpless in their captors' arms, when Aura cried out in a voice that commanded the attention of the soldiery.

"In the name of the Emperor Ming I order you to release those men!" she snapped.

She was answered coldly by one of Vultan's minions.

"We already have our orders from the royal master whom we serve. He saw your ship come down in the courtyard, and bade us seize you all forthwith."

"Do you know who I am?" Aura asked furiously.

"Yes, the daughter of Ming. A daughter who by all accounts has displeased her father to some purpose, even as you have displeased King Vultan. He was greatly enraged when he learned that you had been responsible for the slaying of two of his soldiers on the shore of the Great Sea. Come, you and your friends are to be taken before him."

Struggling, Flash and Zarkov and Barin were marched towards the palace, and in spite of her angry protests, Aura was also clutched by the arms and forced in that direction.

Once over the threshold of the palace, the three male prisoners were shackled with fetters that were brought from a guard-room, and, although spared this indignity, Aura was hustled forward with them as they were thrust along a corridor leading to the audience chamber in which King Vultan was waiting.

Within a few minutes of their descent to the courtyard, the captives were in the presence of the gross, chuckling potentate who ruled that city of the skies. Yet Flash, for one, seawardly had eyes for Vultan. It was Dale who claimed his gaze; Dale, whom he saw cringing at the beefy monarch's side; Dale, who cried out as she beheld her lover amongst the prisoners.

"Flash!" she screamed, and ran forward to embrace the young American with tears in her eyes.

"Steady, honey," he whispered, keenly aware of her distress. "Steady."

She clung to him, and he did his best June 13th, 1936.

to console her. Meanwhile Aura had moved towards the immense throne in which Vultan sat, and was addressing him wrathfully.

"How dare you attack a ship in which the daughter of the Emperor Ming is travelling?" she challenged.

The big man looked at her ironically. "How was I to know that you were aboard that ship?" he inquired.

"Perhaps you did not know," Aura granted. "But at least you ordered your men to seize me and my companions as soon as you saw us land. And I warn you, Vultan, that unless more respect is shown to me, my father will send an army to destroy your city. I may have displeased him, but I can assure you that he will not overlook any insult to his own flesh and blood."

Vultan was still regarding her with his piggish, twinkling eyes, but though the corners of his thick-lipped mouth were uplifted, there was deadly quality in his smile.

"Ming would not dare to destroy this city," he observed, "while I was holding his daughter hostage."

"You would dare to make me a prisoner?" she flung at him.

"Shall we say—er—a guest?" he rejoined with a wheezy chuckle.

She glared at him, but, turning his attention from her, he rose and stepped down to where Flash and Dale were standing.

"So you are the young man named Gordon whom I have been hearing about," he said to the fair-haired American.

"Yes," Flash answered steadfastly, "I'm the fellow. What of it?"

Vultan studied his captive's physique in an appraising fashion.

"You are strong," he remarked. "And I have always need of strong men like you."

He nodded his big head once or twice, and then glanced at the other two who had been shackled.

"Ah, Prince Barin!" he declared. "Welcome! I suppose you are still nursing your grievance against the Emperor Ming, who assassinated your father and deprived you of your rightful heritage?"

Barin made no reply, and King Vultan slid his eyes upon Zarkov.

"And who is the elderly Earth man?" he asked.

"Doctor Zarkov," Prince Barin volunteered then. "A great scientist, your Majesty."

"A great scientist?" Vultan reiterated with a show of interest. "I might be able to employ a great scientist."

He paused, and, after scrutinising the doctor for a space, he signed to the group of soldiers who had marched the prisoners into the throne-room.

"Remove Zarkov's fetters and take him to my laboratory," he commanded. "As for the young man Gordon, conduct him to the furnace chamber, where he will be kept warm."

He laughed boisterously, his whole body shaking flabbily as if in enjoyment of some joke best understood by himself, and his laughter was still ringing in the ears of Flash and Dale when Barin gave vent to an exclamation of protest.

"You can't do that to Gordon, your Majesty!" he blurted. "You can't send him to the furnace-chamber, sire!"

King Vultan seemed to stiffen, and he looked at Barin with a changed expression, his eyes grown baleful.

"No?" he said softly. "Maybe you do not wish to be separated from your friend. Very well, you shall go with him."

"Vultan, release Flash Gordon!" It

was the terse voice of Aura. "Do what you will with Zarkov, Barin and Dale Arden. But release Flash Gordon, or I will see that you—"

"Silence!" the monarch of the sky-city broke out. "You are in no position to offer threats to me! Guards, do as I have ordered! Wait, leave Zarkov to me. I will show him to the laboratory personally."

The doctor's shackles were unlocked, but, still in chains, Flash and Barin were propelled from the room, Dale being swept to one side as she tried to cling to the young American. Then the two men who had been condemned to the furnace chamber were bundled along a wide passage that ended in a flight of steps, at the foot of which was a tremendous door wrought in a metal that resembled lead.

This door was pressed open, and Flash and Barin were east into a room where all was tumult—a tumult consisting of the babble of many voices, the scrape and clang of strange machinery, the roar of hellish fires in colossal furnaces, the rasp of shovels wielded by the hands of sweating, half-nude slaves.

It was a room of immense dimensions, lofty as a cathedral, and the most striking feature of it was the row of furnaces tended by the wretches who were armed with the shovels; begrimed and perspiring creatures who had doubtless been pressed into Vultan's service.

None of them was a Hawk Man, but there were a number of the latter present in the rôle of guards, some of them carrying whips with which they lashed those of the slaves who appeared to shirk.

Other Hawk Men were stationed beside the machines already mentioned, studying instrument dials upon these machines and occasionally moving switches whose purpose could not even be guessed.

Meanwhile, behind a kind of parapet constructed of the same lead-like metal as the door, a crew of weary figures were squatting with bowed heads. The lead wall afforded them shelter from the heat of the furnaces, and they were obviously slaves who had been given a spell of rest. Apparently the work which had to be done in this fetid, sweltering room was so arduous that the prisoners were divided into many shifts—yes, many shifts, to judge by the number of men who were huddled behind the wall.

It was as Flash Gordon and Barin glanced in the direction of those resting slaves that they beheld one who seemed familiar, and when the fellow chanced to raise his head they recognised him at once.

"Thun!" Flash shouted.

Thun it was, and, starting, he peered across the room at the newcomers. At the same time Flash attempted to move towards him, but was dragged back by the men who had charge of him, and who were now in the act of unfastening his shackles.

Those who held Barin were engaged on the same task, having already stripped him to the waist, and the chains had been discarded when two or three of the furnace-room guards approached, long whips trailing from their hands.

"More slaves?" one of them grunted. "We need them. Even working in short spells, the rogues die off all too quickly. We lost four in the last moon-month. These can start with the next shift. They go on almost immediately."

The soldiers who had brought Flash and Barin to the furnace-room trooped off, and long-handled shovels were pushed into the fists of the two new

prisoners. Then they were thrust towards the lead wall.

At crack of whip a dozen of the slaves resting there were roused to their feet, and Thun, who was among them, at once joined Barin and Flash.

"Careful, Flash," he warned, seeing the glint in the American's eye and the ominous thrust of his jaw. "Do nothing rash, or the consequences may be fatal. Better to accept the situation."

It was shrewd advice, perhaps, but at that instant one of the guards slashed at them with his whip, accompanying the blow with a harsh command.

"This is no place for gossip!" he snarled. "Get forward to the furnaces!"

The thong of the whip had caught Flash across the back, and the cruel sting of it spurred him to retaliation. Uttering a bellow, he flung himself at the guard and would have smashed him to the floor if the man's comrades had not come upon him from all directions and grappled with him.

Flash fought like a madman, but his antagonists were too many for him, and the rest of the slaves were kept at bay by others of the guards who had rushed to the spot. Before long the infuriated American had been subdued, and, though he glared at his foes with unbroken spirit, he was compelled to go forward to the furnaces with Barin, Thun and the remainder of the captives who formed that particular shift.

They relieved the miserable wretches who had already been tending the fires, and soon they were driving their shovels deep into the supplies of jet-black fuel which had been loaded into bunkers close at hand. Soon, too, they were envying those of their fellows who were resting beyond the lead wall.

The heat from the red maws of the open furnaces was terrific—a deadly, penetrating heat that seemed to reach the innermost fibres of the body. It drove into their backs as they stooped to fill the shovels; it smote their chests as they swung around to heave the contents of those shovels into the vents where the flames roared ceaselessly. The very Pit of Hell could not be worse than this, Flash told himself.

He noticed that the Hawk Men were

careful to avoid exposing themselves to that heat overmuch. Those at the machines were too far away from the furnaces to be affected by it seriously, and, if this was not the case with the guards who plied the whips, these guards nevertheless kept their distance most of the time.

Only when their vigilant eyes detected some unfortunate slave weakening at his work—only then did they draw close to flay the shirker into renewed activity.

Flash and his comrades of the shift toiled on, sweating, suffering, some of them cursing; cursing, for in the mere utterance of words they gained an outlet for their feelings.

News of Ming

WHILE Flash was slaving in the furnace-room, King Vultan was addressing Aura, Zarkov and Dale in the presence of two or three of his vassals who had remained in the audience chamber.

His remarks were chiefly directed to Aura, who still appeared to be in defiant mood.

"You have threatened me with the vengeance of your father," he was saying, "but let me tell you, my dark-eyed beauty, that your so-called Emperor of the Universe holds no terrors for me."

"You formed an allegiance with him, didn't you?" the princess retorted. "Was it not fear that made you seek his friendship?"

"Fear?" King Vultan echoed the word mockingly. "Bah, I fear no man. It suited me at the time to court your father's aid, but now I do not need his friendship—and if he thinks I am a puppet who will bend the knee to him, then, by all the gods, I'll show him he's mistaken!"

"My father is powerful, Vultan," Aura warned. "I advise you to let me go, and also to surrender Dale Arden and Zarkov to him. As for Flash Gordon, I command you to spare him—"

The monarch of the sky-city silenced her with a gesture of one great hand.

"Flash Gordon remains where he is, together with Barin and Thun and the slaves of the furnace-room. Zarkov goes to my laboratory, where he will be as useful to me as he might have been to Ming."

He paused and leered at Dale, then glanced at Aura again.

"And the Earth girl," he continued, "she will grace my palace. Ming desired her hand in marriage, didn't he? Well, he won't have her. She gladdens old Vultan's eyes too much. A rare treasure for my palace of the skies—a rare treasure, indeed."

And he chuckled throatily, so that Dale drew back from him in fear.

Vultan frowned a little as he saw her recoil, but after studying her in silence for a moment he grinned again.

"I've a mind to tell your esteemed father my plans and see what he has to say," he told Aura in hearty accents. "Yes, I'll communicate with him by the televisual ray and let him know that you are all here. First, however, I must show Zarkov over my laboratory."

Bidding his retainers keep watch on Dale and Aura, he took Dr. Zarkov by the arm and led him from the throne-room, the scientist accompanying him gloomily enough, and a little while later the two of them might have been seen in an apartment that was fitted out with all manner of apparatus.

Just as the Emperor Ming had shown Zarkov over his incredible workshop, so Vultan conducted the doctor around this laboratory of the sky-city. And once again, as he looked upon the marvels which the room contained, Zarkov had cause to reflect upon the curious way in which the barbarism of bygone ages was coupled, on this planet of Mongo, with scientific miracles that were far in advance of the discoveries Earth men had made.

All the time Vultan was explaining in his rough, boisterous fashion the pur-



"Back!" shouted an officer in command of the detachment. "Back, or we'll destroy every man of you!"

poses which the various units of apparatus served; and one thing of especial interest Zarkov learned—that the sky-city was sustained by the terrific forces emanating from a great supply of radium.

"The radium fuel is cast into the furnaces at which your friends are working now," Vultan stated. "And my realm is supported in space by the gravity-resisting rays which are thus generated."

Zarkov eyed him thoughtfully. "What if something should happen to your furnaces?" he suggested. "What if your supply of radium fuel should become exhausted?"

"That would mean complete destruction," Vultan replied, "and, as our supply of radium is not inexhaustible, such a disaster must overtake us in the course of time—unless a substitute can be found. That's why I spared you from the atom furnaces, Zarkov. It seems to me that you may succeed where others have failed."

Suddenly the doctor's face became white and tense.

"King Vultan," he said, "if I understood you correctly, my friends are in a deadly plight. Radium can be of great benefit to medicine, but it can also have fatal consequences if used to any great extent. Do you realize that it is a substance which ultimately kills them if they are exposed to its effects too long?"

"Yes, that is another difficulty we have to face," Vultan announced callously. "The slaves last no time, even though they have frequent spells of rest behind a thick wall of lead, which, as you know, is a protection against the harmful properties of radium."

His eyes narrowed craftily, and a sly note came into his voice.

"But, doctor," he continued, "the danger to your friends should be an incentive to you. Find me a substitute for radium fuel, and they will live."

With these words he turned on his heel and left Zarkov, and on his way out nodded significantly to a sentry who was posted at the laboratory door. Then he passed into a room opposite, and here he was ensconced for some time.

It was a room fitted out with televisual equipment, and when Vultan finally emerged from it again there was an expression of amusement on his bloated features, an expression that was still lingering upon his countenance when he rejoined Dale Arden and Aura in the audience chamber of the palace.

"Well, my illustrious guest," he remarked to Aura jovially, "I have just been in contact with your imperial father. Thunder, he was like a man demented with rage when I had finished telling him that you and the Earth girl were here—and that I intended to keep you here. He swore he'd send his fleet of rocket ships against me, as soon as they had returned from some expedition on which they are engaged."

"He'll keep his word, Vultan," Aura said.

"Let him!" the other scoffed. "His fleet may have a warm welcome. Meanwhile, I have a mind to get better acquainted with the little dove who has come to us from the Earth."

He turned towards Dale, and, though she attempted to retreat from him, he took her by the hand and pulled her towards the dais on which his massive throne was set.

"Come, my dear," he urged, "you will sup with me. Guard, see that food and drink are brought immediately!"

He had called over his shoulder to one of his men-at-arms, but before the fellow could hurry off in response to his

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command another soldier entered the audience chamber.

"Your Majesty," the newcomer reported, "the Earth man Gordon is giving us a good deal of trouble in the furnace-room. Already he has turned on us twice."

Vultan frowned, and was silent for a moment. Then, still grasping Dale by the hand, he moved towards the door.

"Return to the furnace-room with a detachment of guards armed with ray-guns," he said to the soldier who had told of Flash Gordon's defiant attitude. "That rascal's spirit must be broken. I shall be watching, with my fair and lovely companion. And Aura, you may join us, since you seem to be interested in the Earth man."

Mutiny

DOWN in the furnace-room Flash was toiling grimly with the other men of his shift, but, unlike them, he was far from resigned to his condition as a slave. His mood was one of dark, seething rebellion, and in his own headstrong way he had tried to give vent to his wrath—only to be driven back to his ignominious task.

Thun and Barin stood one on each side of him, hurling fuel into the furnaces adjoining that which Flash was tending. They could hear the American muttering under his breath, and took every opportunity to warn him against any further show of resistance.

"It is as hard for Barin and me to suffer this treatment as it is for you," Thun said to him once. "But do nothing foolish, my friend. If we all bide our time a chance of escape may present itself. Where's the sense in throwing away your life? The wonder is that you have been spared after attacking the guards twice."

There was wisdom in Thun's counsel, and there was no doubt that Flash had behaved in foolhardy fashion. Yet it was not in the nature of the young American to hold himself in check, and despite the advice of his companions he was soon in trouble again.

This fresh outburst took place when one of the slaves collapsed in a heap. The man, less hardy than the other members of the shift, had obviously reached the end of his endurance, but two or three of the guards sprang forward to lash his huddled body with their whips and drive him to his feet.

The eyes of Flash Gordon blazed. He could not watch the cruel spectacle without the blood running hot in his veins. Besides, it seemed to him that here was an opportunity to make a bid for freedom, when attention was focused on the wretched man who grovelled under those stinging thongs.

And suddenly Flash was springing upon the group of soldiery who stood about the fallen slave, suddenly he was springing upon them with shovel upraised to strike.

"Come on, men!" he yelled to his comrades in misfortune. "Follow me!"

As he roared the words he brought one of the Hawk Men to his knees with a terrific blow, and in another instant a second guard thudded to the floor. Then pandemonium broke loose, the other slaves of the shift rushing to the attack with loud cries.

Hawk Men ran to the spot from all quarters, but the drudges of the furnace-room were thoroughly aroused, and they were quickly joined by those who had been resting behind the lead wall. Like wildfire the spirit of mutiny had spread throughout the ranks of the prisoners, and they fell upon Vultan's minions tooth and nail.

Confusion reigned supreme in that sweltering chamber, and, outnumbered,

the guards fell on every hand, beaten down by fists or shovels. The whole room seemed to resound to the shouts of stricken soldiers and the infuriated howls of mutineers who were battling for their liberty, and, above the mad din, the voice of Flash rang high and clear—below defiance to the foe and encouragement to his fellow-rebels.

Thun and Barin were close beside the American. In their hearts they felt that the revolt was doomed to failure, for even if the guards in the furnace-room were overpowered the slaves had yet to face the city's garrison and a whole population which would be hostile to a man.

No, Thun and Barin would have preferred to wait for a chance of making an escape from the palace unobserved—repairing Zarkov's rocket ship if possible—then cruising off through the void.

They would have had some plan to work on. Flash apparently had none.

And yet out of loyalty Thun fought side by side with him, and so did Barin; fought until suddenly the great door of the furnace-room was thrown open and a troop of Hawk Men burst across the threshold, armed with ray-guns.

The guards in the chamber had been overwhelmed almost to a man. The triumphant slaves had been on the point of swarming out of their place of captivity. But now they recoiled before the threatening muzzles of those deadly weapons which the newcomers were grasping.

"Back!" shouted an officer in command of the detachment. "Back, or we'll destroy every man of you!"

Flash would have continued the fight and courted death, but Barin restrained him.

"It's no use," he breathed. "It's no use."

Covered by the ray-guns, the slaves were compelled to retreat. In the meantime the guards who had been struck down were beginning to pull themselves to their feet, and with savage looks they wielded their whips might and main, driving Flash and his party to the furnaces, and the rest of the prisoners to the lead wall.

It was as the thongs were descending upon the tortured flesh of the mutineers that a burst of mocking laughter rang out across the chamber, and, raising their eyes to a lofty gallery at the far end of the room, the men who were being herded towards the furnaces saw the figures of Vultan, Aura and Dale Arden there—Dale in a half-fainting condition, sickened by the punishment that was being inflicted on her fiancée and his comrades.

"Flay the skin off their bodies!" Vultan called. "Teach the rogues a lesson! Show them that you are their masters!"

The flogging was continued until blood was running from the raw weals on the backs of the suffering slaves, and the staccato reports of the whip-lashes were still echoing about the walls of the great room when Dale Arden sank in a swoon. Vultan catching her as she slid to the floor of the gallery.

He held her in one powerful arm, and glanced at Aura, who had watched the scene below with a tense expression on her countenance.

"The Earth girl cannot bear to see her lover's plight," he commented sourly. "She thinks too much of him. Perhaps if he were to be removed, she might forget him."

Aura directed an anxious look at him, but already he was leaning over the railing of the gallery again.

"Wait!" he called to his minions. "Hold, there!"

(Continued on page 28)

"EXCLUSIVE STORY"

(Continued from page 20)

"That's what I'd like to know. Why did you?"

"Because we already had the goods on you. You squealed, Acello. You squealed on yourself when you were coming out of the dope."

"You're wasting your time, pretty boy," retorted Acello. "I don't scare easy."

"Personally, I don't think you've the courago of a worm." Barton laughed softly. "Better watch him, boys. He's liable to bite himself and die in convulsions. You know what this is, don't you?" Barton picked up a square packet or box. "You should—you sent it to me. Didn't you?"

"No, I didn't," Acello writhed futilely. "I don't even know what it is."

"All right, I'll explain." Barton held up the box. "It's a species of fruit called pineapple. I had it all put back together—just the way you sent it to me. Clever boys, those cops, down at the bureau of explosives. They put it back together—oiled it up—got it all working, then they wired in five new sticks of dynamite. And here it is—all set to go. You just pull off this tape, release the spring, and in about a minute you forget to worry about anything."

"Take—take that thing away," Acello wheezed as Barton held it close to him. "Oh, I see you know what it is." Barton gave a satisfied grin. "Well, here's the plot, Acello. You came here to plant this pineapple, but a terrible accident happened. The pineapple got ripe too soon. Well, I had to serape you off the walls and redecorate the apartment. Do you like the plot?" His voice hardened. "Do you?"

"Listen, you can't do this!" Acello's eyes were bulging from his head as Barton drew up a table near the chair and placed the bomb on it. "I got rights! I ain't had a trial!"

"Sure you had a trial," mocked the District Attorney. "Only there weren't any crooked attorneys to fix the jury for you. We were the jury." He indicated the cops who had backed to an open door. "And the verdict was guilty!" He caught hold of the tape. "We saved the state the cost of a court hearing, and now we're going to save it the cost of burning you."

"Call him off, Ann," Acello appealed to the girl, who was staring at the scene in horror. "The guy is crazy. I ain't done nothing to you, Ann. I've always liked you, Ann."

She gave him a look of repulsion, and let Higgins lead her away. Only Barton and O'Neill remained in the room.

"You'll have about a minute to do some remembering, Acello," Barton cried. "I want you to remember a harmless old man that died in the gutter. I want you to remember every dirty trick you've played. Remember all you can, Acello. Breathe deeply these next sixty seconds. They'll be all you'll get." He ripped off the tape, and dived for the door.

The door slammed. Ace Acello was alone. Ominously came the ticking of the time-bomb. Mad fear gripped him, and he struggled to get free, but in vain. The ticking seemed to grow louder.

"Stop it! Stop it!" he screamed, foaming at the mouth. "I'll squeal! I'll tell everything!"

In the next room O'Neill, Barton and

some of the detectives were crowding round a switch-board. Ace Acello did not know that there was a dictaphone near the chair. Directly Acello shouted that he would squeal. Barton spoke into the specially prepared apparatus.

"All right, talk, Acello," Barton shouted. "But talk first! It's your only chance!"

"I killed Devlin!" screamed the half-demented crook. "I killed Comosi! And put that stuff on the Mochado, but Werther made me do it. Martin Werther, the big shot! And there was Roth, Rinelli, Coxony—" His dilated eyes stared at the bomb. "Hurry—hurry, I'll tell everything."

"Don't—don't be a sap, Dick," cried Higgins, as Barton flung himself at the door and dragged it open. They saw him dive across the room and grab up the bomb, and press a knob on the contraption.

Slowly they all came into the room, because they knew now that the bomb would not explode. They saw that Ace Acello had fainted. Barton gripped Ace and shook him but the man's head only lolled drunkenly. The attorney picked up a glass of water and dashed it into the wretch's face.

That brought Ace Acello to his senses. "Where's Miss Graham?" Barton demanded. "Quick!"

"The old Fensler Mansion—near Stanford," rasped out the cowed scoundrel.

"I know the place," said O'Neill.

"It's near the water."

"If you're lying"—Barton held up the bomb—"you'll not get a second chance."

"It's the truth," Acello stammered. "Take it away—take it away!"

Barton chuckled and opened the box. Out rolled an ordinary alarm clock. "Just a simple clock, and you didn't like it. That's too bad. Here, take a good look," and he tossed the clock into Acello's lap.

The clock, as if in derision, began to ring, and then Acello began to laugh hysterically. They left him laughing. He was quite mad by the time he was freed from his bonds.

Barton Knows His Own Mind

IN a luxurious office at the Fensler Mansion sat Martin Werther, and round him were his chief cronies. Werther's face was lined with anxiety, though he puffed at a large cigar and tried to appear at his ease. The others shifted uneasily.

"Say, chief, we ought to be hearing from Acello any minute now," said Rinelli. "You told him what to do."

"Do I ever make mistakes?" raged Werther, striking his fist on the desk. "He was told to give Barton a final warning this morning, that we were tired of waiting, and that unless he vowed to resign and chuck up his campaign the Graham girl would die at noon to-day. We'll hear any minute now."

In the next room Tess Graham paced up and down. An unshaven rascal sprawled in a chair and watched her with a cruel leer, whilst at a table sat a red-haired, berouged young woman, who was playing solitaire with a greasy pack of cards.

"Getting nervous, dearie?" mocked the woman. "Well, I don't blame you. You've only got a few more hours."

"Do you mean they'll really—"

Tess could not finish.

"They've taken dames for an airing before this." The woman placed a card.

"But—but he can't know they're holding me."

"Oh, yes, dearie, he knows." The woman grinned evilly. "He's been watched. Instead of laying off he's

sticking the cops on every mug in town. He's tried everything he knows to find this hide-out. Maybe he's not so anxious to see you again. They tell me every where he goes there's a dame with him named Ann Devlin."

"It isn't true."

"Don't you call me a liar, you hot-house geranium," shrilled the woman. "I'll tear your eyes out for you." She leaned forward. "Don't you expect any mercy if Barton don't lay off. It's queer he ain't chucked in his hand, and the chief won't stick at anything to gain his ends. If—" She stopped as if she had been shot because there had come three loud buzzes. "What's that?"

The sprawling crook was on his feet in a flash.

"The warning signal," he cried. "We gotta get outa here, if—" Clearly there came to their ears the scream of sirens. "The cops!"

Martin Werther and his men leapt to their feet when they got the warning, but the place was taken by surprise. One man tried to hold the stairs, but the police shot the crook down. The police burst into Werther's sumptuous den, and Rinelli whipped out a gun. Crack! The Italian dropped in a heap. O'Neill clapped the handcuffs on Werther.

"Hey, what is this?" he shouted. "I've got a warrant for your arrest for murder," cried O'Neill.

In the next room the one crook guard fired as the police rushed in. A detective clasped his arm with a groan. Someone fired and that was the finish for the crook. The woman dived behind a table and crouched there with gun in hand.

Barton appeared. "Tess!" he cried. "Are you all right?"

The girl swayed towards him. Ann ran into the room, and stopped as Tess moved towards Barton. It was then that the woman jumped up and pointed her gun. Ann impulsively jumped forward. The gun exploded and Ann stopped the bullet in her shoulder.

Before the woman could fire another shot the police had wrenched the gun away.

"Take your dirty hands off me!" she shouted.

Their answer was to slip handcuffs over her wrists.

Barton saw Ann drop in a heap, and forgetful of Tess dropped down on his knees.

"Ann, are you hurt?" he demanded in distressed tones. "Darling, answer me."

"It's all right—" Ann's eyes fluttered open.

"Get a car ready," Dick Barton shouted. "Phone the Stamford Hospital—we'll be there in five minutes!"

Dick lifted the still form in his arms, and staggered out of the room. Tess was forgotten. She knew that Dick Barton was lost to her for ever.

And when the place had been cleared and all the crooks taken away to prison a certain reporter used Werther's 'phone.

"This is Timothy Aloysius Higgins, the father of your children," he said into the 'phone. "What have you got for lunch?"

"What! You mean to say you're coming home at last?" came the astonished tones of practical Mrs. Higgins.

"Yeah, might as well," chuckled the reporter. "My other girl ditched me. I think she's gonna get married. Yeah, that's right—to Dick Barton. How did you guess?"

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, starring Franchot Tone, Madge Evans, Stuart Erwin and Joseph Calleia.)

June 13th, 1934.

"THE LONE WOLF RETURNS"

(Continued from page 12)

been thinking of a way to get rid of those two uncouth creatures of his, Mastro and Coster, so that the way would be comparatively clear for you."

"Yes?" said Lanyard with interest.

"It involves a telephone, sir, and a taxi-cab. You could, if occasion demanded it, tell a very convincing lie, couldn't you, sir?"

"I'm afraid I could, Jenkins."

"A very exciting tale would be useful, sir—a tale about hi-jacking the Stewart jewels, for instance."

"Jenkins," said Lanyard heartily, "you're a genius!"

"Oh, no, sir," protested Jenkins with becoming modesty. "Just a gentleman's gentleman in search of a taxi-cab."

Half an hour after this conversation, a waiter at the Club Rendezvous entered a room in which Coster and Mastro were playing cards at a table. He informed Coster that he was wanted on the telephone, and that ugly rough rose up and went into an adjoining room.

Mastro followed him, after an interval, to see him banging the plunger of a telephone up and down.

"What's up?" he asked.

"The Lone Wolf's on the loose," replied Coster excitedly. "He broke away from the cops, and he's found out about the boss' apartment on the West Side."

"How?" demanded Mastro.

"How should I know?" howled Coster. "I just got a tip that he's on his way there now to hi-jack that Stewart stuff!"

"You'd better call the boss."

"What d'you think I'm doing? I can't get any answer!"

"Well, what are we waiting for? We'd better get up there!"

A taxi-cab was standing at the kerb when the two emerged together from the club premises. Jenkins was at the wheel, and he had exchanged his bowler hat for the peaked cap of the vehicle's lawful owner.

The grey coupé was parked very near the spot it had occupied the night before, but Lanyard was not in it. He was sitting on a bootblack's stand, only a few yards away, having his spotless shoes polished. Over the top of an evening paper which concealed most of his face he watched Morphew's henchmen jump into the taxi-cab.

"Where to, sir?" inquired Jenkins.

"Five-forty-seven West Eighty-Sixth," Mastro instructed him. "And step on it!"

Off sped the taxi-cab, and Lanyard threw down the paper and got down from the stand, tossing a coin to the bootblack.

The taxi-cab proceeded up-town. It reached West Sixty-Eighth Street, turned into that thoroughfare, careered wildly along it, mounted a pavement, and crashed into the front wall of a police station.

Startled officers streamed out from the

building, and one of them caught hold of Jenkins' right arm and said fiercely:

"What's the idea?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," returned Jenkins in the mildest of voices, "but where could I report a stolen car?"

"Right here!" rapped the policeman.

"What kind of a car?"

"Oh, this car, sir."

"Who stole it?"

"Why," replied Jenkins with a sweep of his hand towards his dumbfounded passengers, "we three gentlemen."

While the police were dealing with this remarkable circumstance in West Sixty-Eighth Street, Marmaduke Crane called at the Stewart mansion in West One Hundred and Twentieth Street and was left in the hall while the butler informed Marcia of his presence.

She went out to him from the drawing-room.

"I'm sorry to bother you, Miss Stewart," he said with a little bow, "but I'd like to have another look at that carpet in the library. There is not the slightest doubt the thief broke in that way."

"I believe this is the third time you've looked at the carpet in the library today," returned Marcia rather stiffly. "Do what you like, but you'll have to excuse me. I have a friend waiting."

Through the open doorway of the drawing-room Crane had already glimpsed Liane, who had picked up a fur cloak and was putting it on.

"I know," he nodded sagely. "Mrs. Mallison. She's sailing on the Normandie to-night."

"You're not by any chance checking up on Mrs. Mallison?" Marcia challenged.

"No, no, no," said Crane. "You see, I'm what they call a shipping news fan. I read the sailing lists. Always a chance there's somebody sailing I'd want to send some flowers to! I raise beautiful posies, you know."

"Very interesting," said Marcia with incredulous scorn. "Is that all?"

"Oh, just one thing more. What kind of perfume do you use?"

"Perfume?" she echoed. "But what has my perfume to do with it?"

"Oh, you never can tell. We're dealing with a smart man. It might be the one clue we need."

"Mr. Crane," she cried, "look at the carpet in the library! Sample my perfume! Read your shipping lists! Do anything you like, but I can't help you any further!"

She flounced away from him into the drawing-room, but he did not cross the hall into the library; instead, he slipped behind a curtain over the drawing-room doorway.

"Sorry, my dear," said Liane, "but I'll have to run."

"I've just made up my mind," said Marcia. "I'm going with you to Europe."

"Will you take long to pack?" Marcia assured her that packing would be the easiest part of the business.

"I'll make arrangements," said Liane. "As soon as we're ready, we'll call you."

Marcia went with Liane to the door and saw her off in a car which was waiting in the drive. When she returned to the hall Crane stepped out from behind the curtain.

"The carpet you wanted to see is in the library," said she sharply.

"Oh, I've seen the carpet," said Crane. "I've got to take a look at the garden now. Good-bye."

In Morphew's Room

WITH Mastro and Coster out of the way, it was a comparatively easy matter for Lanyard to enter the Club Rendezvous without being seen and to enter Morphew's private office.

To find the stolen emeralds, however, was a very different matter. He had ransacked every drawer in the desk, turned flowers out of a vase, and searched in every likely and unlikely place when the telephone bell rang and he sped to it lest its strident noise should attract attention on the part of the staff downstairs.

The voice of Liane sounded in his left ear.

"Morphew?"

"Yeah," he replied.

"Listen, and don't ask any questions. We're in a jam! Crane knows we're sailing!"

Morphew's voice was not a difficult one to imitate, and Liane was far too agitated to be critical.

"Well, what about the stuff?" Lanyard asked as Morphew might have done.

"If everything's clear, I'd get it out of your room."

"Why? They'd never find it there!"

"That fireplace," he was rejoiced to hear Liane retort, "is the first spot they'd go to! Hurry, I'll be right over."

Liane had been speaking from a telephone-box in the General Post Office, and she had no idea that Crane had followed her in a police car all the way from Marcia's home. He was in the next box when she mentioned the fireplace, and he remained crouched in an exceedingly uncomfortable position for one of his bulk till she had left the building.

The mantelpiece in Morphew's private office was rather an elaborate one with a wooden overmantel. It took Lanyard about five minutes to find a spring that caused a panel at one end of the overmantel to open like a little door, and then he fished out from quite a sizeable recess not only the emerald pendant, but practically the whole of the Stewart collection.

He transferred the jewels to his pockets, and on a card he took from the desk he wrote with his fountain-pen:

"Crane,—I have returned the jewels to the Stewart home. See you at midnight."

"LANYARD."

He put the card in the secret recess and closed the panel, and he restored the flowers to the vase and set the vase upon the mantelpiece.

He heard voices outside the door that was near to the stairs he had ascended, and in a flash he was behind dark-blue plush curtains that screened another door and his automatic was in his hand. He had just time to whisk a little table and a palm in a pot that stood on it into his retreat before the other door opened.

Morphew entered the room with Mallison, and Morphew slammed the door.

"Yeah, that's right," said Mallison—and then Lanyard's voice from behind the curtains made both of them jump.

"It's over here, boys!"

They swung round and stared at the blue barrel of an automatic which projected between the curtains.

"This is one of those set-'em-up exercises," said the invisible Lanyard. "First movement, hands above head. I said up!"

Two pairs of hands were raised.

"Take a deep breath and hold 'em up! Second movement, up on your toes! I said on your toes!"

The unwilling pupils raised themselves on their toes.

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"That's one," Lanyard informed them, "and two is down. One up—two down! Now altogether! Count off!"

In impotent fury Morphew and Mallison rose on their toes and descended on their heels, counting as they did so:

"One up, two down. One up, two down. One up, two down."

The door behind them was opened and Liane entered. She stared in astonishment at the pair—and followed the direction of a hasty nod on the part of her husband. She saw the barrel of the automatic, gasped, and joined in the exercise.

"One up, two down. One up, two down."

Crane walked in at the open door with two plain-clothes men, and for a while Crane listened and looked on as though fascinated. Then, very slowly, he sidled along a wall towards the curtains and peered behind the nearer of the two.

Suddenly he pulled that curtain aside. "That'll do for to-day," he said, after the manner of a physical drill instructor. "You can all get to showers now."

An official six-shooter was in his hand, and equally official six-shooters were in the hands of his subordinates. But the automatic which had kept Morphew, Mallison, and Liane so busy was resting on a pot whence a palm had been removed by its roots. There was no sign of Lanyard, and the door against which he had stood was not quite shut.

The exercise ceased and Crane took up the automatic. He walked to the mantelpiece, and where the vase of flowers was standing he found the spring.

"Say, where'd you get these posies?" he asked, thrusting the automatic in his hip-pocket; and then the spring was pressed and the little panel flew open.

There was nothing in the recess but the card Lanyard had placed there. Crane read the message that was on the back of it, then crumpled the slip of pasteboard in his hand and dropped it in his coat-pocket, smiling broadly at the three crestfallen crooks.

"Where are your credentials?" defied Morphew.

"A little mistake," purred Crane. "You know how it is—they will happen."

"Your apology comes too late! You'll hear more of this from the Commissioner!"

"Won't you tell me where you got those posies?" asked Crane.

"You get out!" cried Morphew.

Crane motioned to the men who were with him and they followed him out from the room. The door was closed, and Morphew listened for receding footsteps and heard them. But Crane erect back to the door, light-footed as any cat, and he put his ear to the keyhole.

The three inside the room had relaxed.

"That was smart of you, Mal, to get rid of the stuff," said Morphew appreciatively. "It was plenty hot."

"Don't give me the medal," returned Mallison. "Give it to Liane. She's the smart girl!"

"Me?" shrilled Liane. "I've never been near that thing! What's the idea, Morphew? You told me you were taking care of the emeralds!"

"I told you that?" shouted Morphew.

"Certainly you did, over the 'phone!"

"Now, just a minute, Morphew!" Mallison broke in furiously. "Let's get this straight! We all get a share of that Stewart stuff. What did you do with it?"

"I haven't been near the mantelpiece since this afternoon when I put it in there," Morphew declared.

"You put the jewels in, and you took them out, you dirty double-crosser!" howled Mallison; and he would have seized Morphew by the throat, but his

elbow was gripped and his wrist was twisted downwards in a trick of judo.

Liane held on to Morphew in alarm—and then the door flew wide, and Crane, with his gun in his hand, said chidingly:

"Now, now, children, you'll get nowhere by calling each other names! We'll just hop down to police headquarters and talk things over quietly with the Commissioner. You tell him what I did, and I'll tell him what you did."

He moved towards Liane, and the two plain-clothes men re-entered the room with quite a number of policemen.

Morphew, in the act of being handcuffed by a stalwart sergeant of police, said bitterly:

"Every time I get set to go to Europe somebody always slaps me in gaol!"

A Card from Crane

LANYARD had secured the release of his man Jenkins, by standing bail for him, long before Marmaduke Crane sauntered into Angus McGowan's room at headquarters that evening. The chief of detectives was following into a telephone.

"I don't care when your edition goes to press!" Crane heard. "I can't tell you who made the arrest! No!"

Down crashed the telephone, and McGowan looked up at the man he had coaxed away from the quiet of a farm.

"Where've you been?" he asked complainingly. "What are you dodging bouquets for? All the confounded newspapers in the city have been ringing up for the last couple of hours! They're ready to plaster your name on all their front pages."

"It's quite simple," returned Crane placidly. "A gentleman we both know is entitled to full credit for the job, Mac. His name is Michael Lanyard."

"Lanyard?" gasped McGowan. "Is he in on this?"

"Plenty, but on our side of the road all the way."

"It'll take a lot of talking to make the District Attorney believe that!"

"Yeah!" drawled Crane. "Well, I'm prepared to do a lot of talking, and for Lanyard, when I get him to the D. A.'s office to-morrow."

"We'll pick him up to-night!"

"No," said Crane, "hold it, Mac. We'd be sort of out of place to-night."

Benson, within an hour, was sent off to Marcia Stewart's home, not by McGowan, but by Crane. On reaching the mansion in West One Hundred and Twentieth Street he rang the front-door

bell, and to the huttler who answered the summons he said, with all his customary importance:

"Tell Mr. Lanyard that Mr. Benson's here to see him."

"Benson?" The butler had not forgotten the night when the masquerade ball had been interrupted by the police, but he affected not to remember the detective.

"Yes," said Benson. "The man they never get by!"

"You must be mistaken," said the butler icily. "Mr. Lanyard's not here."

"I only know what I've been told, brother, and I was told to leave this."

The butler accepted a card at which he barely condescended to glance, and he slammed the door in Benson's face. From a table in the hall he picked up a tray and deposited the card upon it, and carrying the tray into the drawing-room he presented it to Marcia.

"It's a message," he said. "It was handed to me at the door by the gentleman they never get by—Benson by name."

Marcia picked up the card, which bore Crane's name and was one of the sort he had used when he was in the force. With a frown, she turned it over, but the frown vanished as she read what was written on the other side:

"Lanyard,—Thanks for your help in the Stewart case. Marriage Licence Bureau opens at 10 a.m. Congratulations!"

"CRANE."

"But this is for Mr. Lanyard, Joseph," she said.

"I told the detective person that he wasn't here," responded the butler.

"You may go, Joseph."

Joseph went; Benson had gone. A few minutes later Marcia crossed the hall, past a quantity of luggage that had been deposited there, and entered the ball-room, in darkness except for the moonlight that streamed in at the french windows. One of those french windows was wide open, and beside the grand piano on the platform where an orchestra had functioned, two nights before, she saw a tall and shadowy figure.

Swiftly she crossed to the platform, mounted it, and switched on a lamp. The Stewart collection sparkled in the light, but Lanyard, who had spread all the jewels out upon the piano, pretended to be caught.

"All right," he said with an air of resignation, "I'll talk."

"You don't have to," Marcia informed him happily. "I hoped you would return to the scene of the crime!"

She stood very close beside him, and she looked down at the jewels instead of looking into his face.

"Michael, what's that?" she exclaimed, pointing to a ring of platinum set with white diamonds. "That doesn't belong here! It's not part of the collection!"

"Oh," said Lanyard casually, "it's just a little something I picked up."

"Picked up?" she challenged.

"Well, there it was all alone on the counter," he informed her. "Nobody was looking. All I had to do was to stretch out my hand—and pay for it!"

The grey coupé was in the drive, but Jenkins had deserted it to peer in at the french window. He saw Marcia nestle in Lanyard's arms, and he saw Lanyard put the ring on Marcia's finger.

He shook his head from side to side.

"Now," he said gloomily, "we'll never get out of town!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Melvyn Douglas and Gail Patrick.)

June 13th, 1936.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE LONE WOLF RETURNS"—

Michael Lanyard, Melvyn Douglas; Marcia Stewart, Gail Patrick; Liane Mallison, Tala Birell; Geoffrey Mallison, Henry Mollison; Marmaduke Crane, Thurston Hall; Jenkins, Raymond Walburn; Leonard Morphew, Douglas Dumbrielle; Aunt Julie Stewart, Nana Bryant; Chief of Detectives McGowan, Robert Middlemass; Detective-Sergeant Benson, Robert Emmet O'Connor.

"EXCLUSIVE STORY"—Dick Barton,

Franchot Tone; Ann Devlin, Madge Evans; Tim Higgins, Stuart Erwin; Ace Acello, Joseph Calleia; Werther, Robert Barrat; Michael Devlin, J. Farrell MacDonald; Tess, Louise Henry; O'Neil, Wade Boteler; Mrs. Higgins, Margaret Irving; James Witherspoon sen., Charles Trowbridge; James Witherspoon jun., William Henry; City Editor, Raymond Hatton; Comos, J. Carrol Naish.

"FLASH GORDON"

(Continued from page 24)

The guards with the whips ceased to belabour the slaves, and Vultan raised his voice once more.

"Who started this revolt?" he demanded.

"Gordon, the Earth man, sire!" came an answering chorus.

"I thought as much," the monarch of the sky-city growled. "Very well, take him out of there and bring him to the Static Room."

Flash was singled out by four or five of the Hawk Men and was dragged from the furnace-chamber, not knowing what was in store for him, and, as the young American disappeared from view, Vultan wheeled around, lifted Dale as if she had been a child and left the gallery by a small door at the end of it.

Aura followed him, and a minute or two later they were back in the audience chamber, where Vultan laid the unconscious Dale on a low divan. Then he turned to Ming's daughter.

"Look after her," he said. "But do not try to escape, for there is a sentry at the door. In a little while I'll return."

He made his way from the room, and, left alone with Dale, Aura attempted to revive her by striking her across the face with her open palm. Yet some time elapsed before the other girl recovered her senses and struggled up from the divan.

For a space she looked about her dazedly, and then, recalling the incidents that had taken place in the furnace-room, she clutched Aura by the arm.

"Where's Flash?" she panted. "What did they do to him? What did they do to him? I saw them striking at him and those other poor wretches with their whips, and then—and then—"

"And then you fainted!" Aura cut in viciously. "Listen, you little fool; if you took the trouble to show less concern for Flash you might be of some help to him. Can't you see that King Vultan is attracted by you, and resents your interest in another man?"

"What do you suppose I'm made of?" Dale retorted bitterly. "Stone? Do you think I could stand there and see them flogging someone who is dear to me—and not show any emotion? Oh, how can you understand? You're not in love with Flash."

Ming's daughter eyed her narrowly.

"No?" she said. "Let me tell you, Dale Arden, that no man has ever interested me as Flash Gordon interests me. I have not known him as long as you, but—perhaps I am in love with him as well."

Dale stared at her, and there was a long silence. Then Aura spoke again.

"That is why I am trying to make you realise that your attitude towards him may seal his doom," she declared. "He has been taken to what they call the Static Room. I don't know what fate awaits him there, but perhaps if you can convince Vultan that Flash Gordon means nothing to you, then Vultan may at least spare him."

She proceeded to make it doubly clear to Dale that her affection for Flash weighed heavily against him, and that in spite of the part he had played in the mutiny Vultan might let him live if he imagined the Earth girl was indifferent to his fate.

"Vultan does not wish to kill off prisoners if he can avoid doing so," she pointed out. "He needs them too much for his atom furnaces. True, the men who tend those furnaces do not live long, but if we can only play for time we may be able to help Flash to escape—"

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She stopped short as she heard the door open, and a moment later saw Vultan cross the threshold.

"Ah," he exclaimed, on observing that Dale had recovered, "so my fair-guest is herself again. Too bad that you cannot bear to see your lover undergo punishment."

"Your Majesty, you are mistaken," Aura interposed quickly. "The Arden girl has just been telling me that Flash Gordon is not her lover, and that she cares little for him. She says that she prefers the men of Mongo to the men of the Earth."

Vultan looked at Dale suspiciously.

"Is that true?" he asked. "Yes, your Majesty," Dale answered, bearing in mind Aura's advice.

"Then why did you faint on the gallery?" Vultan wanted to know.

Dale hesitated, racking her brain for a reply, and after a delay that was scarcely noticeable she invented an explanation.

"It was the heat of that furnace-chamber, your Majesty," she said. "It—it seemed overpowering."

Vultan fingered his fat chin for several seconds, and then, taking her by the wrist, he drew her to her feet.

"You are certain it was not on account of Gordon that you fainted?"

"Why should I faint because of him, your Majesty? Since we came to Mongo he has paid far more attention to Aura than to me."

To Dale that comment seemed like an inspiration, but Vultan still regarded her with some doubt.

"Come, you must prove your words," he said, and led her from the audience chamber, Aura bringing up the rear.

They passed through the doorway, and, crossing a wide corridor, entered a smaller room. It was the so-called Static Room, and as Vultan took her into it Dale saw a group of soldiers gathered there. Then she caught sight of Flash, strapped to an upright frame of metal that stood a few feet from a large switchboard.

He was struggling in his bonds, and as she set eyes on him Dale had to exercise all her self-control to prevent herself from running to his side.

She felt Aura move close to her and grip her surreptitiously by the hand. Fighting down the impulse to rush towards Flash, she turned to Vultan and somehow managed to speak in a calm voice.

"What are you going to do to him?"

"You will soon see, my pretty one," Vultan answered, with a leer, and at the same time he signed to his vassals.

In response to that gesture one of the soldiers stepped to the switchboard and gripped a lever. Then, slowly and deliberately, he began to draw it back.

A low, droning sound became audible. In the same instant a crackle of galvanic fire played over the frame to which Flash Gordon had been strapped, and a half-stifed gasp escaped the prisoner.

The man at the switchboard pulled the lever farther back, still in that same slow, deliberate manner. The drone of hidden dynamos rose to a higher key, and vivid sparks showered all about the body of the captive on the frame.

Dale saw Flash writhing in agony, saw the look of anguish on his distorted face and knew that he was being electrocuted by an ever-increasing charge of dynamic energy. For all her resolution a shriek burst from her lips, and, even as that scream rang through the room, Flash Gordon sagged lifelessly in his thongs.

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Picturés, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)

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LANDED"

AND

"GALLANT DEFENDER"

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In This Issue!*

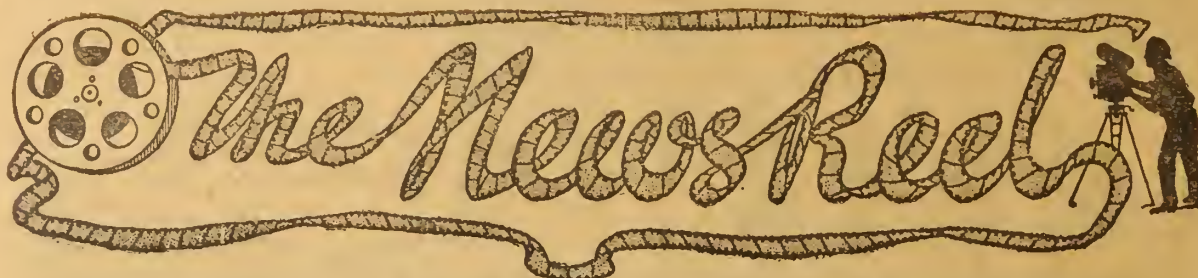
No. 865. EVERY TUESDAY July 11th, 1936.



"The MARINES HAVE LANDED"

A BANDIT DRAMA
OF THE
CHINA SEAS

STARRING
LEW AYRES



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Cowboy Kit

Ten-gallon sombreros, bright neckerchiefs, snug-fitting trousers and high-heeled boots—all part of a cowboy's regalia—are certainly picturesque in appearance, but according to Charles Starrett, the hero of "Gallant Defender," in this week's issue, few persons realise that each item is designed to serve a practical purpose in the range-rider's performance of his duties.

Next to his horse, says Starrett, a cowboy's best friend is his hat. He uses it to feed and water his horse, to carry water any distance, to shade himself under a sweltering sun, and, when he pulls it down over his eyes, to protect his head while riding through the brush.

The brightly coloured neckerchief, knotted tightly around the neck, keeps dust and grime from sliding down inside the cowboy's shirt, and, when riding behind cattle, he will tie it round his mouth and nose to keep the dust kicked up by flying hoofs from his air passages.

Cowboy boots are high-heeled in order to enable a rider to keep hold of the stirrups while riding at breakneck speed down steep canyons.

Chaps not only protect a cowboy's clothes while riding through briars and brush, but also serve as leg protectors during cold or rainy weather.

Mowbray Meets Many Deaths

The cat with nine lives has nothing on Alan Mowbray.

The versatile free-lance actor, who flits from scoundrels to heroes and back again with the greatest of ease in his screen portrayals, is alive and happy and busier than ever in real life, but, cinematically speaking, he's Hollywood's most killed-off personality.

Among other untimely ends, he has been guillotined, hanged, crushed to death, machine-gunned, electrocuted, turned to stone and stabbed, without mentioning any number of natural demises. He can't recall any fatal poisonings on the screen, although it happened to him in his stage career.

Currently Mowbray, who, of course, is an Englishman, is leaping to his doom from a court-room window, after being exposed by George Brent as an unscrupulous San Francisco lawyer, in Walter Wanger's Paramount production, "The Case Against Mrs. Ames."

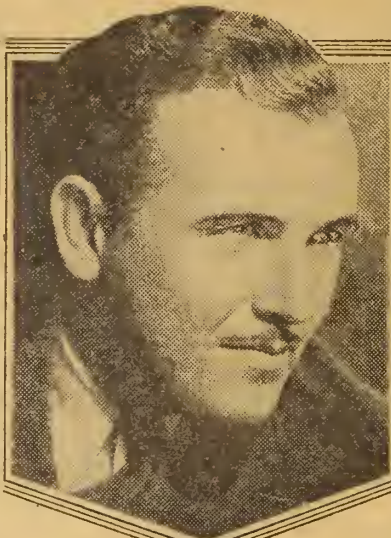
He stepped right into this rôle from another Wanger production, "Fatal Lady," in which he plays a wealthy Brazilian roué and gets a knife through his heart for falling too violently in love with Mary Ellis.

In "Embarrassing Moments" Mowbray's villainy earned him the electric chair.

The script writers made sure that he well merited the hanging that was his lot in "Charlie Chan in London." He was filled with machine-gun lead in "Man about Town," while a plain pistolling was good enough for him in "Guilty Hands."

July 11th, 1936.

NEXT WEEK'S SMASHING FILM DRAMAS!



PRESTON FOSTER

—IN—

"HOUSE OF FATE"

A dog is found shot, a man's life is threatened, a man on the point of disclosing a secret is murdered, and a girl is kidnapped. A free-lance detective succeeds where the police fail. A baffling and thrilling mystery drama.

"LUCKY FUGITIVES"

Because of his remarkable resemblance to a gangster wanted by the authorities, Jack Wyckoff, a successful young author, is pursued by a blundering detective—and experiences a series of exciting adventures in the company of a self-willed girl. A first-rate comedy thriller, starring David Manners.

Also

Another grand episode of the dramatic serial:

"FLASH GORDON"

Starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.

Mowbray was beheaded in "Voltaire," he turned to stone in "Night Life of the Gods," and they let him die a lingering death from fever in "Becky Sharp."

In private life Mowbray is one of the most popular members of the film colony. He's a novelist and playwright as well as an actor, a crack polo player, an amateur photographer of note, and a flyer. He served in the air during the War, and has just completed the writing of a war trilogy.

Oliver Hardy Continues to Gain Weight
Oliver Hardy, Stan Laurel's robust and jolly partner, is gaining weight! And when you consider that he has

always raised the beam around 250 pounds, that his father weighed 251, his mother 220, his four brothers and sisters and four uncles and aunts all were 200 pounds or better, it is something when Oliver starts to balance scales upwards.

During the filming of the latest Hal Roach-Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer feature comedy, "Our Relations," Hardy was induced to measure the pounds on his six-foot-one frame, and the marker went to 285—the most Oliver has ever reached, and also making him the heavy-weight of a heavy-weight family.

The reason for the increase in weight is difficult to fathom. It is a matter of fact that for a big man Hardy is a light eater. He eats much less than his co-star, Stan Laurel, who goes along his merry way at the table and otherwise and averages in the neighbourhood of 150 pounds.

Hardy exercises regularly. He's an enthusiastic golfer, and whenever he is not working in a picture at the Roach studios, he is out on the golf course, walking miles. Perhaps it's laughter that does it, because Oliver is a jolly soul and is continually laughing.

Think what a calamity it would be if he fell off to a feather-weight! Such things have happened.

"Red" Commerce

Henry King found an ideal spot for the background of one of the scenes in "Ramona," the Twentieth Century-Fox Technicolour production now being filmed in the highlands of the San Jacinto Mountains.

An Indian resident accepted £20 as a day's rental of the property.

In mid-afternoon, on the last scene of Loretta Young and Don Ameche, who have the leading rôles in the early California romance, another Indian rode up in front of the cameras.

"Pay!" he commanded.

"We paid an Indian £20 this morning," explained Director Henry King.

The brave was completely uninterested. "Wrong Indian," he said. "Pay me."

He was paid.

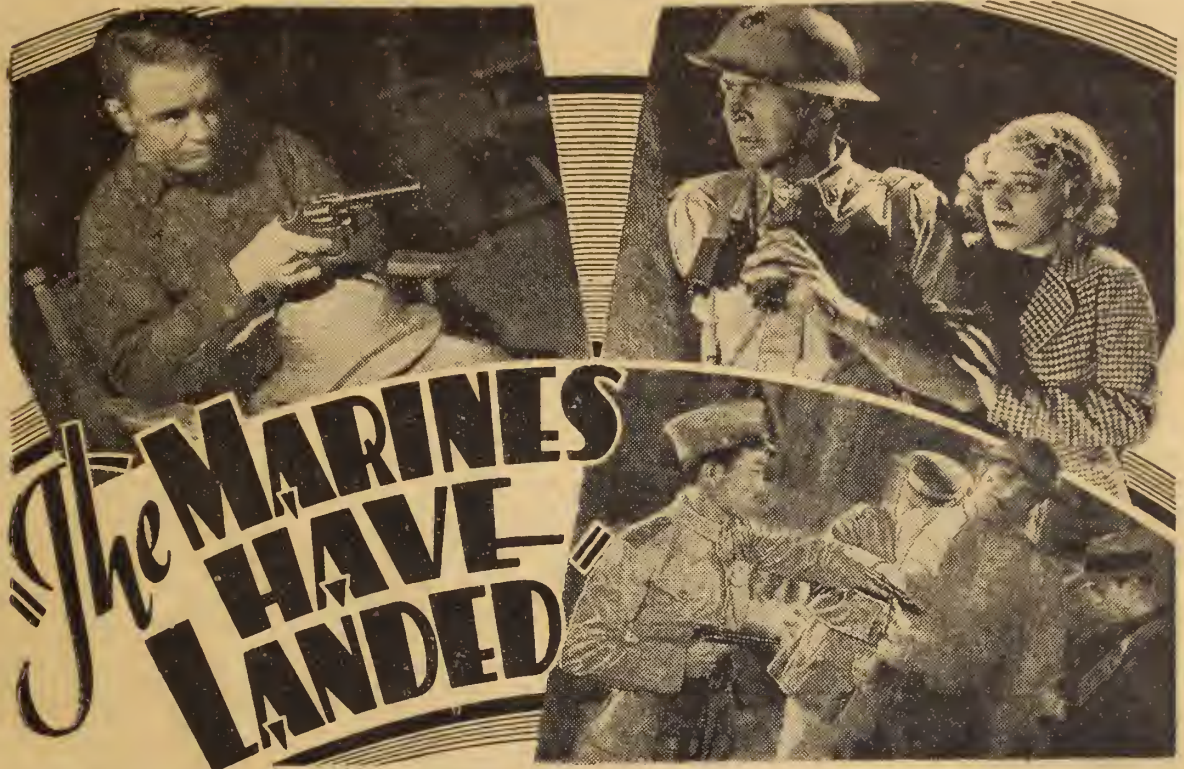
Unseen Heroes

Phillip Reed, who plays the rôle of Uncas in the screen version of the Fenimore Cooper classic, "The Last of the Mohicans," is very proud of his baritone voice. His part of an Indian brave gave him plenty of opportunity to use it in emitting the customary blood-curling war-whoops.

But his singing master, fearful, no doubt, of having a broken Reed on his hands, thought that an excess of whooping would wreak havoc with his pupil's delicate membranes.

The producers were in a quandary until a certain Mr. Harvey Shepherd gallantly offered to lay down his own vocal chords in the cause of realism and act as voice "double" for the more raucous cries.

He was discharged from the Marines with ignominy and joined a renegade white man in smuggling guns and ammunition to a Chinese bandit, but when his former pals are in danger he goes to their rescue through a hail of bullets. A fighting drama, starring Lew Ayres



Their Last Chance'

"PARTY, halt! Right turn! Cadets MacDonald, Waters and Davis, all present and correct, sir!" Sergeant Regan saluted and clicked his heels.

Captain Halstead of the United States Battle-Cruiser Washington looked at the three prisoners. On the right stood a tall, handsome young Scotsman, in the centre a fat, very nervous youth, and on the left a slight, wiry and defiant person with a black eye—Cadets MacDonald, Waters and Davis.

"So this time you spent the night in a Cuban gaol," remarked the captain. "May one ask how you got there?"

MacDonald just stared straight to his front, but Waters gave an apprehensive glance at the youth on his left. The captain did not miss very much.

"I have an idea, Davis, that you can tell me best what happened. I might add that but for the kindness of Sergeant Regan, who went out looking for you, you might have spent some time in that gaol." The captain gave a sarcastic grin. "And Cuban gaols are not over clean. Tell me, Davis, in your own words what happened."

Woody Davis took a pace forward and gave a slight cough.

"Well, sir, it was like this. Leave was given to go ashore, and, having been warned that there were a peculiar crowd down in the native quarter we kept to what we thought were the civilised parts." He paused because he did not want to make any mistakes with this story. "We got tired of sight-seeing, and Tubby—I mean Waters—suggested we should have a bite of food. We found a nice quiet saloon restaurant—"

"The name?"

"Some foreign name, sir, I think—"

"It was the Mexicana," snapped the

captain. "You left a pretty good trail. One of the most notorious places in the town. Continue."

"Well, it seemed quiet enough, sir, when we entered," Woody murmured with his eyes on the ceiling. "We had a drink and something to eat and were thinking of leaving when a Spaniard came in and sat down at a table near us. He hadn't been there a second or so when a girl, probably a Mexican, came over and spoke to him. As far as we could gather, sir, it was his wife. They had a violent quarrel and he slapped her face. Well, sir, a Marine could not stand for that sort of thing, and—"

"As a result," interrupted his superior officer, "you leapt on the Spaniard, who probably drew a knife and then the fun commenced. Several other Spaniards joined in, and so your two friends decided to take a hand. In about five seconds that saloon was one mass of struggling forms. Eventually you were hurled out into the street, collected by irate police, and marched off to prison. The amount of damage that the proprietor says you have done would build a palace." He held up a piece of paper. "The sergeant and I have gone into this bill and reduced it to a reasonable charge, and it means that it will take at least three weeks' pay for you three to settle."

"Thank you, sir."

"I haven't finished, Davis." The captain's voice became stern. "As Marines I have nothing to say against you boys whilst on board this ship or when on duty, but give you leave ashore and you seem to forget the uniform you wear and act like hooligans. If this were the first time you had appeared before me I might have been inclined to take a lenient attitude, but it happens with a regular monotony every time we

touch port. I have been far too lenient because I have imagined that each time would be the last time. All three have passed exams and tests, and yet once you get ashore your wits seem to desert you. You, Davis, are quick-tempered, and you act without thinking. You never heed the consequences, and as a result you get into a fix, out of which your companions strive to get you. I'm not saying that all the blame is yours, Davis, because I think they're almost as hasty themselves."

"Oh, no, sir!" cried Davis. "I was to blame, sir. I never thought that Mac and Tubby—I mean Waters—would join in."

"You never do think!" the captain frowned angrily. "At any rate, I've decided this sort of thing shall stop. It gives the U.S. Navy a darned bad name. You, MacDonald, have applied for a commission. Except for these foolish black marks you have every chance, but I tell you this: One more black mark and your papers will be torn up and you will never get a commission. You, Waters, wish some day to obtain a commission. Take my advice and stay out of trouble if you want promotion. I suggest that you stay away from your two friends and away from trouble, Davis. One more row like this and it won't be a question of promotion. You will be fired out of the navy, Davis. You will be stopped three weeks' pay, and all shore leave cancelled for three months. Sergeant, see that they serve an extra fatigue for a month."

"Very good, sir!" The sergeant clicked his heels. "Escort and party, right turn, quick march!"

The prisoners were marched out of their commander's room and dismissed.

"I'm staying away from you," MacDonald spoke significantly. "Just the same as if you were poisoned ivy."

"I'm sorry, pals," Woody Davis grinned. "But I swear on my word of honour to stay out of all fights and scraps in the future."

"You said that before," Waters said dubiously.

"This time it is a solemn oath," Davis answered. "No matter what happens I won't get involved in any brawl or scrape; in fact, I shan't even take the risk of going ashore."

MacDonald was not impressed. "I bet you'll think different when the three months are up."

The Russian Gunman

NOT many days after the expiration of their three months' stoppage of leave the Battle-Cruiser Washington steamed into Shanghai. It was a glorious day, and Shanghai is a great place to go ashore. Needless to say, Woody Davis had amended his vow not to go ashore, but had promised to stay out of trouble.

The battleship berthed, and leave was not granted to anybody. The reason for this was explained two days later when the captain explained that Marines from the battleship were to be sent to the International Settlement in relief of an American contingent stationed there. It was expected that these land duties would last about a fortnight, and during that time the men would be granted leave to go into the town.

The three friends were in the party detailed for land duty, and after fixing up their quarters in the large barracks an orderly announced that those desirous of leave should apply to the officer in charge. Woody Davis announced that he intended to take a stroll down town, and Waters, after a moment's hesitation, decided to go with him; but MacDonald shook his head decidedly.

"This lad is staying right here," he announced. "I'm not going to endanger my chances of a commission."

"But Shanghai's a swell dump," urged Woody.

"Yeah, but I'm not taking chances," grinned MacDonald. "I've been lured astray before, and I haven't forgotten what was said the last time I was on the mat. My papers have passed through a good many hands since that incident, and the authorities appear to have overlooked that last escapade in a Cuban gaol, but I'm mighty sure it'll be remembered quick enough if I get into further trouble. Don't think, old lad, that I expect you to get into a jam because you made a solemn promise, but I'm not taking any chances. When I've got that commission it'll be a different matter." He turned to Waters. "Tubby, I'm glad you're going with Woody, but for the love of Mike steer him clear of all trouble."

"We're taking a stroll and no more," vowed the fat lad.

"Nothing's going to happen," promised Woody, with a laugh. "I don't care if I see a hundred damsels in distress, people having fights, wars, battles or anything, I am not going to interfere. Come on, Tubby, let's get going."

The two young Marines sallied forth, and for a while they kept to the main thoroughfares, until Woody remarked that there would be no harm in going to some nice quiet saloon for a drink. They looked at several, and as they looked dull went on their way, and then came to a place with a band. They entered the Bar Russe, and sat down at a table.

A fat Italian was behind the long bar, and he was kept pretty busy attending to the needs of his customers, who lounged against the rail. Most of the tables were full, and Woody stared

curiously at the people of many nations. After a while he gave Tubby Waters a nudge in the ribs, and that cadet looked up startled. Woody gave a discreet nod of the head in a certain direction.

A fair-haired, not bad-looking girl sat alone at a table, and she was staring moodily before her, the iced drink untouched. Her coat and skirt were of a loud check, but in spite of her clothes there was something appealing in that whimsical little face. She seemed very bored with life, and they saw her yawn—a yawn stifled when she saw the interested gaze of the two young Marines.

Tubby grinned across at the girl, and she gave a faint suspicion of a smile in response.

"Looks English or American to me," whispered Tubby. "Did you see her smile?"

"Sure. Why don't you go and speak to her?"

"Just to show you you ain't the only lady-killer in the world I will!" cried Tubby, and got to his feet.

Woody grinned as he saw his fat friend amble across the room and, after saying a few words, sit down beside the girl. Woody had expected to see his friend receive a rebuff, and he was quite annoyed. He toyed with his drink and a few minutes later turned his head. Tubby and the girl were laughing, and that was more than he could stand, so he got up and strolled across.

"This is my buddy, Woody Davis," introduced Tubby. "We joined up together."

"Howdy?" answered Woody, and pulled up a chair. "What do you say to a drink?"

"Suits me," the girl answered. "Bout all there is to do in this hole."

"I reckon Shanghai is a swell dump," Woody was surprised. "What's the matter with it?"

The girl stifled a yawn. "Sorry, Woody," she said in her easy way. "But if you had been in Shanghai as long as I have you'd be bored."

"You're from our old country," stated the young Marine. "Why don't you go back if you don't like it here?" "Yes, why don't you?" chimed in Tubby.

"I was in the chorus on Broadway." She shook her head sadly. "Ah, those were the days! I came out here with an act, and the act was broken up when the chief dancer quit. I swore I wouldn't go back without making good, so here I am, sailors, doing a song-and-dance act whenever I get the chance at the various restaurants. Some days I have money and others I haven't. At the moment I am what the profession call 'resting.'"

"That's tough," Woody muttered. "What's your name?"

"Brooklyn, and if you offer to lend me money I'll throw this drink in your face!" Her eyes flashed.

"As we got docked three weeks' pay for a bit of fun way back in Cuba that ain't likely," Woody said, with a disarming smile. "Though you're welcome enough to the few cents Tubby and I possess."

"Sorry I got so hot up." Brooklyn was apologetic. "But this place gets me that way at times—all nerves. If you want to do a girl a good turn just talk about Broadway, Fifth Avenue and all the rest."

So the two Marines bought the girl a drink and told her about New York and anything they could think would interest. She listened avidly, and confessed that she was trying to save so that one day she could get back.

"I'd rather starve there than in this pesky hole." She twisted her face into a grimace of disgust. "It's done me

good talking to you boys. Staying in Shanghai long?"

"We're at the International Settlement. Here to-day and gone to-morrow," Tubby told her. "Maybe we'll be here for a fortnight."

"Will you show us round?" suggested Woody. "You'll know all the places worth seeing, and we could eat some place. How—"

He broke off with a muttered curse because someone had given him a vicious kick in the shins. He turned angrily, and saw the most unpleasant face leering down at him. A sallow, leering face, with the lips twisted in a snarl—a foreigner of some sort.

"Why don't you keep your great feet out of the light, sailor?" the man spoke with a queer accent.

"Why the dickens don't you look where you're going?" Woody jumped up.

"Go and fry yourself, baby face!" derided the man.

"Woody!" Tubby tugged at his coat. The anger died in Woody Davis as he remembered his vow not to get involved in a brawl, and reluctantly he sat down. The foreigner grinned in his unpleasant way and strolled over to the bar, where he lounged grinning all the while at Woody.

"I'd like to sock that guy just once!" Woody turned to his pal.

"He looks evil to me." The girl's face was rather white. "Some queer characters come into these places. They carry knives and guns. Finish your drink and let's get out of here."

"Okay!" Woody drained his drink. "Yellow!" came the sneering voice of the foreigner. "Just like all you dirty Yanks!"

Woody went very red and his fists clenched; even Tubby Waters glowered at this insult.

"Come on—pay no attention," urged the girl.

"All Marines are spineless," came that mocking drawl. "See 'em shaking like a jellyfish!"

Woody threw off the detaining hand of the girl, and walked towards the bar. The old Italian proprietor watched the little scene nervously. The sallow man continued to grin.

"I dislike your remarks just about as much as I do your face," Woody said slowly. "If you think I'm scared of you, then you're mistaken."

"All froth!" snarled the man. "You're nothing but a kid playing at being a Marine. Like all the rest of your kidney you're yellow. A United States Marine—pah! You wouldn't stand up to a half-starved coolie. And that goes for all you pretty boys. You and your rotten navy make me laugh."

"Better mind your tongue, stranger."

Whereupon the man spat straight in Woody's face. There was one answer only to such an insult, and without thinking of the consequences Woody's fist crashed into the evil face. The man fell back half over the bar, and several glasses crashed to the floor. Suddenly the man, snarling all sorts of unintelligible oaths, hurled himself at the young Marine; but Woody had been taught to box, and he landed another stiff punch to the unshaven jaw. A foot lashed out and caught Woody on the shin, and the pain made him see red. He flashed a vicious uppercut and grinned as the man grunted. A hand slid down, and Woody guessed a knife was coming into play, and he jumped forward, gripped the man by the coat-collar and brought round his right with a blow that landed full to the mouth.

Then Woody stood back and wiped his hands.

Everyone in the Bar Russe stared

and seemed spellbound. The foreigner slid from the counter to the floor and sat there sprawled with his head sagging grotesquely.

"That's that!" said Woody with a triumphant grin. "That'll teach him not to insult our navy. Let's go!"

The girl glanced at the sprawled figure.

"Look out!" she shouted.

"You skunk!" Tubby yelled as he saw the gun. The fat Marine hurled himself forward, and then the gun roared. Tubby spun round and sank in a heap on the floor.

Woody stared in horror, and with fury blazing in his eyes he leapt forward, but the gunman did not want to feel again the punch of the Marine's hard fists. He jumped to his feet and his gun roared, but Woody had ducked. The next bullet smashed a lamp, and in the confusion the man darted towards an exit. After him rushed Woody, but the gunman dived headlong through the swing doors.

The Marine lost the gunman in the darkness and after running a few yards came to a halt. Was Tubby badly hurt? He darted back to the saloon.

Woody pulled up with a jerk. A silent group were looking down at something on the floor. Very slowly Woody stepped forward and looked down at Tubby Waters. The Marine's head was pillowed in Brooklyn's lap and his eyes were closed. A flicker and the eyes were open and staring up at Woody.

"Not your fault, old pal," came the faint whisper. "I always wanted to die this way. Say good-bye to Mac. We've had great times together, and maybe one day—" Tubby's face twisted with pain and then his head went limp.

Then Woody Davis realised that his pal Tubby Waters was dead.

Dismissed the Service

IT was two days later that the Marines paraded in the courtyard of the International Settlement to hear the verdict and sentence on Marine Woody Davis.

With two armed Marines as an escort, the prisoner was brought on to the parade ground. Captain Halstead read out the finding of the Courts Martial. He was guilty of causing a disturbance that was responsible for the death of Tubby Waters, and it was the opinion of the court that his services were no longer required by the United States Navy. As from that day he ceased to be a Marine.

Woody raised his head and stared fearlessly at all those boys who had been his friends. Then Sergeant Regan rapped out an order to the escort, and Woody realised that it would be the last command he would obey. Sergeant Regan followed him into the barracks, ordered him to pack his kit and leave directly he was finished.

Only one person came to wish him good-bye and good luck—it was MacDonald.

"Don't take it too hard, Woody." He laid a hand on his friend's shoulder. "It was your past record that counted against you. Maybe in some of those other scrapes we were foolish, but in this last business you weren't to blame. But as the authorities kicked up such a fuss the captain had little alternative. Tubby wouldn't have had you act otherwise—he didn't blame you. What are you going to do, Woody? Going back to the States?"

"I'm not going back to the States till I've found the man that murdered Tubby," fiercely came the answer. "I'll never rest until I find that skunk."

It was decided that the body of Tubby Waters should be buried at sea, and when a solemn party carried the draped coffin from a gun carriage to

the ship Woody Davis was in the small crowd that was present. His eyes were cold and hard. There was a touch on his arm, and there by his side was Brooklyn.

Davis rented a room in a cheap doss-house and spent the days prowling the city in search of the sallow-faced gunman. Except that the man he sought was Russian he could find out little. The Italian proprietor of the Bar Russe had seen the man drinking there once before, but he knew nothing that could help the ex-Marine.

It was Brooklyn, coming from a restaurant after an audition, who was chosen by fate to meet the Russian. She chose to cross the road and had to jump back as a large lorry came thundering round a bend. She got a glimpse of a sallow evil face at the wheel and her heart stood still. It was the Russian.

Brooklyn did not go direct to Woody's diggings, but went to the Bar Russe. She sat so long at a table staring vacantly before her that the kindly proprietor asked her what was wrong.

"I have seen the man that killed the Marine," she answered in tragic accents. "What shall I do?"

The Italian nodded his head understandingly.

"If you tell the boy that got dismissed the Service he see red and go after this man. Very bad Russian, he get all he deserve. You go tell your friend."

Brooklyn went to the doss-house and told Woody Davis that the man he sought was a Russian lorry driver in the employ of the International Portage Transport Company. Woody grabbed up his hat and was out of the room and down the stairs almost before Brooklyn had finished speaking, then the girl broke down and sobbed, for she thought she had sent him to his death.



With two armed Marines as an escort, the prisoner was brought on to the parade ground and Captain Halstead read out the finding of the Courts Martial.

Revenge

IT did not take Woody long to find out the situation of the warehouses of the International Portage Transport. The place seemed to be deserted and the gates were padlocked. Spikes were on the walls, but they presented little difficulty in this grim-faced youngster. He noted a light in one of the offices, and from his pocket drew out a gun, which he broke open to satisfy himself that it was loaded.

Stealthily Woody made his way among packing-cases and bales of merchandise. He saw a number of huge lorries with the name of the company in large letters on the sides. This was the place, but was it likely his enemy would be here? If there were no sign of the Russian he must hide in the warehouse until he showed up.

Woody did not consider the results of the showdown. He was out to kill the man who had brutally shot his friend, and the consequences were of little account as long as Tubby was revenged.

He darted behind a packing-case as a figure came out of the lighted office and strode across to one of the lorries. Difficult to see in the dim light, but Woody felt a queer tingling in his spine. Was this the man he sought? Very cautiously he went forward until he reached the engine of the lorry. He could hear the person working at the end of the lorry and guessed the contents were being unloaded. Very slowly he edged along the side until he could peer round the end of the lorry.

A figure was carrying a huge sack, which was dumped in a corner, and then Woody saw the face. With his eyes blazing and his lips parted in a grin he stepped from hiding. The Russian looked up at the sound and his lips parted in a snarl.

The Russian did not ask why the ex-Marine was here, and in a flash he had whipped out a knife, but Woody was expecting trouble. He was across the intervening space like a flash and his fist crashed into that evil face. His strong hands gripped a wrist and the knife tumbled to the ground.

He backed away, and shouting hoarsely the Russian rushed in with arms whirling, but Woody side-stepped and crashed home two mighty blows to the other's face.

The Russian was hurled back as if hit by a battering-ram. He spun round and sank to the ground.

Very slowly he got to his knees.

"I kill you, like I kill your fat friend!" he rasped.

The Russian drew out a gun, but a second quicker appeared the gun of Woody Davis. Two guns roared, but one was a split second quicker. The killer of Tubby Waters spun round, coughed hoarsely, and clutching at his side crashed to the ground. Woody had revenged the death of his friend.

As he knelt beside that still form he did not hear movements in the lighted office or see the shadow of a figure on the glass. As the ex-Marine got slowly to his feet the door of the office quietly opened and a tall man armed with a gun was framed in the opening. Moving stealthily he came up behind Woody and saw the sprawled figure of Drenov, his Russian lorry driver.

"Drop that gun!" he drawled.

Woody turned, saw the tall, alert man who covered him, and with a shrug of his shoulders tossed the gun at the other's feet. Neatly the man frisked Woody for a gun before standing over the body of the Russian driver. Satisfied the man was dead he motioned Woody to move towards the office.

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Having no alternative the youngster obeyed. The tall man closed the outer door and pointed to a door, on which was marked the name of "L. Corrigan, Managing Director." Woody entered and found another man, an Oriental who looked a mixture of Jap and American. The latter covered Woody with a gun.

But the youngster was past caring. He had done what he set out to do, so what did anything matter? Seeing an open box of cigarettes, he helped himself to one, and picking up a box of matches calmly lit up. The two men watched him narrowly.

"You killed my driver Drenov. Why?"

Woody Davis blew out a cloud of smoke.

"I did kill him, but it was a show-down. If I hadn't been a split second quicker he would have had me. He'd tried a knife, and when that failed he drew a gun, so I had to let him have the heat. My name is Woody Davis, late of the Marines, and your man Drenov was the skunk that shot my pal Tubby Waters."

"I thought your face was kinda familiar," Corrigan drawled and pocketed his gun. "Hansen, you stand by the door and keep this guy covered."

He pointed out a chair to Woody Davis.

"Take a seat. I'm gonna talk to you. Maybe I can do something for you. If you help me then I might not have to tell the police about Drenov."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Are you game to risk your life?" "Sure," answered Woody. "I'll do anything bar murder. I had planned to hire out to the Chinese as a machine-gunner."

"Then you're just the man I need," Corrigan nodded his satisfaction. "We hired Drenov because he was supposed to be the toughest fellow in Shanghai. He was scared of nothing. Well, you seem to have walked in and made rather a mess of him. Drenov was doing very useful work for me as a driver and messenger. Will you take his place? The money's good."

"I presume he didn't only have to drive and run messages?"

"Davis, I can afford to be frank with you," Corrigan muttered. "This company ain't really portage. That's just a bluff to hoodwink the authorities, but of late they've been getting mighty suspicious. I had to have a man like Drenov to get any of my stuff through."

"What is it—dope?" questioned Woody.

"Gun-running," Corrigan answered. "And why not? China has a little war going on against the Royalists under General Cheng. Cheng is having a bad time getting guns, so the International Portage supplies him machine-guns, rifles and ammunition. I want someone to carry on the good work of getting the stuff through. Two hundred dollars a consignment."

"Make it three and you can count me in," grinned Woody.

The Chinese Funeral

WOODY DAVIS slept that night in the warehouse of the International Portage and in the morning he started work. He found that Corrigan had under-estimated the attention of the authorities. They were combing Shanghai to find out who was supplying Cheng with guns and ammunition.

Woody went out into the city to try out the lorry, and he was twice stopped and searched. He reported this to Corrigan when he got back. The tall man rubbed his chin.

"The warehouse is packed full of stuff," he muttered. "It is only a matter of hours or days before they search this place. We've got to get the guns away or else dump 'em in the river."

"Which means I lose a good job and you lose a lot of money," said Woody. "I'm going out into the city to have a walk round, and I might have an idea by the time I get back."

"What can you do?" Corrigan cried.

"There isn't a chance!" "Well, I've got the germ of an idea here." Woody tapped his forehead and grinned. "See you later, buddy."

He was back in two hours. Corrigan was giving orders to Hansen to have all the guns and ammunition dumped.

"They're searching warehouses—they're closing in on us!" Corrigan shouted in angry tones. "It means a terrible loss, but that's better than going to prison for about ten years."

"You're not going to prison and you're not losing your dough. Listen." Woody drew him out of hearing. "I've found a way to get through. By night-fall we can get on board the junk. Here's my plan."

Briefly Woody outlined his scheme, and Corrigan gasped at the daring simplicity of the scheme.

"Davis, you're a genius!" he cried. "I'll get down to the warehouse at the docks and give orders that we'll be loading this evening."

"What's the move after leaving Shanghai?"

"Simple," Corrigan grinned. "We have a warehouse at Yun Kiang. I send a messenger to Cheng, whose headquarters are forty or fifty miles away over the hills, and the Royalist leader makes a raid on our store. We put up a fake defence, but Cheng gets away with the stuff, and we collect a big dividend."

Early the next morning Woody Davis set out on foot for the docks, and he was amused at the attention displayed by the police and soldiers of all nations in every vehicle and lorry—the world was seeking the gun-runners. "But Woody did not grin quite so much when he saw a number of Marines marching through the streets. They were halted and then dispatched in two's and three's about various duties. It was a shock for Woody when he saw who was in charge. It was MacDonald. He would have gone down a side turning, but the big Marine had seen him and came racing across the road.

"Woody, I'm glad to see you," MacDonald cried. "I was worrying over what had happened to you."

"I see you've got your commission—congratulations!"

"Come through the day after you left us," MacDonald grinned nervously. "You look as if you're fixed up with a job."

"I'm working for a trading company," Woody said casually.

"Did you find that guy that—"

"I did!" interrupted Woody, with a hard smile. "That account's squared."

He pointed to a number of Marines holding up a lorry. "That looks like Tex Bond—what's he doing?"

"Tex is my corporal—great fellow,"

MacDonald explained. "We are searching all lorries and civilian cars for guns and ammunition. Someone has sent guns from Shanghai to the rebels and it is expected that this someone is trying to get another load through. We're going to stop this war by seeing it don't get through."

"Better start searching me," Woody said with an impudent grin. "I might be a gun-runner for all you know."

"I can see you helping a lot of blood-thirsty rebels," MacDonald answered with a shake of his head. He pointed. "Tex seems to be having a spot of trouble, so I must be going. When shall I be seeing you, Woody?"

"Who knows?" Woody shrugged his shoulders. "Your path and mine, buddy, seem to lie a good way apart. I'm off to some outlandish depôt of my company, but if I get back before you boys leave I'll look you up. Best of luck, Mac, as an officer."

"It's your turn for a break, Woody," MacDonald spoke with terse conviction. "Don't forget I'm still your buddy."

Woody Davis watched the tall athletic figure stride across the street and sighed a little sorrowfully. All the good old days were over, and the future was far from rosy.

A funeral procession came slowly into the large square, and Woody saw Tex make an effort to hold it up. Woody grinned in a curious way as MacDonald pushed Tex aside and waved the funeral on—he made his men stand stiffly to attention. Twelve big Chinamen bore the coffin, which must have been someone of importance because there was a gorgeous silk covering. With slow, solemn step the mourners bore their burden to its last resting place. It passed through the square on its way to the docks.

Woody waited till the funeral was out of sight, and then he, too, set out for the docks. The coffin was carried into the warehouse of the International Portage Transport Company, where doors were closed and people took up points to see that there were no watchful eyes. Off came the silk covering and the lid of the coffin. Inside was not the body of a mandarin, but machine-gun parts and boxes of ammunition. The funeral had been Woody's way of getting past the authorities.

They placed the parts of the machine-guns in sacks and filled them with rice, corn and flour. So well was it done that when complete the sacks looked quite innocent. The ammunition was hidden in a similar sort of way, and when the job was complete coolies carried the sacks aboard a large junk.

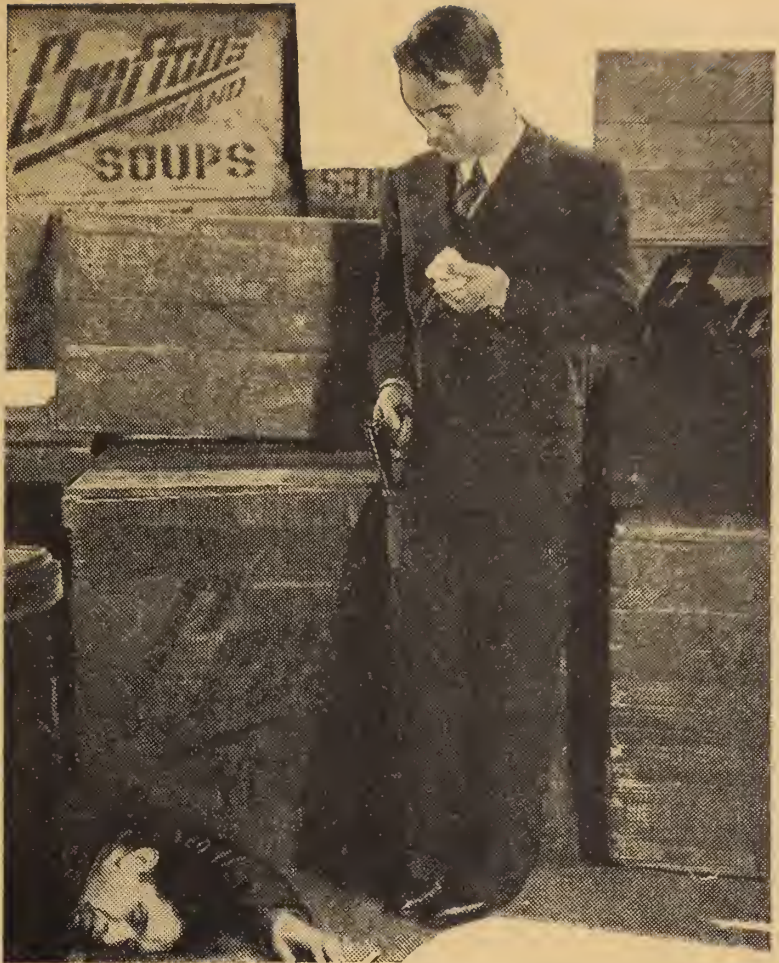
When Corrigan had settled all his business the junk sailed away from Shanghai. The clumsy sailing vessel passed quite close to the United States Battle-Cruiser Washington, and Woody stared at her with tragic eyes. What wouldn't he give to be back on her decks again? What was the use of wishing for the impossible? With a bitter smile he resumed his task of putting together one of the machine-guns—a precaution against being attacked by pirates.

Shanghai became a speck on the horizon and it seemed to Woody, as he sat huddled up in the stern, that he heard the sound of a distant bugle—a mocking reminder of the times that he had given up for ever. He squared his shoulders—one part of his life had ended, now to face a new life. He felt there was little hope for the future.

Brooklyn Hears Startling News

WOODY DAVIS did not see Brooklyn before he sailed, but he had not forgotten the girl. But for the girl he would never have squared the account with Drenov. From the bazaar he sent her several yards of expensive silk and a note that he would look her up when he got back to Shanghai. In the letter he stated that he had a job with a transport company and that his destination was the depôt at Yun Kiang.

Brooklyn missed him and realised



The killer of Tubby Waters crashed to the ground. . . . Woody had revenged the death of his friend.

that if she wasn't careful she would find herself falling in love. Woody Davis had flashed into her life, and maybe she would never see him again. Something made her go the morning after the junk had sailed into the Bar Russe.

The place was empty and so the Italian proprietor was delighted to have someone with whom he could talk.

"You are the young lady I wish to see." He came and sat beside her. "I not tell the policemen anything."

Brooklyn gave him a searching glance. "What does that mean?"

"You know you come here in much distress." The Italian spread wide his fat hands. "You tell me that you see the man that kills that poor boy, and you not know if you should tell his buddy what gets thrown out of the navy for making disturbance."

"Yes—yes." Brooklyn felt something dreadful was going to be told her.

"You tell him, but I no tell the police."

"Yes, I told him," Brooklyn said slowly. "But what do you mean about not telling the police?"

He stabbed a finger at her.

"You not know. That Russian guy what kill Waters—they find him. In the river—quite dead—shot." He saw her look of horror. "Drenov was his name. I have to go identify body. I know him at once." He touched his forehead. "Long scar here. Police take very big interest."

"Why?"

"Drenov very bad mans," answered the proprietor. "Crook, gunman, thief—everythings. Police know how Waters die and how Davis get turned out of Service. They say Davis kill this man for revenge and so they look for Davis. No business of mine, because I like that boy. You tell him go long way away and quick."

"He has gone—sailed last night."

"Good." The proprietor beamed. "When I go to view the body many questions they ask me. Why they take all these interests in dis dirty Russian gunman? I hear plenty whispers. They find out something about this Drenov." He winked. "Gun-runner."

"Gun-runner!" Brooklyn gasped.

"They think so, and they want to find out who he work for and everythings. I just identify man and no more. I do not say I think I know how Drenov die, or what you tell me."

"Thank you, signor." Brooklyn finished her drink. "I am more than grateful for what you have told me and what you have done. I do not know how this Drenov died, but I did tell Woody Davis, and if I get the chance I'll warn Davis. Good-day, signor."

Brooklyn's brain was racing as she tried to piece together the details. Davis had found Drenov and there had been a show-down in which the Russian was killed. Davis, in his note to her, had said he had got a job with a transport company and mentioned his destination, Yun Kiang, and Brooklyn knew that the International had a

depôt there. Davis had got Drenov's job. And the authorities had been looking for Drenov because they thought he was a gun-runner. Woody Davis was in one of those desperate moods when he would do any sort of foolish act, especially if there were danger and adventure attached to it.

Woody had gone off in a hurry and had not come to say good-bye. What would happen if the authorities found out that she had told Davis where Drenov was working? They would go to the International Portage firm and they would find out that—what would they discover? The company did not appear to have made a stir over the loss of Drenov. She became more and more certain that Davis had got a job with the International Portage as a gun-runner. Everything seemed to point to that fact. Why, Yun Kiang was but fifty-odd miles from the storm zone.

Brooklyn decided that she would go over land to Yun Kiang and warn the ex-Marine of his danger.

An SOS for Protection

THE journey to Yun Kiang was long and uneventful. It was somewhat of a shock to find that the troops under Cheng were rebels and deserters. But Woody consoled himself with the fact that Chinese were fighting Chinese, so it wasn't his fault if he helped the wrong side.

The junk was slow and had to run into small coves for shelter, but eventually a wide river was reached and the junk nosed her way up-stream. The craft was fitted with a small oil-engine and she could just managed four knots. Naturally, Davis was very glad when Yun Kiang came in sight round a bend. The junk berthed and coolies began to unload her. Davis saw everything packed on ox wagons and carted off to the company's warehouse, which was at the north-west end of this small port.

When everything had been stored to the satisfaction of Corrigan the two white men went across to a small but comfortable bungalow, where they proceeded to pour themselves out a well-earned drink.

"Good work, Davis," Corrigan relaxed his long frame into an easy-chair. "Lucky day for us when you bumped off Drenov. The Russian could never

have got us clear of Shanghai. I bet Cheng will be glad to get the news this little lot has arrived."

"He's short of ammunition?"

"If he doesn't have guns and ammunition, he's sunk," Corrigan laughed. "I sent a special code message from Shanghai that we were on the way, and I made certain instructions about the money for the guns." He picked up an envelope. "I bet this is an okay." He had read the contents. "Cheng has sent a messenger to our head office at Canton with the deposit. The rest he passes over on getting the guns."

"What's the next move?"

"Did you see that queer old fellow that tried to sell me some fruit?" Corrigan laughed. "You did. Well, that's one of Cheng's spies. He was waiting here for our arrival. I gave him a message that his master should have the raid in about six days from now. Don't want to hurry this show and give anyone a chance of getting suspicious."

"Any likelihood of officials searching your warehouse?"

"No, they're a sleepy lot in these parts."

"Well, this job seems easier than I expected." Davis yawned.

"But if we try to run another load we may not find—" He turned as there came a knocking at the door. "Hallo, wonder who this can be?"

An elderly, tired American came into the room and nodded to Corrigan.

"Hallo, Hewitt, glad to see you." The gun-runner turned to Woody.

"Davis, meet Mr. Hewitt, of the American Oil Company. Mr. Davis is a new assistant."

"How do you do, Mr. Davis?" The American shook hands and turned to Corrigan. "I heard you had arrived with stores and merchandise, so I came across for a serious talk."

"Serious?"

"Do you know Cheng is in these parts?"

"Oh, Cheng!" Corrigan frowned. "Let me see—he's the leader of the Royalists, isn't he?"

"Rebels, you mean," angrily spoke Hewitt. "Cheng is the leader of an army of cut-throats and pillagers, and they tell me he's less than fifty miles away."

"He won't dare come any farther south."

"What's to stop him?" Hewitt spoke sharply. "I sent out some of my boys to get news, and they returned looking scared. They reckon Cheng is heading this way, and if he swept down on this place you know it would be a shambles. He would murder everyone, pillage, and then raze the place to the ground."

"Nonsense," scoffed Corrigan. "Cheng's not a fool. He'd have half the countries in the world up in arms against him. Yun Kiang is a sort of international settlement, and he would respect it. You don't really imagine, Hewitt, that Cheng would bring his men here. He might get cut off from the mountains, where he has his headquarters. Cheng's come as far south as he dares."

"Well, I don't think so," argued Hewitt. "I reckon Cheng is headed for Yun Kiang. My wife is here, and there's her sister, then there are my two assistants, Brown and Hutchins, and their families. That's my company only. There's that English rice firm, the French planters, and a lot more. Why, man, there must be twenty white women alone in this place and the same number of children. I think something should be done to protect them."

"What do you suggest?"

"The Battle-Cruiser Washington is in these waters," eagerly spoke Hewitt. "I can get an SOS message to them to land a party of Marines."

Woody Davis gave Corrigan an anxious glance. How would he deal with this problem?

"My dear fellow, you mustn't do this," Corrigan cried. "You'll get the Marines here, Cheng will never come within miles of the place, and you'll probably get fired by your oil combo for causing international complications."

"I want your co-operation," Hewitt retorted. "If this call to the Marines comes from you as well, then—"

"Now I see the whole idea," Corrigan sneered. "You know you'll get fired if you put through this call on your own, and so you want to drag me in to share the responsibility. You've probably tried the others and had no luck. Then when there's a devil of a row for getting the Marines here you'll slide out of it by pretending you were coerced. You're scared over



"Put your hands up, Davis!" MacDonald rapped out. "And that goes for you, too, Mr. Corrigan." July 11th, 1936.

nothing, Hewitt, and you want to get protection without having to take any consequences."

"I have wasted my time appealing to you, Corrigan." The other drew himself up. "I am afraid, for I have two white women on my hands. You do not think there is any chance of Cheng coming this way, and I think very differently, so much so that if no one else will back me I shall send that SOS through to the Marines on my own responsibility. I've been in China for thirty years, and I know what I'm talking about when I say Cheng is heading this way. Also I do not exaggerate when I say that that callous rebel would not hesitate to rob and murder white people. Good-night, Corrigan."

A stiff little bow to Davis and the American had gone.

Corrigan used a lot of strong language when the oil man had gone. All their plans were ruined.

"If Cheng comes there'll be the deuce of a scrap, and Cheng will get driven off." Corrigan banged a fist into an open palm. "No, I can't allow that—I must warn Cheng. What will that mean? Cheng will have to keep away, and, without arms and ammunition, will be defeated. We shall have all that stuff on our hands. Looks like ruin to me. Curse that fool, Hewitt!" He dragged out a gun. "I'm half a mind

"Leave the murdering to Cheng," coldly interrupted Davis.

Corrigan gave a foolish, sickly grin as he pouched his gun.

"I was just fooling, but for the moment I was so mad, I could have done anything."

"It's still not too late to do something," Woody Davis spoke. "If Cheng is no more than fifty miles away a fast time before a certain ex-Marine tried his hand at gun-running again. He was an outcast, but he had not sunk so low that he had to help a lot of cutthroats, and if he had known that the Royalists were just dissolute rebels he would never have listened to Corrigan's project. He grinned at that—he had not really had much option. At any rate, he was packing up directly they left Yun Kiang, and perhaps if he joined up as a machine-gunner in the Chinese Army he would stop a bullet that would end his worthless career.

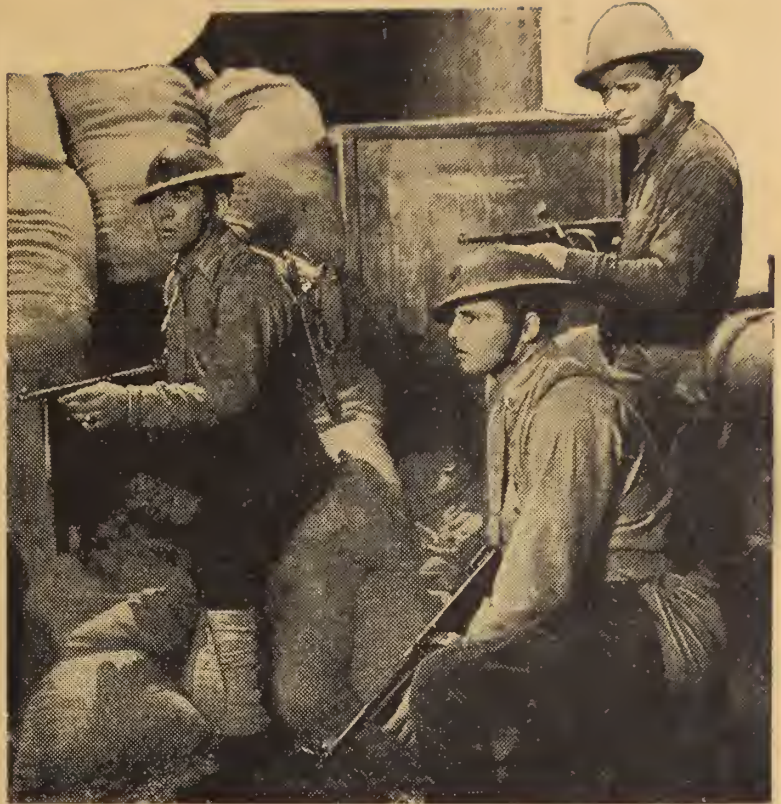
"Yes, I know it." Corrigan turned eagerly to his assistant. "You got us out of Shanghai, and if you can fix this jam I'll not forget it."

"The solution is simple," Woody Davis grinned. "You get on your fastest horse and you go like the wind for Cheng's camp, and you get the general to come here by forced marches. Those Chinks can walk for miles and miles, and they should be here in two or three days. Impossible for the Marines to be here by then. Cheng does his raid, and this warehouse is the only place touched, Hewitt grins and tells us that it serves us right, we depart from Yun Kiang to report to headquarters "at Caution." The youngster winked. "I'll stay here and hold the fort till you get back."

"My boy, you're a marvel." Corrigan slapped him on the back. "So simple, and yet I never thought of it." He shoved a flask of whisky into his pocket. "I'll start right away."

Woody Davis paced the untidy living-room when Corrigan had gone. Gun-running had seemed to him a most stirring sort of life—that had been his childish belief—but now that he was actually involved in the game he was not so stirred. They were supplying guns and ammunition to Chinks who called themselves Royalists, and as far as he could find out, Cheng and his men were nothing more than a bunch of looters.

Woody found the waiting very trying. Two days passed and he guessed that Cheng and his men should be on the move. He was surprised that Corrigan had not shown up, and the only explanation that he could think was that the white man was acting as a



"Let them have it!" cried Mac, as the doors began to sway and splinter.

guide. He decided that once Cheng had got his guns it would be a long time before a certain ex-Marine tried his hand at gun-running again. He was an outcast, but he had not sunk so low that he had to help a lot of cutthroats, and if he had known that the Royalists were just dissolute rebels he would never have listened to Corrigan's project. He grinned at that—he had not really had much option. At any rate, he was packing up directly they left Yun Kiang, and perhaps if he joined up as a machine-gunner in the Chinese Army he would stop a bullet that would end his worthless career.

Woody's thoughts were not very cheerful, and he jumped nervously on the evening of the second day after his chief's departure when there came a rapping at the door. That couldn't be Corrigan. Perhaps it was old Hewitt again. He opened the door, and got the shock of his young life when Brooklyn walked in.

"What on earth are you doing here?" "I've come here to warn you." The girl closed the door and then flopped down in a chair. "Give me something to eat and drink. Travelling across country in filthy trains and ox wagons has nearly finished me."

Woody Davis poured her out a drink and got out some cold food. He wondered what she meant by her ominous words. At last she pushed away her plate and gave a sigh of satisfaction.

"That's better," she remarked, and then gave him a reproving glance. "You didn't tell me the whole story back in Shanghai, and now the cops are looking for you."

"The police?"

"Yes—listen. First of all, thanks for the note and the present. It's lucky for you that you mentioned Yun Kiang. The day after you vanished I went into the Bar Russe, and I got talking with

the proprietor. The body of Drenov was fished out of the water, and he had had to identify it. He admitted it was the man who had shot Waters in his saloon, but because he felt sorry for you he did not say anything about my visit to the Bar Russe when I asked his advice. You see, I was worried when I saw Drenov driving that lorry, and hesitated whether I should tell you, because I knew you would go after the Russian. The proprietor said that Drenov deserved all that was coming to him, and so I came and told you. You rushed out, and I can piece together the rest. You met Drenov and killed him."

"Not quite." He smiled. "I found the transport company, and I got inside, and by luck found Drenov unloading a lorry. He drew a knife on me, and I knocked him down, then he drew his gun, and it was his life or mine. I was just a fraction of a second quicker."

"I'm glad you didn't shoot him down in cold blood. Then you took his place with the company?"

"You guessed right, sister. Corrigan appeared with a gun and hauled me into his office. I had the option of taking Drenov's place or being handed over to the authorities. Corrigan was gun-running for the Royalists, and as that sort of life seemed exciting, and I was not keen on a prison, I joined up."

"You know these Royalists are rebel deserters—the scum of the earth?"

"Yes, I found that out when I got here. After this"—he pulled himself up—"I am resigning in a few days."

"Don't stall." Brooklyn spoke fiercely. "You managed to get guns and ammunition past the authorities, and the stuff's here." He nodded. "It is known that Drenov was mixed up with some gun-running joint, and it won't be long before they know the name of the company. They were

bound to question that proprietor again, and then they would want to talk with me—that would have spilled it. I quit town and came up country."

"You're a great pal." He grinned at her fondly. "Guess I'll have to tell you everything."

Briefly Woody told her of the funeral procession and of the journey to Yun Kiang. He explained how Corrigan had gone off to get Cheng to hurry because Hewitt of the oil company had radio'd the Marines.

"They'll be here any time, and you're not going to be on the scene when those Chinese bandits show up," he concluded. "I'm sending you down to Mrs. Hewitt."

Brooklyn did not want to go, and they were busy arguing when the door swung open and Corrigan strode into the room. The tall man pulled up short with a look of amazement when he saw the girl.

"Take it easy, chief. She's one of us," the youngster cried. "She's come all the way from Shanghai to put me wise to the fact that Drenov's body has been found and that the authorities are making a lot of searching inquiries."

Corrigan gave the girl a suspicious glance, but Woody persuaded him to sit down and listen.

"She can't stay here," Corrigan said when he heard everything. "I found Cheng and acted as a guide. His men are only a few miles away. I rode on so that I should be here when the fun commenced. Directly the show's over we'll get down to Canton until this has all blown over. Now, young lady, you had better get going. Cheng and his rebels are nasty customers, and there may be lead flying around."

Corrigan gave her a note for Mrs. Hewitt and Woody saw her on her way. He could not go far as Cheng might arrive at any moment. Brooklyn found Mrs. Hewitt a kindly soul. The girl told some story about coming to Yun Kiang because she had an uncle who was a missionary, and Mrs. Hewitt, whether she believed the story or not, did not question it. Brooklyn was very welcome to stay.

Brooklyn had not been there more than a few minutes when she heard a lot of commotion out in the narrow street. Chinamen were rushing about and talking excitedly. Her heart missed a beat when she saw a body of blue-coated, steel-helmeted figures.

The Marines had landed, and with grim determination had made their way overland through marsh lands and forests to reach Yun Kiang much sooner than anyone had expected.

An Order for Arrest

HEWITT met the Marines, and he had arranged where the men should be billeted. The two officers in charge of the party were Captain Halstead and Lieutenant MacDonald, and what more natural than that they should be billeted with the Hewitts.

The Marines had no sooner got back to the Washington than the S O S call had been received from Hewitt of the American Oil Company. Captain Halstead was not sorry to get the call, because he felt that a slight stigma rested on the Marines. It was felt that gun-runners had got out of Shanghai by some ruse, and it must have been done under the noses of the Marines.

Captain Halstead knew that after the finding of Drenov the city had been combed, and he had attended a secret conference of representatives of those nations concerned with the China Seas. They expressed themselves willing to lend all help to China to stamp out July 11th, 1936.

rebels such as Cheng, especially as this renegade general was a callous murderer of innocent people. The warehouses of the International Portage Transport Company were found closed up and deserted, and an opinion was expressed that it was suspicious that Corrigan had left Shanghai about the time of the gun-running. The dock warehouses showed signs of recent activity. That the International Portage Transport Company had a depot at Yun Kiang was a factor that puzzled the captain, especially with Cheng threatening to sweep down on the place.

Hewitt informed the captain soon after his arrival that the responsibility of the S O S was his, as Corrigan was all against sending for the Marines. That item of news made the shrewd captain more and more certain that the transport company was not all that it should be.

The two officers went to the Hewitts house, and the first person they saw there was Brooklyn.

MacDonald saw the look of fear in this girl's eyes, and he wondered where he had seen her. Suddenly he remembered a picture in the paper. This was the girl that had been with Davis and Waters on that tragic night at the Bar Russe. It was Mrs. Hewitt, who forged another link. She explained that Brooklyn had been sent to her for refuge by Mr. Corrigan of the International Portage Transport Company.

"Why couldn't you have stayed with the company?" the captain questioned Brooklyn.

"They're only men there," she countered.

"There are only two white men," interposed Mr. Hewitt. "Corrigan and a new assistant—a Mr. Davis."

"Davis—Woody Davis!" cried MacDonald, staring at the girl. "That's why you're here?"

"She's got an uncle who is a missionary," said kindly Mrs. Hewitt.

"You came here to see Davis," MacDonald was certain. "It is Woody Davis that is working for the International, isn't it?"

"Yes," Brooklyn admitted, "and I have got an uncle who is a missionary. Why the excitement?"

"Young lady." Captain Halstead stepped forward. "I know who you are now. Just before I left Shanghai the authorities were very anxious to have a talk with you, but you had vanished. Young ladies don't travel all this way under most difficult conditions unless they have some very good reason. The body of the man who shot Cadet Waters was found in the river, and Drenov is suspected to have been a gun-runner."

"Woody Davis spoke to me in Shanghai and said he had a new job," MacDonald chipped in. "He seemed interested in the fact that we were searching all lorries and cars for arms."

"Drenov was an employee of the International Portage." The captain nodded his head. "This puzzle is beginning to fit together. Drenov shot Waters, is killed, and Woody Davis gets a job with the same company. What as?"

"Search me!" Brooklyn tried to feign indifference. "You cleared out because you did not want to be questioned," accused the captain. "Maybe you also heard something that you thought Woody Davis should know. Davis is the kind of wild, desperate fellow who would take on a risky job like gun-running."

"You're jumping to conclusions," Brooklyn cried. "Suppose Drenov did die, mightn't Davis have gone round looking for a job and got his place?"

They might have hired Drenov in the first place without knowing his character."

"The police have a strong idea from what they have learnt from the proprietor of the Bar Russe that Davis knew Drenov was working for International, a company about whom they have their suspicions." The captain turned to MacDonald. "I've a hunch that if there are any guns about they're in their warehouse in this town. I—"

The door burst open and an exhausted Chinese villager staggered into the room and began babbling to Hewitt.

"This is serious," Hewitt cried when the man had finished. "I sent out spies, and they informed me that Cheng was heading this way. This is another of my men, and he reports that Cheng and his men are but a few miles away. He has run all the way with the news."

"What has Yun Kiang got to offer that is so attractive?" Captain Halstead gave a grim smile. "There are towns and villages that would give Cheng rich pillage and easy to get, yet he must head for Yun Kiang. Besides the oil company and a few stores there are no rich merchants or mandarins here, and Cheng is a good distance from his retreat in the hills. He has a mission to this town, and that mission is to get guns and ammunition—we know he is short of both. MacDonald, take Tex with you and go to the International and arrest Woody Davis."

"On what charge, captain?" "Take a look round that warehouse and see if you can find guns for gun-running. If you don't, bring him along here to be questioned concerning the death of Drenov the Russian. Warn the boys to stand by ready to repel an attack by handits. Tell them to keep under cover. We may spring a warm reception on General Cheng."

"Suppose we find guns at the warehouse?" asked MacDonald. "If we bring Davis away the Chinks may get them."

"You'll have to use your own initiative, MacDonald," decided the captain. "If there are guns Cheng mustn't get them. I must stand by to see where Cheng will attack. If the attack develops round the warehouse I'll move up the men to counter-attack."

"You haven't got anything on Woody Davis, and you won't find any guns," raged Brooklyn. She curled her lip at MacDonald. "I thought you used to be his friend."

MacDonald stared in shamed manner at the floor, then remembering that duty must come first strode out into the night.

A Callous Fiend

CORRIGAN and Davis went into the warehouse, and it was Corrigan's suggestion that Davis should take the lids off some of the cases.

"These Chinks will tear the place to pieces if they don't get the stuff quickly, and the sooner Cheng and his bunch have gone the better for us."

"Any news of those Marines?" questioned Davis.

"They can't get here for two or three days yet," was Corrigan's opinion.

Davis was busy opening a box marked "Danger" when two steel-helmeted figures quietly entered the warehouse. The box contained rifle parts, and Corrigan was staring at the contents when they heard a sound. Both men glanced round and stiffened.

"Put your hands up, Davis!" MacDonald rapped out. "And that goes for you, too, Mr. Corrigan."

Slowly they raised their hands, whilst Tex in the background covered them

(Continued on page 25)

As a roving cowboy, Johnny Flagg would neither throw in his lot with the homesteaders nor work for an unscrupulous rancher; but when he met Barbara McGrail, and heard her story, he risked his life quite readily to help her regain the ranch that had been stolen from her murdered father. A fast-riding, fast-shooting yarn of the West, starring Charles Starrett



"GALLANT DEFENDER"

Caught in the Act!

AT the bottom of the long hill, Johnny Flagg, on his milk-white horse, Pal, ambled out from a shady lane into a broad and dusty coach-road stretching from east to west, and there stopped short.

Pulling the brim of his ten-gallon sombrero over his eyes to shield them from the sudden glare of the sun, he looked about him. He had rather lost his bearings in the last half-hour, being in strange territory, but as he was a roving cowboy in quest of a job, he was not particular in which direction he rode.

His keen brown eyes surveyed a landscape consisting mainly of rolling grass-land, bordered by wooded foothills, and rested upon a signboard attached to a tree-trunk, its wooden arms pointing to left and to right.

Slowly he rode over to the board, a care-free young man in the early twenties, good-looking, broad-shouldered, and tall even in the saddle he sat with easy grace.

According to one of the pointing arms, the town of Ore Grande was twelve miles away to the west; according to the other, the town of Whitewater was fifty-one miles away to the east. As Johnny was not acquainted with either of these places, and had been in the saddle for some hours, he turned in the direction of Ore Grande—and so changed the whole course of his life.

He had ridden no more than two of the twelve miles when he heard the unmistakable crack of rifle-shots somewhere beyond a clump of trees he had yet to reach, and he spurred forward to investigate.

Under the trees he dismounted, and, with his own rifle in his hands, made his way to the edge of the coppice and looked out across a wide expanse of grass.

Sixty or seventy yards away stood a covered wagon, towards which three horsemen were galloping, and on the ground beside it a girl was crouching over a prone figure. Johnny heard the piteous cry of the girl:

"Grandpa! Grandpa!"

It seemed evident to him that the horsemen had fired the shots he had heard, but he waited to make sure before he took any action, and he did not have to wait long.

Two of the riders swept towards a pair of horses which had been detached from the wagon to graze, and the third made for the vehicle itself and heaved himself from the saddle into it.

Everything was only too clear to Johnny now. He raised his rifle to his shoulder, and as the fellow who had entered the wagon jumped down from it, pulled the trigger.

His aim was true enough: the fellow sank to his knees, holding a damaged wrist and calling to his companions.

More shots rang out, and a bullet embedded itself in the massive tree-trunk behind which Johnny had taken cover; then one of the riders galloped over to his fallen accomplice and turned to below:

"Never mind the horses! Give me a hand with Smitty!"

The canvas cover of the prairie schooner was in flames and a crackling sound was issuing from its interior: a can of kerosene and a couple of lighted matches had done their work. The third

rider put away his rifle and sped across the turf to help lift the wounded ruffian on to his horse, and presently all three were in full flight.

Johnny did not wait till they had disappeared. He ran out from the coppice to the weeping girl, and he tugged her bearded grandfather away from the burning wagon.

"Is he gonna die, mister?" she whimpered as he opened the neck of a red shirt and bared a nasty wound in the old man's chest.

"Oh, no, I reckon not!" said Johnny reassuringly. "Let me have your apron, honey, quick!"

She whipped off the none-too-clean apron she was wearing over her grey frock, and he tore it into strips and staunched the wound and bound it. The old man was unconscious, but he was breathing, and his pulse was regular, though weak.

"He won't die?" faltered the girl, who was fair-haired and little more than a child.

Johnny shook his head.

"I reckon an old fellow like him takes an awful lot to kill him," he said cheerfully. "He's one of the tough sort that can generally carry off more lead than a timber wolf. He's good for another forty years!"

A slight exaggeration, this last statement, considering that the old man was at least seventy; but it had the desired effect of allaying the girl's fears. The bandaging process was completed and Johnny got to his feet.

"Now if we can only get him to a doctor's," he said, "so as—well, so as he can be rightly patched up, you know—"

A pair of eyelids quivered and opened; a pair of rather bloodshot grey eyes looked up at them.

"He's coming to already!" exclaimed Johnny, and dropped on his knees again to raise the old man's head.

"Where can I take you?" he asked. "I'm a stranger in this district."

Samuel Hathaway was the old man's name. He replied with much effort:

"I've got—kinfolk—just this side of—Ore Grande. Up Las Flores Creek. I—"

The eyelids closed, the grey-haired head fell back.

"Oh!" lamented the girl.

"That's all right, honey," said Johnny. "Don't you worry—he's gonna be all right. We'll just get him on a horse and take him right out of here."

The wagon had become a flaming mass, utterly beyond redemption, and nothing could be saved from it. Johnny lifted up the limp form of Samuel Hathaway and deposited him gently across the back of one of the horses, then whistled to Pal.

The white horse came trotting out to him from the coppice, the girl was helped up into the saddle, and Johnny mounted behind her. A few minutes later they were moving slowly along the dusty road that led to Ore Grande, the spare horse close behind them.

That morning, in the town, a meeting of the local cattlemen was being held at the headquarters of their own association, a wooden building with a balcony situated just below a bridge that spanned a creek at the top of the main street.

Many years before, Ore Grande had sprung into being as the result of a misguided gold rush, but the land around it had proved excellent for cattle-raising, though completely devoid of precious ore, and the town had prospered, despite the eventual departure of the disappointed pioneers who had founded it.

Harvey Campbell was the chairman of the Cattlemen's Association, an elderly man of dignified presence and a fine type of rancher. He was one of the last to arrive for the meeting, and in company with a number of other ranchers and foremen, he paused on the steps of the building to look back as a covered wagon came rumbling over the bridge; but he did not join in the unfavourable comments of the rest.

Instead, he passed in at the doorway and went to a table at the top of a long room, whence he faced rows and rows of chairs, many of them already occupied. The men who had lingered on the steps straggled in after him and became seated, and then he stood up and addressed the assembly.

"That wagon we've just seen is only another proof of what I've maintained all along," he said. "When the Government throws land open to homesteaders, it's going to be homesteaded, and we might as well like it."

Barr Munro rose from his chair in the second row, tall, dark-skinned and aggressive. He was not generally liked, but he owned a lot of land.

"If the association stand together," he said truculently, "we can keep 'em out!"

"It's been tried by stronger groups than ours," retorted Campbell. "Men have been killed and their outfits burned, but behind them came others and others—and in the end they got the land."

Munro twisted the ends of his little dark moustache.

"It sounds like you're in favour of 'em comin' in," he sneered.

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"Well, I'm not!" declared Campbell emphatically. "I hate it, the same as all cattlemen. They'll fence off water we need and cut up our range with bob-wire until there's no range left. We all know that."

Murmurs of approval greeted that statement.

"They won't if you fellows'll do what I've been advising for over a month," shouted Munro. "Organise! Patrol the roads! Run 'em out and keep 'em out!"

"Your advice is the purpose of this meeting, Munro."

"You're gonna act on it?"

"No," replied Campbell sternly. "We want to go on record officially as being against the war you're making on homesteaders."

"Who says I'm making war on homesteaders?"

"We all do."

"That's rather a serious charge to make, Campbell, without proof!"

Harvey Campbell shrugged his shoulders.

"The proof we've got might not stand in a court of law," he admitted, "but it's enough for us. You've engaged twice as many men as you need. They're all from out of the district, and they're all named Smith or Jones."

"That don't make 'em gunmen!" snapped Munro.

"It's a common trick for killers to use those names. Makes 'em hard to trail. Men have been shot, and their outfits burned, in the past fortnight. That's murder, Munro, and we'll have no part in it!" Campbell rapped on the table with a little mallet. "Am I right?"

"Yes," chorused fully a score of voices, and Munro scowled at many earnest faces.

"I've got a paper here that covers our sentiments on the subject," said Campbell, and he picked up a document and held it out across the table.

Munro walked forward and took it, but he did not trouble to read it.

"Are you asking me for my resignation from this association?" he demanded.

"We thought you'd rather have it that way," was the quiet answer, "instead of going on record as being kicked out."

Munro screwed up the sheet of paper and flung it across the room in a fury.

"All right!" he raged. "Let it stand as a resignation. You never wanted me in this association, anyway, and you all know why. You're sore because I've got the best range in the county! You're sore because I got it right out from under the rest of you!"

"You're wrong, Munro," said Harvey Campbell grimly. "We don't mind your having the range, but we don't care much for the way you got it."

A man in the back row stood up—an oldish man with a double chin. His name was Sherman, and he was a highly respected rancher.

"That land belonged to the McGrail family," he stated, "and we're not going to fight to help you keep it."

"I got it legally," roared Munro, "and I'll keep it with or without your help!"

"There's a good many things done legal that folks don't like," said Campbell, and the mallet descended again upon the table. "The meeting's adjourned."

Chairs were pushed back and the cattlemen streamed out into the sunlight. Barr Munro stopped on the boardwalk to bite the end off a cigar. Another covered wagon was passing

down the street as Harvey Campbell stepped down from the doorway, and he directed Munro's attention to it with a nudge.

"As I said before," he remarked, "you can't keep 'em out!"

The Five "Smiths"

SIX miles east of Ore Grande the creek flowed through low-lying land beside the coach road, and there—on grass considered too poor for cattle—many covered wagons had congregated and a camp had been made. Johnny Flagg, riding slowly along the coach road with the girl between his knees, viewed the camp with interest.

"Looks like this oughta be the place your granddad meant," he said. "I guess this is the creek all right."

"Yes," cried the girl excitedly. "There's my uncle, over there! The one at the anvil."

A forge had been set up in the camp and a horse was being shod. Johnny reached out to hold the head of the animal that was bearing the unconscious Samuel Hathaway, then forded the stream.

Many pairs of eyes watched him, and as he reached the opposite bank, men and women gathered round, clamouring to know what had happened and who was hurt. But the girl slid down from the saddle and ran towards the anvil, crying out:

"Uncle Marvin! Uncle Marvin!"

The man at the anvil turned round with his hammer in his hand. He was middle-aged and bulky with a wide face and a ragged moustache. He stared at the girl and then at Johnny.

"Why, Millie, honey," he exclaimed, "how come you're travelling around the country with strangers?"

"He's no stranger!" she shrilled. "He's the one that drove 'em away when they shot grandpa!"

Marvin Hathaway strode over to Johnny. The wounded old man was being carried off to a wagon, and one of the campers was saddling a horse to ride into town for a doctor.

"What happened?" asked Hathaway.

"Where's his outfit?"

"They burned the wagon," Johnny replied. "All I could save was these two horses."

"Who done it?"

"There were three fellows. I winged one of 'em, and then they scattered."

Hathaway frowned.

"Munro's men, more'n likely," he growled.

"I've had enough!" blurted a nervous-looking little man. "If we're smart we'll pack up and head out of here!"

"A better idea," declared a black-haired man who had just joined the group, "is to get together and go after Munro."

There were several who agreed with him, but Johnny intervened.

"Just a minute," he said. "The old fellow I brought in needs attention. He's got a pretty bad chest wound."

"Hank's gone for Doc Ramsey, Dave," Hathaway stated. "Guess we'd better wait till he's been."

"I'm gonna stay here and fight 'em!" declared one of the campers, possibly because his wife was clinging to his arm.

"What is all this?" inquired Johnny curiously. "A gold strike?"

"We ain't struck any gold," grunted Dave, whose surname was Larkin. "but we've uncovered plenty of lead!"

"It's a kind of land rush," explained the little man who had suggested departure. "The Government's opening up part of the Jackson Reserve

for homesteading, starting to-morrow morning."

"Should have done it long ago," said Larkin. "There's no timber on it."

Johnny rubbed his smoothly shaven chin.

"I guess the cattlemen don't like the idea much," he remarked.

"I wouldn't call 'em very encouragin'," returned Larkin dryly. "Would you?"

"Not very."

"None of 'em wants us," said Abe Nelson, the timorous, "but there's only one that's actually ornery about it."

"This fellow Munro?" suggested Johnny.

"Yeah," nodded Larkin, "Barr Munro. He's been leasing the land for years, and he don't aim to lose it."

"Bringing in gunmen, eh?"

"Plenty!" said Nelson with a grimace. "They'll never let us homestead."

"Well," said Johnny, "they certainly won't if you don't organise and do something about it."

"You ever had any experience in this sort of business?" asked Larkin.

"Not much," replied Johnny briefly. "Couple of sheep wars. Why?"

"I've got a hunch we could make good use of a man of your character."

"How's that?"

"Well, we're mostly farmers, but we're willing to fight if someone will tell us what to do."

"No," Johnny shook his head. "I reckon not."

"Don't say 'No' too quick," urged Larkin. "We could make it worth your while."

But Johnny was not to be persuaded. "I'm not a professional gun-thrower," he said. "I lend it sometimes when I think it's needed, but it's not for sale. Well, good-bye—and good luck!"

"We'll need a lot o' it if we're to reach that land office to-morrow," com-

mented Larkin; and then Johnny swung himself up on to his horse and went back across the stream to the road, where he loped off in the direction of the town.

Barr Munro, after leaving the headquarters of the Cattlemen's Association, had walked down the street and entered the Equality Saloon. As he pushed open the swing-doors from the veranda he saw the three men who had wounded Samuel Hathaway and burned his wagon in the act of seating themselves at a table. He went to the bar, obtained a bottle of spirits and a glass, and carried them to the table.

"A fine pack of gunmen you are!" he said scornfully, as he poured himself a drink. "Sitting around here when you're supposed to be drivin' them nesters back where they came from! Do you crochet as well as you fight?"

Smitty hurriedly removed his bandaged wrist from sight.

"There ain't none of us can crochet, boss," he said gruffly.

"Oh, you can't?" Munro surveyed the unpleasant features of the three hired gunmen. "Well, you should take it up—I'll bet you'd be good at it!"

Out on the boardwalk Harvey Campbell was approaching the steps that led up to the veranda of the saloon, when the ugly but perfectly honest sheriff of the county, Luther Davies, hailed him from the middle of the roadway.

"Harvey!" he cried. "Just a minute! Wait a second!"

Campbell stopped and turned, puffing at the pipe that was in his mouth. The sheriff arrived, scant of breath because he had rushed over from his office, and he panted:

"You've got to get yourself a new sheriff, because I'm resignin'!"

"What, again?" Harvey Campbell removed the pipe from his mouth, blew a cloud of smoke from his lips, and

laughed derisively. "This is getting to be a sort of habit, ain't it?"

The sheriff, whose snub nose and wide upper lip suggested Irish parentage, in spite of his name, screwed up a pair of beady brown eyes as though in pain.

"It ain't no laughin' matter, Harvey," he protested. "Look who's ridin' into town!"

Six horsemen were cantering down the street from the bridge, an ill-favoured bunch, all of them in need of a shave, and one with a black shade over his left eye. The elderly chairman of the association viewed them without comment.

"It's Joe Swale with another flock of gunmen for Munro," said the sheriff unhappily. "This town don't need a sheriff—it needs an army! I—I'm resigning."

"No, you ain't, Luther," returned Campbell firmly.

"Yes, I am!"

"No, you ain't! We elected you, and you're gonna stay put if we have to nail you to your chain!"

The horsemen drew rein outside the saloon and dismounted to hitch their horses to a rail. Luther Davies greeted the one who was most in need of a shave, a diminutive fellow with a pair of cunning, close-set eyes.

"Howdy, Swale?" he said gloomily. "Looks like you brought your boss some more punchers."

"Yeah," Swale stepped on to the boardwalk, and was joined by his five companions. "We've got a big drive on."

"So I understand," said Harvey Campbell, tilting his head. "Wouldn't be surprised if one or two of 'em wasn't named Smith."

"That's funny," Swale chuckled quite shamelessly. "Why, come to think of it, they're all named Smith! Now, that one on the end there is called Soap Creek Smith. The next



Once more the back of the wagon was visited, and this time Johnny returned to offer three guns to the dismayed Munro.

one is One-Eyed Smith, and next to him is Wind River Smith. Next comes Salty Smith, and the last one is Goose Neck Smith, who's a sort of a tenderfoot out here for his health."

Of the five, the one described as Salty Smith had the least ruffianly appearance; but for the grime and the growth of hair upon his face he might have looked almost a respectable cow-puncher.

"Nice bunch of boys," said Campbell, surveying the five. "Very friendly!"

Swale grinned, but the sheriff scowled.

"Now look here, Swale," the dismayed official rapped, "this thing's gone far enough!"

"I reckon I don't understand what you mean, sheriff," drawled Swale.

"Oh, yes, you do, and it's got to stop, or I'm gonna—"

"You're gonna what? What is it you're gonna do?"

"Well, I ain't gonna stand for any more killings! I—I— Well, I'll resign."

Barr Munro's face appeared over the top of the swing-doors of the saloon.

"You'd better, if you can't keep a civil tongue in your head!" he shouted.

"I've heard all the lies I want to hear about what my men are doing!" He pointed a finger at Campbell. "And that goes for you and the rest of the district!" he added.

"But, Barr," the sheriff called complainingly back to him, "there ain't a day passes without a nester being way-laid and burnt out, or shot."

"There's a lot of other people to do that," retorted Munro. "There isn't a cattleman in the district that wouldn't like to see them all run out. They're trying to make me the goat for it."

The sheriff gulped.

"Oh, be reasonable, Barr," he said. "Why should they want to make you the goat?"

Barr Munro pushed open the swing-doors and stepped out on to the veranda.

"Because they want to see me run afoul of the law and get gunned out of the district," he replied, with an air of fierce indignation. "That's why I'm having all these men. Now, if the Cattlemen's Association would like to have war, they can have it and in plenty!"

The sheriff looked at Campbell as though for help, but Campbell stepped down off the boardwalk and crossed the street, so the sheriff went disconsolately back to his own office. Munro descended the steps and looked the five hired men up and down.

"What's your name?" he asked abruptly as he came to the last but one.

"Salty Smith," was the reply.

"Salty Smith, eh?" Munro's dark eyes narrowed, and he beckoned to a man who had followed him out from the saloon—one of the three concerned in the shooting of old Samuel Hathaway. "Here, Tuscan, take these fellows down to the restaurant and feed 'em."

Tuscan, a lean-jawed and swarthy crook of Italian parentage, went off along the boardwalk with the five. Munro turned to Swale.

"What do you know about this man Salty?" he asked sharply.

"Why, no more than the rest," said his fornican. "Why?"

"Seems I met up with him somewhere, but I just can't place him."

Swale scratched his scrubby chin.

"There's a funny rumour floating around the south of the State, boss," he remarked.

"Yeah? What is it?"

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"Well, they say there's a United States marshal on his way up here to pry into this nester business."

"A marshal?" Munro echoed, in obvious concern. "What's his name?"

"That I couldn't find out," replied Swale, "but he aims to join up with you, get the dope, and then start things popping."

"Oh!" Munro plucked reflectively at his little moustache. "I've got a hunch he's here already."

"Why?" asked Swale in surprise.

"Have you seen him?"

"No, but three of the boys had a run-in with him this morning and came out second best. I reckon they'll be glad to see him again!"

A Second Refusal

MUNRO re-entered the saloon, and Joe Swale went with him. They were leaning against the bar when Tuscan burst in upon them.

"That puncher we had a run-in with a while ago has just drifted into town!" he announced breathlessly.

"Where is he?" asked Munro.

"Stopped at the sheriff's office. Who d'you reckon he's after?"

"I know what he's after! He's a United States marshal."

"A marshal?" Tuscan's jaw dropped.

"Yes, and he'll be in here shortly, tryin' to join up with us—probably under the name of Smith!"

Joe Swale grinned.

"I suppose you'll hire him, too, eh?" he suggested with intended irony.

"Why not?" countered Munro. "It's the easiest way to take care of him."

Johnny had entered the town on its eastern side, having crossed the creek by a wooden bridge some distance from it. He had passed the restaurant in Gold Street without being aware of Tuscan's startled scrutiny, turned the corner into Main Street by the blacksmith's shop, and proceeded straight to the office of the sheriff, conspicuously situated opposite the local premises of the Wells Fargo Express Company.

The sheriff was in the doorway, talking to Harvey Campbell, and Johnny hailed him without dismounting.

"I'm looking for a job," he said.

"Maybe you can help?"

Luther Davies thrust his thumbs under his braces and leaned against the door-post.

"Oh, you're looking for a job, are you?" he drawled. "Well, I'm tryin' to lose one! Know anybody that's hiring any men, Harvcy?"

Campbell, thus addressed, replied caustically that he knew of one, but that he wouldn't hire anybody whose name wasn't Smith.

"I've heard of that outfit," said Johnny, "and I don't want any part of it."

"Try the bartender up the street," suggested the sheriff. "He's the closest thing we've got to a newspaper in Ore Grande."

Johnny thanked him and rode on to the saloon, where he left his horse at the rail. Munro was lounging beside the bar, with Tuscan and Joe Swale, when he pushed open the swing-doors, and Munro promptly said in a low voice:

"You fellows scatter; I want to talk to him alone. If anything goes wrong, be ready to back my play."

Tuscan drifted over to the table at which Smitty and the other man were still seated, Swale dropped into a chair not far away from them, and Johnny reached the bar.

"What would you like, mister?" in-

quired the shirt-sleeved attendant behind it.

"Well," replied Johnny, "I'd like a job, if you could steer me to one." He pushed some coins across the mahogany. "Pour yourself a drink and think hard."

Munro moved towards him.

"Did I hear you say you were looking for a job?" he asked smoothly.

"I guess you must have," said Johnny.

"What sort of a job?"

"Well, I'm not particular, long as the elow's all right and the pay's pretty fair. Your name don't happen to be Munro, does it?"

"Yeah, that's right." Munro eyed him shrewdly. "Yours happen to be Smith, or Jones?"

"Smith'll do for the time being," said Johnny without the slightest trace of surprise. "What're you paying?"

"A hundred a month."

"That's what I thought! The deal's off!"

"Why, what's wrong?" Munro raised his heavy brows. "Not enough?"

"Too much! You're not hiring cow-pokes; you're hiring killers!"

Munro bore that accusation without flinching.

"So you don't want the job, eh?"

"No," said Johnny very definitely.

"My name's not Smith, and my gun's not for sale."

"Don't tell me your name," sneered Munro. "You've got 'marshal' stamped all over you!"

Johnny chuckled in a fashion that irritated.

"So you thought I was the law sneak-in' upon you?" he said.

"Yeah," rapped Munro, "and if you know when you're well off, you'll sneak right out again!"

Johnny turned and rested his elbows on the bar.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I'm not the law, which makes you pretty lucky."

"How come?"

"Well, if I was the law, I'd make four arrests right now."

"Yeah? Who and why?"

"Those three men over there, for tryin' to kill a nester this morning, and you for hirm' 'em to do it!"

Munro raised a hand and dropped it again, whereupon Tuscan leapt to his feet.

"You aceusin' us of a killin'?" he demanded menacingly.

"No," replied Johnny, "I'm only aceusin' you of tryin'. You did fire his outfit, and you tried to steal his—"

Tuscan whipped out his gun, but before he could use it Johnny fired from his hip and it fell from a damaged hand, smashing a glass on the table.

The others stared, not daring to move; they had never seen a swifter draw than Johnny's, or a truer aim practically from the holster. For several minutes there was silence in the bar-room; then Munro, standing beside Johnny, brought out his own shooting-iron and pointed it at his own men.

"Lay off your guns, all of you!" he shouted.

Johnny's right hand shifted.

"If you've got another trick," he said patiently, "you'd better put up that gun and forget about it."

The gun was stowed away without a word.

"Now walk over to the door with me," commanded Johnny; and because he had no option Munro obeyed, keeping step with the cowboy who had forestalled him and acting as his unwilling shield to the door.



"Better stand back, boys," said Johnny, "might be a trick! All right, Nelson, ride in—and ride slow!"

"I guess I was wrong about you," he said on the way. "My offer is still open."

"Well, I wasn't wrong about you," retorted Johnny, "and my answer is still 'no.'"

"I'll double the pay."

"I rode into town looking for work," said Johnny, "and I'm riding out still looking."

"Then," snarled Munro, "I'd advise you not to come back ever!"

"If I was the kind to take advice, I'd have stayed home and raised sheep."

The swing-doors were reached and Johnny backed out from them. On the veranda he put his gun back in its holster, and on the steps he encountered the sheriff, who inquired rather anxiously:

"Say, what's all the shootin' about in there?"

"I just had a little run-in with the Smith boys," replied Johnny cheerfully, and he jumped the steps and heaved himself lightly on to his horse.

The sheriff descended in haste.

"Hi! Hi, you can't leave town like this!" he shouted.

"Why not?" asked Johnny. "Am I arrested?"

"Certainly not! You're deputised!"

"Oh, no, I'm not!" Johnny flipped a gloved hand. "When I want to fight for a living I'll join the army!"

Joe Swale as well as Munro watched over the top of the swing doors as he ambled off up the street and over the bridge.

"Get a couple of men," directed Munro, "and trail him out of town—and see that he doesn't come back."

The Girl with Green Eyes

THE road out of town to the west was a pleasant one with varied scenery on either side of it. Johnny progressed slowly up a hill, munching some cold pork and bread he had taken from a saddle-bag. It had

been his intention to procure a proper meal in Ore Grande, but circumstances had rendered that inadvisable.

Having satisfied his hunger and permitted Pal to satisfy his at the top of the hill, he descended at leisure into a long valley where trees abounded as well as grass.

At the side of the road, some distance ahead, a covered wagon was standing at a grotesque angle because its near-side rear wheel had come off. A small boy was down on his knees at the side of the vehicle, trying to slip a jack under the axle, and a tallish girl of about twenty was striving to raise the back high enough for his purpose with the aid of a pole she used as a lever over two heavy logs.

"A little higher, sis!" shouted the boy. "A couple of inches!"

"Can't make it," panted the girl. "Look out for your foot, Jimmy!"

The small boy backed away from the axle and she let the pole go up and the side of the wagon settle down. The weight had proved too much for her, but she had an idea she could get a better leverage by shifting the logs nearer to the tailboard.

"Jimmy, come here!" she called; but Jimmy had caught sight of a lone horseman, rapidly approaching, and he was clambering up into the wagon over the driving-seat.

The girl looked round at the hoof-beats, and then Johnny rode up, stopped his horse, and slid down beside her.

"Well, I guess you could use a little help, couldn't you?" he said pleasantly, raising his hat.

"Thanks," she returned rather stiffly, "but I think I can manage."

He nodded and smiled. She was a very beautiful girl and evidently one of independent spirit, but he had judged at a glance that the task she had set herself was quite beyond her strength.

"I guess you could, miss," he said, "but it'd be a lot easier not to."

"Hi!" piped a shrill voice; and up went Johnny's hands as the barrel of a rifle was projected at him over the tailboard of the wagon. Jimmy was holding the rifle, and two of his very small fingers were on the trigger.

"Don't let your thumb slip, young fellow," urged Johnny with a whimsical grin. "You might have to do this job yourself!"

The grin decided matters, so far as the girl was concerned.

"You may as well put that down, Jimmy," she said. "It looks as if we're surrounded."

Down went the rifle, and the youngster scrambled over the tailboard.

"Thanks," said Johnny gravely. "Another minute and I'd have sold out pretty cheap."

He stooped to move the two logs several inches forward, then picked up the pole she had let fall to the ground.

"Live in this district, miss?" he inquired.

"Not yet," she replied.

He thrust the end of the pole over the logs and under the wagon while the small boy looked on with his hands on his hips.

"Aiming to file on a homestead, eh?" suggested Johnny, testing the leverage.

"Yes."

He pointed to the axle.

"Now get that jack again, son," he said, "and let's see what happens."

"You betcha," said Johnny, and he crouched once more at the side of the wagon.

"You shouldn't have come on a trip like this without your husband," Johnny informed the girl as he bore sturdily upon the pole. "They're mighty handy things to have around at times."

"I haven't any," she informed him.

"I reckon that can be fixed." He raised his voice. "How're we doing, sonny?"

"You ain't getting anywhere!" the youngster shouted back.

"I guess I'm sorta out of practice."

Johnny looked in the girl's eyes as she stood beside him, adding her weight to the pole, and he noticed that they were green. Unfortunately, he did not notice that three horsemen were riding out through a gap in some bushes a hundred yards away to the left, for one of them was Joe Swale, and the other two were Wind River Smith and Salty Smith respectively.

The voice of Swale rang out:

"Hold it, all of you, just like you are!"

Up went the pole, down went the wagon, and Johnny swung round with his hands raised. Jimmy ran to his sister. Each of the three horsemen had his gun out.

"You shot one of our friends this morning, stranger," said Joe Swale harshly. "Get over to him, Salty, and get his gun."

Salty Smith put away his own six-shooter, got down from his horse, and went over to Johnny. The gun in that young man's holster was removed and pocketed.

"Keep him covered till I take care of this nester outfit," directed Swale, and he also dismounted.

Out came Salty Smith's gun again, and Swale put his away.

"Give me a match!"

Wind River Smith groped in his pockets for matches, and to Johnny's infinite astonishment a forty-five was thrust into his hand by its owner, who whispered:

"Don't shoot me!"

Johnny whirled round on Joe Swale and the alleged Smith from Wind River.

"Drop that gun and get off that horse!" he rapped.

In dumbfounded consternation Swale held up his hands, and his companion let go of his six-shooter and descended. Johnny said to the girl:

"Get his gun before it gets him in trouble."

She went quite calmly to Swale without getting in the line of fire, and she took his gun from its holster. Jimmy recovered Johnny's gun from Salty Smith without being asked.

"Now get back on your horses and peel your saddles off!" commanded Johnny. "Go on!"

Reluctantly the three unfastened the girths of their horses and dropped the saddles on the turf. Johnny grinned down at Jimmy.

"Now haze 'em up the road, sonny," he said, "away from town."

The small boy obeyed with alacrity. He set the horses running and flung pebbles after them to speed their departure.

"If you ever catch 'em," Johnny informed the disgruntled trio, "you'll find 'em, and your saddles, with your boss in town. Now move out, pronto! Come on, get goin'!"

The three crooks started off in pursuit of the horses, and Johnny fired over their heads as they ran, then picked up two of the saddles and tossed them into the wagon while Jimmy dragged the other one over. The girl handed him the guns, and he put his own back in its holster and deposited the rest beside the saddles.

The horses had disappeared over the hill at the far end of the valley. Swale and his companions were puffing up the hill.

"There's one little mystery we'll never know the answer to," Johnny remarked as he picked up the pole again.

"What's that?" asked the girl.

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"That big fellow deliberately slipped me his gun!"

"He did?"

"Yeah," Johnny looked into her green eyes and found them fearless. "What I said about your needin' a husband still goes, miss, but seeing as how you haven't got one, why, you'd better turn around and head out."

She pointed across the landscape.

"See that ranch over there amongst those trees?" she asked quite calmly.

"Yeah?" Johnny viewed a wide expanse of rising grassland.

"That's the place I'm going to file on."

"Nothing like being ambitious!"

"It used to be ours. It was stolen from us!"

"How come?"

"Grandfather McGrail settled on it in the fifties, intending to file on it when the Government finished its survey."

Johnny inserted the pole between the tail of the wagon and the logs and put all his weight upon it. The girl helped and Jimmy crouched under the axle with the jack. Up rose the back of the wagon.

"Got it?" asked Johnny.

"Got it!" cried the boy triumphantly.

The axle rested on the jack, the pole was discarded, and Johnny raised the fallen wheel and rolled it back to its proper position with the nave over the end of the axle.

"When the surveys were made," the girl went on, "the land was thrown into Government reserve not open to homestead."

"I'm listening," said Johnny. "Go ahead."

"All he held was squatter's rights. He kept them by leasing from the Government."

"Where's the axle grease, sonny?" shouted Johnny. "Oh, excuse me. Go ahead with your yarn."

Jimmy brought a tin of axle grease and Johnny removed his gloves to use it.

"My father held it the same way," continued the girl, "leasing it for a year at a time. Then one day my father disappeared."

"Right about leasing-time, I reckon," said Johnny, and received the fallen hub-cap from Jimmy and screwed it on.

"They found him a week later, shot through the heart."

"And meanwhile, this fellow Munro had grabbed the lease," Johnny suggested, removing the jack from under the axle.

"Yes, our foreman!" she exclaimed.

"How did you know?"

"I didn't," said he. "I guessed it."

"He may have been the one that killed dad, but Jimmy and I were too young to know anything, so we went south to my uncle."

Jimmy took the jack. He was a quaint little fellow, no more than nine years old, but he was intelligent.

"It's open to homestead now," he said in his piping voice, "and we're gonna grab it!"

"Don't blame you," returned Johnny, and grinned at the girl. "All the same. I still advise you to head back and forget about it."

"Do you expect me to?" she challenged.

"No, but you ought to." Johnny wiped the axle grease from his hands on a piece of rag presented to him by the boy and pulled on his gloves. "Being as how you won't quit, and you haven't got a husband," he said, "there's one thing you've got to have, and that's a foreman. I thank you for offering me the job. Sonny, get in the wagon."

Jimmy made for the driving-seat, but the girl gazed blankly at the self-appointed foreman.

"But I—I haven't got any ranch yet," she stammered.

"No," said Johnny, "but you will have if our luck holds out." And with that he took her arm and marched her round to the front of the wagon as though there were nothing more to be said about the matter.

Johnny Takes Charge

A WOODEN building between the office of the Wells Fargo Express Company and a hardware store in the main street of Ore Grande had been taken over by a Government commissioner as a temporary land office, and a notice across one of its windows stated that it would be open for claims at eight o'clock on the following morning.

This notice had been posted after Johnny had ridden away from the Equality Saloon, and Munro was scowling at it from the boardwalk, with Tuscan beside him, when Harvey Campbell walked up from the restaurant where he had lunched.

"Making faces won't get you anywhere, Barr," he said coldly. "Why don't you forget the nesters? In the morning you can file on the section with the buildings on it."

"I aim to," snapped Munro, "but that doesn't give me any range for my stock."

"Well, as I said before, you'll never keep out the homesteaders."

"No?" Munro put his hands on his hips and spat. "Well, there hasn't been any in here—"

He broke off with an imprecation. A covered wagon had just crossed the bridge, driven by a girl with curly brown hair, and beside it, on a white horse, rode the cowboy he thought he had got rid of for ever. He bit nearly through the cigar that was in his mouth.

"Hold it!" said Johnny, and as the wagon came to a standstill in the middle of the road opposite the land office he drew rein beside the boardwalk and looked down at Munro.

"I thought you'd be glad to know I've found a job, Munro," he said with sarcasm.

"Yeah?" bit back Munro. "What sort of a job?"

"I'm this young lady's foreman."

Munro frowned at the girl on the driving-seat of the wagon and at the small boy on her left.

"Where's her ranch?"

"She hasn't got one yet," replied Johnny in the calmest of voices, "but she will have, to-morrow morning, about eight."

Munro's eyes narrowed at that statement.

"So you're campin' with the nesters now, eh?" he said.

"Yeah, that's right."

"It's kinda dangerous, camping in the gulch in this district. Treacherous climate!"

"Liable to be a cloudburst, wash-outs, and thunderstorms, eh?" bantered Johnny.

"Yeah, something like that."

"Well, we're all good swimmers."

He slid down from his horse and went to the back of the wagon, returning with a saddle which he dumped at Munro's feet, and Harvey Campbell looked on with unfeigned satisfaction as he made a second journey and two more saddles joined the first. Once more the back of the wagon was visited, and this time Johnny returned to offer three guns to the dismayed Munro.

"If your boys ever have any trouble making thunder," he said, "give 'em back their guns. Give 'em back their saddles, too. They may need 'em—when they catch their horses!"

He swung himself up on to his horse. "All right," he said to the girl. "Let's go."

The wagon had turned the corner into Gold Street, and he with it, when over the bridge came three barebacked horses, and behind them, at some little distance, three labouring crooks. After these animals and their pursuers had passed Harvey Campbell walked off without a word. But Tuscan could not resist the opportunity.

"Looks like you need about three more crochet hooks, boss," he remarked.

Johnny escorted the covered wagon to the camp by the creek. He had become quite friendly with the green-eyed girl who drove it, and he knew by this time that her name was Barbara McGrail. She, on her side, had acquired quite an admiration for the way he handled things, and little Jimmy had appointed him a hero.

Once more the homesteaders gathered round Johnny, after the creek had been forded. Barbara and her brother they welcomed, but they were even more glad to see the cowboy again, especially after they had heard the story Barbara had to tell—with interruptions on the part of Jimmy.

David Larkin suggested that Johnny should run the camp.

"Well," said Johnny, "if you really want me to take charge I'm willing, but don't forget it means war."

"That's the only way we'll ever get the land," Larkin declared.

"We'll follow orders," promised Abe Nelson; and the rest endorsed the promise.

"It'll be no fun," said Johnny. "They're liable to raid this camp, and they're certain to try to keep us from the land office to-morrow. They may even follow us to our homesteads—when we've got 'em! All right, if you want to stand and fight, strike your wagons. Throw 'em in a circle, with the fires and stock inside. Later on we'll post guard."

The homesteaders carried out his instructions; the camp became a defensive one, guarded against any sort of surprise. Towards nightfall, Johnny, beside a fire that Jimmy had kindled, enjoyed a meal that Barbara had cooked.

While he was satisfying a healthy appetite, Barr Munro entered the Equality Saloon and sat down at a table with Tuscan, Joe Swale, and several of the alleged Smiths.

"I intended to raid that camp to-night," he said to Swale in the hearing of the others, "but I don't know whether I dare with this bunch of old women you've brought in as gun-slingers!"

He poured himself a drink and swallowed it.

"I guess I got to," he decided. "You go get the rest of the boys, Tuscan, and we'll meet 'em at Sycamore Draw about eleven."

"Want us to go along, too, boss?" inquired Salty Smith.

"No," said Munro curtly. "You don't know the roads yet. You'd probably get lost, anyway."

About an hour later there was singing round the main fire of the homesteaders' camp, under the stars, when Johnny rode out beyond the ring of wagons with Abe Nelson and others and approached a man on guard under a tree, who whirled round with his rifle and challenged:

"Who is it?"

"Change of guard," returned Johnny. "Everything quiet?"

"So far, yeah," was the reply.

"Good! Come along with me. Nelson, you take Iliggins' place."

All round the camp the guard was changed while the singing continued to the accompaniment of guitars and a fiddle, and the men who were relieved made for their respective wagons or tents to rest. Johnny left his horse in Larkin's charge and sauntered over to Barbara, who was sitting on the grass near her own wagon. Jimmy, on his knees, was leaning against her.

"Well," Johnny said to him, "seems like you're up pretty late for a man who's got to get up so early to-morrow."

"Oh, it's not late!" protested the boy; but Barbara sided with Johnny.

"That's right," she said; "you'd better climb into bed, Jimmy."

"Aw, gee, sis," Jimmy expostulated, "I wanta listen to the music!"

"You can hear just as well through the canvas," she insisted. "Go on to bed! Here's your nightshirt, all mended."

He took the nightshirt with an ill-grace and climbed into the wagon.

"Might not be a bad idea," said Johnny, "for you to get some sleep yourself."

"Oh, I couldn't!" she declared. "I'm too excited!"

"You're not worried?"

She shook her head emphatically. "It would be mighty ungrateful, after all you've done for me," she said. "I mean, for us."

"You were right the first time," Johnny informed her with a grin, and a little silence fell between them.

"You seem to have brought new life to the whole camp," she said after a while. "Look at them."

Several couples were dancing, over by the musicians.

"Well," said Johnny gravely, "a lot of things can happen before we get to the land office to-morrow morning."

Somewhere away to the left the sudden crack of a rifle stopped the singing and the dancing, and guns were drawn. Johnny moved out with Barbara from the circle of wagons and saw two horsemen riding across the grass.

"Who's there?" he challenged loudly.

"Post Number Four coming in with a prisoner," was the shouted reply.

"Nelson," said Johnny, and then, to the men who had followed him: "Better stay back, boys—might be a trick! All right, Nelson, ride in, and ride slow!"

Abe Nelson arrived with his prisoner, none other than Salty Smith.

"One of Munro's gunmen," he said. "Caught him sneakin' through the line."

Johnny looked at Salty and recognized him.

"What business have you got in this camp?" he asked, not too severely because of the gun incident.

"I've got something to tell Barbara McGrail," was the astonishing answer.

"Barbara?" echoed Johnny. "Here, Barbara, do you know this man?"

Barbara did not reply.

"Better tell them, honey," urged Salty Smith, "or they won't believe what I've got to say."

"He—he's my uncle," Barbara faltered.

"Your uncle?" cried Johnny, staring at her incredulously. "One of Munro's men?"

"Tryin' to prove that he killed my brother Solon—her father," explained

Salty. "My real name's Daniel McGrail."

"Well, that sorta clears up that gun business this afternoon," said Johnny; and then Barbara asked eagerly:

"Did you find out anything, Uncle Dan?"

"Nothing about your father," admitted her uncle. "I've come to warn you. They're going to raid this camp to-night!"

Half a dozen of the homesteaders shouted questions simultaneously, but Johnny silenced them.

"What time?" he demanded.

"About midnight."

"Where's Munro now?"

"In town, at the saloon."

"Good! You get back there as quick as you can before he discovers you've gone!"

Daniel McGrail nodded, turned his horse, and galloped off in the direction of the creek. Johnny issued orders.

"Nelson," he said, "call in the rest of the guards. One of you fellows saddle my horse. Barbara, you'd better get in the wagon. Larkin, divide the men into watches, one hour each, turn and turn about till daylight. Douse all those fires, and you take charge while I'm gone."

"What d'you aim to do?" asked Larkin.

"Find Munro and stop this raid before it starts—if I can."

His horse was brought to him, and he rode away on it.

The Shooting of Daniel McGrail

HARVEY CAMPBELL and the sheriff were at the har of the Equality Saloon, and Munro was still at the table across the bar-room with Joe Swale and others of his hirelings, half an hour later. Swale looked up at the wall.

"If that clock there's right," he remarked, "we'd better be on our way."

Munro took out a watch attached to a very ornamental gold chain.

"Guess you're right," he said, "but it'd look better if we didn't all leave together. Meet you at the edge of the town in ten minutes."

He was moving towards the swing-doors when one of them was pushed open and Johnny strode into the saloon.

"You may as well sit down, Munro," he said in a voice that could be heard all over the room. "There'll be no raid on our camp to-night."

The sheriff swung round.

"What's this talk about a raid?" he exploded. "What raid?"

"They're all set to attack us at midnight," Johnny replied, "unless you can do something to stop it."

"Aw, the man's crazy, sheriff!" rasped Munro. "Stand aside and let me settle—"

He went to draw his gun, but the sheriff caught hold of his arm.

"Wait a minute!" he roared. "None of that, Munro! D'you know what you're talkin' about, young man?"

"I ought to," replied Johnny. "We've had a spy in his camp—a man who's been trailing him for something he did eight or nine years ago. I knew you couldn't handle him alone, sheriff, so we've organised a Vigilance Committee."

Harvey Campbell, with his back to the bar, frowned heavily. The sheriff said sharply:

"Well, now, you can't do that!"

"Yes, we can," retorted Johnny.

"No, you can't!"

"Yes, we can! We're goin' to drive gun law out of this valley, if only you

and the Cattleman's Association will back us up."

The sheriff screwed up his eyes and looked at Campbell.

"I think he's right about that, Harvey," he growled.

"Aw, don't be a fool, Campbell," put in Munro. "He wants you to do his fightin' for him!"

"If you don't mind, Barr, I'll do my own thinkin'," said Campbell. "Us cattlemen have got no love for gunmen, sheriff, but we ain't got much more for nesters."

"We've got a right to settle this land," stormed Johnny.

"A right, yes," agreed Campbell. "But we've got to have land to range our stock, and feelin' as we do about you and your fences, we're more than fair in stayin' neutral."

"That's just the point," Johnny objected. "You can't be neutral. If you don't fight with us, then you might as well fight against us."

"How d'you figure that?"

"Why, without your help we're licked. We may get the land, but Munro's men will pick us off one by one after we're settled."

"He's right about that, Harvey," boomed the sheriff, "and you know it."

"I've heard all I want about what me and my men are doin'," blazed Munro.

"You ain't called on to listen," Campbell retorted.

"Well, if we're such killers, why don't the sheriff arrest some of us?"

The sheriff, thus challenged, shifted uncomfortably.

"If I was to arrest people for what they're gonna do," he said rather lamely, "I'd have arrested you long ago. I've got to wait till the crimes are committed—and then it's too late."

Munro laughed derisively, and Campbell came to a decision.

"Looks like you're forcing us into action," he said to Johnny. "I'll step over to headquarters and send for the members to come in."

The sheriff looked relieved.

"Now I knowed that—" he began.

"You mean you'll back us up?"

Johnny broke in.

"Well, not exactly. We can't let you get yourselves killed, but we can keep you out of the valley for your own good."

"Campbell," said Johnny grimly, "if you raid our camp to-night, there'll be a lot of empty saddles in Ore Grande by morning!"

"There won't be any raid," stated Campbell with acerbity, "but we'll be in town to-morrow to see that you don't file on any land!"

The sheriff puffed out his cheeks.

"Harvey," he said angrily, "you and me's been friends for a good many years, but this just about settles it. I'm sorry!"

"Me, too!" rapped Campbell.

The sheriff went out from the saloon in a teuper, and Johnny followed him. Munro said:

"I knowed you'd come round to our way o' thinkin' eventually, Harvey."

"Well, I haven't, Barr!" Campbell retorted; and he, too, went out.

Joe Swale and another man, a killer named Slavin, rose up from the table and joined their employer, who said exultingly:

"He played right into our hands! He even tipped me off to the spy!"

"Who is he?" asked Swale.

"Salty Smith! I knew I'd seen him somewhere. He's McGrail's brother Dan. You two go trail him, and see that he doesn't talk any more."

Harvey Campbell walked up the July 11th, 1936.

street to the headquarters of the Cattleman's Association without a glance for the sheriff, who was standing by the hitching-rail where Johnny was unfastening his horse.

"What're you gonna do now?" the sheriff inquired.

"Ridin' back to camp," replied Johnny, and he swung himself up into the saddle and went slowly down the street.

He had gone no farther than the laud office when Daniel McGrail ran out from a yard at the side of the saloon and intercepted the sheriff, who was about to cross over to his office.

"I want to swear out a warrant for Barr Munro's arrest for murder," he stated.

"Murder?" exclaimed the startled sheriff. "Whose murder? Who are you?"

"I'm the spy Johnny Flagg was telling you about in the saloon—I heard him at the side window. Munro killed my brother eight years ago. I knew he did it, but I never could prove it till to-night."

Sheriff Luther Davies drew a long breath.

"You can prove it now?" he demanded.

"Yes," was the emphatic reply. "To-night, just before Flagg came into the saloon, I was seated at a table—"

A jet of flame pierced the darkness of the yard, a shot rang out, and Daniel McGrail fell forward on his face.

Out came the sheriff's gun, and he blazed away at two indistinct figures flying down the yard. Men streamed out from the saloon, heads appeared at windows, and Johnny turned his horse at the bottom of the street and came galloping back.

"What happened, sheriff?" he cried.

"Somebody shot one of Munro's men." The sheriff addressed the crowd at large. "Some of you boys go get Doc Ramsey, and some of you help me over to my office with him, will you?"

Two men sped off to get the doctor; others lifted up the wounded man, and he was carried across the street into the sheriff's office, where he was deposited upon a couch.

The doctor arrived, an experienced old fellow, white of hair and beard and ruddy of complexion. Daniel McGrail had been shot in the back and was unconscious. The bullet was extracted, the wound was dressed, and by that time the crowd had drifted away. But Johnny lingered and the sheriff paced up and down his office.

Finally Doc Ramsey put on his coat and picked up his little black bag.

"Still unconscious, doc?" asked the sheriff anxiously.

"Yes," was the reply. "Liable to be for hours. I think we'd better move him over to my place."

"I don't think you'd better," said Johnny. "If the killer's still after him he's a lot safer here."

"Yeah, that's right," agreed the sheriff gruffly. "Anyway, I want to talk to him when he comes to."

"All right." Doc Ramsey put on his hat. "I'll drop in on him from time to time, then. Good-night."

After he had gone and the door was closed, the sheriff perched discousolately upon his desk.

"Wouldn't you know this'd have to happen to me?" he complained. "Just when I could put Munro out of the running!"

"Munro?" echoed Johnny. "What d'you mean?"

"This fellow wanted a warrant for Munro's arrest for killing his brother.

He was just givin' me the facts when the shot was fired."

Johnny went over to the couch and looked down at the unconscious man. The sheriff flung his hat on a chair and followed him.

"Did he say he could prove it?" asked Johnny.

"Yeah, but he didn't say how." "That's funny!" he told me he couldn't."

"Well, he musta found out just before you came." The sheriff ran a hand through his jet-black hair and scratched the back of his head. "Oh, I say, I plumb forgot to ask you! You know who he is, don't you?"

"Sure," replied Johnny. "Don't you?"

"Not the least idea."

"Why, that's Solon McGrail's brother Dan."

"He is?" The sheriff gazed again at the unshaven face on the rough pillow of the couch. "Well, I always figured Munro did that job," he said bleakly. "Now I know it, and I can't do a thing about it."

"You don't dare arrest him, I suppose?" asked Johnny.

"On whose testimony?"

That decidedly was a stumbling-block. Johnny frowned at a calendar on the wall.

"If you told the cattlemen," he said slowly, "it might keep them from backing Munro."

"And our friend here might never come to!" growled the sheriff. "Then where would I be?"

Johnny heaved a sigh.

"Well, I guess there goes Miss McGrail's chance of getting her ranch back," he remarked regretfully.

The sheriff started.

"What did you say?" he cried.

"Babs McGrail?"

"Yeah," nodded Johnny. "Why?"

"What's she doin' here? Is she with the nesters?"

"Sure. She's aimin' to file on the old ranch—take it right out from under Munro."

The sheriff's beady little eyes rounded with excitement.

"Say, you go up to headquarters and tell that to Campbell!" he cried. "That'll stop him."

Johnny made for the door, but the sheriff stopped him as he was in the act of opening it.

"Just a second!" he said with a grimace. "Don't tell the old toad I sent you, because I don't want any truck with him at all."

His words did not carry conviction, but Johnny nodded and went out in haste.

A False Charge

JOE SWALE, who was lurking in the vcranda of the saloon as Johnny crossed the street, watched him till he had entered the balconied building near the bridge, then dived in at the swing-doors and went to Munro, who was drinking at the bar.

"I just saw Johnny Flagg go into the Association," he confided.

"Sheriff with him?" asked Munro.

"No, alone."

"Oh!" Munro looked round the crowded bar-room and beckoned to some of his men.

Johnny had found Harvey Campbell at a table in a little office at the side of the big room in which meetings of the cattlemen were held. There was an oil-lamp on the table and in its light the rancher was writing notes to all the members of the Association, summoning them to town.

He scowled at Johnny as he entered, but he listened to what the intruder had to say, and his expression changed completely when Barbara's name was mentioned.

"Little Babs McGrail?" he exclaimed. "Well, that sort of alters things. Her father was about the best friend I had."

He sat back in his chair to review the situation.

"It ain't in nature for cattlemen to fight for nesters," he said, "but we sure can't help Munro beat McGrail's kids out of what belongs to 'em. I reckon you win, son, and to tell you the truth I'm glad of it. Here, take this list and get word to the men named on it. I'll write a note."

On a sheet of paper that was lying on the blotting-pad he had already written: "Meet in town not later than 8 a.m." He added to it: "We have to back the nesters. Solon McGrail's kids are with them. Harvey Campbell, chairman."

He folded the sheet of paper twice, addressed it to Donald Sherman, the double-chimned rancher who was vice-chairman of the Cattlemen's Association, and handed it to Johnny.

"Better not lose any time," he said. "Oh, and when you see the sheriff, tell him I'm not such an ornery old cuss as he thinks I am."

"He never even suspected you were," Johnny assured him, and he pocketed the list and the note and went out through the big room to the street.

Barr Munro and Joe Swale were hiding in an alley at the side of the building as he emerged from it, and Joe Swale raised his gun. But Munro knocked it down.

"Don't shoot," he whispered. "We can use him later."

Johnny stepped off the boardwalk, and the two sneaked in at the door to

Campbell's office. The elderly rancher sprang up from his chair at sight of the guns in their hands.

"So you thought you could turn on me, did you?" Munro rasped, and twice his gun spat fire.

Campbell spun round on his feet before he collapsed and fell on his back near a filing-cabinet.

"Quick!" cried Munro. "Let's get out the back way!"

There was a door at the back of the office. It was locked, but the key was in the lock. Joe Swale opened this door, and he and Munro were out in a yard behind the premises when Johnny raced back because he had heard the shots.

Gun in hand he burst into the room he so recently had left, and there his worst fears were confirmed. He went down on one knee by the head of the dead rancher and felt at his heart, but the grating of a key in the lock of the door made him look up. Swale was locking the door on the outside.

He was on his feet instantly, and he flew to a window and opened it. The yard was in darkness, but he fired twice in the direction of running feet, and he was about to climb out of the window when Slavin and a number of Munro's men crowded into the room.

"What's happened?" demanded Slavin.

"Someone shot Mr. Campbell," Johnny replied. "Take care of him while I trail the killer."

"Wait a minute!" Slavin seized hold of his arm and the hand that held the gun. "We don't have to go far for the killer."

"Don't stop me, you fool!" shouted Johnny. "I didn't do it!"

"No?" jeered Slavin. "Why, your gun's still hot!"

"Of course it is. I fired a couple of shots out of the window."

"Any of you believe that?" Slavin asked scornfully of the others.

"No," responded several voices; but the sheriff pushed his way into the room, and he said authoritatively:

"Well, I do, and that's all that counts. Gimmo that gun!"

Slavin let go of Johnny with the utmost reluctance.

"You ain't gonna turn him loose!" he challenged.

"I'm gonna do what the law requires," the sheriff retorted, "if we have to blast our way out!"

Johnny was surrendering his gun when Munro stalked into the room with Swale.

"What's the trouble?" he inquired.

"Harvey Campbell's been killed," Slavin answered, and with clenched fists Munro thrust his face into Johnny's.

"So you got even with Campbell for not siding with you, eh?" he roared.

"I reckon you're the man in this town who knows best that that's a lie!" Johnny snapped back at him.

"Are we gonna let one man and a badge stand between us and that killer?" demanded Swale.

The sheriff promptly handed Johnny back his gun and drew his own; but there were several perfectly peaceable July 11th, 1936

townsmen in the room by this time, and Munro was artful.

"Wait a minute!" he commanded "That's up to the association! It's not our affair, it's theirs!"

The sheriff marched his prisoner out from the building and over to his office, and from the boardwalk Munro and his men watched them till they had disappeared.

"I guess that's the end of Johnny Flag and his nesters," exulted Munro.

"Listen, boys, ride out and tell all the ranchers what's happened."



Eagerly the sheriff took down a halting statement upon his pad, but it was not complete when the wounded man lapsed once more into unconsciousness.

While Swale and Slavin and Tuscan were getting their horses and riding away on them Johnny was locked in a cell at the back of the sheriff's office. The sheriff was badly upset over Campbell's death, and he stared gloomily out of the window as the local undertaker drove by on his backboard.

"I kinda wish I hadn't told Harvey I was mad at him," he said brokenly, "cause I wasn't."

"He knew it," said Johnny. "I told him myself."

"Did you, Johnny?" The sheriff turned away from the window to the bars of the cell and there were tears in his eyes. "Honest? Why did you?"

"He told me to tell you he wasn't so ornery himself."

"Well, doggone it, now I know you didn't shoot him! I'm gonna prove it, too!"

"That won't be so hard," said Johnny, and he took the folded sheet of paper from his shirt pocket and held it out. "Read that!"

The sheriff had to wipe his eyes before he could read what Harvey Campbell had written.

"Why didn't you show me that sooner?" he asked reproachfully, and turned to his desk to get a bunch of keys.

"Here, don't unlock it!" pleaded Johnny as one of the keys was inserted in the lock of the barred door. "I want Munro to figure I'm under arrest when he comes ridin' in here to-morrow morning."

The sheriff stared.

"And then what?" he asked wonderingly.

"Write a letter," suggested Johnny, "and send it out to the nesters' camp."

"Can't quite see the idea, Johnny," confessed the sheriff, "but I'll do that. I'll be glad to."

He threw the keys back on the desk and sat down at it with pen and paper. Johnny dictated a message which he wrote down, and when it was finished he said:

"Address it to Mr. David Larkin."

A Surprise for Sherman

THE note was delivered at the camp near the creek by a messenger whom the sheriff knew to be trustworthy. The messenger was conducted to Larkin by one of the men on guard, and Larkin read the note aloud in the light of one of the fires.

"Send Miss McGrail and Jimmy in with the bearer. All others be in town before eight in the morning, but no guns showing.—JOHNNY FLAGG."

"No guns?" growled Abe Nelson. "Sounds like a trick to me."

"No, it ain't," declared the messenger. "The sheriff's back of him. The sheriff sent me here."

"I'll take a chance," decided Larkin.

Barbara was in her wagon, fully clothed and wide awake. She was perfectly ready to do as Johnny wished, and Jimmy was awakened and dressed.

On one of the horses from her wagon she and her small brother rode double, and Larkin accompanied them and the messenger across the creek and into the town, returning with the horse after he had seen them enter the sheriff's office.

Through what remained of the night Munro's men called on one rancher after another, and dawn was breaking when Joe Swale hammered on the front door of Donald Sherman's home and its owner descended to him in his night-shirt and a pair of slippers.

"Round up the neighbouring ranchers," said Swale in his own crude July 11th, 1936.

fashion. "The nesters have killed Campbell."

"Campbell?" gasped Sherman.

"Yeah."

"All right, I'll get my clothes on. You go to the north side of the valley and I'll take the south."

"Meet us at the bridge west of town," said Swale, remounting his horse. "The others'll be gatherin' there."

With the dawn the homesteaders struck camp, under Dave Larkin's directions, and the long train of wagons crossed the creek and moved slowly towards Ore Grande.

Half an hour before sunrise Doe Ramsey paid another visit to the sheriff's office, and he was applying his stethoscope to the heart of Daniel McGrail when that wounded man recovered consciousness and murmured something.

"He may be able to talk in a minute," said the doctor, and thereupon the sheriff pulled up a chair beside the couch and sat down on it with a pad and pencil. Barbara moved her chair across the floor and Jimmy crouched beside her.

Presently her uncle opened his eyes and smiled feebly at her. He looked at the sheriff and began to speak in a voice barely audible.

Eagerly the sheriff took down a halting statement upon his pad, but it was not by any means complete when the wounded man lapsed once more into unconsciousness.

"Aw, he's fainted again!" lamented the sheriff. "Still, I can make out that warrant now."

He went to his desk, put the pad away in a drawer, and from another drawer took out a printed sheet of blue paper. Barbara and Johnny talked together as he wrote; the doctor announced confidently that his patient would recover and went home to breakfast.

At seven o'clock in the morning the sheriff yawned prodigiously and stepped over to Johnny's cell for about the twentieth time since sunrise.

"Don't be a fool, Johnny," he urged. "Get your horse and ride out o' town while there's still time."

"I said 'no,'" gritted Johnny.

"Oh, come on!"

Barbara went to the door of bars. "The sheriff's right, Johnny," she said agitatedly. "It's too big a gamble to take."

"It's not too big a gamble," declared Johnny. "Not if I know cowmen."

The train of wagons had entered Gold Street by this time and was beginning to line up there. Jimmy cried excitedly from the window of the sheriff's office:

"Here come the nesters!"

Barbara ran to the window. Most of the homesteaders' womenfolk and children were left with the wagons while the men followed Larkin in a solid body to the door of the land office. Larkin tried the door and found it locked.

"Looks like we're in plenty of time," he said. "Guess we'll stay right here. First come, first served."

On the far side of the bridge at the top of Main Street nearly a score of ranchers and foremen had arrived on their horses. Swale and Tuscan were with them. Munro joined them and led the way to the land office, their self-appointed spokesman.

"You fellows might as well get back to your wagons and forget this land business," he shouted to the waiting homesteaders, but Dave Larkin stepped forward.

"How so?" he challenged.

"There's no one gonna file on this land but us cattlemen!"

"The law says—" Larkin began heatedly, but Munro cut him short. "The Cattlemen's Association is runnin' things for the time being."

Out came his gun, and all the cattlemen drew their weapons. The homesteaders were armed, but in accordance with Johnny's instructions they were not wearing belts and their guns were in their pockets.

"What have you done with Johnny Flagg?" demanded Larkin.

"Nothing yet," snapped Munro. "Now get back to your wagons!"

At a signal from their leader the homesteaders turned and streamed slowly back to the corner. Munro spoke to Donald Sherman, who had remained silent on his horse.

"All right, Sherman," he said. "my men will back you up while you attend to your business."

The rancher nodded and ambled over to the sheriff's office, followed by the rest of the cattlemen. Munro and his men dismounted and stood on guard outside the land office.

At the corner of Gold Street Abe Nelson looked back.

"What are you gonna do?" he asked apprehensively, as Larkin stopped short.

"When that office opens," was the determined reply, "we're goin' in to file!"

The sheriff emerged from his office as the cattlemen drew up outside it, and with his hands on his hips he addressed them from the doorstep.

"Well," he said gruffly. "I suppose you boys have come for the fellow who killed Campbell?"

"We have," replied Sherman, "and I hope you're not goin' to make too much fuss about it."

"No fuss at all," the sheriff assured him, "but there isn't room for all of you. Step right inside, Sherman, and take him."

Sherman descended bulkily from his horse and followed the sheriff in over the step. He saw Johnny, standing with folded arms behind the bars of his cell, and he had eyes only for him. "Wher's the key to the cell?" he rapped.

"He's got it," purred the sheriff. "He's got it?" howled the astounded rancher.

"Yeah. I tried to get him to leave town, but he said he wanted to talk to you boys first."

Sherman advanced to the bars.

"Have you got the key to this cell?" he hellowed.

"I have," replied Johnny, "and you can have it in just a minute. But first I want to ask you a couple o' questions."

"Go ahead."

"Did Munro tell you that I killed Mr. Campbell?"

"Yes."

"Did he say why?"

"Because Harvey refused to back you and the nesters."

Johnny smiled, unfolded his arms, and held out the note Harvey Campbell had written.

"Read that," he said. "See if you think he refused to back us."

Sherman stared, but he opened out the sheet of paper, and he read the message aloud as though it needed his voice to convince him that the words were actually there:

"Meet in town not later than eight a.m. We have to back the nesters. Solon McGrail's kids are with them."

"HARVEY CAMPBELL, Chairman."

(Continued on page 26)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

A strange planet, hitherto unknown, has shifted from its orbit and loomed into the view of the peoples of the Earth. It is the planet Mongo, and its overlord is Ming, a sinister figure who had probed the fundamental secrets of Nature.

Dr. Zarkov, an American scientist, sets out in a rocket ship to penetrate the stratosphere. He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart, but they reach the new planet only to be seized by Ming, who wants to marry the beautiful blonde Earth-girl and make her the Empress of the Universe.

Flash and Dale escape with the aid of Aura, Ming's daughter, who is attracted by Flash. They are also assisted by Thun, a prince whose father rules a territory on Mongo which has not yet been subdued by Ming. Dale and Thun, however, are captured and carried off by winged men in the pay of King Vultan, who dominates an amazing sky-city poised thousands of feet above the surface of the planet.

Zarkov and Flash visit the sky-city with Prince Barin, rightful heir to the throne Ming occupies, and they manage to gain the friendship of Vultan, who only returns them to Ming on condition that they are not harmed.

But Ming plans to destroy Flash, and a priest in his employ cunningly persuades Aura to drug the American, who is then carried to the lair of a beast known as the Fire Dragon.

Now Read On

**EPISODE 10:—
"The Unseen Peril"**

The Claws of the Monster

FURY and anguish were written on the features of the Princess Aura—fury at the manner in which she had been tricked, anguish at the sight of Flash Gordon's deadly peril.

She realised now that she had been but an instrument in the grim plot that her father and the High Priest had conceived. Lured by the prospect of carrying Flash to the remote Temple of Taos, and of persuading him to accept her as his bride when he should recover from the drug of forgetfulness, she had fallen all too readily into a cruel snare.

How clearly she saw it all! Her father and the High Priest could have brought about the American's destruction unaided, but it had suited them to draw her into the plan. It was Ming's way of punishing an unruly daughter—to make her an accessory in the slaying of the man with whom she was infatuated.

Frantically she struggled in the arms of the retainers who held her. The rest of the High Priest's minions were setting their shoulders to the door of the Fire Dragon's lair, but had not yet got it closed, and her blazing eyes were fixed on the scene that was being enacted in the tunnel beyond—where Flash Gordon lay prone and insensible on the abandoned stretcher, and where the huge form of the aroused monster

was looming up amidst the sulphurous smoke-clouds that filled the cavern.

With a superhuman effort the Princess Aura managed to break away from her captors, and before they could pounce on her again she was rushing forward to the men who were on the point of closing the door.

One of those possessed a ray-pistol that was thrust into a belt around his waist, and with a swift gesture Ming's daughter snatched the weapon. Next instant she was directing it into the misty tunnel ahead of her.

She could see the Fire Dragon plainly now, a loathsome brute like a giant, winged lizard, its jaws agape and its fangs bared, its hot breath issuing from its nostrils in foul, vapourish jets. It had dragged its great body to the spot where Flash Gordon lay, and it was poised above him ghoulishly, its hideous talons reaching down to close fast on him.

Another moment and the claws must have dug deep into the unconscious American's flesh and then lifted him to the monster's hungry throat. But ere the dragon could seize its prey there came a withering stream of fire from the ray-gun in Aura's hand.

A death-current struck the massive reptile's breast, and it seemed to rise up on high, uttering a queer, half-strangled snarl as it did so. Then it toppled backwards and crashed to the floor of its den, to lie there in a quivering but lifeless heap amid the weird fumes that swirled about the tunnel.

There was a silence during which no
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one made a move, least of all the men who had been pressing against the heavy door in a concerted attempt to close it. Then the High Priest spoke in a voice that shook with emotion.

"You have killed the sacred Fire Dragon!"

Aura turned on him, and, awed as he was by the act which he had just witnessed, he forgot his superstitious in a thrill of personal alarm as the girl levelled the ray-gun at him.

There was a scathing hatred in the girl's expression, and for a second it looked as if the High Priest were about to share the monster's fate. But, even as the princess hesitated between blasting the life out of him or showing mercy, there came a rapid scuffle of footfalls that diverted her attention, and all at once King Vultan swung into view with Barin, Zarkov and Dale at his heels.

Aura looked at them uncertainly, and was still in a state of indecision when Vultan caught her by the hand and wrested the pistol from her grasp. At the same time his companions hurried forward into the cavern where Flash lay, and fell on their knees beside the insensible American.

"How is he?" Vultan called out presently, in his deep, gruff tones.

"He's alive," answered Zarkov, "but we can't rouse him. He is under the influence of some very powerful drug."

Vultan, King of the Hawk Men, glared at Aura and the High Priest one after the other.

"What devilry is behind all this?" he rasped. "Come, I want the truth!"

"I was tricked into it, Vultan!" Aura exclaimed hotly. "I believed the High Priest was helping me to get Flash away from the Earth girl, Dale Arden. But in reality he and my father had planned Flash Gordon's death."

Vultan looked at her from under his beetling brows, and then he riveted his eyes on Ming's priest.

"There will be no further opportunity for treachery," he said, "whether it concerns your master's desire to get rid of the Earth man, or the Princess Aura's ambition to marry him."

"The bride of Gordon's choice is Dale Arden," he added thickly, "and he was to wed her to-morrow. But in view of what has happened to-night there will be no delay. The ceremony will take place as soon as Gordon has recovered, and immediately after it we shall leave this accursed realm—I to return to my sky-city, the Earth people to return to their own world in the rocket ship that brought them here."

The High Priest glanced at him in a furtive manner.

"And you think Ming will consent to such an arrangement?" he said with a faint sneer.

"He would be ill-advised to offer any objections," Vultan ground out. "Go—tell him to prepare for the ceremony in the chapel. Go! Do you hear me?"

The last words were uttered in a bellow, and he stressed them the more by advancing on the High Priest threateningly, so that the latter quailed before him and made haste to remove himself from the vicinity. Then Vultan strode to the entrance of the tunnel, and, with one eye on the priest's servants, watched Zarkov and Barin and Dale as they strove to revive Flash.

As for Aura, she remained motionless for the space of two or three minutes. But suddenly a queer expression dawned on her pallid face, and like a woman with a purpose she slipped quietly away and retraced her steps to the upper corridors of the palace.

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The suite of rooms which her father occupied was the objective that she had in mind, and on arrival there she found Ming in conference with the High Priest, a number of armed guards being present as well.

It was obvious that the priest had told his story, for Ming's countenance was dark with anger, and he was speaking in wrathful accents when Aura put in an appearance.

"The marriage will not take place," he was saying viciously. "Dale Arden will be my bride and no other man's—and Gordon's life is forfeit by reason of the defiance he has shown ever since he crossed my path. Nor will Vultan stand in my way. One false move on his part, and he shall be dealt with, even if it plunges us into a war with the winged Hawk Men. I—"

He paused as he became aware that Aura had crossed the threshold, and he launched a bitter glance at her through his narrowed lids. It was a glance that she returned steadfastly, however, and, approaching him, she addressed him in a calm voice.

"Father," she announced, "you and the High Priest played me false, but I have come here to tell you that you need no longer concern yourself with Flash Gordon."

"What do you mean?"

"Did the High Priest not tell you that he is under the influence of the drug that brings forgetfulness?" she replied. "Yes, father, the drug of forgetfulness. And thus, when he recovers consciousness, he will recall nothing of the past. He will not remember Dale Arden—and therefore he will have no desire to marry her."

A gleam of interest became apparent on Ming's face, and he looked at the High Priest, who at once confirmed Aura's statement.

"The princess is right, your Majesty. Gordon will remember nothing."

"So why kill him, father?" Aura went on quickly. "You only hate him, because Dale Arden is in love with him. But if he is no longer interested in her she may turn to you—yes, and turn to you more readily than she ever would if the thought were always in her mind that you had slain him. Let him live, father, for my sake."

Ming regarded her in silence for a spell, and then he gave an inscrutable smile.

"Let him live?" he murmured. "We shall see, we shall see. But the drug of forgetfulness—that is an intriguing factor. It might be amusing to go to the chapel in accordance with Vultan's wishes—very amusing."

And all at once, signing to the others to follow him, he made his way from the room.

Aura and the High Priest fell into step behind him, and were accompanied by the armed guards who had been assembled in the emperor's suite, these forming a procession which eventually trooped into the chapel wherein Ming and his court were wont to pay homage to the heathen deity known as Taos.

It was here that Flash had once rescued Dale from Ming's clutches and appalled the High Priest by shattering a sacred idol. But that statue had since been replaced by another, and it was in the shadow of this enormous figure of stone that the emperor and his party now took up their positions.

They had not long to wait before King Vultan entered the chapel with Dale, Zarkov, Barin and Flash, the latter being supported in the arms of his friends and walking with the air

of one who was not yet in full possession of his wits.

Vultan strode across to Ming and glowered at him in a domineering fashion.

"I'm glad to see you thought it as well to obey me," he rumbled. "Gordon is still somewhat dazed, but he should soon be himself again."

Ming volunteered no answer, merely slid his cunning eyes upon Flash and watched the American as Zarkov and Barin stood chafing his hands and face; and presently their efforts seemed to meet with more success, for Flash drew himself up, and, looking around in a puzzled manner, stammered out a hesitant query.

"Where—where am I?" he asked.

It was Ming who offered a reply, advancing upon the younger man as he spoke.

"You are in the palace of the Emperor of the Universe, Gordon," he said, "and you are here for the purpose of choosing a bride. Whom shall it be? My daughter, Princess Aura; Or the Earth girl, Dale Arden?"

He pointed to Dale and Aura in turn, and Flash gazed at each in a bewildered fashion; was silent for the space of several seconds, and then managed to find his voice.

"A bride?" he echoed dully. "Why should I choose a bride—amongst strangers? Who are these two girls?"

Vultan a Prisoner

IF Flash Gordon's words had been anticipated by Aura and those who shared her secret, the reverse was the case so far as Dale and her friends were concerned, and at first they could only stare at him in amazement.

Then all at once Dale confronted him, and, clutching him by the arm, she looked up into his face with a piteous expression of appeal in her blue eyes.

"Flash," she cried, "what have they done to you? You know me! You know me, don't you?"

He regarded her blankly, without the least sign of recognition on his handsome features, and when Barin, Zarkov and Vultan gathered around him and began to speak to him they were met with that same puzzled scrutiny.

"He knows none of us!" Vultan blurted out at last. "Something has happened to him which has robbed him of his memory! And, by thunder, we don't have to seek far to learn the cause! Ming, this is the work of you and your precious daughter and that crafty High Priest!"

He swung round on the emperor savagely as he made the accusation, and was roused to a further pitch of anger by the mocking smile that he saw on the man's lips.

"What witchcraft has been practised on Flash Gordon?" he rasped. "Come, Ming, you'd better talk!"

The emperor continued to smile at him, however, as if inviting him to do his worst, and Vultan seemed on the point of laying violent hands on the scoundrelly potentate when Aura suddenly stepped close to Flash and thrust Dale Arden to one side.

"You and I are strangers, son of the Earth," she told the American in soothing accents. "I am your friend, though you may not remember me—a friend who has been true to you ever since we first met. Come with me, and I'll try to explain."

She took him by the wrist, and, submissively enough, he allowed her to lead him towards the door of the chapel. But before they had taken half a dozen steps Vultan was roaring a protest.

"Stop!" he shouted. "There has

been trickery here—witchcraft—and I mean to defeat it! Ming, either you'll tell me what has been done to Gordon, or I'll—"

"Have a care, Vultan," the emperor interrupted menacingly. "Have a care lest your temper leads you into trouble. I am inclined to think you presume upon the privileges of a guest."

"Presume?" the King of the Hawk Men stormed. "I'll do more than presume! I'll drop you dead in your tracks unless you give me an answer to this mystery."

He was still gripping the ray-pistol that he had wrested from Aura in the vicinity of the Fire Dragon's lair, and now he levelled it at Ming. But on the instant some of the emperor's guards swarmed upon him, and there ensued a desperate mêlée that filled the chapel with the sound of oaths and blows.

It was a struggle in which Barin and Zarkov were able to play no part, for those of Ming's guards who had not flung themselves on Vultan had closed in on the prince and the scientist ominously, and prevented them from interfering.

King Vultan was, therefore, left to battle against his foes unaided, and, although the ray-gun had been knocked from his hand at the first onset, he put up a magnificent resistance with his bare fists, fighting with a berserk fury that scattered his antagonists again and again.

Towering above them, he might have been likened to some Viking of old as he stood there and drove his bunched knuckles into the flushed faces of the men who had assailed him, and with every blow that he struck a soldier measured his length on the floor. Yet each warrior was soon on his feet once more, and, despite Vultan's prowess, it

was clear that the affair could only have one result and that weight of numbers must tell in the end.

The King of the Hawk Men was overpowered at last, and, held fast in the arms of his captors, he was finally reduced to uttering fierce, prophetic warnings of the disaster that would overtake the Imperial stronghold before long.

"You shall pay for this night's work, Ming!" he raved. "You shall pay dearly!"

"To the dungeons with him," the emperor drawled. "I grow weary of his voice."

"Fool!" Vultan bellowed. "Do you think you can treat me in this manner and live to boast of it? When I fail to return to my sky-city my faithful Hawk Men will come here as swiftly as the birds from which they take their name. And then, Ming—then you shall regret this piece of treachery!"

"We shall be ready for your Hawk Men, Vultan," the self-styled Emperor of the Universe retorted, "and we shall give them a warm welcome when they arrive. Meantime, you will cool your heels in one of my darkest cells. Away with him, guards, and put him under lock and key."

Writhing and cursing, Vultan was dragged out of the chapel, and little by little his irate shouts died away in the distance. Then Aura made her way from the hall of worship, still holding Flash Gordon's hand persuasively, and when she and the bemused American had departed Ming focused his attention on Zarkov, Dale and Barin.

"I trust that none of you shares King Vultan's disapproval in regard to what has taken place here to-night?" he said softly.

They were silent, knowing that it was useless to show defiance, and after grin-

ning at them evilly Ming spoke again in his thin, sibilant voice.

"I suggest you return to your respective quarters and accept a situation which you cannot alter," he observed. "In the morning, Zarkov, I shall expect you to bring the lovely Earth girl to me in the audience-room, where I shall have something important to say to her concerning her future rôle as Empress of Mongo."

He paused, and then fixed his narrow, slanting eyes on Barin.

"As for you, my friend," he remarked significantly, "I advise you to be extremely careful so far as your conduct is concerned. One false move on your part, and it is liable to be your last. Remember that."

He dismissed them with a gesture, and slowly, heavily, the three of them filed out of the chapel. But they had not gone far when Dale laid a hand on Zarkov's sleeve and addressed him in a querulous tone.

"Doctor," she faltered, "what could they have done to Flash to make his mind a complete blank? What's happened to him, that he failed to recognize any of us?"

It was not Zarkov who answered her, but Prince Barin.

"There is only one reply to that question," he muttered. "They must have given him the draught of forgetfulness."

"The draught of forgetfulness?" echoed Zarkov.

"A potion that kills the memory," Barin explained. "After receiving it, the victim becomes insensible for a while. When he recovers, his past life is like a closed book to him, and he can remember nothing of it. That is what has happened to Flash Gordon, and it was Aura who gave him the



"Beware, Gordon!" Torch rapped out. "My men hold you covered, and if you offer resistance the death-fire will be poured into your body here and now!"

draught, of course—in the hope of winning him."

It was an explanation that Dale and Zarkov might have discredited if it had not been for the fact that they had encountered wonders far more staggering than this during their sojourn on the planet Mongo.

"Barin," the doctor said after a spell of silence, "how long does the effect of this drug last?"

"As long as a man lives," came the rejoinder, "unless he is given the antidote."

"The antidote!" Zarkov exclaimed hopefully. "Is it possible to obtain that?"

Barin looked him full in the face. "It is fortunate, doctor," he declared, "that I am your friend. It is even more fortunate that I was brought up among the priests of Mongo, who know the secrets of these drugs. I need only add that there is a cabinet in the laboratory filled with the ingredients necessary for making this antidote I have mentioned."

"And you will compound the antidote for us?" Dale began in an eager voice, then checked as a disturbing thought occurred to her.

"No," she added, "it would be better if you told us the formula and left us to make up the antidote ourselves. You mustn't risk the displeasure of Ming."

Barin clenched his fists and thrust out his strong jaw.

"Ming would know that the information had come from me, in any case," he announced. "But I'm not afraid of him, Earth girl, for I'd rather die than go on living with his heel upon my neck. Come, we must first seek Flash, and unless I am far mistaken we shall find him in Aura's suite of rooms."

He led the way to the upper realms of the palace, and before long they were on the threshold of a sumptuous apartment. It was an apartment in the suite of the Princess Aura, and she and Flash were seated on a couch there when Barin and his companions put in an appearance.

"You understand?" Aura was saying to the young American as the newcomers entered the room. "You came here in search of me from afar, and ever since you reached the palace our enemies have tried to keep us apart."

Flash could only look at her with the expression of a man who was trying to rack his brain.

"I can't remember," he groaned. "Everything seems so hazy—"

He stopped, becoming aware of the figures which had shown up in the doorway, and next moment Dale was running towards him, giving the lie to the Princess Aura's story, begging him to believe that she and not Ming's daughter was his fiancée.

Flash stared at her as if he did not understand, and then turned his glance upon Aura, who was watching Dale angrily.

"Who is this girl?" he demanded. "What is she trying to tell me?"

"Don't listen to her," Aura said. "She wants to make trouble for us both—"

"Aura." It was Barin who interrupted the princess, and he spoke the name tersely. "Aura, we're here in the Earth man's interests. I know that you've given him the draught of forgetfulness, and I intend to counteract its effect with the antidote."

"Flash," he added, taking the younger man by the arm, "you are going with us to the laboratory."

"No!" Ming's daughter cried out furiously. "Flash, don't be fooled by July 11th, 1936.

these people. They are your enemies, and they will do you harm!"

The American had risen to his feet in an uncertain manner, but at Aura's misleading words he started to resist Barin's efforts to draw him across the room, and the prince's urgent appeals only served to make him the more stubborn. Then suddenly, without warning, and in a spirit of sheer desperation, Barin struck him full in the jaw with his bunched knuckles.

All his strength was behind that blow, and Flash went sprawling to the floor, hitting his head against the decorative tiles as he fell.

He rolled over with a groan and lay still, and next second Dale was beside him.

"Barin, what have you done?" she exclaimed in dismay.

"I had no choice," was the answer. "Don't worry—he'll be all right. It would take more than that to hurt Flash Gordon. Quick, Zarkov, give me a hand with him."

Barin and the doctor lifted their friend and stumbled across to the door with him. They were accompanied by Dale—and by Aura, too—Aura, who beat at them with her clenched fists and did her utmost to impede their progress. But in spite of the princess they won their way to the corridor that led to the laboratory, and on reaching their destination they thrust the angry girl back into the passage and locked themselves in the workshop.

So incensed was Aura that she pounded and kicked at that laboratory door for several minutes, but, realising at last that she was exhausting herself to no purpose, she finally wheeled round and hurried off in quest of her father. Nor was she long in finding him, for she encountered him as he was walking from the direction of the underground chapel with the High Priest.

Breathlessly she related all that had occurred, and as he listened to her a scowl gathered upon Ming's brow. Then he gave vent to an imprecation and turned to the High Priest.

"Find Torch, captain of my bodyguards," he grated. "Tell him to take a file of men to the laboratory and execute Gordon without delay. I have had enough trouble with that accursed son of the Earth."

"No, no, father," Aura ejaculated wildly, "you can't do this. Flash Gordon belongs to me. Stop them from restoring his memory, but don't kill him."

Ming directed a cold, relentless glance at her.

"He dies," the emperor snapped. "From the very beginning I have never had any thought of sparing him."

He slid his eyes on the High Priest again, and spoke with an incisive curt-ness.

"You heard my command," he said. "What are you waiting for?"

With a bow the priest glided past him and departed to convey his instructions to Torch, captain of the royal bodyguard and executioner in chief.

The Invisible Ray

BEHIND the locked door of the laboratory, Zarkov and Dale were watching Barin as the latter filled a beaker with the contents of several flasks that he had obtained from a cabinet there.

They saw him mix his strange concoction with sure, steady hands, and then followed him to a table on which the body of Flash had been laid. Already the young American was beginning to show signs of recovering from the blow he had received, but before he

could rouse himself Barin had forced him to swallow the drug that he had compounded.

Immediately it had passed his throat Flash became inert again, and for a minute or two he remained quite motionless. Then those who were bent over him detected a flickering of his lids, and presently he opened his eyes.

He looked at them, and Dale and Zarkov could have cried out for joy as they perceived the expression of recognition that crossed his face.

"Dale," he said, "Barin, Zarkov—where am I? What's happened? My head—it feels as if it's splitting."

"Barin's to blame for that," Zarkov told him, with a smile that indicated his relieved state of mind. "He had to lay you out, and you struck your skull on the floor."

"Had to lay me out?"

The three of them helped Flash down from the table and gave him an account of the events which had taken place during that interlude when he had been under the influence of the draught of forgetfulness. It was a narrative that filled him with incredulity, so that it had to be repeated again in detail before he could grasp the full facts. But at last, when all had been made clear to him, Zarkov took him aside and for no apparent reason led him towards an electrical contrivance that was bolted against the far wall—an appliance that was like an enormous switchboard, with a metal pedestal at its base on which a man might comfortably stand.

"Flash," the scientist stated, "it's been proved to-night that Ming is not prepared to stand by the terms of the bargain he made with Vultan. In short, we're not to be granted our freedom—and your life, perhaps Barin's as well, is in jeopardy."

He paused, and then went on speaking earnestly.

"In these circumstances," he announced, "it's well for you that I have stumbled upon an amazing discovery during my researches in this laboratory—a discovery, Flash, that left me astonished and—not a little afraid, though I can see now that it may be of infinite value if I can only be sure of controlling it."

The younger man gave him a puzzled look, finding it difficult to follow him.

"Flash," Zarkov continued, "this machine before which we are standing is a device that supplies the radio-active forces which have helped the emperor to achieve so many of his sinister ambitions. But even Ming does not know to what fresh use it can be put. That's my secret—the secret which I blundered upon when I began some idle experiments with this very machine and discovered a new and hitherto unthought-of ray!"

Dale and Barin had moved across and joined Flash beside the instrument board which was under discussion, and he exchanged a glance with them ere turning to Zarkov again.

"I may be kind of slow in the uptake, doctor," he remarked, "but I'm darned if I know what you're driving at. Supposing you take the trouble to explain things a little more clearly. What is this discovery you've made? What is this new ray you speak of?"

Dr. Zarkov pursed his lips.

"I doubt whether you'd believe me if I told you the effect it produces," he muttered, "and, to be frank, I'm scared of demonstrating it—as yet. But perhaps—"

Again he paused, and then, as if he

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"THE MARINES HAVE LANDED"

(Continued from page 10)

with his rifle. So the Marines had got here! A twisted smile appeared on Davis' lips as he stared at his one-time friend. It would be old Mac that would butt in.

MacDonald stepped forward. "Rifle parts—as we suspected." He gavo Davis a look of contempt. "So now you've turned gun-runner. You may get shot for this."

"Who cares?" the ex-Marine shrugged his shoulders. "A short life and a merry one."

"What made you become a gun-runner for a bunch of dirty, murdering Chinks, who have looted and raided villages and committed terrible crimes? You wished them to continue their murdering?"

"No, I'm not quite all that bad," Davis shook his head. "I'm not making excuses, Mac, but I had the idea that Royalists were soldiers supporting a good cause. China seems to change every day, with new generals in command, and I thought that Cheng might be the new leader. 'Fraid I didn't ask many questions about him. I agree he ain't all that I pictured. But once in this game I couldn't quit. I was aiming to join up with the real Chinese army if I got away with this business. Maybe I'm not sorry I've been found out."

"What're we gonna do, sir?" questioned the big Tex.

"Stand guard here until Captain Halstead turns up," was the immediate answer. "We've got to stop Cheng—"

It was too late. Into the warehouse charged a number of dirty-looking soldiers. All carried guns and swords. They covered the two Marines, who were hopelessly outnumbered.

"Drop those guns!" drawled an oily voice. "If not we shoot you stone dead."

MacDonald felt that it would serve little purpose trying to resist. They might kill about two before they were shot down. They lowered their arms, and instantly the rebel soldiers rushed forward.

With narrowed eyes Woody Davis watched the rebels bind MacDonald and Tex with ropes to two of the stout pillars of the warehouse. Then through the rauks stepped a smug-faced, fat little man, who wore a very dirty officer's uniform, and a thin, waspish Chinaman who had a green-peaked helmet and gold braid all over his uniform. The latter jabbered excitedly to the fat man.

"General Cheng want to know what this mean," drawled the general's chief-of-staff. "How come the Marines here?"

"When I came out to you I explained that someone had radio'd the Marines." Corrigan's eyes flickered nervously. "They got here quicker than I expected."

Suddenly General Cheng whipped out a gun, and there was an explosion. Corrigan screamed hoarsely, spun round and dropped in a heap. Woody Davis thought his last hour had come. With hands folded across his chest he stared defiantly at the two Chinese rebels, who were jabbering away. At last the chief-of-staff came close to Davis.

"General Cheng not quite understand," he said in the purring tones that made Davis want to strike him. "He think Corrigan make general hurry here and walk into trap. He shoot Corrigan by mistake. Corrigan was a fool so it make no difference. These two Marines

stick you up—general wish to know why and who you are. Answer quick or you die like him."

"You don't scare me," retorted Davis. "I was Corrigan's assistant. I helped him get some of the guns out of Shanghai. Corrigan rode out to General Cheng because he knew the only chance you had of getting the guns was to get here before the Marines. You did not hurry and the Marines did. You murdered Corrigan and he was your friend. Where will you get more guns now he's dead?"

"Maybe you help us," grinned the evil Chinaman. "You wish to live you help general—yes, no?"

"I'll do my best," Woody Davis decided that after all life was very sweet, and he did not wish to die. These murdering thugs had roused his anger. To think that he had helped a bunch that were worse than any American gunmen. The general had brutally murdered Corrigan for no reason at all, and the manner in which Mac and Tex had been lashed to those pillars was making him see red. The general was at that moment amusing himself by striking Mac across the face with a whip.

The general desisted from torturing MacDonald and came across to stare at Davis, who faced him without flinching.

"The great general say he spare you, but no nonsense," drawled that evil voice. "You know where guns are—speak quick."

Woody Davis pointed to the cases. All the guns wanted assembling so they would be of little use. With a grim smile he watched boxes ripped open and guessed the general's remarks were not very polite.

When the chief-of-staff demanded the reason Woody answered that it was impossible to bring through the guns assembled as they would have been conspicuous. Several of the soldiers tried to put together some of the guns—their efforts were ludicrous. Next came a demand for ammunition. Davis managed to give MacDonald a sly wink, and that young officer knew his old pal was now on the side of law and order. Davis knew of some boxes of ammunition underneath bales of merchandise, and time was wasted at these boxes.

"Where the machine-guns and bombs?"

"Too dangerous—couldn't get them through," lied Davis.

The general rushed up to the youngster, and once more Woody thought his moments were numbered. The chief-of-staff purred that it would be wise for him to talk.

"I'm telling the truth!" shouted Woody, with assumed anger. "We managed to get through a thousand rifles and about a hundred cases of ammuni-

tion. Search the place if you don't believe me."

The sound of firing was a welcome interruption, and a soldier rushed in, and from the gestures Woody guessed that the Marines were converging on the warehouse. The general apparently had no desire to expose himself to danger and ordered his chief-of-staff to beat off the attack. Only Cheng remained, and his small eyes gleamed malevolently as he glanced round the warehouse. Cheng had a suspicion that the machine-guns might have arrived.

Revolver in hand, Cheng prowled round the warehouse, whilst Woody Davis lowered his hands to his side and waited. Again he winked at MacDonald. Cheng paused before some bags of rice, and he slit several with a knife, so that the contents spilled all over the floor. The ex-Marine's heart missed a beat, but the general only examined the top half of the bag and did not burrow.

Then Cheng felt one bag and saw something hard protruding. It was a bag that had been badly packed. Swiftly the knife went to work, and the magazine case of a machine-gun and butt of the gun were exposed. But as Cheng swung round on Davis the youngster leapt. His fist crashed into that evil, grinning face. Cheng was hurled backwards, but he still clutched the revolver as he sprawled against some cases.

A hullet whined past Woody's ear as he whipped out his own gun from its holster. Luckily, his blow had shaken Cheng and spoiled his aim, then Woody's gun barked, and the little general clutched at his side screaming horribly. He swayed before toppling to the floor.

The Siege

WITH his foot Woody Davis turned over the body of General Cheng, and a feeling of satisfaction could not be suppressed to find that this murdering little bandit was dead. He picked up the general's knife and quickly freed MacDonald and Tex.

"Mac, what I told you about going into this show thinking I was helping a worthy cause is true enough, though I didn't make too many inquiries. Maybe I wasn't in the mood. But I never reckoned I was helping a bunch of murderers. Cheng's men aren't going to have these guns if I can help it."

"Good for you, Woody!" gasped Mac. "You two mugs take it easy." Davis pointed to the machine-guns. "Get that assembled whilst I close and bolt the sliding doors."

By now the rifle fire had increased to an incessant crackling. Davis closed the great doors and bolted them in the nick of time. He had scarce finished when there came a rapping on the steel panels.

"Most of this place is galvanised iron and not bullet-proof," he spouted at MacDonald. "But if we pile cases against the three main doors and the windows we can hold out for some while." He pointed. "Tex, there are two more machine-guns in those sacks, and in the boxes marked 'Sugar' there is plenty of ammunition."

It was some while before the rebels realised that something had gone wrong, and that enabled the three young fellows to erect sound barricades. They were now armed with three machine-guns.

The main entrance began to sway as the Chinese tried to batter it in with great baulks of wood.

"Let 'em have it!" MacDonald cried, and pointed his machine-gun at the doors.

The leaden missiles poured through thin galvanised iron and mowed down the attackers, but the chief-of-staff was there, and he rushed more of his rebels to the attack. Unless they got into the

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THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE MARINES HAVE LANDED"

—Woody Davis, Lew Ayres; Brooklyn, Isabel Jewel; MacDonald, Jimmy Ellison; Corrigan, James Burke; Drenov, J. Carroll Naish; Captain Halstead, Clay Clement; Tubby Waters, Maynard Holmes; Tex, Ward Bond; Sergeant Regan, Joseph Sawyer; Cheng, Victor Wong; Mr. Hewitt, Robert Strange; Mrs. Hewitt, Alma Chester.

"GALLANT DEFENDER"

—Johnny Flagg, Charles Starrett; Barbara McGrail, Joan Perry; Barr Munro, Harry Woods; Harvey Campbell, Edward J. le Saint; Sheriff Luther Davies, Jack Clifford; "Salty Smith," Al Bridges; Jimmy McGrail, George Billings; Joe Swale, George Cheesboro.

warehouse and got those machine-guns and ammunition they were doomed.

Each took a door and kept up a rapid fire, until the Chinese began to shoot back. It was essential that they should not get hit, so they took up positions behind great bales of carpets. Now and again Woody or Mac would race to a window and pour out sweeping fire before the enemy could concentrate on him.

Then Tex's gun jammed through overheating. From the firing it seemed that the superior numbers of the rebels were keeping the Marines at bay. The three knew that they could not hold out much longer. The walls of the warehouse had been riddled with holes, and bullets seemed to be whistling all round them, so that they had to hug the floor. A face appeared at a window. Crack! Crack! Woody had not missed.

"Looks as if we're heat!" MacDonald shouted above the noise.

"I'll not let these seum beat me!" cried Davis through gritted teeth. He glanced round to try and see some way of beating their enemies. "I got it!" He pointed. "There's a small door over there that's seldom used—don't suppose the Chinks have seen it. We can unlock it and make a run for it."

"We can't quit here, Woody," argued MacDonald.

"Fifty yards away is an iron shed where petrol is stored," Davis explained. "If we can make it we can beat off the Chinks and hold out for some while, but that's not all." He jumped up and raced across the warehouse to start pulling packing-cases furiously to one side. He dragged forth a case, and when he staggered back they saw he was carrying hand grenades.

"They're the boys!" Tex cried gleefully.

"In that cellar we have a lot of high-explosive. It was brought here to sell to the various mines," Davis shouted. "As we quit this place we will blow it up. If Tex could make the shed he could open covering fire. Then you follow, Mac."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to try to square myself!" The ex-Marine's eyes glinted. "I don't care whether you're an officer or what you are, but I'm blowing up this dump, and no one else is taking the risk."

They opened the door, and Tex made a run for it. He reached the shed without being seen. He had a good view of one of the doors, and he opened fire with MacDonald's gun. The officer was across and lying down beside him before the rebels had realised what was happening. MacDonald had his rifle and plenty of ammunition.

Woody Davis tossed several of the hand grenades down into the cellar and then raced for the door. There came the sound of an explosion, but there was nothing terrible about it. Half-way across to the shed Woody flung himself flat. He drew out a bomb, removed the pin, and then got to his knees. A bomb whistled through a window. There came a roar and a sheet of flame.

The rebels saw him, and bullets whined round him, but he bore a charmed life.

"The young fool!" yelled MacDonald.

Three more bombs Woody hurled before a red-hot needle seemed to go all up his side, and he toppled over, but he grinned as he lay there because there was one great mighty roar, and it seemed as if a volcano had torn the earth apart.

It was Tex who got to his side, and began to stagger with him towards the petrol shed. Then Tex dropped, lit in several places. MacDonald saw a body of enraged rebels rushing forward to kill two of the white men who had smashed

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their rebellion. His gun mowed them down.

From the trees charged a number of blue figures. The Marines had made a flank attack.

Woody Davis got to his knees, and though suffering agonies dragged Tex towards a heap of cans, whilst MacDonald poured out a withering fire on the almost demoralised rebels.

The Marines charged, and that completed the rout of all that remained of Cheng's army. Before the gleaming bayonets the Chinese turned and scuttled away into the darkness. Mac left his gun and tore across to Woody. That young man grinned inanely and flopped unconscious into his arms.

Woody Davis woke up in hospital aboard ship. He found that he had been unconscious for two days. He wanted to talk and ask questions, and as he threatened to get into a fever MacDonald came to see him.

"You're on board the Washington and you're at sea," MacDonald explained with a grin. "Tex has four bullet wounds in one leg, one through the ribs and a shoulder smashed. Being as tough as an ox he will pull through. I had the luck to get a slight graze only. The two bullets you stopped went dangerously close to your heart, but fate watches over some guys, and so you're here to hear some good news."

"Good news?"

"For your valour and courage Captain Halstead has decided to take you back into the Service."

"Say, that's swell!" cried Woody Davis. "But how about that guy Drenov?"

"Accidents do happen sometimes," Mac grinned. "That episode will be forgotten. It'll be just one of those things that will never be cleared up. You should be fit again in a few weeks."

Then Woody tried to sit up.

"I sent Brooklyn down to the Hewitts and—"

"Keep calm—keep calm—all in good time," laughed MacDonald. "That girl tried her hardest to make Captain Halstead and myself believe you were an innocent little lamb. You should have seen the way she carried on when we brought you back on a stretcher to the Hewitts. We had two men killed and four injured. The total the Chinks lost isn't known. Now you've gotta relax."

"But what happened to Brooklyn?"

"Swell dame that kid," MacDonald spoke quietly. "Up till now I haven't thought you were a good picker. She reckoned she would be a hindrance to your career, so she got Captain Halstead to fix her a passage on a junk bound for Shanghai. The captain offered to take her, but she just said that now she knew you were going to live she should get back to her job."

Woody Davis looked glum.

"I should be all fired up at being a Marine again," he muttered. "But this idea of not seeing Brooklyn again makes me feel as if I could howl."

"One last word," MacDonald edged to the cabin door. "In three months' time the Washington is due at the Philippines for a good two weeks' stay, Brooklyn knows that, and she'll be there, so that if you still feel the same way about her you can go on your bended knees. Now you rest or I'll have you chloroformed."

Woody Davis went to sleep with a contented grin on his face.

(By permission of Associated British Film Distributors and Republic Pictures, starring Lew Ayres as Woody Davis, Isabel Jewell as Brooklyn and Jimmy Ellison as MacDonald.)

"GALLANT DEFENDER"

(Continued from page 20)

"Do you think I'd shoot a man for writing that note?" asked Johnny.

Sherman read the note again, to himself this time, and he studied the handwriting.

"It looks to me," he said slowly, "as though you're the one man that'd have every reason not to."

"I knew you'd see it that way," said Johnny.

"But what does he mean here about the McGrail kids?"

The sheriff pointed to Barbara and Jimmy, who were sitting beside the couch on which their uncle lay.

"Why, that's them," he said. "Babs and Jimmy have grown some since you seen 'em last, haven't they?"

Sherman gaped at the beautiful girl and her little brother, then eyed the prone figure upon the couch.

"Who's the man?" he asked.

"That's Solon's brother," replied the sheriff. "One of Munro's men shot him, too!"

"Munro's men? You sure o' that?"

The sheriff nodded.

"Somebody shot him just as he was tellin' me he could prove that it was Munro who shot Solon McGrail."

Sherman blinked.

"And was he able to prove it?"

"Enough so that I made out a warrant for Munro's arrest."

Silently Johnny held out the key of the cell, and Sherman himself unlocked the door. Johnny walked over to the sheriff's desk, where his belt was lying, and he picked it up and fastened it round his waist.

"I guess you won't need to bother about serving that warrant, sheriff," said Sherman.

"Why not?" countered the sheriff.

"Haven't we had enough gun-law in this valley in the past month?"

"Yeah, but this looks like an open-and-shut case to me."

"And you'd have said the same thing about Johnny Flagg when you came in, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," admitted the rancher in a shame-faced manner. "I reckon I would."

"And it would have been a pretty sad mistake, too, wouldn't it? Now you let the law make the mistakes." The sheriff pocketed the warrant he had made out. "That's what I'm hired for!"

At Bay!

FROM the front step of the sheriff's office Sherman explained matters at length to the waiting cattlemen and introduced Barbara and Jimmy to them. Munro, outside the estate office down the street, could not see what was happening, but began to chafe at the delay.

"I wonder what's keepin' 'em over there so long," he growled.

"You can search me," said Swale.

The homesteaders reappeared in force at the bottom of the street, and Munro saw that they were now wearing belts and that many of them had their hands on the butts of their guns.

"Hi!" he exclaimed. "Looks like the nesters are figuring on something, too. I wish this place'd open—there's no cover if they start anything!"

"No," said Swale.

Five more minutes passed, and Munro took out his watch. It was close upon eight o'clock.

Two more minutes, and then a

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"FLASH GORDON"

(Continued from page 24)

had come to a sudden decision, he stepped closer to the switchboard and drew down a lever that appeared to have been recently fitted to it.

If his companions had anticipated a surprise, they were sadly disappointed. So far as Flash, Dale and Barin could see, the gesture produced no result—not even the drone of mechanism such as one might expect to hear from forces that had been suddenly set in motion.

Flash stared at Zarkov inquiringly. "Well?" he asked.

Without a word the doctor set one foot on the pedestal at the base of the contrivance, but even as he did so there came an interruption in the form of a summons on the laboratory door, a loud knocking that was accompanied by a harsh, strident voice.

"Open! In the name of the Emperor Ming!"

Zarkov drew back and looked quickly at Dale, Flash and Barin. There was a moment of tense silence, and then that summons was repeated, a heavy hand beating upon the door so that it shook under the blows.

"Open, I say! In the name of his Majesty the Emperor!"

Barin spoke in a hushed tone. There was an anxious expression in his sombre eyes.

"Torch, captain of the royal bodyguard!" he panted. "Aura must have carried word to her father that you were here, Flash, and Torch and some of his men have come to fetch you."

The American bunched his muscles involuntarily and his face became grim—as grim as Dale's was frightened. Magnificent he looked as he stood there, a stalwart figure that seemed to radiate strength and purposeful determination.

"They won't take me without a fight!" he said through gritted teeth.

It was at this juncture that Zarkov laid a hand on his arm, and, turning his head, Flash saw that there was a queer look on the scientist's features.

"Wait," the doctor cautioned. "Wait, my boy. Do nothing rash—"

"Rash!" the younger man cried, breaking in on him. "Ming has shown that he means to have my blood, hasn't he? All right, if I choose to cut loose and go down fighting, I don't call that rash!"

Zarkov attempted to put forward some argument, but at that instant a sharp command reached his ears from beyond the laboratory door, and immediately afterwards he saw the lock transformed into molten metal—molten metal that dripped to the floor like boiling lead.

A destroying jet of electric fire had reduced it to pulp, and a kick sent the door swinging inward on its hinges. Another second and the form of Torch was striding across the threshold, clad in his strange suit of armour.

He was followed by a group of soldiery, each man carrying a ray-gun, and, coming to a halt in the middle of the laboratory, he glowered at its four occupants collectively before he finally riveted his attention on Flash.

"Gordon," he said, "stand away from your friends and get back against that wall!"

Flash made a movement, but it was not one of obedience, for he advanced upon Torch until he was face to face with him.

"What's the idea?" he jerked out.

The captain of Ming's bodyguard looked him full in the eyes.

"The emperor grows tired of the intrigues that are centred round you," he announced deliberately. "Therefore he has ordered your execution, and I am here to see that his instructions are carried out!"

There was a heart-rending cry from Dale Arden, and, rushing forward, she clung to her lover frantically.

"Flash, Flash!" she sobbed. "They can't do this to you—they can't!"

"Steady, Dale," he breathed, and then, taking a step closer to Torch, he made as if to grapple with the fellow.

Torch promptly lifted a hand to keep him at bay.

"Beware, Gordon," he rapped out. "My men hold you covered, and if you offer resistance, the death-fire will be poured into your body here and now. Would you imperil the life of the girl by your side as well?"

The words brought Flash to a standstill, and he caught Dale by the wrists and broke her hold on him.

"Keep away, dear," he said huskily. "I don't care what they do to me, but you mustn't suffer. Zarkov—Barin—look after her!"

"No, no," Dale wept. "I'm not afraid to die, Flash. Let them kill both of us. I couldn't go on living without you."

Barin and Zarkov were hurrying across the laboratory now, and while the doctor took charge of Dale, the prince thrust himself between Torch and the condemned American.

"This man's life must be spared," he began. "Is there no mercy in Ming's heart? Is there no honour in him? Gordon earned his freedom, as you yourself can testify. His freedom, and the right to wed Dale Arden! Can you deny it?"

The face of Torch was impassive, except for a glitter that played in his eyes.

"It is not for me to question his Majesty's orders," he said. "Nor is that privilege yours, Prince Barin. I would remind you that your own life hangs by a thread—and the emperor may choose to snap that thread—on the slightest provocation."

A defiant retort sprang to Barin's lips, but before he could utter it Flash pushed him aside. There had been enough futile talk, to his way of thinking, and he wanted to make an end of the busi-

ness—to fling himself into the midst of his enemies and land a blow or two ere he was struck down by a shaft of withering fire.

To die fighting—such was the purpose that Flash had in mind. But as he was on the point of launching an attack that would have been directed mainly against Torch, a restraining hand closed fast on his shoulder.

It was Zarkov's hand, for abandoning Dale, the scientist had leaped upon his young friend to prevent him from hurling himself into the thick of the firing-squad.

"Don't, Flash, don't!" he cried out. "Come, it's useless to resist. Get back to the wall and show these men that you can face those ray-guns without flinching."

Flash glared at him—was about to shake him off when all at once it seemed to him that he caught a significant glint in the doctor's eyes—and it came to him then, in a split second of time, that Zarkov had some plan, some inspiration the nature of which was not to be guessed.

Flash only knew that there was a message in the scientist's glance, a message which he could not fathom; and next moment he found himself retreating with the older man.

"The doctor's counsel is wise," he heard Torch say, "and I can promise you, Gordon, that it will be a swift and easy death."

Flash made no comment. In silence he accompanied Zarkov to the far wall, and was brought to a halt before that switchboard which they had been contemplating when Torch had interrupted them by his summons on the door.

"On the pedestal, Flash!" Dr. Zarkov hissed under his breath. "Stand on the pedestal!"

The condemned American looked at him vaguely, and then he stepped on to the metal pad at the base of the switchboard, after which Zarkov held him in conversation for a brief interval, making a great show of bidding him farewell.

It was a conversation which was brought to a close by Torch, who soon showed signs of impatience.

"Enough, Zarkov," he called. "Get to one side. There has been enough delay."

The doctor obeyed, and as he moved clear of the line of fire, he saw Ming's guards take up their position with ray-guns held in readiness. At the same time Dale attempted to run towards Flash, but Zarkov seized her and pulled her out of harm's way.

"Aim at the prisoner!" Torch commanded sharply.

The men of the firing-party carried the ray-guns to their shoulders—trained them on the body of their intended victim—and it was then that an incredible change became apparent in the figure of Flash Gordon, a transformation that astounded everyone present excepting Dr. Zarkov.

The outlines of the young American's stalwart form were growing dim, were dissolving like those of some strange phantom that had walked amongst mortal men in human guise and then chosen to vanish into thin air and return to the limbo of a spirit world. Before the amazed eyes of Torch and his comrades, Flash Gordon was losing substance, and as with faltering hands his executioners lowered their guns, so the condemned prisoner disappeared utterly from their sight!

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)
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"GALLANT DEFENDER"

(Continued from page 28)

heavily built Government commissioner came walking along the boardwalk from the direction of the so-called Grand Hotel, a man of dignity, clad in dark clothes and wearing a collar and tie.

Munro moved aside as this official approached the door of the land office.

"Good-morning," said the commissioner, and took a key from his pocket and inserted it in the lock of the door.

The homesteaders began to march up the street, ready to draw their guns if there should be any opposition to their perfectly lawful purpose. Munro said hurriedly to his men:

"You wait here till I make the McGrail ranch mine accordin' to the law."

The commissioner opened the door and entered the office, but just as Munro was about to cross the threshold Sherman shouted at him:

"Hi, Munro, just a second!"

The crook swung round and saw the rancher striding across the street with all the cattlemen on foot behind him. With none too good a will he waited.

Johnny and the sheriff were also waiting, but they were inside the doorway of the sheriff's office.

"D'you figure you're fast enough to serve that warrant?" asked Johnny.

"Well, I don't know," was the frank reply, "but I'm gonna try."

Sherman reached the boardwalk.

"Flagg did not kill Harvey Campbell!" he said brusquely and without any preliminaries.

Munro was taken aback.

"What makes you think Flagg didn't kill him?" he asked blankly.

"This!" said Sherman, and gave him the note.

Munro read it, gritted his teeth, and handed it back. The homesteaders were very near now.

"That does sorta clear him, doesn't it?" he said hoarsely. "Are the McGrail children with the nesters?"

Sherman nodded.

"Are you figurin' on backing 'em like this letter says?"

"We've got orders from the law," replied Sherman, "to stay neutral."

"Well," said Munro with obvious relief, "then I'd better file before they do."

Johnny had approached unobserved. "Wait a minute, Munro!" he said sternly.

Munro, with an oath, reached for his gun; Joe Swale and Tuscan did likewise. But Sherman and the cattlemen instantly had them covered.

"Lay off those guns!" roared Sherman.

The homesteaders halted, only a few yards away, and all their guns were out. Munro and his men dropped their hands.

"I thought you said you were neutral," raged Munro.

"We are," returned Sherman, "and we're gonna see that everyone else stays neutral, too! Move on ahead, you, and hand over your irons before you're tempted!"

Joe Swale and the rest of the gang surrendered their weapons to the cattlemen and slunk off along the boardwalk. The sheriff crossed the roadway with Barbara and Jimmy.

"I've got a warrant for you, Munro," he said sternly, "for murder!"

"What are you tryin' to do?" snarled the crook. "Pin that Campbell death on me?"

"You're wanted for killing Solon McGrail. His brother swore out the warrant."

Munro was at bay and knew it; but he tried to keep up his bluff.

"What is this?" he howled. "A trick to stop me from filing? If we'd known who killed Solon McGrail we'd have hung him eight years ago."

"It took all those years," said Johnny, "to get enough evidence, and it all points to you, Munro! For one thing, you're wearing a watch that can be identified as his!"

Munro snatched from his waistcoat pocket the watch that was attached to an ornamental gold chain.

"This?" he cried scornfully. "Why, there's a thousand like this in the county!"

"Not with McGrail's name engraved inside the back case," said Johnny.

"There's no engraving in the back of the watch!"

"Then maybe you won't mind opening it up so we can all take a look for ourselves."

"Certainly I mind!" Munro thrust the watch back in his pocket. "Not you, nor anyone else, is gonna tell me what to do with my property."

"All right, Munro." Johnny stepped down off the boardwalk. "You can put your hands or go for your gun any time you're ready."

With his own hands loose at his sides he backed slowly away, and the cattlemen and the homesteaders gave him plenty of room.

Munro hesitated for the space of thirty seconds, then, with the swiftness of lightning, his right hand went to his gun. But Johnny beat him to the draw, swift as he was, and down he went, flat on his face in the roadway, with a bullet in his heart.

For several long minutes all eyes were on the sprawling form of the murderer whose death no one regretted, and it was the sheriff who broke the silence.

"All right, Sherman," he said, "I'll take care of his men. The law's got something to say to them!"

He marched over to Joe Swale and the others.

"Get out of here!" he shouted. "Go on!"

Some of the cattlemen helped to drive the crestfallen ruffians over to the sheriff's office, where they were bundled into cells. Sherman stowed away his own six-shooter and waved a hand towards the door of the estate office.

"Well, I reckon you folks can start filing your claims now," he said.

The homesteaders pressed eagerly forward, but Dave Larkin stopped them.

"Wait!" he commanded. "We seem to be forgettin' who's got the right to file on the first claim—the McGrails and their foreman!"

"That's right," agreed everybody; but Jimmy, standing between Johnny and Barbara, piped shrilly:

"Foreman my eye! It's a husband we need, ain't it, sis?"

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The Watcher

THE driver of the taxicab parked on the rank in East Eighty-Sixth Street was fast asleep, his arms on the wheel, his face on his arms, when Don Gregg left a doorway in which he had been lurking and ran across to him. It was five o'clock in the morning and the sun was rising redly over the East River, but the driver had been plying for hire all night and he was tired.

Don Gregg looked none too fresh himself. He was young, clean-shaven, and in a lean sort of way almost handsome, but his face was drawn and his grey eyes were heavy-lidded and bloodshot. The collar of his dark overcoat was turned up about his ears and the brim of his slouch hat was pulled down as though to hide his eyes.

Not very far along the street two cars were moving away from the canopied entrance of a tall apartment-house, and Don awakened the driver in haste.

"Follow that car!" he said harshly.

The driver blinked in the direction indicated by a pointing finger.

"Why?" he challenged.

"This is why!"

Don plucked his hand into a pocket of his overcoat, whereupon the man sat up, half expecting to be shown a detective's badge. But it was a five-dollar note that was flourished in his face.

"Okay, boss," he said, and Don scrambled into the cab and the self-starter roused a cold engine into activity.

There was not much traffic about in that particular region of New York City so early in the morning, and the

September 26th, 1930.

two cars were trailed without difficulty round a corner into Madison Avenue and down that wide thoroughfare into East Fifty-Seventh Street.

Outside the double and cross-divided doors of a livery stable just beyond Park Avenue the leading car came to a standstill with a screeching of brakes and the other one stopped close behind it. Don Gregg instructed the driver of the taxicab to pull up at the corner and there descended and handed over the five-dollar note.

He made for a doorway, and the driver saw him peering out from it as he drove off. From the leading car a girl in riding-coat and jodhpurs was being helped down by a youngish man in evening clothes, and Don's attention was concentrated upon her.

Violet Feverel was her name, and but for a petulant droop about her mouth she would have been beautiful. Two other girls were in the car, and one of them leaned out to say:

"Sorry you're deserting, Violet. It was a grand party."

"Glad you could come," responded Violet Feverel, and turned to the man in evening clothes. "Thanks for dropping me, Tony."

"We don't want to drop you," he declared emphatically. "Why don't you come on to Harlem with us?"

"No, thanks." She smiled slightly. "I'm in the cavalry this morning. Have you got a cigarette?"

Tony groped in his pockets, but the last of his cigarettes had been smoked. She went back to the open door of the car.

"Have you got a cigarette in there?" she asked.

There were two men in the car as well as the two girls, but they hadn't a cigarette between them.

"Try Eddie," suggested one of the men.

Eddie Fry, a curly-headed young fellow with a muffer round his neck, was in the driving-seat of the car behind and a girl with pale red hair and large dark hazel eyes was sitting beside him. In the back were two other girls. He saw Violet Feverel walking towards him, and he said hastily to his companion:

"Babs, you'd better hide down there so Violet won't see you."

"But, Eddie," she said nervously, "do you think it's all right?"

"Sure it's all right," he returned. "Go on—get down!"

She slid from the seat and crouched down on the floor of the car just as her sister Violet reached the window. The girls in the back seat were laughing, and Eddie told them to shut up.

"Got any cigarettes, Eddie?" asked Violet.

"Sure," he replied, and held out a case, screening the girl on the floor as well as he could.

"And a light?"

He had to unfasten his overcoat to get at a lighter which he ignited and offered. She lit the cigarette, and in doing so looked down past him and saw the huddled figure of her sister. Immediately she flew round the car to the other door, opened it, and dragged the girl out.

"Well, ehiseller!" she cried furiously.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the girl, white of face and trying to

free herself from the hand that gripped her arm.

"You know what I mean!" Eddie scrambled out from behind the wheel and rushed round to them.

"Oh, leave her alone!" he stormed. "What have you got to be sore about?"

"Not a thing, Mr. Fry," Violet Feverel retorted scathingly. "And my own sister, too!"

"We were going to tell you," began Barbara, "but—"

"But it was more fun sneaking around behind my back, wasn't it?" raged Violet.

The upper part of one of the double doors of the livery stable swung back and the manager of the place looked out, thrusting his elbows on the lower part of the door. Heads were thrust out of the windows of the two cars, and from his hiding-place Don Gregg watched and listened.

"I wouldn't talk about sneaking around people's backs," cried Eddie Fry. "You seem to be doing pretty well with that stable boy of yours!"

Violet Feverel smacked his face and stalked away towards the stable, and he would have followed her but Barbara stopped him.

"Let's take a walk until you cool down, Eddie," she pleaded. "One of the others can drive."

Tony got back into the front car with a grimace.

"Violet's on the rampage," he said. "Let's get out of here."

The two cars were being started, and Eddie and Barbara were walking off together, when Violet reached the stable and the manager opened for her the part of the door upon which he had been leaning.

He was tall, young, and obviously conceited.

"You certainly have a fast right hand," he said as she stepped into a brick-paved yard between well-kept stalls. "I was going to help you, but—"

"But you found out I could take care of myself," she snapped. "It's a good thing for you to remember."

There was an office on the left of the yard, but she passed it with her chin in the air and he kept pace with her.

"Was there anything special meant by that crack?" he asked, twisting the ends of his little moustache.

"Have my horse saddled."

The expression on his face showed that he resented her tone.

"Highpockets is saddling him now," he returned curtly.

The grinning face of a negro stable-boy appeared at the bars of one of the stalls, and then a red stallion was led out into the yard.

"Good-mornin', Miss Fev'el," boomed the negro.

"Give me a leg up, Highpockets," said she.

He stared at her in a puzzled fashion and at the manager who usually helped her into the saddle. But the manager nodded and held the stallion's head, so he obeyed.

"I'm riding alone this morning," she stated icily as she took up the reins, "and that's the way I'm doing everything so far as you're concerned."

"But, Violet," protested the manager, "why all this—"

"You know why," she broke in, "so don't let's go into that again."

She rode out from the yard into the street and turned in the direction of Central Park. Highpockets went to close the lower part of the door after her, but the manager waved him aside.

"If anybody wants me," he said, "tell them I've gone to breakfast."

"Yassuh, Mis'r Wells," nodded the black, and Latigo Wells walked out past him and also turned to the right. The lower part of the door was closed and bolted, and the negro looked thoughtfully over it.

"This sho's gwine to be a bad mornin'," he soliloquised with gloom. "Sun come up red, everybody's actin' more like snappin' turtles than white folks, and I'se hungry. Yassuh."

He slammed the upper part of the door and was about to bolt that, too, when Don Gregg came running over from his lurking place.

"Hi!" he shouted. "I want to rent a horse!"

Highpockets reopened the upper part of the door and viewed the stranger.

"Boss gone to breakfast," he said with a shake of his woolly head. "Won't be back till after a while."

"I don't want the boss," retorted Don. "I want to rent a horse."

"Yeah, but you gotta see the boss before you gits a horse. We don't rent hosses to strangers."

The upper part of the door was slammed, but it creaked open again a few seconds later, and Highpockets was surprised to see the young man who wanted a horse help himself to a tradesman's cycle that was resting against the kerb outside a shop across the street and ride away on it.

The Red Stallion

VIOLET FEVEREL cantered into Central Park by its southern entrance in Fifth Avenue and beyond the pond turned into a bridleway with bushes and trees. The early morning air was crisp and a breeze



"Yeah, I guess you're right," decided Piper. "No witnesses, eh?"

stirred her golden hair as she set the horse to a gallop.

She had ridden nearly as far as the lake when suddenly the red stallion reared up on his hind legs and she was pitched out of the saddle on to the turf close beside a bush.

The fall jarred every bone in her body, but she was not otherwise injured, and she sat up to see the spirited animal disappearing round a bend. Slowly she rose to her feet and readjusted her hat, and she was about to start off in pursuit when a sound in the bush caused her to look round.

Her blue eyes widened with horror and she uttered a piercing scream. Then something struck her on the head, and down she went, flat on her back, with outspread arms.

Central Park is well policed, but ten minutes elapsed before a patrolman came upon her body and blew his whistle. Other officers came running to the scene, a few curious pedestrians gathered round, and from the nearest telephone-box a burly sergeant rang up the precinct station in East Sixty-Seventh Street.

Almost simultaneously with an ambulance from Bellevue Hospital a car arrived from headquarters, and Dr. Charles Bloom, the medical examiner, adjusted his pince-nez and knelt to ascertain the cause of death.

"It was an accident all right," he said after a while, and got to his feet. "I wonder what's keeping the inspector?"

Another squad car drove up close to the ambulance and from it Detective-Inspector Osear Piper descended, a sharp-featured man with steely blue eyes, a tight-lipped mouth, and a wisp of a moustache.

"Oh, here he is!" exclaimed the doctor, and a plain-clothes man named Burke hurried towards the car to greet the newcomer.

"Hallo, Burke," said Piper, mainly out of the corner of his mouth. "Gotta miss my breakfast again this morning?"

"Not to-day, inspector," replied the detective. "She was thrown, and it looks like the horse kicked her."

Piper joined the group round the dead body of Violet Feverel.

"Hallo, doe," he said. "What've we got?"

"Well," replied the medical examiner, "it looks like an accident. Apparently the horse threw her and trampled her. The hoofprint is clear."

Piper went down on one knee to look at a wound in the back of the girl's head—and at her hat, which lay beside her left hand. The hat was crushed and bore the imprint of a horseshoe.

"Yeah, I guess you're right," decided Piper. "No witnesses, eh?"

Burke, to whom the question was addressed, replied in the negative, and Piper rose and looked to left and right.

"Where's the horse?" he asked.

"Must've run away."

Concealed from view by the bushes, a tallish and middle-aged woman was leading the red stallion along the bride-path and carrying a little black and white rough-haired terrier in one arm. Her face was full and plain, her nose was long, and her jaw suggested a tenacity of purpose.

"I guess that's all," said Piper. "You can make out the death certificate doc. I don't see why I always have to miss my breakfast for these accidents."

"I had an uncle once," said a feminine voice close behind him, "who thought the world war was an accident."

He swung round with a start, and

he saw the woman with the horse and the dog.

"It would be you!" he exploded, while all the others stared. "It's getting so, Hildegard, that a person can't be killed within the city limits without you showing up. Where'd you get this horse?"

"Mister Jones and I were out taking an early walk," she replied, "and we found it, so we thought we'd look for the rider."

He took the bridle from her and she set Mister Jones, the terrier, down upon his four feet.

"Well, it's all right, see!" snapped Piper. "It's nothing but an accident."

Miss Hildegard Withers viewed the body on the ground with quick blue eyes and emitted a characteristic sniff.

"I don't think so," said she.

"Oh," scoffed Piper, "got a theory, I suppose? Going to try and tell me she committed suicide? Hi, doe, you know Miss Withers!"

The lanky medical examiner walked over to them.

"How d'you do?" he said. "We met during that schoolhouse case—the one the Press called 'Murder on the Blackboard.' You helped us a lot on that case."

"Thank you, doctor," responded Miss Withers meekly. "And I may help you on this one, too."

"Aw, Hildegard," wailed Piper, "don't start gumming things up."

"All right, Osear." She flipped a hand at him. "You run along to breakfast, but I'm going to find out how this blood got on the horse by accident."

"Blood?" Piper gaped in astonishment at a little patch of crimson on the neck of the red stallion which she pointed out to him. "What d'you make of this, doe?" he exclaimed.

Dr. Bloom looked closely at the little patch.

"Why, I don't know," he confessed. "There doesn't seem to be any wound."

"Aw," growled Piper, "probably just scratched himself on one of these bushes."

"But there's no scratch," said Hildegard Withers.

The doctor instructed two internes from Bellevue Hospital to remove the body of the dead girl, and turned to a policeman from the squad car.

"Durkin," he said, "get me my kit. I'm going to do some probing."

Miss Withers had no desire to witness the probing of a spirited horse's neck for a bullet that might not be there, and she drifted away.

She saw Violet Feverel transferred from the ground to a stretcher, covered over with a sheet, and borne off to the ambulance, and then she kicked against something half-buried in the turf and stooped to unearth a well-used briar pipe.

She rose with the pipe in her hand, glanced round to make sure that nobody had noticed what she was doing, and opened a handbag which had been tucked under her arm. The pipe was stowed in the handbag, and she was looking thoughtfully from the spot where she had found it to a bush only a few feet away when two very obvious grooms came walking along the bride-path.

"What's going on here?" asked one of them with a nod of his head towards the ambulance.

"Accident," replied the other laconically.

"You ought to be on the police force," said Miss Withers. "Oh, by the by, do you know where that horse helongs?"

The two grooms became aware of the

red stallion and of the men clustered round it.

"Why, yes," replied the one who had received a very doubtful compliment, "that's Siwash from the Thwaite Stables, East Fifty-Seventh Street."

"Thanks," she murmured.

The two grooms passed on, and she was looking about the trampled ground when Piper shouted to her:

"Hi, Hildegard, come here! Look what we've found!"

She went back to him, and he displayed, in the palm of his hand, a little bullet.

"A BB shot!" he exclaimed. "Somebody must have plugged that horse with an air rifle!"

"By accident," said she dryly; but Piper appeared not to hear that comment.

"You know, I knew there was more in this than met the eye!" he declared.

Dr. Charles Bloom joined them, wiping his pince-nez with a huge handkerchief.

"In view of this, inspector," he said, "I think I'd better make an autopsy."

"Yeah, that's right," approved Piper. "Go ahead, doc. The girl may have been dead before the horse kicked her."

The doctor went off to the ear that had brought him, and he was climbing into it when two plain-clothes men appeared round a bush carrying, between them, a damaged bicycle, from the bent front wheel of which a tyre was hanging limply.

"Hi, boys, what have you got there?" demanded Piper.

"Offhand," sniffed Miss Withers, "I'd say it's a bicycle."

The machine was set down in front of them.

"Don't handle it, chump!" Piper rapped at a man who had caught hold of the handlebars. "I want to have it dusted for finger-prints. Use your handkerchief!"

He turned exultingly to Hildegard Withers.

"Now we're getting somewhere!"

Miss Withers had nothing to say to that. She called to her terrier, and she caught hold of his lead. Piper spoke to one of the plain-clothes men.

"Sims," he said, "get on the 'phone and call all stables in the neighbourhood and see if you can find out which one that nag came from."

"It's from the Thwaite Stables in East Fifty-Seventh Street," Miss Withers stated quietly.

"Huh?" In his astonishment Piper nearly fell over the lead and felt tempted to kick the dog. His men were repressing grins with difficulty.

"Well, why don't you get busy?" he roared at Sims. "Get on that horse! Here, you take this ankle-chewing mutt, too!"

Miss Withers, with a pained expression on her face, held out the lead.

"Yes, Mr. Sims," she said, "take him to my apartment—and you might feed him. I'm going to be with the inspector all day."

Piper promptly strode away towards the squad car, but she ran after him.

"Thwaite Stables on East Fifty-Seventh," he said to the driver, but as he opened the rear door Miss Withers collided with him against the running-board.

"Where d'you think you're going?" he snapped. "What are you following me for?"

"I don't know, Osear," she returned demurely. "I guess it's because you bring out the mother in me."

"Oh, go ahead!" he growled,

At the Stables

IN response to a loud banging on the double and divided doors of the stable in East Fifty-Seventh Street, one upper portion was opened and the face of Highpockets looked out.

"Ah can't rent no hosses to no strangers," the negro informed Detective-Inspector Oscar Piper and the female beside him.

"All right, all right!" returned Piper sharply. "Never mind that." He held out his badge. "Come on, open up!"

Highpockets gulped, and his eyes bulged nearly out of his head.

"Oh, Lawsy, de polceese!" he gasped. "Yassuh, yassuh, openin' up right away, suh!"

Both doors were opened, top and bottom, and at that moment a plain-clothes man arrived on the back of the red stallion. Sims had gone off with Mister Jones to Hildegard's flat in West Seventy-Seventh Street, deputing to a colleague the task of riding the horse back to the stable where it belonged.

"All right, Grady," said Piper, "bring him in."

Highpockets gaped.

"What you all bringin' back Miss Fev'el's hoss for?" he asked wonderingly, as Grady dismounted and led the horse into the yard.

"Feverel, eh?" Piper whirled round on him. "Sounds like a phoney name to me. Where does she live?"

"Ah don't know," declared the negro, taking the bridle of the stallion. "She don't live here."

"Well," said Piper wryly to Miss Withers, "we've cleared that up. She doesn't live here. Okay, Grady, but you'd better stiek around."

Grady nodded, and drifted out in the street.

"Who's in charge here?" demanded Piper.

"Mistah Wells is the manager," replied the black, "but he's out to breakfast."

"Out to breakfast, eh?" Piper's eyes glistened. "How long's he been gone? About three-quarters of an hour, maybe?"

"No, not that long." Highpockets shook his head with vigour. "About an hour or two—maybe."

Piper looked helplessly at Miss Withers, whose face expressed nothing in particular.

"Okay, Hildegard," he said. "You're witness! Where's the office?"

"Right over to your left, suh." Highpockets pointed to a closed door, and led the horse away. Miss Withers followed him at a distance, and Piper opened the indicated door and entered a very plainly-furnished office.

A desk in it engaged his attention, and he proceeded to open one drawer after another.

Siwash, the red stallion, was led into its stall and unsaddled, and Highpockets, all unaware that Miss Withers was watching him, took a rabbit's foot from a pocket of his trousers and rubbed it on his rather shapeless nose. "Rabbit foot," he said sepulchrally. "I knowed dis day was gonna be unlucky for somebody."

"You did, eh?" Miss Withers entered the stall, startling him nearly out of his wits, and he pocketed the rabbit's foot in haste. "Now look here, son—"

"Ah knows nuthin'!" he cried. "Oh, I'll take your word for that!"

she said. "Suppose you tell me your name?"

"Highpockets, ma'am."

The name sounded incredible, but she accepted it with a shrug.

"Well, have it your own way. How long have you worked around here?"



"Thank you, doctor," responded Miss Withers meekly. "And I may help you on this case, too."

"About three month, ma'am—not countin' the week I was in gaol."

"What were you doing in gaol?"

The negro rolled his eyes and replied: "Shootin' dice."

"No, I mean, what did they put you in gaol for?"

"Shootin' dice." She laughed a little, and after that Highpockets answered quite readily other questions she put to him.

In the office Piper had found a book in which accounts with regular customers were kept, and he was examining it at the desk when Latigo Wells stepped in at the door and stopped short to scowl at him.

"Well, good-morning," the manager barked. "What can I do for you?"

Piper put down the book.

"You the manager here?" he inquired curtly.

"Yes, Wells is the name."

"Did you know Violet Feverel?"

Latigo Wells looked startled.

"Why, yes," he admitted, dropping his tone of resentment. "She—"

"Just come back from your breakfast, haven't you?"

"Say, what is all this?" demanded Wells.

"Who are you, anyway?"

"Inspector Piper, Homicide Squad."

Piper displayed his credentials. "Come on, answer the question!"

"Yes, I've just got back from breakfast."

"Where'd you eat?"

"Fifty-Ninth and Madison."

"How long have you known Miss Feverel?"

The manager perched himself on the edge of the desk and appeared to be searching his memory.

"Quite some time," he said.

"Know her socially—away from the stables?"

"Yes, sort of. I've had a date with her occasionally."

"Ever have any trouble with her?"

Wells looked away from the keen blue eyes that were boring into his

dark-brown ones, but he answered emphatically enough:

"Certainly not. We were the best of friends."

"Oh!" interpreted Piper. "Liked her a lot, eh? Matter of fact, you were a little bit in love with her, weren't you?"

"I wouldn't say that. She was— Say, I don't see why you're asking me all these questions."

"You don't, eh? Well, Violet Feverel's been killed under very strange circumstances." He stepped nearer to the young man. "Murdered!"

"Murdered?" The manager paled.

"While you were out at breakfast," said Piper significantly.

"While I—" Wells bounced off the desk, trembling visibly. "What are you trying to do?" he screeched.

"Hang it on me?"

"Take it easy, take it easy," urged Piper, and caught hold of his arm.

"Come on, sit down. I'm not hanging anything on you—I'm just trying to find out all I can."

Wells sank on to a chair, and with fumbling hands took out a cigarette; but the cigarette remained unlighted.

"Now, come on, be a good fellow," said Piper. "Tell me all you know. Did she have any enemies to your knowledge?"

"No," was the hesitating reply, "I don't think so. Er—wait a minute—this might be something. She had an argument with a guy outside the stable this morning, and she slapped his face."

"Slapped a guy's face? Now we're getting somewhere!"

Miss Withers, by this time, had extracted what she considered to be some useful information from Highpockets. She rewarded him with a five-dollar note, and she said:

"You're a fine fellow, Highpockets, and I know I can trust you to keep quiet about all you've told me. Understand?"

"Yes, ma'am, Miss Withers," the

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negro assured her. "When Ah keeps quiet, Ah keeps quiet all over."

Miss Withers made her way to the office and looked in at the open door.

"Oh, Hildegarde," boomed Piper, "I want you to meet Mr. Wells, the manager here."

She crossed the threshold and she tilted her head at the young man in the chair.

"How d'you do, Mr. Wells?" she purred, and then: "Is this the murderer?"

"Mr. Wells," snapped Piper disgustedly, "has just given me some very valuable information."

"Well, isn't that nice? Then he's probably told you he had a row with Miss Feverel this morning?"

"No," said Piper, staring blankly at her, "he didn't say anything about that."

Wells jumped up from the chair in consternation.

"Hi, wait a minute!" he cried. "I can explain!"

"You can explain down at headquarters," retorted Piper, and he bellowed for Grady.

Latigo Wells was taken away in custody, and Piper beamed at Miss Withers.

"You know, I thought that guy was holding something back," he said shamelessly. "Nice work, Hildegarde."

"Umph!" sniffed Miss Withers. "Nice work if you can get it!"

In the Dead Girl's Flat

FROM the Thwaite Stables the inspector and his unofficial colleague travelled in the squad car to the tall apartment-house in East Eighty-Sixth Street; and there, after a brief conversation with the clerk in the glass-partitioned office on the ground floor, ascended to the fifth-floor flat in which Violet Feverel had given a party the night before.

"How long has Miss Feverel lived here?" Piper inquired as the clerk unlocked the front door with a duplicate key.

"About eight months," was the reply. "Anything else, inspector?"

"Yeah," drawled Piper. "In case she gets any 'phone calls while we're here, switch 'em through to me—and don't be listening on the wire."

"Of course not, sir," said the clerk.

From the carpeted corridor Piper and Miss Withers stepped directly into a large and well-furnished sitting-room which was in rather a state of disorder.

"Well, what's been going on here?" exclaimed the inspector, staring at littered music on the floor near a grand piano, scattered cushions, and pictures askew on the walls.

"Get out of here!" shrilled a voice. Piper immediately pushed his companion down into an easy-chair, and standing in front of her, whipped out a gun.

"Come out of there!" he rasped.

"Get out of here!" shrilled the voice again. "Get out of here!"

Miss Withers suddenly began to laugh, and as she laughed she pointed towards the piano. Underneath it was a green parrot in a cage, and Piper put away the gun with a snort of disgust.

"A parrot!" he exploded. "How d'you like that?"

"You certainly had it scared," said she.

They wandered about the room, and Piper reached the mantelpiece, where he picked up a large framed photograph.

"Hi, look!" he called out. "Here's a picture of her with that guy Wells! September 26th, 1938.

They must have been pretty friendly, at that!"

Miss Withers looked, then pounced on another framed photograph—one of Violet Feverel with Eddie Fry.

"Here's another young man," she said. "I wonder who he is? Oh, listen!"

The sound of a key in the lock of the front door had reached her alert ears. Piper heard it, too, and together they dived across the room to a luxurious chesterfield and crouched down behind it.

Eddie and Barbara entered the room, and Eddie closed the door behind him.

"Just toss some things into a suitcase, Babs," he said. "We'll have to hurry if we want to get away."

"I'll hurry, dear," she promised, and ran across to a bed-room and disappeared into it.

Eddie went over to an ornamental desk near one of the windows, and Piper and Miss Withers watched him over the back of the chesterfield as he opened a drawer and took out what looked like a packet of letters.

"All right," said Piper, rising to his feet, "I'll take those!"

Eddie swung round and stared wide-eyed at the two who moved towards him.

"What is this?" he gasped.

"Come on, come on," said Piper, holding out his hand. "Come across with those letters."

"You know it isn't nice," rebuked Miss Withers, "reading other people's mail."

"Who are you?" faltered Eddie.

"Inspector Piper, Homicide Squad." Piper snatched away the letters, and Barbara emerged from the bed-room in a state of alarm.

"It's about Miss Feverel," said Miss Withers.

"Violet?" Barbara tottered forward. "Has something happened? She's dead, isn't she?"

"How did you know that?" demanded Piper harshly.

"Why, I—I can see it in your faces. Oh-h!" She burst into tears, and Miss Withers straightaway put an arm round her heaving shoulders.

"I'll take care of her," she said, and led the weeping girl back into the bed-room and closed the door.

"Young man," said Piper sternly, "what's your name?"

"Edward Fry," replied Eddie.

"Where were you two going in such a hurry just now?"

"We were going to get married."

"Oh!" Incredulously the inspector eyed the good-looking but rather agitated young fellow. "Is that why you said 'We'll have to work fast if we want to get away'?"

Eddie nodded.

"We didn't want Violet to know about it till afterwards," he explained.

In the bed-room Barbara had flung herself on a bed and was sobbing into a pillow, but she managed to answer the questions with which Miss Withers gently plied her.

"You were going to marry him," said the spinster, "and you've only known him a month?"

"Not quite a month."

"You're rather impetuous, aren't you?"

Barbara looked up and nodded.

"How long have you been living here with Violet?"

"About five months. I wasn't very welcome, and I'd have been terribly unhappy if it hadn't been for Eddie."

"Looks like you're in love with him," commented Miss Withers.

"Yes, I am."

Piper, standing on the hearthrug in

the sitting-room, frowned at the photograph of Violet Feverel and Eddie that stood on the mantelpiece.

"So you didn't want her to find out about your marriage to her sister," he said. "Might have made trouble, eh?"

"She always made trouble for everybody," Eddie declared.

"Did you ever have any trouble with her?"

"Why, no."

"Why did she slap your face this morning?"

Eddie flinched, but made no reply.

"Thought I didn't know about that, eh? So you didn't go to Harlem with the rest of the party?"

"No, we took a walk."

"Oh, you took a walk?"

"Yes." Eddie sat down in a chair.

"Then we had breakfast."

"So you had breakfast?" Piper

seemed quite annoyed to hear it.

"Well, it looks like everybody had breakfast this morning but me! Where'd you walk? In the park?"

"No," said Eddie, "we just walked and talked, and then we decided to elope."

Miss Withers had finished with that particular subject in the bed-room.

"Tell me, Barbara," she said in a friendly way, "is there anybody who had any reason for hating your sister?"

Barbara nodded, and then wished that she hadn't.

"Oh, it couldn't be!" she exclaimed.

"Who is it?" insisted Miss Withers.

"Don—but Don couldn't have done it! She divorced him, but he couldn't have—"

"Don who?"

"Don Gregg."

"Umph! Don Gregg, ex-husband!"

Miss Withers rose from the bed on which she had been sitting beside the girl. "You stay right here, Barbara."

She went out into the sitting-room, and Barbara immediately got up and went to a dressing-table, where she opened a drawer and took out a little diary bearing the dead girl's name in gilt letters upon its cover.

From another drawer she took out a box, and she put the diary in the box, then opened a hand-bag which was lying on the table and transferred from it to the box a little automatic of blue steel.

Miss Withers, meanwhile, had whispered to Piper, and Piper suddenly flamed at Eddie:

"Say, why didn't you tell me about Gregg?"

"Gregg?" Eddie looked round from a window to which he had discreetly retreated. Miss Withers sat down on the chesterfield.

"Yes, Don Gregg," snapped Piper. "Violet Feverel's ex-husband. What do you know about him?"

"Nothing—nothing much," said Eddie with marked reluctance. "She got rid of him about six months ago."

"Was he in love with her?"

"Naturally, Oscar," purred Miss Withers, "if he married her."

"Pah!" snorted Piper, and he repeated his question.

"I suppose so," said Eddie with a shrug. "She took everything he had, and jammed him up on his alimony."

"Oh, she did? Why didn't you tell us about this before?"

Eddie replied that he didn't think that it was important.

"Oh, you didn't think it was important."

Piper scratched his chin.

"An ex-husband," he mused, "alimony—trouble. Uhuh! He loved her—and she's dead! Hildegarde, this

may be what the French call a crime of passion."

The bed-room door opened and Barbara reappeared. She had removed most of the traces of her tears, but she still looked badly upset.

"What do you know about Don Gregg?" Piper barked at her.

"Don?" she faltered. "Oh, I'm sure he's innocent."

"Oh, you're sure he's innocent, eh?"

"I know he is," stated Eddie definitely, and Piper swung round on him.

"How do you know?"

"Because," was the unexpected reply, "when he didn't pay his alimony, Violet had him thrown into gaol."

"What?" bellowed Piper.

"And he's still there."

"So the murderer was in gaol at the time of the murder," remarked Miss Withers. "Well, if this was a crime of passion, Oscar, it was pretty darned platonic!"

"All right, all right, all right," growled the discomfited sleuth. "Hold it!"

The bell of the front door rang, and Barbara would have answered its summons, but Piper stopped her and motioned to Miss Withers and to Eddie to go into the bed-room.

The bell rang again while they were obeying, and an excited voice rang out:

"Miss Feverel! Miss Feverel! Miss Feverel!"

Piper walked over to the door and crooked a finger at Barbara, and he was hidden by the door when she opened it. On the mat in the corridor outside stood a man who looked like a butler—a man with stooping shoulders, a thin, clean-shaven face, and a queer-shaped jaw. He was holding his hat in his hand.

"What is it?" asked Barbara.

"Please tell Miss Violet," said the man tremulously, "that her father-in-

law wants to see her right away. Tell her to hurry, or it may be too late."

Piper swept out from behind the door.

"Why will it be too late?" he questioned sharply.

The man's jaw dropped and he blinked at the detective.

"Excuse me," he mumbled. "I—I didn't know—"

"What didn't you know?"

"That Miss Feverel had guests."

"Come in!" Piper snapped, and as the man stepped into the sitting-room he shut the door. "Who are you?"

"Abraham Thomas," was the nervous reply. "I'm working for Mr. Patrick Gregg—Miss Feverel's father-in-law. If you'll just tell Miss Feverel—"

"My sister is dead," blurted Barbara. "She was killed this morning."

"Killed?" echoed the butler, seemingly aghast. "Why—why it can't be!"

"She was murdered," said Piper.

"But nobody would want to murder her!" exclaimed Thomas. "It's old Mr. Gregg they're after!"

Miss Withers stepped briskly out from the bed-room.

"What makes you say that?" she asked.

The butler gaped at her.

"Well," he said in a quavering voice, "yesterday somebody poisoned old Rex, his dog, and Mr. Gregg is afraid he'll be next."

"Where does Mr. Gregg live?"

"Long Island, ma'am. I've got to be getting back there now."

"Just a minute," commanded Miss Withers. "We'll go with you."

She looked at Piper for confirmation, and he frowned.

"Might not be a bad idea," he conceded, "but I don't see what a dead dog on Long Island's got to do with a girl killed in Central Park."

"The dog belonged to her father-in-

law," said Miss Withers tartly, "and he's afraid of his life. Now, you don't want another murder on your hands, do you?"

"Okay," surrendered Piper, "but I still think it's a snipe hunt."

"Excuse me," said Thomas diffidently, "but are you the police?"

"He's on to you, Oscar," laughed Miss Withers. "Better give yourself up!"

"All right, go ahead!" Piper picked up his hat and put it on his head, then turned to Barbara. "I'm not through with you two yet," he said menacingly. "Take my advice and don't try to leave town."

The House on Long Island

DOWN at the kerb in East Eighty-Sixth Street an old-fashioned limousine was standing close behind the squad car, a uniformed chauffeur at its wheel. The squad car was dismissed, and Piper and Miss Withers climbed into the limousine after the butler had seated himself beside the chauffeur.

A journey of some thirty-five miles followed, and then from a country road the limousine turned into a winding drive and came to a standstill in front of a house which Miss Withers decided was hideous.

It was large and gabled, but it was built in the worst possible style of the previous century, with wings that did not match, porches heavily porticoed, and a turret that made the whole place look lopsided.

The butler was the first to descend, and he preceded Piper and Miss Withers up the steps to the double front doors and rang the bell.

"Well, this is a nice cheery place," said the spinster. "It's just dying to be haunted."

"Yeah," drawled Piper, "and about all we'll find in there is moth-balls."



Having snapped one of the steel bracelets round Don's wrist, he gripped Miss Withers fiercely by the arm and snapped the other one round hers.

Thomas pressed the bell-button again, but without effect.

"Well, what's the matter?" complained Piper, trying to peer through the stained glass of a leaded panel. "Why don't somebody open up?"

He beat a tattoo with a knocker, but still there was no response from within. "Ever do any housebreaking?" he said to Miss Withers.

"I house-broke a Pekinese once," she replied.

Abruptly one of the doors was opened, and a queer-looking fellow stared out at them. He might have been almost any age between twenty and thirty, and his right shoulder was hunched and his head seemed permanently bent towards it.

"Joey," said the butler, "show the lady and gentleman into the back parlour."

They entered a gloomy hall, Joey limping ahead of them, and at the foot of some stairs Thomas said to Piper:

"I'll tell Mr. Gregg you're here, sir." He ascended the stairs, but the cripple moved past them and opened a door.

"You can wait in here," he said in a voice which sounded as though it had never finished breaking, and Miss Withers and the detective stepped into a room overcrowded with heavy furniture and full of gloom.

"This place would be great for an undertakers' convention," remarked Miss Withers with a sniff; and then the voice of Thomas rang out from above the stairs:

"Joey! Joey, come up here quick!" The cripple limped swiftly away, but Piper followed him, and Miss Withers followed Piper.

"What's the trouble up there?" shouted the inspector as he sped upwards; but he received no reply, and he reached a wide hallway on the first floor to find the butler rattling the handle of an oaken door and shouting:

"Mr. Gregg!"

"What's wrong?" demanded Piper.

"He doesn't answer—and the door's locked from the inside."

"We'll soon fix that," said Piper. "Get out of the way."

The butler and the cripple moved aside and the detective put his shoulder to the door in such a fashion that the lock gave way.

He burst into a bed-room as gloomy as the room below, and quite as heavily furnished, and he reached a massive wooden bed which might at one time have had posts and a canopy—and leaned down over an old man who lay upon it, his scanty white hair upon a pillow, his hands spread out on the coverlet.

"He's breathing!" exclaimed Piper. "Open a window! Get the doctor!"

The cripple went to a window and opened it; the butler ran out from the room. Miss Withers stood beside the detective, studying the thin and lined face of the old man. Joey limped out past them, and then Piper said:

"Well, I don't think there's anything we can do till the doctor comes. Looks like a stroke to me."

"Yes," returned Miss Withers, but without conviction. "Look, he has a big bump behind the left ear." How do you suppose that happened?"

"Oh, probably fell and hit his head when he had the attack."

"And then climbed back into bed?"

"Yeah," said Piper, and scratched his chin while she straightened the bedclothes.

Thomas reappeared while she was tucking in a sheet.

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"Dr. Peters is on his way over," he said. "He lives just down the road. Poor Mr. Gregg— Oh, I'll do that, ma'am."

He finished tucking in the sheet and he straightened the tumbled coverlet.

"He has a bad heart," he said. "The doctor told him that any excitement was likely to prove fatal. He had a slight attack not long ago."

"What caused the excitement that time?" inquired Piper.

"Horse racing, sir. Mr. Gregg has been a horseman all his life."

Somewhere in the house a bell rang. "Oh, if you'll excuse me, that must be the doctor," said the butler, and hurried off again.

Miss Withers promptly went to some clothes which were lying on a sofa across the room and proceeded to go through the pockets of a pair of grey trousers.

"Are you sure you've never been married?" chaffed Piper, watching her with amusement.

"If you're trying to be funny," she retorted severely, "there's a time and place for everything." She held out a slip of paper she had discovered.

"Here, look at this!" He took the slip. On it was written:

"Received from Pat Gregg nine hundred dollars for back alimony due. "VIOLET FEVEREL."

"I knew Don Gregg was the one—" he began.

"S-s-s-sh!" hissed Miss Withers, and the slip of paper was out of sight when Thomas ushered into the room a short and rather tubby man with a pronounced nose and a clipped moustache.

"Dr. Peters," the butler said introductively; but the doctor, with the barest of nods, leant over his patient, turned back the lid of one of the closed eyes, and held a skinny wrist.

"Hot water and some towels, please," he said.

"What is it, doc?" asked Piper, after Thomas had gone. "A stroke?"

"Umm," grunted the doctor. "I warned him."

"About what?" ventured Miss Withers.

"He has a very bad heart." With none too friendly grey eyes Dr. Peters surveyed his questioners. "Thomas told me that you are the police," he said, "and that Miss Feverel is dead." "Murdered," corrected Piper.

"I'm not surprised. She was an evil woman."

"She certainly wasn't the most popular girl in her class," remarked Miss Withers.

Thomas reappeared with a jug of hot water and some towels, and the doctor frowned at her.

"Oh, don't mind me," she said casually. "I'll just look around."

She went out and shut the bed-room door behind her, and she glanced about the wide hallway out of which several doors opened, but it was a second flight of stairs that interested her and she flitted noiselessly up them.

On the floor above she entered a room directly over the bed-room and saw that it was fitted up as a sort of study. There was a big flat-topped desk in the middle of it, facing a window, and on the desk stood a mounted telescope of considerable size.

"Heavens, the man's an astronomer!" she exclaimed, and sat down in a chair behind the desk and applied an eye to the telescope.

There were many trees in the extensive grounds at the back of the house, but no trees were visible through

the telescope. Instead, she found that she had a perfectly good view of the Belmont Park race track, and of two stable-boys riding horses upon it.

"My error," she murmured, "not stars—horses!"

With her gloved hands she went through the drawers of the desk, looked at all the papers on top of the desk, and under the blotting-pad found a scrap on which had been written:

"Bet \$100 on Wallaby at 15 to 1."

She folded the piece of paper, slipped it into her glove, and went out from the room; and she reached the floor below just as Dr. Peters and Piper emerged from the bed-room.

"The doc say he'll pull through all right," said Piper.

"He'll recover all right," confirmed the doctor; "but I can't understand it. Somehow the hand of death must have slipped."

"Doctor," said Miss Withers, "could Patrick Gregg have gone into town, killed his daughter-in-law, and then come back here?"

"Impossible!" returned the doctor with ill-concealed scorn. "His heart couldn't have stood the excitement. Excuse me."

He made his way to the stairs and descended them, preceded by the butler.

"What a question!" jeered Piper. "Could Patrick Gregg have killed his daughter-in-law! Why, this alimony receipt proves that Don Gregg was out of gaol."

"I don't care what you say," she retorted with a sniff, "there's something phoney going on here."

The Forged Order

DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR PIPER went down the stairs, but the indignant spinster re-entered the bed-room and stood beside the bed looking down at the old man in it.

"Faker!" she said suddenly and loudly, and Patrick Gregg opened his eyes.

"What's that?" he asked in a feeble voice, staring up at her.

"I said 'faker,'" she replied, and calmly perched herself on the edge of the bed. "When you pretend to be asleep why don't you breathe naturally? When did you come to?"

"While the doctor was here," he said slowly. "He told me you were police, and about Violet."

"Must have been quite a shock," she suggested.

"Pleasant shock," he returned. "She was no good. Horse kick her?"

Miss Withers shook her head and informed him that the girl was murdered.

"Murdered?" said he in surprise. "When did it happen?"

"Early this morning. Why?"

"I was just wondering."

Miss Withers rose.

"Were you alone when you had this attack?" she asked.

"What's that? Oh, I suppose so. I can't remember. But I had a funny dream." He raised a hand and waved the forefinger back and forth. "I dreamed I was a pendulum in a clock."

He licked his lips and closed his eyes again, and she put the hand back under the bedclothes.

"Well, pleasant dreams," she said.

She descended to the hall, and there she heard the voice of Piper in the back parlour and made for the open doorway.

The inspector was squatting on an ottoman, his hands in his pockets, and he was speaking to Thomas:

"Come on now, just between you and me, the late Mrs. Don Gregg—otherwise Violet Feverel—wasn't very popular around here, was she?"

"No, sir," agreed the butler, "she was not. If I may say so, she was a trouble-maker, and Mr. Pat Gregg disapproved of her violently. So did Mr. Don, after a while."

"He did, eh?" Piper bounded to his feet and stood over the butler. "Why did you lie to me?"

"Sir?"

"Why did you tell me that Don Gregg was still in gaol when you knew he was released two weeks ago?"

"Well, but he wasn't released, sir." Piper produced the receipt Miss Withers had found.

"Here's the alimony receipt," he said fiercely. "It's paid!"

"Yes," said the butler, "but, you see, sir, Mr. Gregg paid only the alimony due at the time Master Don was arrested, not the amount that had accrued while he was locked up."

"Are you trying to tell me," howled Piper, "that Don Gregg was kept in gaol after this nine hundred dollars was paid?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm a speckled ape." "This is no time for a confession, Oscar," rebuked Miss Withers from the doorway.

"I don't believe it!" snorted the detective. "Don Gregg is the guy. The dame was a rat, and he knocked her off. I'm going to check on your story, mister. Where's the 'phone?"

"Just outside in the hall, sir."

Piper went out to a telephone on a table in the hall, and Miss Withers stopped the butler as he was about to pass her.

"Oh, tell me, Thomas," she said, "what kind of a pipe do you smoke?"

"A corncob, ma'am," the butler replied, without evincing any surprise at the question. "I paid twenty cents

for it, and I've smoked it for twenty years."

"Really?" she murmured, and walked along to the inspector, who had rung up the gaol in Thirty-Seventh Street to which divorced husbands are committed when they fail to keep up their payments of alimony to their former wives.

"Listen," he was shouting. "Have you got a guy down there named Don Gregg? You what? Oh, you did, eh? Who's this talking? Oh, Warden Mahoney! Oh, Warden Sylvester Mahoney. Well, listen, Mr. Warden Sylvester Mahoney, I want you at my office in half an hour, and bring all the records of the case with you. Yeah!"

He slammed down the instrument, and turned to grin triumphantly at Miss Withers.

"Don Gregg was sprung out of the alimony gaol last night a few hours before the murder," he stated.

"Who let him out?" she asked.

"I don't know, but I'm going to find out."

He retrieved his hat from the back parlour.

"In gaol, huh?" he said. "Looks like I hit a bullseye!"

He strode towards the double front door, and Miss Withers kept pace with him.

"It hurts me, Oscar," she confessed as he pulled back the latch, "but I think you've got something."

"Stick around," he boasted, "and you'll see an arrest in twenty-four hours."

One of the doors was opened, and Thomas hurried forward to see the unwelcome visitors off the premises.

A full hour elapsed before Piper reached his own room at police headquarters in Centre Street, and Warden Sylvester Mahoney had been waiting in it for some time. He was a big man and a bulky one, with a florid face and a neck that bulged over his collar

—a man of importance, in his own estimation.

Piper took the folder he presented, lit a cigar, and studied a document.

"So this is the court order that sprung Master Don Gregg, eh?" he suddenly burst out, and stabbed the document with a finger. "I suppose you've noticed, Mr. Sylvester Mahoney, that the seal is phoney and that the order is a forgery?"

The warden gulped and gripped at the hat on his knees. His flabby face seemed to sag.

"Dear me, dear me," he murmured; "but, inspector, how was I to know?"

"How were you to know?" roared Piper. "How were you to know anything? D'you know what city this is? D'you know what the date is?"

"I—I think," stammered the warden, "it's the seventh."

"You think it's the seventh, eh? Well, it ain't!" Piper consulted a calendar-pad. "It's the ninth!"

"My mistake."

Piper walked round the desk and flung himself into his chair behind it.

"Here was a guy who might have been a murderer," he raged, "and you sprung him out of gaol!"

"He couldn't have murdered anybody while he was in gaol, could he?" said the warden hopefully.

"No," returned Piper, "and if you'd kept him in gaol, I wouldn't be hunting for him now."

"Well, it—it's all very confusing. But, you see, inspector, one of the boys had a birthday, and a friend of his sent him some—well, some bottles for a little celebration."

That practically was a confession that the warden had imbibed the night before, and that as a consequence he had not been any too careful.

"Birthday!" repeated Piper. "Whose birthday?"

It appeared that Don Gregg had had



She was far too scared to answer, and she shrank back against the wall as he leaned menacingly over the side of the dressing-table.

the birthday, and this was added fuel to the inspector's wrath.

"Get out!" he bellowed. "Get out, Mr. Sylvester Mahoney, because I'm looking for myself for murder!"

The warden was only too glad to escape, and he almost ran from the building. Piper shouted at the top of his voice for a detective-sergeant named Kane, and after an interval a short and very tubby person put his head in at the door—a head from which a well-worn slouch hat had not been removed.

"Did you call, inspector?" inquired the owner of the face and the hat.

"Did I call?" snapped Piper. "What did you think I was doing—singing? Send out a general alarm for Donald Gregg."

"Yes, sir," responded Kane. "What do we want him for?"

"For the murder of Violet Feveler," was the reply.

A Shock for Miss Withers

BARBARA—whose surname was Foley, just as her sister's had been before she had adopted the name of Feveler for stage purposes—was alone in the flat on the fifth floor of the apartment-house in East Eighty-Sixth Street when she heard a sound as of someone trying to open the front door. Instantly she rushed into the bed-room and returned from it with the automatic in her hand.

A key grated in the lock, the door swung wide, and Don Gregg entered the sitting-room, but stopped short and held up his hands at sight of the girl and the gun.

"Don't shoot!" he pleaded hoarsely. "I'm Don Gregg. Who are you?"

"Oh!" The gun drooped in Barbara's hand. "I'm Barbara," she said in rather a shaky voice. "Violet's sister. I—I thought you were in gaol."

"I was," said Don, closing the door. "I got out last night."

"Last night?" she gasped. "Oh!" "What's the matter?" He followed her as she sped to the little desk on which a telephone reposed. "What are you going to do?"

She pointed the gun at him again. "Stay where you are!" she shrielled. "I'm going to call the police!"

Outside the canopied entrance of the building Miss Withers descended from a taxicab and handed the driver the exact fare registered on the clock, much to his disgust. She was crossing the pavement when a newsboy thrust a special edition of the "Chronicle" upon her, and she paid for that, too, because she had caught sight of enormous headlines:

"INSPECTOR PIPER PREDICTS ARREST IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF FEVELER MURDER SUSPECT."

She looked at a picture of Don on the front page beneath the headlines, and she made a grimace at a picture of Detective-Inspector Oscar Piper which was close beside it, then folded the paper and marched firmly into the building and entered a lift.

Up on the fifth floor Don Gregg had persuaded Barbara not to telephone the police, and had listened in apparent astonishment to her statement that his former wife had been murdered early that morning.

"I came here to see Violet," he told her. "I didn't know she was dead."

The doorbell rang, and they looked at one another in dismay.

"Don't answer it," whispered Don. "Maybe they'll go away."

But it was Miss Withers at the door, and she had no intention of going away.

September 28th, 1936.

She continued to press the bell-button till at last Barbara bundled Don Gregg into the bed-room and opened the door.

"Hallo!" said Miss Withers, brushing past her and stopping beside a little table near the chesterfield. "I hope I'm not disturbing you. I just dropped in to ask a few more questions about your sister."

"But I've told you everything I know," protested Barbara, trying not to appear flustered. "Really, I have."

There was a briar pipe on the table, and Miss Withers had not failed to notice it.

"Do you smoke?" she asked abruptly. "Yes, a little bit."

Miss Withers picked up the pipe and found that it was warm.

"But not a pipe, I hope?" "Oh, that—er—that belongs to—"

"To the man hiding in the other room," Miss Withers completed for her, and raised her voice. "Come out, young man."

Don Gregg came out from the bed-room. The collar of his overcoat was still turned up about his neck, but his hat was on the back of his head, and his gray eyes were defiant.

"This is Miss Withers from the police," said Barbara.

"And you're Don Gregg," said Miss Withers, walking over to him with the newspaper in her hand. "Don't you think it's kind of silly for you to come here?"

"I came to see Violet," he stated, removing his hat. "I didn't know she was dead."

"Don't lie to me!" "I'm not lying to you!" he retorted.

"What did you do after you got out of gaol last night?"

He went over to the table on which he had replaced the pipe, and he thrust the pipe in his overcoat pocket.

"Why," he said slowly, "I went to a Turkish bath."

"Then what did you do?" "Well, I slept there, and this morning I came here."

She looked at him steadily for several seconds.

"All right," she said then, "if that's the truth come down to headquarters and tell your story to the police."

"And get thrown back in gaol?" he scoffed. "I should say not!"

Barbara ran to him, caught hold of his arm.

"I think you'd better go, Don," she said.

"If you're innocent," said Miss Withers, "you have nothing to worry about. And, besides, I have a great deal of influence with Inspector Piper."

"All right," growled Don, and he restored his hat to his head and went out from the flat with her.

There was a uniformed attendant at the entrance to the building and Miss Withers asked him to get a taxi. Detective-Sergeant Kane was lurking on the pavement with a colleague considerably taller than himself, but he did not know Miss Withers, and Miss Withers did not know him.

"Are you sure it's going to be all right?" asked Don nervously while the attendant was trying to find a taxicab.

"Now don't you worry," Miss Withers returned reassuringly. "Leave everything to me."

They moved towards the kerb, but Kane suddenly swooped.

"Well, where d'you think you're goin'?" he demanded harshly.

"And what do you think you're doing?" Miss Withers retorted.

"I'm arresting both of you in the name of the law!"

"B-but you can't!" she cried indignantly as he flashed his badge. "I'm a friend of the inspector's. I'll show you."

She opened her handbag and fumbled in it, intensely annoyed because a crowd was gathering round them. But Kane peered into the bag.

"Here, watcha got?" he cried, and plunged his own podgy hand into the bag and brought forth a small but very serviceable six-shooter. "A rod, eh? Well, you never can tell."

"I was looking for my courtesy badge," she said as laughter rang out behind her.

"What badge?" "The one the inspector gave me."

"Lemme see it."

"Just a minute," Miss Withers searched, but searched in vain. "I must have left it at home," she said blankly.

"Oh, sure!" jibed the detective. "On the bureau." Right beside the permit for this!

He pocketed the gun and produced a pair of handcuffs, and having snapped one of the steel bracelets round Don's wrist he gripped her fiercely by the arm and snapped the other one round hers.

"Call the wagon, Jim," he directed gruffly.

A patrol wagon arrived while the crowd grew in numbers, and the manacled pair were ordered to get into it.

"But you can't do this to me!" stormed the spinster.

"Oh, I can't, eh?" Kane bundled her up into the wagon while his colleague dealt with Don. "Well, it's done, ain't it?"

To the accompaniment of more laughter from the onlookers he followed his prisoners into the vehicle, and the doors were closed and fastened.

Some half-hour later the self-important little detective swaggered into Piper's office at headquarters with an expansive smile on his fat face, and Piper looked up at him from his desk.

"Well, what's on your mind?" snapped the inspector.

"It's Gregg," replied Kane boastfully. "I nabbed him right outside the apartment-house—him and a dame."

"Nice work," approved Piper. "Bring 'em in."

Kane went to the door, which he had left open, and shouted into the ante-room.

"Come on, you!"

Handcuffed together, Don Gregg and Miss Withers walked past him into the office, and the expression on Piper's face as he viewed the female prisoner was a study in mixed emotions.

"Hildegard!" he exclaimed.

Miss Withers held up her right hand, and with it Don's left hand, and the inspector laughed again at sight of the handcuffs.

"Kane," he gnrled, "you ought to be promoted for this!"

"You're as funny as a cry for help!" cried Miss Withers with a snuff.

"All right, Kane," chuckled Piper, "take the cuffs off."

"I was afraid," said the spinster as the discomfited little detective obeyed, "that we were going to have to get married. Oscar, I told Mr. Gregg that you'd just ask him a few questions and let him go."

All trace of amusement faded from Piper's lean features.

"Oh," he said with sarcasm, "so I'm just going to ask him a couple of questions and let him go?"

"Uhuh," she nodded. "I think you will, when you hear the answers."

"So he's got an alibi, eh?"
 "The only evidence you have," she retorted, "is a BB shot in a horse. You can't hold him on that."

"I can't, eh? I'm going to ask him some questions that'll knock his hat off!"

Miss Withers smiled at Don.
 "Better hold on to your hat, Mr. Gregg," she said.

"Sit down, Gregg," commanded Piper.
 "Sit down, Hildegarde."

Don seated himself in a chair, but Miss Withers sailed towards the door.

"No, thank you," she said on her way out. "I'm afraid you might start questioning me."

"Deduction!"

KANE was dismissed, and Piper deserted his chair to sit on the end of the desk within a few inches of the young man he believed to be a murderer.

"Gregg," he said bullyingly, "we know you were released last night on a forged order. How did you do it?"

"On a forged order?" asked Don.

"Aw, come on, Gregg! We know the whole thing. We know that you were sprung from gaol on a phoney writ and killed the woman who had you locked up. Now you might as well come clean."

Don drew a long breath.
 "Well, I got out of gaol, yes," he admitted, "but I—well, I spent the night in a Turkish bath."

"Yeah?" Piper glared at him incredulously. "What was the name of the baths?"

"The Central Baths."
 A bell-button on the desk was jabbed, and Kane re-entered.

"Oh, Kane," said Piper, "find out who the attendant was at the Central Baths last night. Get him over here right away."

"Yes, sir," said Kane.
 "And don't bring back Hildegarde Withers!"

"Oh, no, sir!"
 During the period of waiting that followed, Don felt in one pocket after another, and Piper watched him.

"What's the matter?" he rapped.
 "Lose something?"

"Yes," said Don, "my pipe. It's gone. Somebody's picked my pockets!"
 "Now who could have picked your pockets at Police Headquarters?" jeered the inspector.

Miss Withers, of course, was the guilty person. She went from Centre Street into Broadway, and there invaded a high-class tobacconist's establishment.

"Can you tell by examining a pipe what kind of a man might have smoked it?" she asked anxiously of an elderly and bald-headed man who leaned over a glass-topped counter as she approached it.

"It's quite possible, madam," was the reply. "Pipes are always like the men who smoke them."

Miss Withers differed from other women; inside her astrakhan-trimmed jacket there was a pocket almost as capacious as a poacher's. From this pocket she produced two briar pipes—the one she had found in Central Park and the one she had managed to filch from Don's overcoat. She laid them on the counter, and she said:

"Well, I'd like to find out all about the man who smoked these. It's very important."

The tobacconist picked up Don's pipe and examined it with care, particularly the mouthpiece.

"This is a very ordinary pipe," he said, putting it down again, and he picked

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up the other. "Ah, but this—this is interesting! It tells me quite a lot about the man who smoked it."

A pair of spectacles were readjusted upon an aquiline nose, and the mouth-piece of the pipe was turned this way and that.

"Such a man," declared the tobacconist, "would be of middle-age, probably a professor, or a chemist—and he has false teeth."

Miss Withers repossessed herself of the pipes, thanked her informant, and departed.

Meanwhile, Detective-Sergeant Kane had returned to headquarters with an enormous fellow from the Central Baths who had been whisked away from his duties in trousers and vest. He was a trifle over six feet in height and he weighed at least eighteen stone.

Piper viewed this mountainous person in some astonishment.

"So you're the rubber over at the Central Baths, eh?" he queried.

"Yes, sir, I am," replied the giant complacently. "And a pretty good one, too."

"All right," Piper gestured to Don, who rose to his feet. "Take a look at this man. Was he over at your baths last night?"

The attendant regarded Don from head to foot with a pair of critical brown eyes, but shook his head.

"I wouldn't know, sir," he said. "I couldn't tell."

"What d'you mean you couldn't tell?" rapped Piper.

"Well, a suit of clothes is just a suit of clothes to me, sir. I don't see 'em in any clothes."

"Oh," said Piper, "I get you. Strip yourself to the waist, Gregg!"

Don obeyed quite readily, and a smile of recognition spread over the giant's face.

"I can tell you now, sir," he boomed. "He was at the baths last night. In fact, I rubbed him myself."

"You rubbed him yourself?" Piper was obviously disappointed. "You sure?"

The attendant was positive.
 "All right," growled Piper, "you can go."

Off went the witness, and Kane went, too. Piper relit a cigar that had expired in his mouth and turned none too happily to Don.

"So far your story's okay," he said. "I'm not going to hold you, but don't try to leave town."

Don, having resumed his garments, decided to go to his father's house on Long Island where he had lived before his unhappy marriage and after his divorce. But as soon as Patrick Gregg heard of his arrival from the butler he sent for him, and a none-too-pleasant scene occurred in the depressing bedroom.

The sick man, considerably better by this time, accused him of having murdered Violet Feverel.

"Why do you say that?" Don demanded heatedly. "I tell you I'm in the clear. I've got an alibi!"

"You're involved in a murder," shouted his father, sitting up in bed and pointing an accusing finger at him, "and I hope the truth comes out, even if you are my son!"

"That's a fine attitude for you—"
 The butler burst into the room with upraised hands.

"Master Don," he expostulated, "you mustn't excite your father. The doctor said he'd have another attack if he wasn't kept quiet."

"Get out and stay out!" Patrick Gregg roared at his son. "I want no part of you!"

Don smothered his rage and went out to the stairs, and Thomas followed him. They descended together to the hall, and on the way Thomas said, regretfully:

"I'm sorry, Master Don."

"You'd have thought I could go to my own father," complained Don. "Oh, well, he never had much love for me, anyway—and I'm not so sure that I've much love for him, either."

The bell of the telephone began to ring as they reached the foot of the stairs.

"I'll get that," Don said, and he went to the table in the hall and picked up the instrument. "Hallo! Yes, this is Don Gregg speaking."

Eddie Fry was on the other end of the line, speaking from the flat in East Eighty-Sixth Street.

"I'm a friend of Miss Foley's," he stated. "She wants to see you as soon as possible. It's very important."

Don looked at his watch and found that it was just after eleven o'clock.

"Tell her I'll be there around noon," he said.

Thomas was standing by the newel-post as he put down the telephone.

"Get my car," he directed, and after the butler had disappeared he went slowly up the stairs.

Miss Withers, having had a very early breakfast that morning, had an unusually early lunch before she returned to Headquarters in quest of Oscar Piper. The inspector was munching sandwiches when she invaded his room and seated herself in a fairly comfortable chair near the desk.

"Oscar," she said impressively, "Don Gregg didn't do it."

The inspector, in his shirt sleeves and with his waistcoat unfastened, swallowed the last morsel of the last sandwich but one and scowled at her.

"Don't be a sap," he snorted. "Of course he did it!"

"How are you going to prove it?" she challenged.

"Well—"

"Exactly!" she cut in. "Oscar, the man who killed Violet Feyeel was middle-aged. He was a thoughtful man—possibly a chemist, or a professor—and he has false teeth."

Piper bounded to his feet. "What's his name?" he asked excitedly.

"I haven't the least idea."

"Then where'd you get all the dope?"

"Deduction, Oscar."

"Aw!" He forgot all about the remaining sandwich in his disgust, and he lit a cigar.

"How can you find out if a man has false teeth?" inquired the cause of his distraction.

"That's easy," he growled. "Get him mad enough to bite you!"

Dr. Charles Bloom, the medical examiner, looked into the room with a sheet of paper in his hand.

"Oh, come on in, doc," said Piper.

"What you got—the autopsy report?"

"Yes." Bloom advanced to the desk and handed him the sheet of paper. "But there's nothing new. The girl had been killed by a blow on the head, that's certain."

"Okay." Piper did not even trouble to look at the report. "Oh, by the way, Miss Withers wants to know how she can find out if somebody has false teeth."

"H'm." The medical examiner pursed his thin lips. "That's quite a problem. Well, you can offer him an apple. If he bites, the teeth are his own. If not—not."

He went out, closing the door behind him, and Piper grinned at Miss Withers. "Now all we need's an apple," he said dryly.

More Revelations

It was only a few minutes later that Schultz, the handwriting expert at headquarters, entered the room. He was a little man with a veritable mane of white hair, and he had a whole sheaf of papers in his hand.

These he proceeded to spread out on the inspector's desk, and they proved to be enlargements of different letters and words from the receipt for the alimony and the court order which had secured Don's release from gaol. He was demonstrating the difference between some of the specimens, and the similarity between others, when Piper impatiently interrupted him.

"Look," he said, "all I want to find out is, did Gregg forge that court order?"

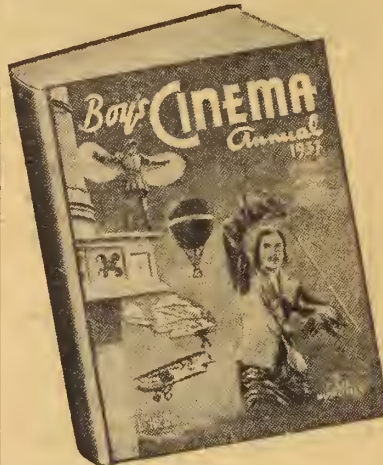
"A forged court order?" exclaimed Miss Withers in astonishment.

"Yeah. Your friend Gregg got out of gaol on a forged order. I forgot to tell you about it, you were so sure he was okay."

"Huh!" she sniffed. "I still am!"

September 26th, 1936.

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"Oh, you are? Well, come on, Schultz, did Gregg forge that order?"

"No," said the little handwriting expert quite definitely, "he didn't."

Piper's disappointment was manifest. Miss Withers, smiling triumphantly, took the scrap of paper she had found under the blotting-pad in Patrick Gregg's study and opened it out.

"Mr. Schultz," she said, "do you think this might be the handwriting we're looking for?"

Schultz studied the writing, and Piper leaned over the desk.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"That's a specimen of Patrick Gregg's handwriting," Miss Withers informed him tartly. "I forgot to tell you about it, you were so sure he was okay."

"Pat Gregg?" Piper could hardly believe his ears. "Well, how d'you like that? Here—here's an old man who had a stroke—"

"How about it, Mr. Schultz?" Miss Withers interposed.

"Well, I can't be sure from a casual examination," was the guarded answer. "I'll have to chart the handwriting."

"Go ahead and chart it," rapped Piper.

Schultz gathered up all the papers and retreated.

"Pat Gregg!" exploded Piper. "Next thing you'll be telling me—"

A telephone bell interrupted him, and he snatched up the instrument. Highpockets was on the other end of the line, speaking from a call-box, but he was too excited to be articulate, and Piper, gathering that the stable-boy wanted to speak to Miss Withers, handed the instrument to her.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"I don't know," said the inspector, "but he's hissing like a snake!"

At the sound of her voice the negro became a little calmer, and a lot more coherent. Her brows went up as she listened.

"Yes, yes," she said, "you stay there, Highpockets. I'll be right over."

She handed the telephone back to Piper and rose and picked up her handbag.

"Come on," she said urgently, "we've got something!"

"What?" asked Piper.

"I'll tell you on the way over."

In a squad car they travelled uptown to East Fifty-Seventh Street, and Kane accompanied them. Highpockets ran out from the Thwaite Stables as the car drew up near the wide-open doors, and, waving his arms about as though he himself were fighting, he bellowed at Miss Withers as she descended:

"Dey bin scrappin' with each other! I mos' seared to death. Better go in dere and do somethin'. Dey bin fightin'—"

Piper and Kane dived into the brick-paved yard, but Miss Withers remained with the shouting and gesticulating negro.

"Now listen, Highpockets," she said, when he had calmed down a little. "I've got a ten-dollar bill in this bag. You just quiet yourself and begin at the beginning."

Highpockets' eyes ceased to roll, and avarice shone in them.

"Yes, ma'am," he said in his natural voice. "I'm awful calm, now. I'll tell you."

In the yard, outside the stall of the stallion, an altercation between Latigo Wells, recently released from custody, and Don Gregg ceased abruptly as the two detectives arrived. Eddie Fry was there, and Barbara was with him.

"What's going on here?" blazed Piper, and Don immediately pointed an accusing finger at Wells.

(Continued on page 25)

While the world trembled at a deadly menace and nations struggled for its possession, a G-man triumphs over a ring of spies. A dramatic story, starring Bill Boyd



More Than the Call of Duty

READEAD this!" The commissioner in charge of the secret investigation department held out a sheet of official paper to his assistant.

"Good heavens!" gasped the other. "Lynch murdered! How did this happen, chief?"

"He hadn't a chance." The commissioner held up another sheet of paper. "I have here a full report, which came in a few moments after that note. They found a car had crashed on a winding mountain road, and they found Lynch's body in the wreckage, and he had been shot in the back. Lynch was working on the Sanderson case."

"Sanderson—that's the man who has a formula for some new explosive, isn't it?"

"Yes, and evidently a pretty good one, because I've a hunch that a certain gang are after it. We've been trying to locate Sanderson because our people might like to buy the formula. I reckon Lynch was on to something when he was bumped off."

"What's the next move?"

"Only one man can handle this case—Bob Woods."

"But he's due for a vacation, chief," cried the assistant. "First he has taken in six years."

"Jack Lynch was his buddy."

The assistant turned as he heard the sound of hearty laughter.

"I'll bet that's Bob. Like to see him?"

The chief nodded.

Bob Woods was a thick-set, muscular man. A frank, open face and a ready smile. He removed a straw hat as he came into the commissioner's room.

"Can't think why I bought this darned thing," he remarked in the easy manner that made him so popular. "Had to celebrate my holiday some way, I

suppose." He stared at the two officials.

"Say, don't you two look bright and cheerful. I believe it's because I'm going away on a holiday."

"I wanted to see you, Bob, because there is something here that you're the only man could handle properly."

"I knew it—I knew it!" Bob gave a gesture of despair. "I knew something would stop me going on that fishing holiday with Jack Lynch. Tell me the worst, chief."

The commissioner's only answer was to hand across the desk the note that he had already shown to his assistant.

There was no expression on Bob Woods' face as he read the short message, but he sank into a chair as if he were tired, and sat there staring dully into space. The other two men glanced at each other, but wisely made no remark. After a while Bob roused himself, glanced again at the note, and then handed it back to the commissioner.

"So they got Jack?" Bob spoke slowly, and his eyes were hard. "I can start on this case, chief, at once. Have you any dope?"

Solemnly Bob listened whilst the commissioner told of an international spy ring, whose American operatives were attempting to buy from its inventor, Sanderson, the formula for a deadly explosive. That the authorities had not thought a great deal of Sanderson's discoveries until finding out the interest taken by outside agents. Sanderson's whereabouts were, at the moment, unknown. Sanderson was rather a crank, and though well known to scientists for his discoveries, had always remained very much in the background. Lynch had been instructed to look into the case, and had evidently made discoveries that had caused this spy ring to murder him in cold blood.

"You have worked with Lynch on

many cases and know his methods," stated the chief. "We can show you where the accident took place, but we can't tell you very much else. Wilson had been giving some sort of assistance to Lynch—and Wilson, you can get in touch with at this tobacco store. Wilson should know all that there is about this case, and it's up to you, Woods, to pick up the threads."

That morning Bob Woods left New York for California.

The door of the laboratory opened and a dark, foreign-looking man entered. The ferrety, shifty-eyed individual standing by some bubbling retorts looked at him narrowly.

"What luck?" he questioned.

"Nothing on the body," was the reply. He held up a pipe. "But I have found something here." He pulled the pipe apart, and from the pipe-stem drew out a piece of paper. "A sort of wedge to keep the holder fixed into the pipe. You will notice that it is not stained with nicotine, and cannot have been here when the pipe was smoked. It is quite blank."

"Try the acid test."

That test brought no result.

"How about the light?" came the next suggestion.

The foreigner scowled when that had no result. He peered into the pipe and fished out a knife. He scraped out the bowl on to a piece of paper, and asked for some luke-warm water. The contents of the bowl he tipped into the glass, and noted the deposit was melting. He dipped the paper in the liquid and placed in on a blotting-pad. Nothing happened, so he held the paper near to a small flame. He smiled and beckoned the other man. Wording had appeared.

"Have located Sanderson. Explosive seems very powerful and deadly. Recard, head of spy ring, trying to obtain formula.—LYNCH."

Jule Recard smiled.

"It was as well that Lynch was removed. Now you see what a menace he would have been to our plans."

The Gramophone Records

ON arrival at San Francisco, Bob Woods went straight to the tobacconist and bought some cigarettes, for which he offered a two-dollar bill.

"Don't see many of these."

The man looked closely at Bob.

"You'll find it's genuine."

The owner of the shop was satisfied from this special answer—a password—that Bob Woods was a Federal Agent.

"What can I do for you?"

"Where can I find Wilson?"

"Through the telephone booth," was the answer. "Rap three times on the wall."

The back of the telephone booth swung back, and Woods walked into a room. He nodded to the little man with the comical smile, and glanced thoughtfully at a man who was seated before a large radio set.

"This is Andrews," said the little man, who was Wilson. "I thought we might pick up something on the air."

Bob tossed his hat on to a table, and sat down in a rickety chair.

"What can you tell me about the case?"

"Very little," Wilson hesitated. "We're terribly sorry about Lynch. He was a grand fellow, and we're sure he was on to something, or else this wouldn't have happened. He set off on the morning he was killed, and he was very excited. Reckoned he would be able to clear up the Sanderson case in a few hours and then meet you for a vacation."

"Jack always liked to play a lone

hand." Bob Woods shook his head sadly. "I gather, Wilson, that you can tell me nothing more than I know already—that Lynch, hot on the scent, was trailed—was bumped off by persons unknown."

Wilson gave a faint nod.

"Anything from the air?"

"Nothing, though this message has come through three times." Andrews handed over a sheet of paper. "Looks like a code message. May be of no importance."

On the paper was written:

"V S 8 K G."

Bob frowned over it, and finally placed it in his pocket.

"Where was Lynch staying?"

"Some quiet apartments in Cedarville," answered Wilson. "Got a flatletto on the fifth floor. I've been through all his papers, but I didn't find a thing."

"We'll go take a look. You stay here, Andrews, and see if you can pick up anything else—we'll be back in an hour."

It was dusk when they reached Cedarville and the quiet block of flats where Lynch had resided. There was an amazed look on Wilson's face when the door of the flat would not open. The two men put their weight against the door and burst in.

Bob had drawn out a gun, and the first thing he noticed was the billowing curtains. He darted to the window.

Outside was a fire-escape, and, almost at the bottom he could see the scurrying figure of a woman.

"Wilson," Bob snapped out. "Come here." The other peered from the window. "See that woman—see that car she jumped into—tail it and then come back here."

"Okay, boss!" Wilson rushed out of the room.

Bob was thoughtful as he stared round Lynch's room. On the floor were a number of papers, and he guessed that the woman had been searching his friend's desk. He walked across, and at once his quick eyes noticed something

sticking out of the centre drawer. It was a strap from a lady's handbag and it was wedged so tight that he had quite a task opening the drawer.

The woman must have been seated at this desk with the drawer open, and she had been so startled by hearing people at the door that she had hurriedly closed the drawer and in some way jammed her handbag. Unable to move it, she had wrenched the bag free and scurried down the escape.

A glance through the papers in the desk told him little, for they were mostly routine matters. Against the wall was a gramophone. Now Lynch and Woods had made an arrangement between themselves whereby they could leave a record of recent activities by an ingenious, secret method. Bob Woods also had a gramophone, and by means of records they had kept in touch with one another.

Bob looked through the pile of records, and he tried out several, but they were all dance tunes or light opera. Then Bob held the records near to the light and a slight smile appeared on his lips. On the desk were a number of pipes, and he scraped the bowl of one in the same way that Recard had done, and placed the residue in a glass of hot water, which he had obtained from a wash-basin. He was dabbing one of the records when Wilson returned, very much out of breath.

"It was a girl," he exclaimed. "A good-looker. I tailed the car to the Santa Barbara Hotel, but she gave me the slip in the lounge. She's in the hotel some place, and I've left two of the boys watching the various exits."

"Good work," Bob grunted, and walked across to the gramophone. "Keep quiet and listen to this."

Wilson looked at Woods in amazement as the Federal Agent placed the record on the machine. It was a popular waltz. Suddenly the music ceased, and there came the sound of a voice from the gramophone:

"Lynch!" gasped Wilson.

"Shut up!" snapped Woods.

"After many weeks of searching have at last got a line on the Sanderson case," Lynch's voice even made Woods shudder. "On June 19th I contacted Sanderson. Appears to have formula for a deadly explosive which will revolutionise modern warfare. June 20th—Sanderson inclined to be secretive and not disposed to tell me his hide-out. Has a secret laboratory. Apparently his formula is almost complete, and in a secret laboratory is working night and day. Very suspicious of all inquiries. June 22nd.—Again contacted Sanderson, who has promised to meet me at his laboratory. So far only had conversation from call booth. Learnt big organisation after Sanderson's discovery and offering big price. Only my threat that the sale of formula may cause the outbreak of a terrible war has stopped him selling. Have discovered that



"What luck?" questioned the foreign-looking man.

Quietly the curtains were pushed to one side, and Bob Woods stood there and watched her.



Recard is the ringleader of this organization. Recard is working to obtain formula, which he plans to sell for a fortune to some foreign country. Recard is wanted in many countries for spying and other offences. June 24th.—Have seen Sanderson but not at his laboratory. Have satisfied him that I am working for the Government. Sanderson desperately in need of money. Have decided to take a car trip to Silver Falls and discuss problem with Bob Woods. Sanderson wants some sort of note from the White House." After that followed some music. "Just before leaving to meet Woods found out that Recard is expecting to meet an accomplice. Vilma Santos is the woman, and imagine she has come from some part of Asia with money to help Recard buy the formula." The record ended with music, and Bob switched off. "Vilma Santos." He took out the paper from his pocket. "V S 8 K G—Vilma Santos arriving at eight on King George. Wilson, the King George docks at eight in the morning, and if I guess rightly the woman will be on board. We're meeting the liner, Wilson."

The Steward

NATURALLY the badge that proved they were Federal Agents assisted Woods and Wilson at the docks. An embarkation officer allowed them to take up a position near the main gangway, and behind some merchandise. They were able to watch without looking too much like watchdogs—the officials had orders to scrutinise everybody's ticket. A signal was arranged should they observe any irregularity.

Bob Woods began to finger his chin in perplexity when the stream of passengers began to lessen. They knew that so far no one had passed the officers with the name of Vilma Santos, nor had they observed anyone acting suspiciously. Bob had almost decided to go on to the King George and have a search made of the cabins, when he laid

a hand on Wilson's arm. A solitary figure had appeared at the top of the gangway.

Wilson stared at his superior in surprise, for it was only a steward.

The steward was carrying a heavy suitcase and walked very carefully. A very smooth-faced, almost feminine type of young man, who seemed a little nervous. The officer examined the steward's pass and nodded that it was all right to proceed.

Bob came to the officer's side.

"Who was that?"

"If anyone is suspicious that's the person," said the officer. "But that is a man."

"Ever seen a man walk that way?" Woods pointed. "Ever seen a steward with powder on his cheeks? I hope not."

"I've got it!" gasped Wilson. "The steward's a woman!"

"You're improving," laughed Woods. "Come on!"

Outside the docks a long, powerful car was waiting. Now the steward began to hurry. The back door was opened by a sleek, dark-skinned man, and the bag tossed inside, then the door beside the driver was opened and the steward jumped in—the car went off with a roar. When the car pulled up outside the Santa Barbara the taxi containing Woods and Wilson was close behind.

The steward entered the hotel and the car drove away. Woods was just in time to see their quarry enter a lift.

"Find out the room number," whispered the agent. "The lift has stopped at the sixth. Better take the stairs."

"And me with dropped arches," bemoaned Wilson.

Bob Woods studied the people sitting in the lounge, and his keen eyes detected a girl who was dressed very much in the same sort of clothes as the person seen escaping from Lynch's flat. She was reading a magazine, and yet she was constantly looking up from her reading. There was plenty of room on the settee, so Bob Woods took a place beside her.

A quick glance she gave him before before going back to her reading.

Her left hand was resting on a handbag, and she took it away to smooth an unruly brown curl, giving Bob the chance to have a good look at the bag. That twisted smile came to his lips as he noticed one end of the strap was torn and the other end missing. Quietly he took out the strap, and, holding it hidden, made a comparison—no doubt that this was the strap of the handbag.

Wilson, in the meantime, had found out that the steward had gone into Room 210. He proceeded to make himself comfortable in the corridor and wait till the woman—if it were a woman—reappeared.

The Treacherous Recard

JULE RECARD admitted the steward to his room, and after locking the door, would have taken his visitor in his arms. The latter dropped the suitcase and stayed him with outstretched hand.

"My darling, what is it?" Recard said in injured tones.

The steward removed the peaked cap and out tumbled a mass of black curls. The woman shook them into place, but her eyes never once wavered from the man's face.

"I understand that you've got someone else into the game. A woman. Who is she?"

"You're not jealous, are you, dear?"

"Oh, no!" The woman's eyes flashed. "I'm delighted about it. I can't leave you for a day without you prove unfaithful to me. I risk my life and my freedom for you and come back to find you carrying on with another woman."

Recard pointed to the bag.

"You have the money?"

"Yes, but—"

"My dear, I can explain." He smiled at her and held out his arms.

"You must not be so suspicious. I must have people to help me. This

woman is of use to me." His eyes narrowed. "What did Mullins tell you?"

"Only what I could worm out of him," blazed the woman. "He mentioned that your plans were all in readiness, and by chance mentioned that a woman had helped in the negotiations with Sanderson."

"It's quite right, my dear," he smiled. "Sanderson's a most difficult person to contact, and only through her help have I been able to fix up almost complete arrangements. She is taking me to see Sanderson in the morning. Vilma, you have my word that this woman means nothing to me. It is only you I love."

The woman seemed slightly mollified. "Don't give me cause for suspicion, Jule, because if I find you have lied to me I am likely to get a little angry. One word from me and I could burst this scheme of yours wide open."

With difficulty Recard controlled the impulse to put his hands round her throat and throttle her.

"My dear, there is no one else." He rubbed his hands together. "Within a few days the secret formula will be in my possession. Then we can go down to Mexico, where I will hand the formula to special emissaries, and we shall be richer by a quarter of a million dollars. My angel, you haven't kissed me yet."

The woman submitted to his caress, but all the while she was wondering what was behind that inscrutable smile.

"All my plans are practically complete," explained Recard. "Now you have arrived with these bonds and securities, which can be converted into cash at a moment's notice, the prize is within our grasp. It would be as well if you went to our house."

"Whilst you stay here?" she asked quickly.

"My dear, do not be so suspicious." He was patient. "I am staying here under an assumed name, and it would not be wise to have my wife with me. If you go to the house with Mullins you can help me most. We must give these Federal Agents no chance of trailing us."

"But I don't see why your wife—"

"Vilma, please let me conduct this in my way. That house has been left long enough. Besides, I may require you to help me in the laboratory testing out old Sanderson's formula." He pointed to the bed-room. "Some people may have seen you enter here as a man. I have your clothes in my room. It would be best if you change and go back to the house."

Wilson was half-asleep when he woke to the fact that a very beautiful woman was standing by the lift. She gave him a slight smile. Poor Wilson had no idea this was the steward. The lift doors opened and madam disappeared, leaving Wilson goggling foolishly.

The woman downstairs had seen the steward enter, and knew whom she was, and was waiting for the reappearance of the other to go up to see Recard.

Bob Woods edged a little nearer to her.

"Looks as if we might have a war in Europe," he remarked.

The girl frowned at his impertinence in addressing her.

Bob was unperturbed.

"War is a terrible thing with these new engines of war. What with new gases and deadly explosives."

"I'm not interested."

"You should be," Bob grinned. "America might be involved. Airships might come over dropping bombs. There's a bit here about a new ex-

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plosive discovered by some old crank named Sanderson."

The girl gave a slight start, then, without answering, turned her back.

"It says here that the explosive is more deadly and powerful than anything yet discovered." Bob rustled the paper. "Sanderson is reputed to be out for the highest bidder. Awful if that explosive got into the wrong hands, don't you agree with me?"

The girl hesitated as if she would call one of the bellboys, but there was something in his eyes that made her pause. A sort of knowing look. Who was this man?

"I've never heard of Sanderson."

"Oh, yes you have!" Bob chuckled. "You're trying to secure the Sanderson formula."

"What do you mean by that?"

"What I said, young lady. You're after the Sanderson formula. Well, so am I." He winked. "And maybe the syndicate for whom I'm working can pay better than the bunch for whom you're working. No good trying to bluff me. A lot of people know about the Sanderson explosive, and you'd be surprised if you knew the people for whom I'm working. Stand in with me and I'll guarantee you a small fortune."

"You must be quite mad."

"Lady, don't try to keep up that game." Bob shook his head. "We've got our agents and we know who are working against us. What do you say to working in with me on a fifty-fifty basis?"

Bob Woods was hoping to get some useful information from this girl. Usually money would open most mouths, and in his pocket was a big wad of notes. Not that Bob intended to part with them, but they might prove a good bait.

Suddenly over Bob's shoulder the girl sighted Vilma Santos. This man had been following Vilma, because she had seen the two men enter the hotel close on the steward's heels. Round her neck was a heavy bead bracelet. A cry of alarm and the girl clutched at her dress—she had cunningly broken the necklace. The heavy beads rolled on to the floor, and, unsuspecting, Bob went down on his knees. Some of the beads had gone under a couch.

Bob straightened his back and gave a rueful grin. An old trick, and it had caught him—the girl had vanished. But his sharp eyes saw something else. A beautiful woman getting into a taxi. His knowledge of disguises told him that the woman was Vilma Santos. He got to his feet, and as he hastened towards the swing doors Wilson came running down the stairs.

"No sign of that steward," said Wilson. "All I saw was a darned good-looking dame. She smiled at me, Bob. If I hadn't been busy I might—"

Bob clutched his arm.

"Is that her going off in that taxi?"

"Yeah. That's her."

"That is the steward, you dumb egg!" rasped Bob.

"You don't say." Wilson's eyes nearly popped out of his head. "Who would have thought it?"

"Go book a room in this hotel for two," ordered Bob. "And try to get the room next to 210, and don't tell everybody your business. Look like a travelling salesman. I'll be back."

Bob tailed the taxi for some distance. Vilma alighted and began to look at shops. Up drove a car, and Vilma entered it and was driven away. At traffic lights Bob got held up and cursed heartily at losing his quarry. He returned to the hotel, and was glad to find that Wilson had secured Room 209. He found Wilson sprawled on the bed fast asleep.

"You're a fine assistant."

"Sorry, Bob, but I've done so much running about I'm worn out," apologised Wilson. "Besides, what could I have done?"

"Found out what's happening in the next room."

Actually, the girl was in Recard's room, and was sitting on a settee with his arms round her.

"Thank goodness I got rid of Vilma," Recard smiled at her boldly. "Her jealousy nearly drives me crazy. After this deal is through I finish with her. There is someone else who means a lot to me. You say that Sanderson will see me. When we get that formula we can ask any price. I'll divorce Vilma and you and I can live in wealth and comfort for the rest of our lives."

"There will be no more bloodshed, Jule?"

"Accidents happen sometimes."

"Like Jack Lynch?"

"He would have spoilt our plans." Recard shrugged his shoulders. "What is one Federal Agent more or less? That reminds me of something important. You say you were disturbed in Lynch's rooms, but you had not found anything. I want you to go back there again and look for some gramophone records."

"Gramophone records?" questioned the girl.

"I have found out that Lynch was often experimenting with records, and, according to his landlady, talking to himself. Maybe some of those records may prove interesting. I must not leave a scrap of evidence against us."

"What Lynch found out might ruin your plans?"

"He knew too much, so that was why he had to go."

"You are very ruthless, Jule." Her eyes watched him intently, but she freed herself as he would have drawn her closer. "If I'm going to get these records I must go now."

When the girl left Recard's room she did not know the door of 209 was slightly ajar.

"I'm going to follow the girl," Bob Woods told Wilson. "Whilst I'm away bide your chance, and when Recard goes out of his room, slip in and fix dictaphones. Don't fail me, Wilson."

"It's as good as done."

Bob Woods was able to follow the girl easily, and when she headed for Cedarville he had a good idea of her destination.

Twenty-four Hours

THE girl had the key that she had been given by Recard, who had got it from the body of Lynch.

Swiftly she closed the door and switched on the light. She went to the gramophone and took out the records. She did not notice a faint movement of the curtains of the window that led to the fire-escape.

Very methodically she went through all the records, and it was not till almost the end that she came to the record of Lynch's own making. She clung to the gramophone cabinet as if she felt faint. Quietly the curtains were pushed to one side, and Bob Woods stood there and watched her.

"Found what you wanted, sister?"

She spun round with a gasp of dismay.

"You!"

"A clever gag with those beads." Bob was watching her every move. "Suppose you thought you had thrown me off the trail, but it takes a lot to get rid of me. Just keep your hand away from the pocket of your coat. I hate to use a gun on a woman, but in necessity one has to be quite callous."

"I have no gun," she answered him.

"A pity you didn't accept my offer to work with me." He lit a cigarette. "What do you know of the death of Jack Lynch?"

The girl shot him a startled glance. "I don't believe what you told me about working for another syndicate is true. Who are you?"

Bob Woods showed her his badge. "You're a Federal Agent!"

"I am!" His voice hardened. "And now you'd better talk, sister. I want to know what you know about Jack Lynch."

Again she avoided the question. "You think I'm working for Recard, don't you? Would it surprise you to know I hate him?"

Bob Woods came closer so he could see her better. This girl was not only good-looking, but she did not look like a wrong 'un. Her face might be set in hard lines, but the gaze from the blue eyes never wavered from his. He did not know what to make of her, though he had to admit she was uncommonly attractive, and felt sure that if she were to smile she would be most appealing. He squared his shoulders—if he were not careful he would be getting sentimental.

His voice became gruff.

"I'm listening."

"I hate Recard more than any person in the world." As she spoke those blue eyes never faltered. "What I'm doing may seem very suspicious, but I have a reason. Recard is a crook and a dastardly scoundrel, and it is my aim to bring him to justice. If you persist in interfering you will ruin all my schemes."

"Who are you?"

"My Christian name is Helen, my surname is my affair," she said fiercely. "But I swear that I'm not trying to aid and abet Recard, but luring a rascal into a trap. Give me twenty-four hours and I can succeed in my plans. Interfere and Recard is more than likely to get away with Sanderson's secret formula, and if that should get into unscrupulous hands you know what that would mean. Sanderson has discovered an explosive that is four times as destructive as anything ever discovered before. Please trust me."

By rights Woods ought to have arrested this mystery girl, but she seemed so in earnest that he hesitated. From his pocket he produced the strap of her handbag.

"I disturbed you the other day, and when I saw your handbag in the lobby

of the hotel I knew you were the young woman who got away down that fire-escape. What did you want then and now from Lynch's apartment?"

"For many months your department has wanted to lay hands on Recard and men like him," was her reply.

"But there are many scoundrels who know how to evade the law. You might arrest Recard for the murder of Lynch, but you would have difficulty in pinning the crime on to him. You would have to let him go free. I'm out to get Recard so that he will not go free, but if I'm to obtain the evidence that is necessary I must have a free hand."

"I asked you before what you know of Lynch's death."

"I know Recard was responsible, but I have no proof, though he has boasted of men he has killed. Give me twenty-four hours and Recard shall not escape."

"Very well—twenty-four hours," Bob Woods decided. "I've never done anything like this in all the ten years I've worked for the department, and if my chief knew he would say I was crazy, but somehow you've succeeded in convincing me that you're on the level. I will hold up on my investigations. My name is Bob Woods, and you can get in touch with me at the Santa Barbara Hotel. I'm risking my job in letting you do this, and risking the chance of letting a scoundrel slip through my fingers, but you must have some magnetic will that makes me act this way."

The girl held out her hand.

"I won't fail you."

Bob gripped it.

"You have a grudge against Recard. Care to tell me?"

"At the end of the twenty-four hours you shall know why I hate him so. No person can hate him as much as I do."

"Jack Lynch was my friend," Bob walked towards the window. "If you fail I swear I will not rest till I have

avenged his death. Why you should have a prior claim I cannot imagine, but a girl like you would not be taking all this risk unless your reasons were very great. Therefore, Helen, for twenty-four hours you have a free hand. I will leave by the escape."

It was not very long after that the girl left the block of flats. A taxi took her to the outskirts of the city. She told the driver to wait at some cross-roads, whilst she walked briskly down the quietest of the roads to a house surrounded by a high hedge. The house was in a bad state of repair and looked deserted. The girl had a key, and with a glance round to see she was not followed, let herself into a deserted hall.

She knocked at a door and entered when there was no answer. A bed was in one corner, and there were a few sticks of furniture. She looked round and satisfied the person she sought was not there, went back into the hall and up some stairs. She did not walk on tiptoe, but if well used to this old mansion, and was not afraid of being heard. After going down a number of corridors she came to some big doors, which she unlocked with another key.

A sort of lounge with stairs leading downwards into darkness. She touched a switch and a light appeared below. Eagerly she hastened down the stairs. There was an earthy, peculiar smell. She rapped at a door, and when there came no answer, placed her hands against the door. She knew the secret of that door which had no handle, because it swung back. The room beyond was a laboratory. Everywhere were benches loaded with queer retorts and vessels. Something spluttered in a pan, under which flickered a blue flame. On one side were great steel doors. The smell of chemicals was very strong. On a bench was a keyboard, and she pressed a button, and immediately a red light appeared over the steel doors.

"You asked for this, flat-foot, and you deserve all that's coming to you!"
cried Helen.



A moment later there came a rumbling and one of the doors rolled back, and thick smoke rolled sluggishly into the laboratory. Out of this murk appeared a masked and goggled figure. The door rolled back, shutting out the foul fumes. The mask and goggles were removed to reveal an old man with sharp, shrewd eyes. The very long nose and the almost bald head gave Sanderson the appearance of an owl.

"You quite startled me, my dear. I was not expecting anybody. Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"No, professor. I called to say that Recard has the money and we can sell him the formula some time tomorrow."

"I wrote to the authorities and they did not even bother to send anyone even to investigate." The professor looked worried. "I wonder if I'm right in letting this formula fall into foreign hands? You are sure this man represents the League of Nations?"

"Your formula will not fall into the hands of anyone who will throw the world into another terrible war," the girl cried. "You can rely on that. Where is the formula?"

"It is complete," Sanderson pointed. "It is in that safe over in the corner."

"Good!" Helen looked at the steel doors. "Are you any farther advanced with the new gas you are trying to make?"

"I have succeeded beyond my wildest dreams." The professor walked across to some levers. "I am able to fill those chambers with any sort of gases and be able to extract the most deadly fumes by means of touching these levers. All that remains is just waste material."

"Could a person live in it after you have released the fumes?"

"No; not even with this apparatus," answered the professor. "I could live for a little while, but soon I should suffocate. It would be a slow and very unpleasant death. Tell me, my dear, when will Recard come here to buy the formula?"

"To-morrow night, so there is no need for you to work any more to-day. You must rest yourself." Her eyes seemed to stare at those steel doors as if they fascinated her. "I can take you back into town with me."

There was a curious glint in those blue eyes as the girl assisted the old professor into the waiting car. Her zero hour was at hand.

Silenced

BOB WOODS called himself all kinds of an idiot because he had been influenced by a pretty face. He had promised to do nothing for twenty-four hours because this girl hinted that she had a prior claim. What did he know about the mysterious Helen? He was greatly attracted by her, but women, with their smiles and beguiling ways, had bluffed far cleverer men than himself. He decided to go back to the hotel and talk the matter over with Wilson.

Of course, Wilson would call him a sap, especially as the nit-wit had been tricked by Vilma Santos. Bob decided that he would use his discretion about discussing the matter with Wilson; he wondered if his assistant had succeeded in fixing a dictaphone.

It did not surprise Bob to find Wilson sprawled on the bed. Always sleeping. But he saw the earphones and knew that Wilson had succeeded in planting dictaphones.

"What luck, old timer?" he asked as he washed his hands.

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There came no answer.

"Wake up, you old scoundrel," Bob called. "You can't sleep all the day."

Bob dried his hands and went over to the bed. This sleeping habit of Wilson's was getting beyond a joke. Important information might have come through, and Wilson not taking it.

"Wake up!" shouted Bob, and gave Wilson a shove.

To his surprise, Wilson rolled off the bed and lay there sprawled out. Puzzled, he stared down, and suddenly noted the pallor of his assistant's cheeks. With a sharp intake of breath he went down on his knees and shook Wilson roughly. A touch on the cheek and he drew back his hand with sudden dread.

It was now that he observed that the wires from the headpieces seemed to be round Wilson's throat. With hands that shook he turned over the body and knew that his companion was dead. He had been throttled to death. With difficulty he freed the wires and tried artificial respiration, but Wilson did not respond.

There was a grim, hard look on Bob's face as he got up and followed the wire to the wall. It was cut, but he found a place where a hole had been drilled near the door. Quietly he went out into the passage and noted a similar hole on the door of 210. He had a shrewd idea of all that had occurred. Wilson had planted his dictaphone, and either the wires, the holes in the door, or the instrument had been seen by Ricard. Ricard had entered 209 and killed Wilson.

Bob tried the door of 210 and found it open. It did not surprise him to find the room empty—the occupant had gone and taken all his luggage. From a picture hung part of a dictaphone, and a fierce grin came to Bob's face as he saw it—Ricard had guessed he would enter 210, and had left it as a sign of mocking defiance.

No good wasting time here—something had to be done. He thought suddenly of the girl. She must have been in on this killing. If only he could find her! He went back to his room to stare down at the body of Wilson. First Lynch and now Wilson—their deaths had got to be avenged.

Suddenly he dropped on his knees because he had noticed something protruding from the hand of the dead man. Just the edge of a piece of paper. He forced open the fingers and drew forth a crumpled ball. It seemed to be blank, but the agents often used an invisible ink. He smoothed out the paper, and from a drawer took out a flat instrument which he plugged into the wall. At once a powerful light ray appeared, and on placing the paper over it he was able to see a message:

"Recard seeing Sanderson to-night. Some dame, not Vilma Santos, has made contact for Recard with Sanderson. Recard plans to quit hotel. Has a hide-out at the Haven, in Yellowstone Park Avenue."

The girl had double-crossed him. She must have been wise all the time. Directly he had left her in Lynch's flat she had probably rung Recard. How they must have laughed!

Captured

ON leaving the hotel Recard had gone to a small restaurant to meet the girl, and he was inclined to be sharp because she kept him waiting. She stated that she had tried every record, but there was only music on all of them. She had ransacked the place

and found nothing that could incriminate Recard.

They left the restaurant and went to the house in Yellowstone Park Avenue, and as they entered by the front door the bushes close at hand parted and Bob Woods peered forth. The agent was an expert at opening windows and soon found a means of egress into the house. Hidden behind a curtain, he was witness of a scene between Recard and his wife.

"Why have you brought this creature here?" demanded the jealous Vilma Santos.

"Vilma, will you hold your tongue?" Recard shouted.

"How dare you speak to me like that?" the woman countered. "Why is she here?"

"Because I can't contact Sanderson without her," Recard exclaimed. "She is his representative. It's not my fault that Sanderson does his business through a girl. But without her I can't buy the formula. Now do you understand?"

"I don't trust her," muttered Vilma. "It wouldn't surprise me if she was a Federal Agent."

"What right have you to say that?" demanded the girl. "I work for Sanderson, and I draw a commission on the deal. The higher the price the higher my commission. We tried the Government and they wouldn't even bother to send a representative. I've got no love for them, so it's absurd to make out I'm a Federal Agent."

"Vilma, I can't have my plans spoilt by disputes and suspicions," Recard argued. "Everything is set. Helen is taking me—"

"So you use her Christian name?"

"And why not?" Recard almost foamed at the mouth. "We have been negotiating and arguing over the price for the formula for days and weeks, so why shouldn't I? My dear, you carry your suspicions too far. One day I may lose my temper."

"And then what would you do?" His face contorted, but it ended in a smile.

"I should regain my temper and tell you not to be foolish." He held up his hand. "No more argument, please. Everything is arranged. I am going in a few minutes to see Professor Sanderson, and if the complete formula is handed to me I shall then conduct this lady to the house of a banker, where I will hand over the price named."

All this while Mullins, who was Recard's radio operator and right-hand man, had listened with an evil grin on his unhealthy features. He knew very well that Recard aimed to walk out on Vilma at the first opportunity, and if she made any trouble it would be just too bad for her. Recard aimed to get the formula, the girl and not pay Sanderson a cent. Once the formula was in his possession Recard could snap his fingers at Sanderson. The girl would have to obey orders or else be framed, but as Recard imagined Helen to be in love with him he had no fears about her.

"You'll come back here?" asked Vilma.

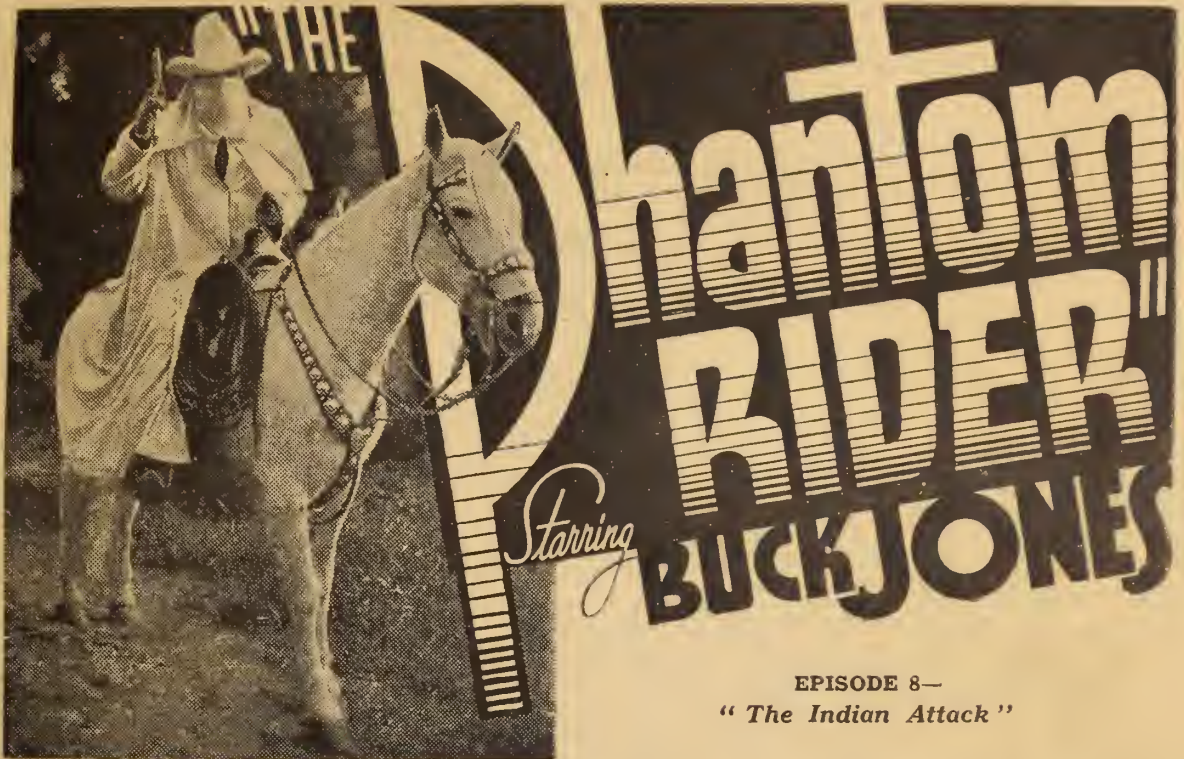
"No. I have fixed a meeting-place with Mullins," instructed Recard. "I want Mullins to help you in destroying all evidence in this house. The wireless must be smashed. Directly it is dark you will leave, and I propose to meet you at midnight. Then we will travel south."

"Who are 'we'?"

"You and I, my dear, with Mullins as the discreet chauffeur," Recard said

(Continued on page 23)

Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



EPISODE 8—

"The Indian Attack"

READ THIS FIRST

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way to the Valley. Dying, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delaney, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Old Grayson is murdered the next day, and leaves Mary a wallet containing the map of a secret gold mine. Later, a railroad agent makes Mary an offer for her land, and she is on the point of signing away the property when an outlaw bullet smashed a lamp and caused the agent to sink to the floor.

Immediately afterwards the Phantom appears on the scene, but falls from his horse as two more shots ring out at close quarters.

Now Read On

The Wallet Disappears

"GOT him!"

The words were spoken simultaneously by the gangsters known as Gabe and Keeler, but they speedily discovered that they were mistaken, for in tumbling from his horse the Phantom had merely sought to deceive them, and now, from the cover of a clump of shrubs, their supposed victim opened fire on them with an accuracy that threw them into a panic.

The first shot blistered Keeler's cheek, and his second cut a hole in the sleeve of Gabe's shirt. In another moment the two outlaws were veering away from the ranch-house porch and sprinting in the direction of the thickets where they had parted with Dirk and the rest of the gang.

Crouching amidst the shrubbery into which he had plunged, the Phantom accelerated the departure of the fugitives with two more slugs that kicked up the dust at their heels. Then he saw the Grayson punchers come swarming from the bunkhouse, to be met with a volley from Dirk and his men.

The ranch-hands were forced to retreat into their quarters again, and thus Gabe and Keeler were enabled to rejoin the remainder of the outlaw band. Meanwhile, over at the principal building of the Grayson outfit, Mary had appeared at the front door with Helen Moore, Judge Holmes and Harvey Delaney, and from his covert in the shrubbery the Phantom obtained a clear view of them as they peered across at the thickets on the south side of the property.

The Phantom himself was not visible to the eyes of Mary and her companions. Nor did he attempt to show himself, but, striking off through the bushes, worked round to the rear of

the ranch-house and slipped into the dwelling by a back door.

A few seconds afterwards he was in the lounge where Mary had been on the point of signing the railroad company's agreement when Keeler's six-gun had interrupted negotiations.

The lounge was in darkness, but, accustomed to the gloom, the Phantom perceived the body of a man lying on the floor, and recognised Blake. The latter had obviously been struck down by the same bullet that had smashed the lamp.

The Phantom knelt beside the railroad agent, and gave vent to an exclamation of relief as he discovered that the man was still alive, though unconscious and severely wounded. Then he turned towards the table, and spying the wallet that contained the chart of the Grayson gold mine, he snatched this up with a rapid gesture and thrust it into his pocket.

A moment later Buck Grant, alias the Phantom, was hurrying out of the room again, but as he emerged from it he was seen by a seared housemaid who was descending from her bed-room with a naphtha lamp clutched in one trembling hand.

The maid uttered a shriek, and the sound lent added speed to Buck's exit. He was clear of the house in the twinkling of an eye, and dodging forth through the kitchen doorway, he spied his bronc Silver some forty or fifty yards from the building.

The animal was standing near a barn, to which it had trotted when its master had flung himself from the saddle, and Buck dashed towards the creature. As he ran he heard the frightened maid shrieking at the top of her voice inside the ranch-house, and guessed that her cries would bring

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Mary back into the dwelling from the front door.

His guess was right. Followed by Delaney, Helen Moore and Judge Holmes, Mary came rushing into the hall and seized the hysterical housemaid by the arm.

"What's wrong, Lizzie?" she demanded. "What are you screaming for?"

"A ghost!" was the shrill response. "I've just seen a ghost! All in white, he was—from head to foot!"

"The Phantom!" barked Delaney. "Which way did he go? Mary, tell this fool of a girl to pull herself together!"

"A ghost!" Lizzie repeated wildly. "I've just seen him! He went out through the back door!"

Harvey Delaney made for the kitchen, and Holmes accompanied him. As they stumbled out of the house they obtained an impression of a robed figure mounting a silver-grey bronc in the vicinity of the barn, and Delaney promptly tugged out a six-gun.

He was prevented from using it by Holmes.

"Hold on, Harvey," the older man protested. "The Phantom is a friend." "You think so?" Delaney snapped. "Then how do you account for him shooting out the light in the lounge just now?"

"He didn't do that," the judge retorted. "It was one of those two fellows we spotted from the front door—the men who were heading for the thickets."

"And the Phantom was in cahoots with them," Harvey Delaney ground out. "I'd gamble on that, judge. Let go of my arm and give me a chance to pick him off."

But Holmes would not release him willingly, and by the time that the big cattleman had wrenched free, the Phantom had spurred off across the range, vanishing beyond a fold in the landscape, and it was in a disgruntled fashion that he jammed his forty-five back into its holster and returned to the hall with the judge.

They found Mary and Helen doing their best to pacify the abject Lizzie. At the same time they heard a smattering of gunplay coming from the direction of the bunkhouse, where the Grayson cowboys were answering the fire that had been opened up on them from the brushwood thickets, but the shooting was dying down as Delaney addressed the girl who had inherited the Hidden Valley ranch.

"It was the Phantom all right, Mary," he declared, "and, though Holmes won't agree with me, I think he's a wrong 'un."

"How can you say that, Harvey?" the girl exclaimed in a harassed tone. "Anybody who has ever had any dealings with him will tell you that he's on the side of law and order."

"He may appear to be," Delaney grunted. "But if he's an honest man why does he have to go around hiding his identity by a mask and a cloak? No, Mary, he's not a friend, and I'll stake my last cent that he was behind those men who surprised us from the lounge—the men who shattered the light and drilled Blake!"

Mary cried out at that.

"Blake!" she ejaculated. "I—I'd forgotten him! Yes—he cried out, didn't he? He must have been hit!"

She took the naphtha lamp from the quaking grasp of her maid, and together with Helen, Delaney and Holmes she tottered into the lounge.

There lay the railroad agent, and with a look of concern on her pretty

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face Mary dropped to her knees beside him. She was joined in this attitude by Harvey Delaney and the judge, who lost no time in examining the wounded man.

"I think he'll be all right," Holmes said at length, "but he's pretty badly hurt, and we'd better send for a doctor."

It was at this moment that there was a tramping of feet on the porch, and immediately afterwards Mary's foreman entered the house with some of the boys, Spooky being amongst them.

"What happened, ma'am?" the foreman queried huskily. "We heard shots, and when we came out the bunkhouse we was met by a volley that drove us back inside. Then we started to blaze at the thickets, and whoever the houbres were that had opened up on us, they cleared off pretty soon."

"It was some kind of an attack by outlaws, Steve," Mary answered. "I don't know what their game was, but they got Mr. Blake here, and you'd better take him upstairs to one of the spare rooms. Spooky, you and Bob give Steve a hand. Slim, you ride to town and fetch the doctor. The rest of you go back to your quarters, but be ready for trouble, in case those outlaws show up again."

Her instructions were obeyed, and it was while Blake was being carried up to bed that Harvey Delaney spoke once more.

"Is anything missing from this room, Mary?" he asked grimly.

The girl looked at him quickly, and then her eyes travelled towards the table at which she and her companions had been gathered when Keeler's gunshot had blasted out the light and struck down the railroad agent.

The deed which she had been about to sign was still there. The pen that she had been in the act of wielding was lying beside it, just as she had dropped it when the lamp had been extinguished.

"No," she began, "I—"

And then she stopped, for suddenly she remembered the pocket-book that contained the chart of her father's gold mine.

"The wallet!" she gasped. "I left it on the table, and it's gone!"

"I thought so," Harvey Delaney breathed. "And the Phantom was the man who took it, for your maid saw him coming out of this room. Now maybe you'll believe that he's a crook and that he was in league with those two men who made off into the brush."

Mary stared at the table in silence, her face pale, an expression of uncertainty in her eyes.

"I—I can't understand it," she faltered. "It—it just doesn't make sense. Judge Holmes, you told me that the wallet was given to you by the Phantom with a request that you would keep it safely for me until I wanted it."

"That's right, Mary," Holmes answered. "At least, it was sent to me with a covering note that purported to be from the Phantom."

"And yet the Phantom came here to-night and stole it," the girl said. "What kind of game is he playing?"

The judge looked at her helplessly, with the air of a man completely bewildered, though he had a shrewd notion of the truth.

"I have no explanation to offer, Mary," he murmured, "but somehow I can't bring myself to accept Delaney's theory that the Phantom was operating with the men who shot Blake and who scuttled off into the brushwood, where they apparently had a bunch of accomplices waiting for them."

"If you ask me," Helen Moore interposed. "the Phantom scared off those men whom we saw, judge. I wonder if they'll come back with their confederates and start some more trouble?"

Had she but known it, there was small fear of that, for the outlaws were at present riding in a south-easterly direction in the hope of picking up the trail of the Phantom, whose flight from the ranch-house they had witnessed.

They were not successful in their purpose, however, and after wasting a full hour in reconnoitring the country between Hidden Valley and the Pecos River they set out for their lair in the heart of the mountains.

Some time later they might have been seen drawing rein at the lonely cabin which was their hide-out, and as they dismounted from their ponies Dirk spoke in a lugubrious voice.

"I wonder if the boss has got here yet," he said. "I ain't looking forward to meetin' him—without that wallet he sent us to get."

His comrades exchanged uneasy glances with him, and then the whole gang filed into the cabin. As they crossed the threshold they found a lamp burning at a low glimmer in the front room, and by the thievish light of it saw an indistinct figure standing in one of the farthest corners.

It was the figure of the man who was their chief, and Dirk proceeded to address him sheepishly, but had not been talking for long when the gang leader cut in on him in harsh accents.

"Never mind the alibis, Dirk," he snarled. "You slipped up on the job, and all of you are to blame as much as Gabe and Keeler. You let the Phantom put one over on you—that's the long and short of it."

"We did the best we could, boss," Dirk expostulated, "and the boys will bear me out when I tell you that we hunted high an' low for that Phantom after we saw him ride away from the Grayson ranch. I'm tellin' you, boss, we did our level best."

The leader of the gang ripped out an oath.

"Your level best!" he blazed. "That's always your lame excuse. Well, it looks to me like I'll have to get some new men to help you make good."

"New men?" Dirk echoed. "Where you gonna get 'em?"

"That's my business," was the curt rejoinder. "But get them I will. Meantime, you'd better lie low until you hear from me again."

With those words he thrust his way through the pack of ruffians and slammed out of the cabin. Then, striding round to a lean-to that was attached to the dwelling, he led forth a sorrel pony and swung himself astride the animal.

A moment afterwards he was spurring savagely from the ravine in which the gang's hide-out was situated, and once clear of the canyon, he struck due north through the hills.

Delaney Sets a Trap

THE following morning Spooky slipped away from the Hidden Valley outfit and rode over to Dry Creek, where Buck Grant's homestead was located, and it was as the little Ranger was reining up outside the shack that his six-foot comrade appeared on the threshold.

"Hallo, Buck," Spooky greeted him cheerfully. "How's tricks?"

"Fine and dandy," the big fellow answered. "It's kinda' lucky I showed up at the Grayson ranch last night. I

reckon those outlaws would have got the wallet if I hadn't been on hand."

His partner nodded.

"You're right," he agreed. "But what do you intend to do with that wallet now? Turn it over to Judge Holmes again?"

"No," Buck replied. "I've been thinking things over, and I believe it will be safer with me than with anybody else."

"It might be even safer with me," observed Spooky, "especially if the outlaws happen to discover that you were the Phantom."

Buck looked at him quickly, and seemed to ponder the other Ranger's suggestion. Then he produced the wallet and passed it up to Spooky.

"Not a bad idea, pal," he declared. "You'd be the last person in the world that anyone would suspect. Okay, you take care of it—for a while, at any rate."

Spooky placed the wallet in his hip pocket, and then, after a brief silence, he volunteered another comment.

"We oughta put Mary Grayson wise, somehow," he murmured. "I don't mean we should tell her that I'm holdin' the wallet, but we could let her know that it's in safe-keepin'. Suppose you write a note to her, settin' her mind at rest."

Once again Buck showed approval, and when Spooky left the cabin some time later he was the bearer of a message that his comrade had printed in pencil; a message which he carried back to the Hidden Valley ranch, and which he handed to Mary Grayson a few minutes after his arrival there.

He found her in the lounge, and, delivering the note, which was enclosed in an envelope, he told her a trumped-up story of how he had come across it.

"I was over at the barn just now and saw this pinned to the door," he

stated. "It's addressed to you, Miss Mary."

The girl took the missive and ripped open the envelope, and, watching her, Spooky noted the expression of tense interest that dawned on her lovely features as she read the epistle. Then, all at once she rose from the couch on which she had been sitting, and, hastening out into the hall, she called Helen Moore by name.

The latter soon presented herself in the lounge, and Mary was in the act of divulging the contents of the note she had received when Lizzie, the housemaid, came into the room and announced Judge Holmes and Harvey Delaney.

Within a few seconds the judge and the neighbouring cattleman were entering the apartment in which Mary, Helen and Spooky were standing.

"Good-morning, Mary," Holmes began in his fatherly way. "I thought I'd drop in on you and see how things were, and it seems Harvey here was of the same mind. We met on the trail."

"I'm glad you came, judge," Mary said, "for I have news for you. Spooky found a note pinned on the barn door. It's from the Phantom, and must have been left by him last night, I suppose."

Both Holmes and Delaney immediately showed signs of curiosity, and listened attentively as the girl provided them with the gist of the message.

"The Phantom says that I've no need to worry," she told them. "He's going to take care of the wallet for me, and assures me that it will be quite safe with him."

Delaney frowned at that.

"And you mean to say, Mary," he exclaimed, "that you're willing to take it for granted that the wallet will be safe with him? Why, you're crazy! What's his idea in doing so?"

"This note makes his motive perfectly clear," Mary retorted. "His aim is to

prevent the outlaws from getting it, of course."

Harvey Delaney seemed far from satisfied. His strong, keen face wore a look of impatience.

"If you ask me," he said, "the Phantom wrote that message as a blind, in order to prevent you from taking any steps to recover the chart of your father's mine. No doubt, while you're sitting quietly at home and making no effort to get the wallet, he'll jump that hidden claim and enrich himself by it."

"Harvey," Mary rejoined, "I don't know who the Phantom is, but I feel certain you're doing him an injustice. He's acted too honourably in the past to turn around and rob me of any part of my inheritance."

"In any case," she added, "what steps could I take to recover that wallet, even if I questioned his honesty? Why should he take the trouble to write a note setting my mind at rest if he means to steal my father's gold mine? I've no means of bringing the law on him, when I haven't the vaguest idea who he is."

Delaney moved a step nearer to her, and when he spoke to her again it was in a voice that was low and significant.

"But supposing you suspected his identity," he said, "and supposing you were to lay a trap that would put your suspicions to the crucial test."

The girl stared at him in a puzzled fashion. So did Helen Moore, Judge Holmes and Spooky.

"What do you mean, Harvey?" Mary demanded. "Do you suspect someone of being the Phantom Rider?"

Delaney answered her tersely.

"Yes," he rapped out. "I think Buck Grant and the Phantom Rider are one and the same man!"

Holmes and Spooky exchanged a swift glance, and then, looking at Mary and Helen, they saw the amazement that was written on the faces of the two girls.



"It's close on time," the cattleman said. "Now to see if the Phantom Rider shows up."

"Grant and the Phantom both appeared in this country about the same time," Delaney went on in an emphatic tone, "and to my mind, Grant's behaviour hasn't been straightforward. Anyway, I'd like a chance to prove my theory."

Hotly resenting the insinuation that Buck was a questionable character, Mary speedily made it clear that the young "nester" from Dry Creek occupied a high place in her esteem.

Delaney, however, was stubbornly intractable, and was arguing with the girl in a dogged manner when Judge Holmes broke in on the discussion.

"You say you'd like a chance to prove your theory, Harvey," he remarked. "Have you any plan in mind?"

"Yes, I have," the other man replied. "If a message was sent to Grant telling him that an attack was expected here—and if the Phantom showed up in response to such a message—that would establish my suspicions pretty conclusively, wouldn't it?"

"I'll be no party to a scheme like that," Mary interposed angrily, but the judge laid a hand on her arm.

"Harvey Delaney may be right, Mary," he told her. "I've heard the same theory expressed by other folks, and though I very much doubt it myself, I think we might put it to the test. Spooky here could carry the message, and drop it in at Grant's cabin."

He looked at the little fellow meaningly as he spoke, and received an understanding glance in return. Then Delaney proceeded to scrawl a somewhat mysterious note which stated that an outlaw raid would be launched on the Grayson ranch at three o'clock that afternoon.

"Leave this at Grant's homestead," he said at length, tendering Spooky the missive, "but don't let him see you if you can help it."

Spooky nodded, and went outside to his horse, but, as he was preparing to mount, Judge Holmes followed him out of the ranch-house and addressed him in an undertone.

"I thought it might be as well to fall in with Delaney's suggestion, Spooky," he whispered. "You can put Buck wise, and he can kill, once and for all, this rumour that he is the Phantom."

"He'll kill it all right, judge," the little fellow murmured, and an instant later he was clapping his heels to the flanks of his pony.

Holmes stood watching him for a minute or two as he galloped across the range, and then he retraced his steps into the ranch-house and joined Delaney and the girls again, walking into the lounge just as Mary was making a caustic remark to her neighbour.

"Well, Harvey," she was saying, "since you've chosen to use my house as a bait to prove your suspicions, I suppose I'll have to invite you to stay to lunch."

Delaney grinned at her.

"Either that, or I'll break into the larder," he declared. "I'm going to be pretty hungry long before three o'clock, the time scheduled for the imaginary attack."

Judge Holmes seconded him on that score, and so Mary and Helen had company for the midday meal; a meal over which they lingered so long that the hands of the clock in the dining-room were pointing to the time of two-thirty when they eventually rose from the table.

With half an hour to wait, the two men and the two girls drifted back into the lounge, and here Delaney took the liberty of throwing the windows wide open. Then he assumed a position

whence he was able to command a view of the country to the south.

Mary, Helen and Judge Holmes moved over to the windows as well, and they remained there while the minutes dragged by, till it seemed as if they had been gazing across the range for an eternity. But at last Delaney took out his watch, and, after glancing at it, uttered a grunt of anticipation.

"It's close on time," the cattleman said. "Now to see if the Phantom Rider shows up."

Scarcely were the words spoken when the figure of a horseman burst out of the brushwood thickets some distance from the ranch and began to career along the fringe of them. He was a horseman who forked the saddle of a white mustang, and who wore a voluminous cloak and a kerchief that concealed his features, and at sight of him Delaney gave vent to a triumphant cry.

"Friends," he ejaculated, "the Phantom! And right on the dot! Now do you deny that he and Grant are one and the same?"

Judge Holmes remained silent. As for Helen and Mary, they appeared to be denied the power of speech, and were still staring mutely in the direction of the thickets when the voice of Lizzie, the housemaid, became audible.

"Mr. Grant to see you, Miss Mary."

The quartet at the window spun round, and saw Lizzie draw aside from the threshold of the lounge to admit Buck, who was immediately aware of the astonished expression on Harvey Delaney's countenance.

Thunderstruck, crestfallen, Delaney gaped at the big fellow from Dry Creek, and then looked through the windows again to catch a final glimpse of the robed figure on the white horse as the latter re-entered the thickets. A moment afterwards the tall cattleman was listening to Buck's drawing tones.

"Looks like somebody has been playin' a joke on me," Buck observed. "I expected the ranch to be surrounded by outlaws. Can anyone explain this note to me?"

"You'd better ask Mr. Delaney," Mary answered, shooting a glance at the discomfited rancher who was her neighbour. "It was his idea."

Harvey Delaney eyed Buck sheepishly, and noticed that he was fingering the missive that Spooky had been instructed to deliver.

"Forget it, Grant," the cattleman said. "It was just a little misunderstanding, but it's all straightened out now."

He turned and picked up his hat, and then, making some reference to a certain business appointment that he had at his ranch, he made his way towards the door.

Helen and Mary accompanied him as far as the porch, both of them being anxious to show that they were not "bad friends" with him on account of what had happened, and it was during the brief absence of the two girls that Holmes spoke in an aside to Buck.

"Who was the bogus Phantom Rider we just saw on the edge of the brush?" he asked. "Spooky?"

"Sure," Buck declared. "As soon as he gave me the low-down I told him he'd better take my place."

"And where did he pick up the white bronc? That wasn't your horse, Silver."

"No," Buck said with a smile. "That's where the laugh comes in. Spooky lifted it from the north pasture of the Delaney ranch. He'll be on his way back there with it now."

Holmes chuckled softly, but managed to subdue his mirth when Helen and Mary reappeared in the lounge, and

a little while later announced that he must return to town.

Departing, he left Buck with the two girls, and soon after the judge had gone Helen Moore went upstairs to attend to Blake, the railroad agent, who was still lying in the room to which he had been carried the previous night.

Buck, therefore, found himself alone with Mary, and was engaged in conversation with her when Spooky showed up at the outfit. Then, with the afternoon wearing on, the stalwart nester from Dry Creek suggested to his hostess that a gallop across the range would not come amiss.

It was a proposal to which Mary readily assented, and before long the two of them were riding off through Hidden Valley, little dreaming that ere they saw the Grayson ranch again they were to figure in an unexpected adventure.

Redskin Allies

ABOUT the time that Buck and Mary set out to enjoy a gallop across the range, a crowd of men might have been seen outside a remote cabin in the hills.

The men in question were the outlaws who had been terrorising Benson County, and the cabin was their hide-away and rendezvous. It was here that Dirk had put in an appearance after a brief interview with the mysterious leader of the gang, and from the saddle of his horse he was now repeating his chief's orders to the other members of the band.

"The boss wants us to run off a bunch of Mary Grayson's cattle," he declared. "They're located on the prairie west of Sandstone Bluff, and there's three punchers in charge of 'em."

"Sandstone Bluff?" echoed Keeler. "That's pretty close to the ranch, ain't it? We're liable to have the whole outfit down on us before we get far away with the herd."

"No," Dirk retorted. "The boss has decided on his new men. They'll cover our raid and hold up the main body of the Grayson cowboys if the alarm is given."

The other rustlers looked at one another, and then the ruffian known as Gabe voiced a query.

"Who are the new men?" he demanded.

"Red Eagle and his renegades, from the reservation. Yep—Indians. The boss has sent word to them to meet us near their camp."

"Can we bank on them?" another of the outlaws growled.

"Sure," answered Dirk. "Red Eagle's father is friendly to white folks—realises there ain't no sense in bein' anything else. But Red Eagle and some of the young braves are allus ready for trouble, especially if there's any dough in it. Come on, you fellows had better mount up. We've a lotta ridin' to do."

The rest of the gangsters were soon astride their ponies, and at the head of the outlaw band Dirk then led the way through the hills, striking deeper into the barren fastnesses of the mountain country until an hour later he espied another group of horsemen approaching from the opposite direction.

They were Indians of a degenerate breed, rigged out incongruously in garments that were a compromise between the picturesque attire of their forefathers and the clothing of civilisation. They were armed, too, with revolvers of the latest pattern, traded to them secretly by whites who had ignored the regulations of the Government.

Civilisation had done little to improve

(Continued on page 28)

"FEDERAL AGENT"

(Continued from page 18)

in a soft, quiet tone of voice. "It will be a second honeymoon."

"I would like a few words with you, Jule," insisted Vilma. "It will be as well if we go to the laboratory. We can talk and then you can help me destroy everything. Mullins had better come with us."

"Will you please wait here?" Recard smiled at the girl as he followed his wife.

The girl gasped when the curtains parted and there stood Bob Woods.

"You promised me twenty-four hours."

"You tricked me," Bob countered. "It was all lies that you told me. Swearing to hate Recard, when all the time you're planning to go off with him. It's plain you aim to rob Sanderson of his formula, and then vamoos south with Recard with not only the formula, but the money."

"Not so loud—they'll hear you." The girl had gone very white. "I swear I hate Recard. Your coming here is likely to ruin everything. Why didn't you trust me?"

"Because I got back to the Santa Barbara to find my friend dead—throttled."

"You mean they killed Wilson?" the girl gasped. "I did not know. After leaving Lynch's room I met Recard by appointment—I did not even tell him of the gramophone record. I know nothing of your assistant's death. You must believe me, because I have Recard almost in my power. Do not ruin everything now."

"I've had enough of this," rasped Woods. "I've got you all in this dump and I reckon I can pin enough on all of you. I'm going to ring the police and get a flying squad here."

"Don't touch that 'phone!" begged the girl. "It's connected with Recard's laboratory."

But Bob Woods had taken the receiver from its hook. He raised the 'phone as if about to call a number and all he heard was an insistent buzzing. He hung up and stared at the girl.

"I wish I could believe you."

"They're coming down the stairs," whispered the girl. "You're trapped! Your only chance is to play up to me." She laid a finger on her lips, and then raised her voice. "Thought yourself clever, trailing us here. Well, you've been a bit too clever. I've tricked you into warning my friends."

"Keep still!" came the voice of Recard from behind heavy curtains. "One move and you're a dead man. Better raise your hands."

Slowly Bob raised his hands. The curtains were flung back, and Recard, Mullins and Vilma came into the room.

"Well done, Helen," approved Recard. "And now, Mr. Agent, have you anything to say before I shoot?"

"You don't think I should have walked into this dump without protecting myself," sneered Woods. "I've got other men besides Wilson trailing me."

"Better kill him," hissed Vilma.

"Search him," ordered Recard to Mullins.

Mullins frisked Woods and removed a gun, whilst Recard kept the Federal Agent covered.

"What are you going to do with him?" demanded Vilma Santos.

"We do not want to leave anything

in this house that might be used against us," softly spoke Recard. "Mullins, get some rope and lash our friend to that chair." He turned to the woman. "As arranged, you and Mullins will finish the work of destruction, you will then take this interfering fool of a policeman out to the saloon car—I am using the open tourer. Mullins knows what to do with this man when San Francisco has been left many miles behind. I can leave this to you, Mullins."

"It'll be a pleasure, boss." "You had better keep a close eye on him," Recard went on. "He must not escape. Vilma, you had better get back to the laboratory. I will go now to see Sanderson."

"Yes, we mustn't waste any more time." It was Helen, and she looked intently at the bound man. "You asked for this, flat-foot, and you deserve all that's coming to you." In her hand she had secreted a knife, and she walked across to the chair. She laughed harshly. "I hope you have a pleasant ride. I'm almost sorry I shan't be with you, but I've got a date with Sanderson. As you're not long for this world I'll tell you his hide-out. It is near the Junction crossroads, and Sanderson lives in the old deserted Blue Mill." Her laugh was shrill.

Recard laughed. Little did he know that as the girl stood by the chair of the bound man her hand slid down towards his hands that were bound behind the chair-back.

The girl laughed again and moved away from the chair to stand beside Recard.

"We mustn't keep Sanderson waiting," she hinted.

Bob Woods was alone with Mullins, who sat on a chair with a gun on his knee, and leered at the man he was soon going to kill, whilst upstairs came the sounds of crashing glass—Vilma was smashing up the laboratory and the radio. All the while the Federal Agent was sawing at the bonds that secured his wrists.

Fortune favoured him, because Vilma Santos came to the top of the stairs and shouted to Mullins to come and help her. The task was more than she could manage.

When Mullins came back he stared at the chair aghast—it was empty. He had scarce got over his surprise when the gun was wrenched from his hands and powerful fingers were locked round his throat.

Mullins managed to break free, and then a mighty fist landed to the point of the jaw. He went down like a felled ox.

Vilma Santos heard the scuffling and came running down the stairs. Her eyes widened at sight of a battered Mullins sprawled at the foot of the stairs. One wrist was circled by a handcuff. Bob showed no mercy, and seized her before she could escape.

She screamed and tried to bite and claw, but his hands were like steel. There was a cлик, and then Bob stood back to survey his work. There was a handcuff on both their wrists, and the chain went between the stout iron banisters.

"You two can stay there till I come back for you," he mocked. "I might add, madam, that I'm doing you a service. Recard intended to walk out on you for that other dame, and never intended

to meet you at midnight. Mullins would have met Recard and the girl later, but you wouldn't have been with them. I trust your darling Jule had not planned the same end for you as he had for me. Now I must leave you two for a while. I hope you have a nice friendly talk whilst I'm gone."

As Bob tore through the night he prayed he would reach the Blue Mill in time.

Helen in Her True Colours

ON arrival at the Blue Mill Helen admitted Recard to the old house.

The crook kept his hand near his hip, as if suspicious of a trap.

"This place seems deserted."

"It suited the professor," explained the girl. "Somebody was killed here, and as a result they can never let the place. The professor got it very cheap, and I don't suppose anyone knows he comes here as this road is seldom used—it leads to a disused quarry. Apart from this room"—she opened a door—"the whole house is bare, except for the cellars. Professor Sanderson is evidently down in the cellars, where he has done all his experiments."

Assured that all was well, Recard allowed the girl to lead him through the old place. She knocked at the doors of the laboratory, and when there was no answer, entered. She disappeared into the blackness and a light was switched on.

Recard looked round. This was evidently the place where Sanderson carried out his experiments.

"Where is the professor?"

"Like all professors very bad on appointments," Helen answered. "I told him that you would be here about nine. He's bound to be here at any moment. At any rate, while we're waiting you can have a look at the formula. The old fool trusts me with all his keys."

From the safe she took out a thick roll of parchment and handed it to Recard.

"With your knowledge of chemistry you should be able to understand this. Anything you don't fathom the professor will tell you when he arrives. There is a bench over there."

Recard unfolded the roll of parchment and smoothed it out on the bench. He was so eager that he did not observe the fierce light that blazed in the girl's eyes.

After a while Recard looked round.

"I can't make much of this," he said.

"You're sure it is the formula?"

"No, that isn't the formula." The girl's hand came from behind her back and it held a gun. "I've got you at last, Recard!"

"What do you mean?"

"You're at my mercy."

"So you are a double-crossing Federal Agent?"

"No, I'm Helen Lynch!" she cried. "The sister of Jack Lynch, the man you murdered by shooting in the back."

Recard gaped at her as if he could not believe what he had heard.

"My brother told me a lot about the Sanderson case, and it was I who managed to find this hide-out of the professor's," Helen told him. "When you murdered my brother I swore to get even, and got the professor to act as a go-between." She gave a short, bitter

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laugh. "I learnt something of the secrets of this laboratory and what is behind those steel doors."

Recard looked at the doors and they seemed to fill his evil soul with terror.

"What do you want of me?"

"I'm going to hand out to you the fate you deserve." Still keeping him covered she moved across the laboratory. "When I press on this lever these doors swing back; when they close it is a slow death by suffocation for anyone that is imprisoned."

"You mean—"

"That like a rat you can die," Helen shouted. "You showed my brother no mercy and now it's your turn. You killed Wilson. Well, you can think of my brother, Wilson, and others that you have murdered as slowly you begin to suffocate."

"You'll go to the chair for this."

"That wouldn't worry me, but they may never find out. This shall be the perfect crime. I've told Professor Sanderson that it is to-morrow you buy the formula. You came here a day before and it is obvious that you have tried to steal the formula. Somehow you enter the gas chamber and stumbling against a lever close the doors, trapping yourself. You fail to escape and die miserably."

"Think of the money you are going to lose." Recard's eyes took in the whole place for some means of attacking this girl. "Besides, I didn't kill your brother."

"You gave the orders."

"I gave orders for Lynch to be stopped. Lynch would not stop and in the gun fight was—"

"Shot in the back," Helen interrupted. "Lies won't save you, Recard. You'll tell me in a moment you didn't tell that skunk Mullins to murder that Federal Agent. It may interest you to know that whilst I was talking I slipped him a knife, and if I know anything of him Mullins and your wife will be his prisoners."

"So you've been double-crossing me all the time?" He made a step forward as if he would leap at her.

The gun never wavered.

"Another step, Recard, and this gun goes off. I know how to handle a gun and I can't miss."

Recard hesitated. If he tried a rush she would fire and fire to kill. If he were not to die a horrible death he must find some way immediately. If he could think of nothing, then he would hurl himself at her on the chance that she was taken by surprise. He was standing near the long laboratory bench, and he wondered if there was time to grab one of these glass vessels and hurl it at her—he dismissed the idea as hopeless. It was then that he noticed at the end of the bench the light switch.

"You can't kill me like this without giving me a chance." He began to talk to gain time. He held out his hands pleadingly, and managed to edge along the floor. Helen did not suspect because though she saw him move slightly it did not bring him any nearer to her. "I got a right to live," he shouted. "Lynch had shot many of my men, and it he had stopped when ordered he would have been alive to-day."

"Did you give that chance to Wilson?"

"I told one of my men to put him to sleep," lied Recard. "And the fool strangled him. Was that my fault?"

"You're gaining nothing, Recard." Helen began to press on the lever. "Either be shot down or get behind these doors."

His hand slid forward and next moment the laboratory was in darkness.

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Recard bent double as Helen fired. The bullet passed over him, and before she could fire again he had flung himself forward to seize her by the wrist. The gun exploded harmlessly again, and then Helen gave a cry of agony as Recard brutally twisted her arm, forcing her to let go of the weapon.

A Fight to a Finish

BOB WOODS found the cross-roads, but it was some little while before he came to the Blue Mill.

It was a gloomy old place. He tried the front door and found it locked. Actually, Recard had shot the bolt when Helen had not been watching. Easy for Bob to have broken down the door, but the noise would have warned Recard.

A tour of the house revealed wooden planks laid over some sort of coal shute. They removed easily enough, and a flash of his torch revealed a door into the house.

The sound of two shots and a woman's scream startled him. Helen was in danger. Quickly he dropped down and ran to the door, which was bolted, but his weight soon burst it open. He guessed he would not have been heard because of the noise coming from somewhere close at hand. He heard Helen scream again. With the aid of his torch he picked his way down a gloomy, dirty passage until he came to high doors. He placed his ear to the keyhole.

"I've got you now, my pretty." It was the voice of Recard. "No one ever double-crosses me and gets away with it. You want me to suffocate to death, and so, pretty lady, I guess you can sample some of your own medicine."

Very quietly Bob turned the handle and breathed a sigh of relief that the door was not locked. Moreover, the hinges did not squeak, and he was able to creep into the laboratory like a shadow. A moon cast a fitful shadow and Bob could vaguely glimpse two people struggling on the floor.

"One move and I'll throttle you like I did Wilson," snarled Recard. "Now you're going to tell me how to work these cursed doors—tell me the way to kill you."

Groping fingers found the switch and the laboratory was flooded with light. Bob Woods hurled himself forward at Recard's back.

Though Recard was winded he fought desperately. His clawing hands tried to get at the pistol, but Bob managed to kick it into a corner. Helen crawled away and watched the fight with agonised eyes. It never occurred to her to try to get the gun—she was too absorbed in the fight.

The two men were on their feet, and how her heart leapt as Woods got in a terrific punch to Recard's jaw. Recard went down, but he was game. Out went a leg as the Federal Agent rushed and down sprawled his enemy. Now it was his turn to rush, but Bob Woods doubled his feet under him and shot them out like pistons into the other's chest.

A table covered with bottles and paraphernalia crashed over, and the two men rolled amongst the broken glass. They staggered up, and faced each other before attempting to attack. Suddenly Recard darted to a table and swung up a huge glass jar. The Agent dodged and the jar smashed to pieces against the wall. Locked in each other's arms they rolled over the floor, with each trying to get uppermost. A punch below the belt caused Bob to relax his grip and Recard wriggled free. He grabbed up a chair with the full intention of smashing it down on his victim.

"Look out, Bob!" screamed Helen.

Bob Woods twisted sideways and the chair crashed on the floor, but when

Recard swung up the chair for another blow a fist with the force of a mighty battering ram behind it caught Recard and hurled him back. The crook staggered into the long bench that was loaded with test-tubes, retorts, bottles, jars and beakers. The whole lot went over with a sickening crash, and Helen thought that the fight was over, but desperation often lends a man strength. Recard staggered to his feet, his face streaming with blood, and screaming curses rushed forward.

"Take that you rat!" shouted Bob, and his right laded with a thud to the point of the jaw.

Recard was hurled back to crash once more into the debris. Fear and rage seemed to drive the man mad, and though his hands were cut and bleeding he began to pick up broken bottles to throw at Bob, who had hard work dodging the missiles. Then the crook found an iron bar and tried to smash Bob over the head.

Strong hands wrenched the weapon away and Bob crashed a right and left to the jaw. This time Recard crashed against a cupboard that was loaded with bottles. They smashed and instantly white fumes burst forth.

"It's gas!" screamed Helen. "It's deadly!"

Bob would have rushed forward to try to help the wretched Recard, but Helen grabbed his arm.

"One whiff of that and you haven't a chance." Her voice was shrill with fear. "Come away before it is too late."

The blows that Recard had showered on her and the mental strain were too much for her, and Bob was just in time to catch her in his arms. Some more of the bottles exploded and there was an ominous sizzling noise. A flicker of flame showed in the dense fumes, which were moving towards him like a cloud.

Bob Woods decided that the best thing was to get out of the Blue Mill, and quickly.

But that was far from a simple matter. There was a sharp report and in a flash the choking fumes surrounded them. They coughed and spluttered. They tripped over a smashed table and sprawled on the floor, and when Woods got to his feet his outstretched hands could not find the girl.

"Where are you?" he gasped out.

A faint cry was his answer.

Stooping, he groped about the floor till he found her. The gases were making him faint and dizzy, but somehow he managed to pick up the half-fainting girl in his arms. Now he had no idea which was the way out of the laboratory till another sharp explosion gave him a rough idea of his bearings. What a relief to find himself out in a passage. Now he could use his torch.

A glance back showed that the laboratory was in flames, and he did not know how soon it would be before the explosives would go up like a volcano. At last he reached the shute, and he was in such an exhausted condition that he had to rest to get back his strength. Luckily, the air revived the girl, so that she was able with his assistance to clamber upwards. A moment later they were in the garden. They raced to the car, and scarce had they reached it when the Blue Mill rocked under a violent explosion.

"Best thing we can do is to get a call through to the fire squad," decided Bob. "That place will be ablaze in two shakes. Way goes old Sanderson's formula."

(Continued on page 27)

"MURDER ON A BRIDLE PATH"

(Continued from page 12)

"He's the one that did it!" he cried. "I tell you he killed her!"

"Aw, you're crazy!" roared the stable manager. "You're trying to hang it on to me."

"Quiet!" thundered Piper. "What are you three doing here?"

Barbara was the first to speak.

"Go on, Eddie," she said, "you'd better tell him."

"All right," Eddie stepped forward. "You see, Violet gave this fellow Wells nine hundred dollars."

"What!" howled Piper.

"We found an entry in her diary," Eddie held out the little book Barbara had taken from a drawer of the dressing-table in the bed-room of the flat. He pointed to an entry which Piper read aloud:

"Gave Latigo nine hundred dollars to put on Wallaby. Why didn't you tell me about this before?"

"Well," Eddie replied, "we didn't think it was important."

"Oh, again you didn't think it was important!" raged the inspector, and whirled round on Wells.

"Well, Mr. Latigo Wells, it looks like you've got some explaining to do. She gave you the money, and when she couldn't get it back you killed her."

Miss Withers sailed along the yard, and he shouted to her above the trembling manager's protests:

"I think we've got him, Hildegarde."

"Wait a minute," said she importantly. "I want to tell you something."

He stepped aside with her, and a whispered conversation ensued, during which Eddie and Barbara looked at one another and at Don.

Finally Piper stalked over to Don.

"Oh, Gregg," he said in an ominously quiet voice, "where did you go when you left the Turkish baths?"

"Why, I had my breakfast there," was the reply, "and then I went to the flat."

"What are you lying for? You tried to rent a horse to follow Violet Feverel. Why did you want to follow her?"

A telephone bell shrilled in the office, and Wells made a movement which was instantly stayed by the inspector.

"I'll take it," said Miss Withers. "I'll tell them you're in conference, Mr. Wells."

She sped off down the yard, and Piper faced Don again.

"You may as well spill it, Gregg," he gritted. "A wrecked bicycle was found near the spot where the girl was killed."

"So what?" challenged Don.

"That bicycle was stolen from across the street, and you were seen doing it. A little piece of cloth was caught in the sprocket wheel—dark cloth!" Piper picked up the skirt of Don's overcoat and found a little tear in it—a tear on which all eyes became focused.

"Say, wait a minute—" Don began hoarsely.

But Piper would not listen.

"When you couldn't rent a horse," he accused sternly, "you stole a bicycle, and you just happened to ride in the park where Violet Feverel was murdered."

"I did follow her," admitted Don frantically. "But I never saw her. I ran into a tree—"

Miss Withers came running up, a trifle scant of breath.

"It was Mr. Schultz, the handwriting expert," she panted.

"What did he want?" snapped Piper.

"He says," replied Miss Withers, "that the forged court order was in Pat Gregg's handwriting."

Piper emitted an ejaculation that sounded uncommonly like an oath.

"Well, how'd you like that?" he howled. "So your father forged the court order, eh, Gregg? Well, maybe you'll talk now, and maybe your father'll talk. Kane, get another car from headquarters and take 'em out to the Gregg home, all of 'em."

"Yes, sir," said Kane dutifully, and he made use of the telephone in the office.

The Knotted Sheet

DAYLIGHT had faded into dusk when the squad car containing Detective-Inspector Piper and Miss Withers drew up outside the front steps of the ugly house on Long Island, and in the gloom the place bore a more sinister aspect than ever.

The two descended from the car and ascended to the porch, but a repeated ringing of the bell and pounding of the knocker failed to elicit any response from within.

"Nobody home!" growled Piper.

"If I lived in a place like this," commented Miss Withers, "I wouldn't stay home, either."

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September 26th, 1936.

"Well, a locked house never stopped me yet," Piper boasted. "If there's anyone in there at all, I'm going to sneak up on them."

He went off to look for an unfastened window, and presently Miss Withers tried the handle of the door, and found that the door would open.

She stepped rather timorously into the hall, which was in darkness, and she had groped her way to the stairs when she heard a crash in the back parlour. Piper had found one of its windows unfastened and had raised the sash and climbed in over the sill; but he had blundered against a table which overturned, and as he fell to the floor with it he had caught his hand in the shade of a reading-lamp, which had been sent flying.

He was rising to his feet and flinging the lampshade from him when Miss Withers reached the doorway of the room and cried out in a voice she herself did not recognise:

"Stand still, I've got you covered!"

Piper stood perfectly still, and then she found the switch and flooded the room with light.

"Relax, Hildegard, relax," rebuked Piper, not without relief, and in some embarrassment she dropped the hand she had been pointing as though it were a gun.

In the hall he switched on more lights. "The place seems kind of empty," he remarked. "I wonder where everybody is."

"I don't know," she said; "but old man Gregg's home, that's a cinch. Come on."

They climbed the stairs together.

"How did you get in, anyway?" asked Piper.

"The door wasn't locked," she replied, and it was his turn to feel foolish.

The door of Patrick Gregg's bedroom was wide open when they reached it, but the bed was empty.

"He's gone!" exclaimed Piper blankly.

"Right again, Oscar," said Miss Withers.

"Do you suppose somebody could have tipped him off we were coming?"

"It's possible," she conceded, "but I have an idea where he might be."

She led the way up the second flight of stairs and she pointed mutely to the closed door of the room in which she had looked through a telescope.

Piper opened the door and she reached round it to switch on the lights. Patrick Gregg was in the chair behind the desk in his dressing-gown, his face flat upon its leatherette surface, one arm close to his head, the other stretched out towards an inkstand as though it had fallen away from the telescope.

Piper felt for a pulse which had long since ceased to beat, and Miss Withers explained about the telescope.

"Umph!" grunted the inspector. "Looking at the races this afternoon, that's what did it. The doctor said he couldn't stand any excitement." He snapped thumb and finger in annoyance. "He would have to pop off at a time like this."

"I'm not so sure he popped off," said Miss Withers, and that caused him to examine the body more closely. Presently he went down on his knees, and he found red marks round the old man's bare ankles.

"Looks as though they've been tied," he said, and rose thoughtfully. "You know, Hildegard, he might have been murdered at that. But how did he—"

"I think I know," she interrupted. "Come on!"

They descended to the bed-room, and there she pointed out some sand upon

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the carpet, near the bed, which she had noticed that morning.

"If he had been sandbagged," she said, "it wouldn't show more than a lump on his head, would it? And look!"

She pulled out the bottom of a sheet, the corner of which was knotted.

"It was like that this morning," she said.

"Knotted!" exclaimed Piper. "And his ankles are chafed! That might mean that somebody—"

He broke off to look up at the ceiling. There were heavy beams across it, and in one of the beams there was a big hook—almost directly over the bed.

"Look!" he cried, and stood up on the bed to examine the hook. It had been pulled out of shape as though by a weight almost too much for it.

"Something's been tied around here!" he proclaimed excitedly.

Miss Withers stared from the knotted sheet to the hook.

"Oscar," she said suddenly, "he dreamt he was swinging like a pendulum—he told me so! Somebody tried to kill him this morning! He was hit on the back of the head with a sandbag and hung up there by his heels!"

"Uhuh!" Piper got down from the bed. "That would make the blood run into his head so it would look like he had a stroke."

"Whoever did it," decided Miss Withers, "tried it this morning, but something happened, so they came back this afternoon."

"Yeah," objected Piper, "but if he was killed here how did his body get up in that turret room?"

"Must have been carried there," she replied, "so that it would look as if the excitement of the races killed him."

"You've got it!"

A sound down in the hall as of a door being closed sent them out on to the landing, and over the banisters Piper caught sight of Thomas, who had stared at the squad car in the drive before he entered the house.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" shouted the inspector, and swept down the stairs. "Where've you been?"

Thomas stopped short, holding his bowler hat between his hands.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" he asked.

"Never mind that," snapped Piper.

"Where've you been?"

"Mr. Gregg said I might go to the races, sir, at Belmont Park," the butler replied.

"Oh, he did, eh? What time did you leave the house?"

"Why, it—it was shortly after lunch, sir. Pardon me, but are you alone in the house?"

"Why?" demanded Piper sharply.

"Mr. Gregg's up in his room, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir, of course." The butler appeared to be worried. "I was wondering where Joey was."

"Joey?"

"That's the cripple boy who works here," explained Miss Withers, who had followed the inspector down. "He opened the door this morning."

"Oh, yeah." Piper remembered.

"Was he here when you left?"

"Yes, sir, he was," Thomas replied.

"I'm his father, you know. The boy is not well, but there's no harm in him. Mr. Gregg will tell you—"

"Mr. Gregg won't tell me anything!" rasped Piper. "He's dead!"

"Dead?" The butler looked flabbergasted. "Why—why I—I left him all right this afternoon. Poor Master Don, he'll be broken up over this. He'll regret the quarrel."

"What quarrel?" Piper almost shouted.

"Oh, nothing, sir—nothing."

"Come on, what quarrel? What was it about?"

Thomas bit his lip and stared at Miss Withers, who was regarding him intently.

"It—it was— Well, Mr. Gregg thought Master Don had killed Miss Violet," he mumbled.

"He did, eh? What made him think that?"

"I can't imagine, sir."

"Listen, the—" The strident note of a motor horn out in the drive caused the inspector to break off abruptly. "Wait a minute!" he commanded. "I'll attend to that—and you stay right here!"

He went to the front door, opened it, and strode out on to the porch.

"By the way, Thomas," said Miss Withers in a friendly sort of fashion, "who won the big handicap?"

"Wallaby, ma'am," replied the butler.

"Did you have a bet on him?"

"I would have liked to, ma'am."

"Anyone who did have a bet on him won a lot of money, didn't they?"

"Yes," replied Thomas, "a lot of money."

Despite the inspector's instructions he walked slowly up the stairs, and she did not try to stop him. But after he had disappeared round the bend at the half-landing she, too, slowly ascended.

Caught!

THE car which had arrived in the drive was the one Kane had obtained from headquarters, and it contained Don Gregg, Barbara, Eddie Fry, and Latigo Wells—to say nothing of several plain-clothes men.

On Piper's instructions the four were marched into the hall, Kane bringing up the rear, and there Eddie Fry looked at Don and said:

"Gregg, I think we ought to tell him everything."

"I do, too," declared Barbara.

"Well, somebody'd better tell me something!" snarled Piper. "What is it?"

Eddie held out a very small piece of paper.

"It's a page that Don tore out of Violet's diary," he said. "She hated old man Gregg. She says on it that she'd like to kill him."

Piper snatched at the paper, read what was written on it, and held it behind his back.

"But somebody killed her first, eh?" he said caustically. "Maybe it was the same person that had a quarrel with your father this morning, Gregg!"

"I don't see—" Don began angrily.

"Oh, you don't see, eh?" roared Piper. "Where were you this afternoon before I saw you at the stables?"

"I spent the afternoon with these people," Don indicated Eddie and Barbara, and Eddie nodded confirmation.

"You were pretty sore at your father, weren't you?" said Piper. "Were you sore enough to kill him?"

"Kill him?" gasped Don.

"We found your father upstairs, dead!"

By the time Miss Withers had reached the hallway of the first floor Thomas had disappeared. She was looking about her when a shuffling sound on the upper stairs caused her to turn about, and she saw the cripple limping downwards.

She met him at the bottom of the

flight, and he started slightly as she faced him.

"Where have you been, Joey?" she inquired.

"Upstairs, ma'am," he replied.

"What were you doing up there?"

"That's where I live—me and my father."

She raised her brows a trifle, but forbore to ask any more questions.

"All right, Joey," she said, and watched him as he limped away to the landing and went down the lower stairs.

In the hall Piper was blazing at Don Gregg when the cripple endeavoured to slip past him.

"Hi, you!" bellowed the detective.

"Where're you going?"

"To the stables, sir," was the reply.

"Well, forget about the stables! Stick around here!"

Joey's rather wild eyes were rebellious, but he leaned against the wall, not daring to disobey the police.

Miss Withers heard the harsh command, then crept up the second flight of stairs. Beyond the room in which Patrick Gregg was sprawled dead across his desk there were five more stairs, and at the top of them a door. She opened the door and slipped into a bedroom obviously under the roof of the turret.

The ceiling sloped down on either side of it, as she discovered after she had switched on a light, and it was very meagrely furnished. Near the window there was a double bed, and near the door there was a dressing-table of stained deal. In the wall which had no slope there was a cupboard, and she opened its door.

On the floor inside lay a long and narrow bag from which sand had leaked, and in a corner an air rifle was propped against the wall.

She backed out from the cupboard and went to the dressing-table, and she did not notice that the door of the room, which she had closed, was now open a couple of inches.

On the dressing-table, beside a candlestick, there was a cardboard box. She opened the box and from it poured some BB shots into the palm of her gloved hand and studied them.

She was putting the shots back into the box when the door swung wide, and she turned to see the butler standing there with a most malignant expression on his thin face.

"Thomas!" she gasped.

"Did you call, ma'am?"

She was far too scared to answer, and she shrank against the wall as he closed the door and leaned menacingly over the side of the dressing-table.

"You know, don't you?" he said, the light of madness in his staring eyes.

"You know everything?"

With one claw-like hand outstretched, he moved round the dressing-table, and from behind it and the wall snatched up an object that made her shudder—a garden hoe with a horseshoe wired to its blade. She was in deadly fear of her own life, but she found her voice.

"So that's how you

Feverel?" she said.

"Yes," he

strange weapon,

a soul, because you

(this room alive!)"

Down in the hall, Piper

Don Gregg of having had

quarrel with his father in the

"What was it about?" he de

"Nothing important," stated Do

"That isn't what Thomas told m

"Thomas?" the young man echoed in

surprise.

"Yeah, he told me all about it."

Don became furious at what he

considered to be a piece of treachery.

"Well, did he tell you he was the one that got me out of gaol?" he stormed.

"Oh," drawled Piper, "so it was Thomas?"

He scratched first his chin and then the back of his neck.

"Well, now, that's funny," he mused. "There was nothing funny to Miss Withers about Thomas' revelations, up in the room under the roof of the turret. She listened because she had to listen, but her heart was pounding against her ribs."

"My son was crippled," the butler stated fiercely, "by one of that old man's horses. I saved and saved for years and years so that he could be cured, and then I gave nine hundred dollars to old man Gregg to bet on Wallaby because that would have made it enough. But he stole it. He gave it to Violet Feverel for Don's alimony!"

His voice rose to a shriek.

"I went to her, after he had told me, but she laughed at me. I got 'em both—Violet Feverel in the park, and old man Gregg in his bed!"

Maniacal laughter filled the room.

"I carried him up to his study so that he could see the horses for ever and ever and ever!"

Raising the hoe above his head by its handle, he struck suddenly, but Miss Withers ducked in time to evade the blow and flew out past him on to the landing.

"Oscar!" she screamed at the top of her voice. "Oscar!"

Thomas rushed out at her, aiming another blow at her head, but again she evaded the horrible weapon, and she stumbled down the stairs with the madman after her. On the floor below he reached over the banisters to hurl the thing at her, but the banisters gave way and he pitched headlong downwards, screeching horribly, and fell in a crumpled heap almost at Piper's feet.

On the following afternoon Miss Withers leaned forward in a chair at the end of the inspector's desk in his office at headquarters. Eddie Fry and Barbara had got married that morning, and were on their way to Canada for their honeymoon, but there was still something on the spinster's mind.

"There's one remaining point I'd like cleared up," she said.

"What?" asked Piper.

She took a briar pipe from her handbag and pushed it across the desk to him.

"The owner of that pipe has false teeth, but Thomas' teeth were his own

—such as they were—discoloured and decayed for anyone to see. Yet I found that pipe in the park near the body!"

"So you think the murderer must be still at large, after all?" suggested Piper with playful sarcasm.

"Oscar," she chided, "I'm not all that funny!"

Dr. Charles Bloom walked into the room, and Piper held up the pipe.

"Hallo, doc," he said. "Ever see that before?"

The medical examiner took the pipe, and one glance at it was enough.

"Why, yes," he exclaimed, "it's mine! I've been looking for it ever since yesterday morning. Thanks!"

"Wait a minute, doc," chuckled Piper. "You've got some questions to answer. Miss Withers suspects that you don't eat apples. You'd better have a good answer!"

The doctor turned with quite an annoyed expression on his face to the finder of the pipe.

"The answer, Miss Withers," he said stiffly, "is apple-sauce!"

He went straight out, his head in the air, and Piper roared with laughter.

"Trying to pin a murder on the medical examiner!" he gurgled.

Miss Withers promptly whisked a cigar from a box on the desk and jabbed it into his open mouth.

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring James Gleason and Helen Broderick.)

"FEDERAL AGENT"

(Continued from page 24)

"The formula is at a bank—it is quite safe," gasped Helen.

"Well, why did you take Recard to the Blue Mill?" Bob demanded.

"Because I wanted to kill him," answered the girl. "Because he killed my brother, Jack."

"So you're Helen Lynch!" burred Bob.

"I knew there was something about your face that was familiar—it was the eyes. Mighty good thing, young lady, I showed up, and Recard got the better of you. You can't go handing out justice that way, though that skunk deserved all that came to him."

After Vilma and Mullins had been handed over to the police and Bob had had a talk with Professor Sanderson on the right person to see in regard to the formula there seemed nothing more to do but go and watch the Blue Mill blazing merrily.

"Helen!" Bob had his arm through hers. "You're alone in the world now, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Are you in a job?"

"I was, but I resigned after Jack died."

"Well, I've got a month's vacation that's starting right now," Bob cried.

"I'm going to write my report to-night and post it in the morning, and I'm going to assure head office that for a month I'm going to be missing. I'm going on my honeymoon."

"Who with?" Helen tried to free her arm.

"With you, stupid," Bob grinned.

"And I'm marrying you directly after breakfast before you have a chance to change your mind."

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"MURDER ON A BRIDLE PATH."— Detective-Inspector Oscar Piper, James Gleason; Miss Hildegard Withers, Helen Broderick; Violet Feverel, Sheila Terry; Donald Gregg, Leslie Fenton; Barbara Foley, Louise Latimer; Eddie Fry, Owen Davies, Jnr.; Abe Thomas, Christian Rub; Joey Thomas, John Arledge; Latigo Wells, John Carroll; Highpockets, Willie Best; Dr. Charles Bloom, Harry von Seyffertitz; Patrick Gregg, ...; Detective-Sergeant Kane, ...; Warden Sylvester ...; ...; Dewy Robinson; Case; Dr. Peters,

NT.— Bob ...; Charles ...; Ware; Santos,

Alv.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Bill Boyd as Bob Woods and Irene Ware as Helen.)
September 26th, 1936.

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

(Continued from page 22)

these Indians—had merely sapped such qualities as their race had formerly possessed, and added new vices to their old ones so that they were ripe for any mischief—and typical of the harm thus wrought amongst a once-proud people was the young brave who commanded this particular party.

He was Red Eagle, a lean, swarthy native with shifty eyes and a face that was ravaged by the effects of whisky. Indeed, his breath stank of the raw spirit as he drew rein before Dirk and lifted a hand in salute.

"I come with my friends here in answer to message," he said. "We slip away from Indian village, and take care that my father, the old chief, does not see us. Him no' like make trouble. Old people all the same—they no' like trouble."

"But you don't mind trouble so long as the pay is good, huh?" Dirk commented with a leer. "Okay, Red Eagle, you'll get plenty of dough if you do as I tell you. Now listen."

He began to make the situation clear to the wayward son of the old Indian chief, and, when the renegades had learned the part that they were to play, they and their allies took the trail that led to Sandstone Bluff.

They rode at a brisk pace, and before the sun had gone down beyond the western peaks of the Guadalupe mountains, they were in sight of their destination—a sweep of prairie sloping away from the bluff, and dotted with steers which were peacefully grazing.

Three cowboys were guarding the scattered herd, and Dirk and his cronies did not anticipate much trouble from these. A single volley and the punchers would probably ride for their lives. So the outlaws imagined, at any rate.

"Come on, men," Dirk rapped out, and with a jab of his spurs he sent his horse bounding from a strip of forest through which the rustlers had made their way.

The scoundrelly whites whom he commanded were quick to follow his example, and, meanwhile, in accordance with the pre-arranged plan, the pack of renegade Indians moved northward to the edge of the wood under Red Eagle's leadership—there to take up a position and beat off any of the Grayson hands who might come from the direction of the ranch.

Before the renegades had reached the northern fringe of the timber, shots were ringing out across the expanse of prairie on which the Hidden Valley heaves were feeding. They threw the herd into confusion. But, contrary to expectations, they did not put to flight the three punchers who were in charge of the steers, for these promptly drew their forty-fives and answered the challenge of the gangsters' fusillade.

It was at this very moment that a man and a girl hove into view on the

brow of a low ridge to the north-west, and with the blasts of the revolvers resounding in their ears the two of them pulled up abruptly.

The man and the girl were Buck Grant and Mary Grayson, homeward bound from their gallop across the range, and as they beheld Dirk and his associates bearing down on the stampeding drove of cattle they looked at each other quickly.

"Rustlers!" Buck ejaculated. "And operating in broad daylight! They've got their nerve!"

"I'll say they have," Mary cried. "The ranch is only just beyond Sandstone Bluff there, and my cowboys are bound to hear the shooting."

Buck gripped her by the arm. "Maybe not," he said. "You head for the outfit and send 'em out here. This is no place for you, anyway."

"What are you going to do?" the girl demanded.

"Give those three herdsmen of yours a little support," was the reply. "I reckon they'll need it. Go on now, you get going."

Mary was loath to leave him, believing that he and the three punchers down on the prairie were likely to meet their death at the hands of the outlaws. But he prevailed upon her to ride for the ranch and give the alarm, and as she began to spur in the direction of her home he galloped to the aid of the men who were facing the onset of the charging outlaws.

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Before Buck had covered a hundred yards of ground, however, he looked back to see if Mary were still making for the ranch that lay beyond the bluff, and, as he turned his head, he at once became aware that she was in danger.

Two renegade Indians were careering in pursuit of her—ruffians who seemed to spring from nowhere; or so it appeared to Buck, who knew nothing of the party which was lurking in the wood.

They had been ordered by Red Eagle to seize Mary, and they were gaining on her rapidly. Consequently, Buck wheeled around and abandoned his former intention of going to the assistance of the three cowboys in charge of the herd, riding to the rescue of the girl instead.

Never before had he taxed his bronc, Silver, as he did now, and, leaning forward in the saddle, uttering words of encouragement in the pony's ears, he urged the gallant creature over the mesquite at breakneck speed to take up the chase of the renegades who sought to secure Mary Grayson.

He had not gone far when he realised that he himself had been marked down for pursuit—by two more renegade Indians who suddenly debouched from that wood where, if Buck had only known it, the band of braves under Red Eagle's command were lying in concealment.

Menaced as he was by these unexpected foes, the big Ranger concentrated his attention on the pair of rogues who were striving to overtake Mary, and, though they were making up on her, their horses were no match for Silver. Therefore, Buck was soon abreast of the hindmost of the girl's pursuers, and with a powerful back-handed blow he knocked the fellow clean off his mustang's back.

With a hoarse cry the Redskin plunged to the dust, and the shout that broke from his lips as he fell caused his accomplice to look round sharply. In another instant the latter was tugging out a six-gun, and, still riding at top pace, he tried to drill Buck through the body at point-blank range.

Luckily the white man was within reach of him ere it was possible for him to draw trigger, and, catching him by the wrist with one hand and gripping him by the throat with the other, he succeeded in unhorsing him—though at the cost of parting company with his own brone.

Both men crashed to earth, and the gun flew from the renegade's hand. Then, rolling asunder, they picked themselves up and launched a simultaneous attack, the Redskin leaping at his antagonist pantherishly, but meeting an Anglo-Saxon uppercut that grassed him in the twinkling of an eye.

But, in the meantime, the second pair of Indians who had dashed from the cover of the wood were coming up fast, and with savage yells they sprang from their ponies and closed with Buck, to be joined within a few seconds by the brave whom the Ranger had first assailed.

Some distance away, Mary Grayson brought her horse to a standstill and looked back to see her protector battling furiously with his enemies—saw the dust rising from their feet in clouds as they staggered from side to side in their life-and-death struggle. Then, all at once, Buck seemed to wrench himself free with a tremendous effort, and, swinging his fists, he scattered the three renegades who had been grappling with him.

At that same instant, however, Mary detected a movement on the part of the Indian who had gone down from Buck's uppercut a minute before, and a thrill of horror coursed through her as she saw him scramble to his feet and pluck out a wicked-looking knife whose blade glinted sinisterly in the rays of the setting sun.

"Buck!" Mary screamed, and then covered her face with her hands as the murderous Redskin pounced on the white man from behind.

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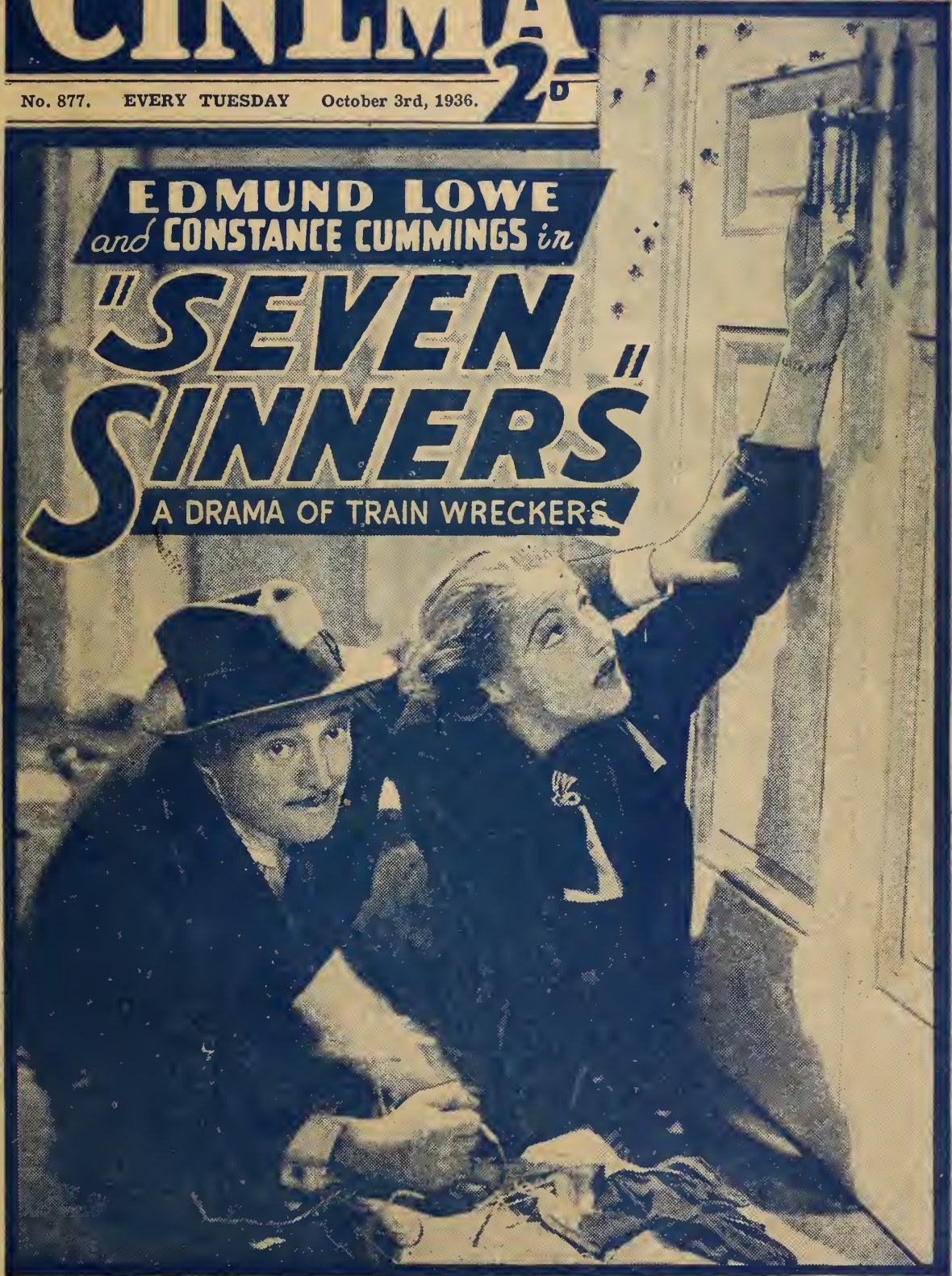
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EDMUND LOWE
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A detective finds a murdered man in his room at his hotel, but when he summons the officials the body has vanished. They suggest hallucinations, but next day he is involved in a train wreck and he sees the dead man in the flames. A gripping thriller, starring Edmund Lowe and Constance Cummings



The Body that Disappeared

JOHN HARWOOD staggered up the stairs of his hotel. He was a little sick of Nice and its everlasting gaieties. That night there had been a big Carnival Ball, and trying to get the festive spirit, he had mingled with the crowds in the guise of Mephistopheles. The American knew no one in Nice, and as a result had drowned his sorrows in more wine than was good for him. He wished the dickens that Felton would turn up so they could leave Nice and be on their way to England and eventually Scotland.

Harwood was the European agent of a big American detective agency, and he had gone to Nice for a holiday. Whilst there he had received instructions that his services were required for the unravelling of a jewel theft in Scotland, and that he was to wait there for Felton, the representative of an insurance company. The necklace lost by Lady Morland, who was an American, was of great value, and the insurance company insisted upon sending a representative. As a result Harwood had to hang around Nice.

On reaching his room he had some difficulty in fitting the key into the lock, but managed it at last. He staggered inside and then pulled up in surprise at sight of a weird thing sprawled across a table.

Harwood laughed. He remembered quite clearly where he had seen this person before. It was the man who occupied the next room. Harwood had got his devil's tail jammed in his own door, and had left the doorkey in his suit. The man next door, wearing the guise of a monk with a monstrosity of a cardboard head mask, had opened the

door with his own key. Harwood chuckled again because they had had several drinks together until the surging crowds had parted them. Apparently, the monk had come to Harwood's room for a drink, and had fallen into a tipsy sleep.

"I'll mix you a corpse reviver," cried Harwood.

There came no answer from the unexpected guest. "Must make it pretty strong," Harwood muttered. "Seems to be out." After a certain amount of trouble he mixed a very strong drink and swayed across the room. "Drink this, old boy." He slapped the man on the shoulder. "Do you a power of good."

There came no response, so Harwood slapped the man a trifle harder, and to his surprise the sleeping man rolled off his chair on to the floor. The grotesque head came off and he found himself staring at a bearded, elderly man, whose cheeks were the colour of chalk. The detective went down on his knees, and the alcoholic fumes were dispelled in a flash when he found the man dead—strangled!

Down to the reception bureau hastened Harwood.

"Look here, my name's Harwood and—"

That was as far as Harwood got, because a hand was laid on his shoulder and he found himself staring at a remarkably attractive girl, who was in travelling clothes with a rug over one arm. She smiled at him.

"I've been looking for you—I'm Felton."

"Good heavens, I thought Felton was a man." Then he saw the manager coming out of his office and remem-

bered. "M'sieur, a word with you," he called. The fat manager bowed, beamed and hastened forward. "There's a dead man in my room. I think he's been murdered!"

The pretty girl gasped and the manager muttered "Mon Dieu!" whilst a reception-clerk, who thought the American gentleman was joking, tittered.

At any rate, Harwood finally convinced everyone that there was a strangled man in his room, and a rush was made upstairs. The detective clutched at a chair when he found his room empty—the body had gone!

Naturally, everyone thought John Harwood was suffering from delusions or strong drink. The manager was quite cross, and Harwood was not pleased with the mocking laughter of Miss Caryl Fenton.

"I tell you I saw a man sprawled in that chair," he told her when the irate manager and his staff had departed. "and that when I slapped him he fell on the floor—dead—strangled. I know I've had quite enough to drink, but I don't care if I live to be a hundred I shall always swear I saw a dead body lying just there." He pointed dramatically.

"May I remind you that you had orders to leave Nice immediately I arrived," said the girl. "And that tonight we've got to be on our way across Europe towards England. Have you forgotten all about Lady Morland's necklace?"

"No, I have not."

"We must leave by the midnight Continental Express," Miss Fenton addressed him as if he were a child. "Kindly come out of your trance and

start packing, because the train leaves in exactly half an hour. You can sleep this off in the train."

It was a reluctant and bewildered John Harwood that boarded the Continental Express. He was now in that state when he was almost sure he had seen a body, but just the slightest bit doubtful that it might have been the result of too many drinks.

The Train Smash

HARWOOD had been ready to leave at a moment's notice and had bought tickets. Naturally, he had got a double sleeper, thinking Fenton was a man, and as a result of the train being full had to repose on luggage in a corridor, whilst his companion slumbered in the luxurious sleeper. Harwood decided that life was very hard, especially as the train rattled and bumped in a manner that made sleep almost impossible.

At last Harwood managed to doze off, and it seemed that he had scarce closed his eyes when he had a rude awakening. First his head hit a wall, then his body seemed to come off the floor to crash against the roof, then he was twisted like a ball and hurled violently to the floor. Vaguely Harwood wondered whether this was some dread nightmare. The sound of splintering wood, breaking glass, terrific crashings and agonised screaming made him realise at last the train was off the lines.

Next sensation was sinking and having a vague conception of the whole coach crumpling up, then his head hit something and everything went black.

When Harwood opened his eyes he was in a place that was not heaven. Everything was red and leaping. His vision cleared and he realised these were flames. The express had crashed at sixty miles an hour and the coach was a blazing wreck. He did not know that his face was blackened, his forehead streaming blood from flying glass, and that his clothes were in tatters,

but he did know he was alive, and if he wished to survive he must get out quick. It was as he moved towards a broken window that he saw the body.

Half protruding from a wrecked seat was the body of a bearded man. It was the dead man that he had seen in his room. Suddenly leaping flames began to roar and crackle close to the body. Fascinated, Harwood crawled forward. The man had been dead some time. The shrewd eyes of the detective were quick to note the dangling sleeve and stiff, blood-stained shirt cuff. There was writing on the cuff—an address. Harwood ripped off the cuff, and as the flames blazed up darted for the window.

Harwood got clear in the nick of time. The coach became a blazing mass. He rolled down a slight slope and was helped to his feet by someone. Vaguely he heard that the express had been deliberately derailed and that it was feared many had perished. He could find out nothing about Miss Fenton, though a rescue worker informed him that a number of the passengers had been conducted to a near-by convent. He was so badly battered and bruised that it was an effort to limp the quarter of a mile to the convent.

A nun admitted him and led him to the cloisters. Here temporary beds had been fitted up for the wounded and hurt. Nowhere was there any sign of the girl, until a Sister in white robes told him in broken English that an American young lady was in the library.

It was Fenton and he was intensely relieved. The girl gave a cry of joy at sight of him. She had feared he had been killed or burnt. She had not been hurt, but had been knocked silly, and had woken up in this convent. Harwood shook her hand warmly, and did not notice the clean-shaven, elderly man seated at a table.

Harwood suddenly remembered about his discovery.

"Listen, Miss Fenton," he cried.

"You know what I told you about seeing a body in my room and how you thought I was crazy because I couldn't produce the corpse. Well, I saw the same man on the express."

"What!" The girl was shocked. "And believe me, this is no hallucination," Harwood grinned triumphantly. "It was the same man, and he had been dead some while. The body vanished from my room and was dumped on the express, and, in my humble opinion, the train was derailed because someone wanted to cover the murder. The express was wrecked so the world should think this man was killed in the smash. If only I could get in touch with the police I'd—"

The girl shook his arm and pointed. Startled, Hopwood glanced round and saw the man at the table. The latter smiled and bowed.

"Permit me to introduce myself, m'sieur," he said. "I'm Paul Turbe, Assistant Prefect of the Paris Police. By the irony of fate I was holiday-making in the district, and naturally I have taken charge. I could not fail to hear some of your remarks about a dead body. Perhaps shock, concussion, or—"

"Nothing," Harwood interrupted with a quick sweep of his hand. "I had that same sort of gag tried on me at Nice and I nearly swallowed it. M'sieu Turbe, I am certain the express was wrecked to hide a murder."

With a slightly mocking smile the Assistant Prefect listened to Harwood's tale, and it was obvious to the detective that the great man thought him demented or suffering from the accident.

"You think I'm crackers," shouted the exasperated Harwood. "Well, I'm so crazy I'm willing to wager a grand—that's a thousand dollars—that the man was murdered and that I'll find the murderer. Will you take the bet? But first let me tell you who I am. I'm Harwood of Pinkerton's."



The detective went down on his knees and he knew in a flash that the man was dead—strangled!

"Why look a gift horse in the mouth?" laughed Turbe, with a smile of sympathy for the girl. "Certainly I take your bet."

"Okay!" snapped Harwood. "Now I believe in a straight fight and no trickery. Always start square with your opponent. I'm going to show you clue number one." He fished out the blood-stained cuff. "That I tore from the sleeve of the body before the flames got busy."

The Limping Man

CARYL FENTON began to believe there was something in Harwood's story, and she consented to go with him to Paris to the address that had been on the cuff, but she made the detective promise that if they found nothing there they were to continue their journey at once.

"We'll both get fired if we don't get to Scotland and settle this necklace case of Lady Morland," the girl complained. "Send her a wire," suggested Harwood. "Delayed by train smash—fog in Channel—trouble with passports—anything. I reckon I'm on to something. I've found out the dead man's name was Karl Wagner—his badly burnt body was found and identified. Also, I'm all out to show Mister Paul Turbe that we're not the fools he appears to think. When we get to Paris we go straight to that address on the cuff. I imagine Wagner wrote the address, because he has a bad memory. Axel Hoyt may be the next stepping-stone."

They found that the address in Paris was in a fashionable quarter though quiet. A sleek manservant admitted them, and stated with a bow that Axel Hoyt resided there and asked the nature of their business. Harwood answered vaguely that it concerned a personal friend of his master. They were admitted to a large room. At a piano sat a rather curious little man. He was playing and sweeping back his hair in the manner of a genius. He did not cease playing, but with a nod indicated chairs.

The opera selection finished, Axel Hoyt rose to his feet. He was garbed in a black frock coat and his face seemed unnaturally white—keen, dark eyes stared at the visitors. When he walked towards them he limped.

"I have just arrived in Paris," stated Harwood. "And I thought it best to come and see you as I have some bad news about a friend of yours." Hoyt raised his eyebrows. "We were train acquaintances, but there was an unfortunate railway accident and your friend was killed. His name was Karl Wagner."

Harwood thought Hoyt gave a slight start.

"So Karl is dead." Hoyt spoke softly. "I am very sorry to hear that. How did you get my address, m'sieu?"

"It was written on a piece of paper," lied Harwood. "It was found when they searched the body. I happened to be coming to Paris with my wife." He dare not look at Caryl. "And I thought the only thing I could do was to let you know."

"I thank you." Hoyt gave a little bow. "Very kind. I did know Wagner, but it was only a business acquaintanceship. I am sorry to hear about this train smash. Thank you for coming to see me. I knew Wagner not very well, so I feel you have come on rather a fruitless errand, but, all the same, I appreciate the kindness."

Harwood had been glancing round the room. He saw a number of photo-

graphs of a racecourse, and as they rose to leave Harwood managed to get a closer view.

"I see you know Buenos Aires racecourse," he remarked. "Nice place."

"I have never been there," Hoyt spoke shortly. "I rent these apartments, and I have not moved the pictures. Good-day, m'sieu! Good-day, madame!"

"I'll wager those pictures of Buenos Aires were his own," whispered Harwood, as they went down the stairs. "He did not want to admit he had been there. Moreover, he was unmoved by the death of Wagner, and said he was sorry to hear about the train smash. I spotted several newspapers that had been flung into a waste-paper basket, and as their front pages talk of nothing else but the disaster, he was bound to have seen about it. Why did he act as if it were news to him?"

"Will you explain why it was necessary to refer to me as your wife?" Caryl demanded.

"I thought you wouldn't mind," Harwood grinned. "I didn't want Hoyt to get suspicious. Caryl, I'm going to break into this place to-night and have a look round."

"You can leave me out," firmly stated the girl. "I've no desire to spend the rest of my life behind bars."

Yet so persuasive was Harwood's tongue that Caryl accompanied him that night when they entered the house by picking the lock of the front door. Harwood explained that he had taken lessons from a crook, whose life he had saved. The house was composed of several flats and Hoyt was on the top floor. They went up the stairs, and with a finger against his lips, the detective signalled for extreme caution. After experimenting with a number of keys and some wire instrument, Harwood managed to open the front door of the flat and they tiptoed inside.

By means of a torch they found their way to the big lounge. The flat seemed extremely quiet and seemed to possess a musty smell. Harwood listened against several doors and could hear no sound. It was two in the morning—awkward if Hoyt were out and returned to find someone busy ransacking the flat. But the beam of light from the torch showed them that Hoyt was not likely to return—the lounge was bare. Harwood flashed the light round—not a stick of furniture.

"They've gone!" came Caryl's hoarse whisper.

"I must have scared the rats," Harwood muttered. "I'll switch on the lights."

The man and girl stared round at the bare, untidy room; dust, bits of shavings, some sacking and a broken plate were all they saw. But a few hours before this room had been crammed with furniture and a grand piano. They had certainly got busy after receiving that visit from Harwood. "Hallo, there's something they couldn't take." Harwood pointed to a clock let into the wall. "I might as well take a look at it."

They were standing there admiring the clock when Harwood decided to open the glass door that encased it—something floated to the floor. The door latch was broken and this piece of paper had been used as a wedge.

"Hallo, look at this." The detective unfolded it and held it out so the girl could see. "An invitation to a Guildhall banquet. Our friend Hoyt must have been a big noise to have been invited."

"Look at the date." Caryl pointed. "It's seven years ago."

Harwood put the invitation into a waistcoat pocket. "Hoyt has been here a good many years, the condition of this piece of paper proves that, and yet he runs because I talk about his friend Wagner—that's how the story reads to me."

Harwood walked to the window and flung up the bottom half. Caryl came to his side to lean on the ledge and stare over Paris.

"Somewhere in this city Hoyt is hiding and—"

The detective ducked because something whined past his ear to smash into the wall behind with a dull thud. Before Caryl could ask what was happening, she was seized by strong fingers and flung to the floor.

"Someone shooting at us," hissed Harwood. "Thank heaven whoever it was scored a miss."

Crack! Crack! The hidden gunner got busy when Harwood tried to peep over the window ledge.

"Don't be a fool," screamed Caryl. "Let's get out of here!"

"Humiliating as it may seem, but I see no other way but to crawl." The detective laughed. "That window-sill is pretty low, so keep as flat as you can. Let's crawl!"

They reached the door, and then came the task of reaching up a hand to the door-handle. Caryl was nearest the door, and she managed to reach up to the handle. Scarce had she opened the door than two bullets splintered the woodwork. She did not cry out, and Harwood gave the girl an approving glance. Very slowly they opened the door and wriggled through. With a sigh of relief they got to their feet.

"I think we will leave here before our friends decide to pay us a personal visit." Harwood took her arm. "We will depart at dawn from this unfriendly city and be on our way to England."

"And from there on to Scotland?" asked Caryl.

"No, my dear, not yet. We are going to see the Guildhall," chuckled Harwood. "The fog in the Channel is going to prevent us from having the pleasure of dear Lady Morland's company for another day or two."

The Trail Broadens

THEY crossed the Channel in brilliant sunshine, and Harwood hoped fervently that Lady Morland did not read the weather reports. They had slept on the train and on the boat, so that they did not feel too exhausted when they reached London. Besides, Harwood on a trail was a mass of energy, and it had an inspiring effect on Caryl Fenton. Not till the afternoon did they manage to get into the Guildhall.

A guide showed them round, and in a droning voice rattled off a long monologue upon the history of the Guildhall and of the many events that had happened beneath its marvellous roof. There were forty or fifty people, mostly Americans, being shown round, and Caryl marvelled at the absurd questions asked by some people. A nudge in the ribs made her glance at the detective.

"According to this guide book we shall shortly be shown into the banquet hall, and round the walls are huge photographs of the dinners that have taken place here. I want a good look at those pictures." Harwood indicated the crowd. "Just memorise some of those daft questions that are being asked, because I may want you to delay the guide as long as possible by those pictures. How many people sat down to dine? Did they have roast turkey on the menu—what did the Lord

Mayor wear? Who sat on his right, and why? You should do this fine."

"Thanks for the compliment," Caryl said a trifle crisply.

"And don't shoot your questions till I tip you off," he added. "It's that 1929 picture I want to see most."

Harwood succeeded, through the clever work of Caryl, in getting a good look at the picture of the 1929 Lord Mayor's banquet through a magnifying glass, and his eyes opened wide when he located Hoyt almost at once. Unfortunately the light near the picture was not very good. When the party were shown into a library, Caryl went all hot and cold because Harwood was not with them. What was that crazy idiot up to now?

The guide was now getting to the end of his tale, and come to the part that made him speak with fervour. He might not get a pension, and would be very grateful for any trifling reward the visitors might care to make him—a doctor had warned him that so much talking was straining his vocal cords.

A hoarse cough caused many to fumble in their pockets. And the callous Caryl would ask questions at a moment like this. She smiled contentedly when Harwood appeared from nowhere, but she did not fail to observe the bulge in his coat. They had booked rooms in a large hotel, and in the privacy of his room they had leisure to study the picture of the 1929 banquet which Harwood had stolen from the Guildhall by cutting it out of its frame.

"See, there is Hoyt!" Harwood was peering through the glass. "No mistaking him. See that bearded man quite close to him—that, my sweet, is Wagner. Now it seems to me that there are three others in whom we must take an interest. One is the woman between Hoyt and Wagner, and the other two are the men opposite."

"Why?"

"They look like a group," was his explanation. "I get the impression they were not aware the picture was going to be taken and were discussing some matter. The five seem to be interested in the one of their party doing the talking—that being the guy of whom we can only see the back of his head. The only outstanding feature there is the hand with the cigar."

"The hand is by the ear, and I should say he appreciates a cigar. It is a sort of attitude adopted by a man who wishes to swank about being able to afford expensive cigars. A characteristic gesture, but not very helpful to us. On his left is a woman, who has edged her chair away and is turning to people farther up the table, and so I rule her out of the party. On his right is a man, and as he has turned his head we get a part of the face. I'm going to have special enlargements made."

"What do you propose to do after that?" asked Caryl. "We've got to go to Scotland some time."

Harwood scratched his head with a pencil.

"I have an idea." Caryl pointed to the woman between Hoyt and Wagner. "I know a woman who dresses Society for Court functions, and she is quite discreet. The gown worn by the woman is very distinctive and cost a lot of money. My friend might be able to tell me who designed it, and that might lead us to the establishment which sold the dress."

Caryl's idea proved fruitful. Her friend had a marvellous memory for fashionable designs. She had herself brought out a model like this, and had been incensed because another firm had dared to copy the design.

The firm was still in existence. Off went the sleuths and interviewed a madame, who surrendered to that

"Clue number one," snapped Harwood. "That cuff I tore from the body before the flames got busy."



charming Harwood smile and informed them that the lady was still a client of hers, and that her name was Miss Elizabeth Wentworth and the address: Wentworth Hall, Buckley, Hampshire.

Harwood and Caryl caught the six o'clock train from Waterloo, and their destination was Buckley. They went to the local inn, as Harwood said that innkeepers always knew everything about the locals. They ordered a drink, and Caryl was about to ask Harwood when he proposed to start asking questions, when he took her by the arm and led her to a dart board.

The first two darts stuck in the board, but the third he cast in another direction. It pierced a poster, and Caryl gave a little gasp. The poster proclaimed that that evening, at the mission hall, a whist drive was being held to raise funds for the "Pilgrims of Peace." The vicar would preside. Miss Elizabeth Wentworth, the secretary of the organisation, had her name at the bottom of the poster, and it was through her name that Harwood had flung the dart.

The Whist Drive

HARWOOD drained his glass of beer and announced that he proposed to compete in the whist drive.

Caryl drained her half-pint and spluttered that she was the worst card-player in the world.

"Impossible!" cried Harwood. "At any rate, we'll go to the slaughter together."

"But you'll find the losing lady goes down and the losing man moves up," laughed Caryl. "And what do you propose to do at the whist drive?"

"Take a look at Lizzy and see what I think of her," chuckled the detective. "I shall connive some way to get to the same table, whereupon I intend to whisper something about Hoyt and see what effect it has on her."

They arrived at the mission hall, and the whist drive was preceded by a short service. Harwood nudged Caryl. "See the platform," he said in a

stage whisper. "See the woman with the smart clothes and the fox fur—that's Miss Lizzy Wentworth. Also take a good look at the man on the right of the vicar." He glanced across at a poster on the wall. "That, I imagine, is Sir Charles Webber, the President of the 'Pilgrims of Peace'; and when he turns his head you will notice the likeness to the man opposite Hoyt at the banquet."

"You're right," came her excited whisper.

"Of course we may be on a blind trail, and they may be quite innocent; but I have a hunch they're all mixed up in this game. At any rate, I may be able to tell you more after I have played whist with Miss Wentworth." He gave a quiet chuckle. "I bet old Turbe gets a surprise this evening. He should have got by air mail my clue number two, which is the picture of the Guildhall banquet, and, just to help the poor fellow, I put a tick against Hoyt, Wagner, and Miss Wentworth. I could make good use of that thousand dollars."

"In what way?"

"I might get married," blandly answered Harwood.

"You'd want more than a thousand bucks to persuade any girl to marry you!" scoffed Caryl. "Hallo, what's that bell for?"

"A few words from the dear vicar," whispered Harwood. "And a nod or so from the patrons on the platform."

As far as the two sleuths could gather, the purpose of the "Pilgrims of Peace" was to prevent war at all cost, and funds were required to send a missionary ship that would go round the world trying to persuade belligerent nations to vote at the next League of Nations' conference for world peace. The cause seemed good but quite hopeless to Harwood's idea, but everyone present seemed most enthusiastic. Sir Charles Webber strutted to the front of the platform and said, with chest well stuck out, that he was delighted to see these good people here. Miss Elizabeth Wentworth, in a tired, drawl—
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ing voice, spoke of the cause, and mentioned a number of distinguished names—people interested in the cause. She smiled and added that any contribution would be welcome. The vicar announced that his curate would be pleased to receive any cheques or contributions at the platform. From the background a thin-faced man with a very pious expression shuffled forward and said a few words in a rather high-pitched voice.

Harwood looked at Caryl.

"Ever seen him before?"

"He does seem familiar somehow," Caryl wrinkled her delightful nose. "He looks very religious."

"Crooks often do," muttered the detective. "You try and think of someone who walks with a limp. Hallo, there goes the bell. Seconds out of the ring. Here's to the first round."

Caryl found the whist drive a most trying affair. She was soon separated from Harwood, who seemed to lose every hand. Actually, the vicar was an expert card manipulator, and twice in his eagerness to get moved in the direction of Miss Wentworth, he dealt one of his opponents a hand that contained thirteen hearts—they were trumps. Of course, it was his luck that Miss Wentworth should start at Table 18 and Harwood at 6. It was not till almost the end of the evening that he saw his prey move to Table 15—they were opponents at the same table.

There was still a lot of skirmishing going on at other tables, so the four at No. 15 waited till the clamour died down. Harwood was busy with the cards. He smiled at Miss Wentworth.

"You don't remember me, Miss Wentworth?"

She gave him a puzzled glance.

"I'm sorry, but—"

"It was at the Guildhall banquet seven years ago." His eyes watched her closely. "I was at the next table."

The beautiful Miss Wentworth gave him a very close scrutiny.

"I feel sure you've made a mistake." She spoke in slightly bored tones. "I did attend a banquet, but I don't remember when it was."

"One nine two nine," promptly replied Harwood. "I remember it so well because you were sitting next to a man I knew quite well. Nice man, Axel Hoyt." Now the woman could not check her unmistakable start, but Harwood went on as if he had seen nothing. "I've been abroad for years, but the other day I happened to be in Paris. What a surprise I got to see Hoyt again. I didn't speak to him, but—"

"You are quite mistaken," Miss Wentworth spoke coldly. "Axel Hoyt died three years ago. Would you stop shuffling the cards—you're holding up the game."

Harwood dealt and talked. "I would have sworn it was Hoyt."

"Hoyt is buried in Buckley," the woman said in a cold, rebuking tone of voice. "You can see his grave there if you don't believe me."

Harwood apologised humbly for his mistake and gave so little attention to the game that he trumped his partner's act. What the elderly spinster called the detective is nobody's business—even the vicar was shocked.

When the whist drive was over Miss Wentworth went over to speak with Sir Charles Webber, and they had not been chatting many moments when the curate limped over to them. Harwood, who was sampling a most appalling cup of cocoa, happened to glance across, and it did not surprise him to find three pairs of eyes studying him closely.

"Sweetheart, the plot thickens." He

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spoke out of the corner of his mouth. "I'm not your sweetheart," snapped Caryl. "What's the next move, Bonehead?"

"We stay the night at the village inn, before breakfast we visit the churchyard to see if a certain lady is telling the truth, and after that a visit to the registry of births and deaths, where I expect to do a lot of expert lying to obtain the information I require."

"And I suppose I have to assist, big boy?" She laughed mockingly. "One more day's delay. If we don't both get sacked it will be a miracle."

Harwood's parcel had reached Paul Turbe in Paris. The Assistant Prefect studied the photograph and smiled at the detective's note that this was Clue No. 2, and that as the mystery was almost solved, it would be a good idea if he saw that there were sufficient funds to pay out a cheque for a thousand dollars. Turbe looked at the cardboard cylinder in which the picture had been sent, and it was plain to see that it had been posted at Buckley.

A Second Death

SURE enough they found Hoyt's grave, and Harwood told Caryl that the Buckley Registry office might supply the next link. The girl gazed at the American with incredulous eyes as he talked to the kindly little registrar. They had been married a year and they wanted to call their first child after his wife's uncle, Axel Hoyt. They were faced with a difficulty, as they wanted to use Hoyt's middle name, which was Aloysius, and they were not sure of the spelling. There was much argument in his wife's family over the matter, and as far as Harwood could see, the death certificate was the only means of deciding the matter. How he got the tale over Caryl can never understand, but he succeeded and discovered that Dr. Evans, who lived locally, had attended the supposed death.

It was a bad blow on arrival at Evans' house to learn from his housekeeper that the doctor had received an urgent summons by telegram to a patient in a neighbouring town. The good woman mentioned that he had caught the 9.45, and politely closed the door.

"The train has just left," remarked Harwood, looking at his wrist watch. "But if we hop across the road to that garage we may succeed in hiring a car that will get us there almost as soon. If we can make the station before Evans we'll be in luck."

"Why?"

"My dear Caryl, you ask too many awkward questions," Harwood grinned. "What I shall say to Evans when I locate him I shall try to figure out during the car trip. First let us obtain a car. Come on!"

They succeeded in hiring a powerful open two-seater of a somewhat ancient type. It rattled and shook, and when doing sixty threatened to break up. They had secured a map from the garage, which Caryl spread out on her knees.

"According to this map," the girl said, after they had gone a considerable distance. "We are now within four miles of Ramley, and very shortly we cross the railway line. Then there seems to be a mile beside the railway, and then, for some comic reason, the road again crosses the track."

They reached a level-crossing as the man in charge was about to shut the gates, but their violent honking kept them open. As they flashed past the man shouted something about deserv-

ing to get killed. A minute or so later, hearing a train, they glanced back.

"That's the 9.45," cried Harwood.

"Our man's on that train."

"It's a straight stretch and the train's catching up," shouted Caryl. "We can't beat it to the next crossing."

"We can try!" Grimly Harwood bent over the wheel.

It was a hard race, in which Harwood had to admit himself beaten. The train had gained the lead.

"Look!" shouted Caryl, as they came into a straight stretch. "Look at that lorry!"

Even as they watched, a lorry crashed through the gates and stopped right across the line. They saw a man get out and run for dear life. Appalled, they glanced back. A screeching of brakes denoted that the engine driver was applying his brakes, but the speed was too great.

The engine hit the lorry with a crash. The level-crossing was at an embankment and the engine left the line, swiped off part of a signal-box and crashed down an embankment, carrying the three coaches and guard's van with it. There came the sounds of terrific smashings as the coaches were telescoped.

An hour later, Caryl and Harwood were at the Three Feathers Inn, which was situated a quarter of a mile from the scene of the disaster and about a mile from Ramley. The local train had not been carrying many passengers, but the engine-driver and four passengers were dead, with five passengers gravely injured. Harwood was sunk in gloom because Dr. Evans had been in the first coach and was one of the dead.

The Squire of Ramley, who was the Chief Constable of the district, a sergeant, and two policemen had arrived at the inn, and Harwood had made a frank statement of what he had seen.

"It was a deliberate train wreck!" he cried. "That lorry was timed to crash through those gates in order to derail the train. I am a detective, and there was a Dr. Evans on that train with whom I wanted to talk; someone wrecked the train to prevent me speaking to him."

"Rather a sweeping statement!" cried the Chief Constable. "These sort of things don't happen in England."

"Well, it happened to-day!" rasped Harwood. "Do you remember the Continental Express from Nice to Paris that was derailed a few days ago? I see you read about it. As part of the rail had been removed, it is known the train was wrecked for some sinister purpose. Well, I think the same man or gang engineered this disaster."

"I think you're quite right," said a voice that made Harwood and the girl turn round eagerly.

It was Paul Turbe, the Assistant Prefect of Paris.

"What are you doing here?"

"So far, I have been one move behind you, Harwood." Turbe gave a grim smile. "And, frankly, I think that now I have drawn level. I confess I thought your tale about the Continental being deliberately wrecked a lot of nonsense, but I soon found out you were right. I started investigations on my own account, and I must say your picture of the Guildhall banquet was of great value. I was at Burley late last night, but I went to Ramley Station to meet Evans—the wrecker was one move ahead of me."

Harwood introduced the Chief Constable to the Assistant Prefect and the sergeant. The Chief Constable was astounded to hear that it was a case of train wrecking.

"A fiendish murder!" the Constable cried. "Scotland Yard must know of this!"

Paul Turbe beckoned to Harwood to come to one side.

"I have gone over the ground with a fine toothcomb, and frankly I think it is only a matter of hours before I get my man," Turbe smiled. "And your thousand dollars. Now you have played fair by me in giving me two very valuable clues, so I think it right that I should give you a helping hand. On that cuff that you took from the body of Wagner there was not only that address in Paris, but part of a cuff-link." From his pocket he produced the link. "You will observe the rather peculiar palm-leaf design." He fumbled again. "There was nothing on the body of Dr. Evans that was of any assistance, but his cuff-link might interest you. Please note that it is identically the same as that found on Wagner. I made a lot out of these cuff-links—they should help you."

When Turbe had gone Harwood thought for a few minutes, then he hastened to have a few words with the landlord. He returned to Caryl.

"I've just asked the landlord to get through to Buenos Aires Police Department for me. I'm going to have a talk to my friend Mulligan." He laughed. "The whole village is agog because I happen to be 'phoning someone thousands of miles from here."

"Have you solved the cuff-link clue?" asked Caryl.

"No," he admitted, and frowned. "But these palm-leaves are strangely familiar. I know I've seen them recently, and—" Suddenly he dived his hand into his pocket and pulled out a crumpled handbill. "By gosh, I've got it! Look, Caryl!"

It was the handbill of the whist drive promoted by the Pilgrims of Peace. Their emblem was identically the same—a crossed palm-branch.

By some miracle the landlord got the telephone call to Buenos Aires through

under an hour, and from Mulligan the detective got information that seemed to explain almost everything.

"Mulligan knew all about Hoyt, whom he is sure is not dead," Harwood told Caryl. "Hoyt made South America pretty warm for him by his gun-running and smuggling. There is a small war going on there at the moment, and they have been tipped off that a bunch of international crooks—of whom Hoyt is one—are thought to be scheming to get arms into the country. This missionary campaign is just a fake to cover their latest gun-running activity. One old dame, with whom I played cards with at the drive, told me of the wonderful work done by the mission, and she told me that they had headquarters in London, where they exhibited in a museum all the terrible weapons of war that the Pilgrims were fighting against. Sweetheart, the old car is taking us to London."

"And what shall I tell Lady Morland?" she inquired sweetly.

"I think you'd better have suspected appendicitis," decided Harwood. "That should stall her."

The Pilgrims of Peace

THEY journeyed to London without incident, and soon discovered the headquarters and museum of the Pilgrims of Peace. Harwood gave Caryl a significant glance when they observed the awning outside the building and the plush carpet. From posters outside the detective learnt that the mission ship, John Murdoch, was at Bordeaux, and would be sailing on the Crusade within the next few days.

"I suppose all this business here is to pull wool over the eyes of the police and to fleece the public for more funds," Harwood said with a sneer. "Let's take a look at their museum."

The place was crowded with people, and everywhere the two went they heard people talking in praise of the noble work that was being done by the Pilgrims. There were a great number

of exhibits in glass cases: Bombs, rifle-grenades, aerial torpedoes, trench-mortar shells, smoke shells, gas shells, a howitzer, a field-gun, many types of machine-guns, rifles from all over the world, revolvers, swords and daggers. There were pictures of mine-craters in the No Man's Land of the Great War, and a great number of gruesome war scenes. Besides the war, they showed scenes of the carnage in Abyssinia and Spain.

"Sort of Chamber of Horrors," hissed Harwood. "And don't some of these goody-goody folk wallow in it. Ah, refreshment!" A big man with a scarred face and tray of glasses approached and tendered them a cocktail. "I bet this is pretty poisonous." He glanced after the man. "That fellow seemed to be very interested in us."

"Well, you would walk into this hornet's nest. How peaceful Scotland must be."

"Nonsense!" scoffed the detective. "You're revelling in the excitement. There's a platform over there—let's go and hear what rubbish they're talking."

They mingled with the crowd, and Harwood grinned when he observed on the platform Miss Elizabeth Wentworth, Sir Charles Webber, and Hoyt. The last-named was wearing the garb of a priest. Sir Charles announced that it was wonderful to have this send-off from so many well-wishers.

It would be the work of the mission to bear the palm branch of peace to every country. Loud cheering. With a wave of his hand he indicated the people on the platform. Within a very few minutes they would be leaving here to catch a boat train at Victoria, and it might be many months before they would be fortunate enough to see England again.

Their mission would not be an easy one, and he trusted that the adherents at home would work to keep the cause going and to help with funds. If an appeal for money should be necessary. More cheering. This was followed by



Harwood swung up a big chair and the toughs covered down, not desiring to get hit.

a prayer and a psalm; whereupon Sir Charles indicated that it was time for all good people to go home, as they had their train to catch.

People began to leave, but Harwood hung around because he did not want to miss anything. A queer kind of fellow came up to the detective and began to recite some poem about the John Murdoch, and, when he tried to push the fellow to one side, another apparently half-witted youth appeared and began to talk a lot of nonsense.

"Will you kindly stand to one side?" growled Harwood, and blinked to find three large men that were between him and the exit. Moreover, Caryl had been separated from him, and he could not see her anywhere. The waiter who had served the cocktails appeared with two more men dressed as servants. They crowded round Harwood, and all talked loudly. The detective knew that they were trying to keep him a prisoner; he was in a nasty jam.

Behind him was a table, and on it a few cocktails that had not been finished.

"I'll take a drink before I go!" Harwood cried, and made for the table. Still jabbering, the men surged after him.

The reciter was in the lead, and Harwood stared at the fellow's pointed chin speculatively. Pongk! His left lifted the surprised fellow clean off his feet. That stopped the jabbering. With angry shouts the men rushed at Harwood, who, floored a couple before leaping over the table.

From behind a case appeared Caryl Fenton. She had realised that an attempt was being made to separate them. She had gone with the crowd, and then doubled back when no one was watching. How could she help John to fight all those horrible men?

Harwood was strong, and he swung up a big chair as if it were a stick. The toughs covered down, not desiring to get hit. Crouching, they began to edge nearer their victim. It was then that the wildly despairing gaze of the girl saw the glass case containing a number of Mills' bombs and the notice that these bombs were alive. Crash! With her handbag she had smashed the glass.

"I'll blow you all to bits if you move an inch!" she screamed.

Harwood hurled the chair at the men and bounded to her side to take the bomb from her hand.

"Folk, I have now removed the pin!" he shouted. "I believe three seconds is the time that this pretty toy takes before it explodes." All the while his fingers were pushing the pin back. Now he swung back his arm. "One—two—catch!" He flung it.

Those toughs had not waited. In a mob they scuttled like scared rabbits towards the back of the hall.

"Come on, sweetheart!" Harwood caught the girl's hand. "We've got a train to catch."

They arrived at Victoria with three minutes to spare. Harwood pushed everyone away from the booking-office and secured his tickets. A wild rush towards the train, for the guard had blown his whistle. A first-class carriage door swung open, and as the train began to move Harwood bundled the girl inside. They sank panting into seats.

There was one other passenger, who October 3rd, 1936.

seemed engrossed in his paper. A rustle and the paper was lowered.

"I thought you were going to miss the train!" laughed Paul Turbe.

The Tunnel

PAUL TURBE laughed at their surprise.

"I told you, Harwood, I was gaining on you." He laughed heartily. "I might almost say I was a move ahead. Smart work to solve that link clue. I presume you've found out the real work of the Pilgrims of Peace?"

"I have." Harwood mopped his brow. "They did their best to detain us at their museum, but we managed to escape."

"I thought you might have trouble, but I felt certain you would make this train." The Assistant Prefect pulled back the sliding door. "If you put your head outside, you will observe two men at either end of the corridor." Harwood followed the suggestion and saw the men. "Those are detectives from Scotland Yard."

"What are you planning?" Harwood asked as he sank back into his seat.

"To rope in the whole gang," Turbe puffed at his cigar. "This train is a special for the Pilgrims of Peace, so that the whole of the gun-runners are

with us. Only this coach is empty—I had it put on for the benefit of Scotland Yard, Mr. Harwood of Pinkertons, and for myself. Mr. Harwood, I am willing to wave aside the bet that we made, because I think we should work together. There is a big reward for the arrest of these people, and we can share that reward."

"As we seem about all square, at the moment, I'm game," answered Harwood. "Though I think I have a lot of information about which you know very little, but as you no doubt have warrants for the arrest of these Pilgrims, I think it would be best for me to accept your offer."

Paul Turbe listened with a thoughtful air to Harwood's story, and added bits of information that he himself thought helped to link up the whole mystery. He commended Caryl on her bravery.

"Sir Charles, Miss Wentworth, and Hoyt are now in the dining-car." Turbe looked thoughtfully at his cigar. "Why not arrest them on the train? Supposing I go to my table that is near them, and you go and confront them. I can hear everything, and the Scotland Yard men will be handy should trouble arise. When you think the moment has come for the arrest, light a cigarette and I'll leave the car to give the detectives their orders."

The scheme was discussed and approved. Paul Turbe lit a fresh cigar and went along to the dining-car. A few minutes later Caryl and Harwood followed. At a table sat the three conspirators and what a shock they had when Harwood smiled at them. Calmly he pulled up a chair for Caryl and then took the vacant chair next to Miss Wentworth.

"A very pleasant evening," Harwood beamed at them. "I trust you Pilgrims are all in the best of health?"

"What the dickens do you mean by this intrusion?" rasped Sir Charles Webber. The woman and the priest eyed the detective covertly.

"The game is up," answered Harwood. "The Pilgrims of Peace are finished. You're gun-runners." He saw their startled glances. "Now, don't get nasty and try any of that rough stuff you tried to hand out at your headquarters, because this time I have protection."

"You must be out of your mind!" stuttered Sir Charles.

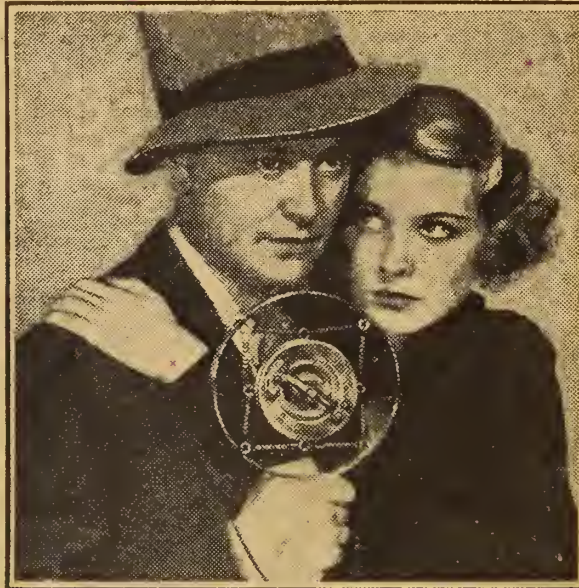
"Wagner was in with you all at one time, but either he knew too much or was diffident, and so you bumped him off," Harwood told them. "Unfortunately you killed him in my room at an hotel in Nice. The body then vanished, and the Nice-Paris express was wrecked—the body appeared in the wreckage."

"In fact, the train had been wrecked to hide the murder. Being a detective I was annoyed, and decided to find out what it was all about, and the trail led me to Paris to the house of M'sieu Axel Hoyt. There I heard a lot of lies, and when I made my next call I found Hoyt had flown."

"Someone then tried to shoot this lady here and myself, but we disappointed this somewhat poor gunman. To cut the story short, my trail led me to Miss Wentworth and you, Sir Charles. Miss Wentworth informed me Hoyt was dead, and there he was standing on the platform."

(Continued on page 26)

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM STORIES



LEW AYRES and FLORENCE RICE

—IN—

"TRAPPED BY WIRELESS"

Mysterious figures pencilled on a five-dollar note puzzle Jerry Tracy, a young radio reporter, and in trying to find out their significance he stumbles upon a murdered woman, hides a girl wanted by the police, and is captured by a gang of crooks. A sensational story in which wireless plays a vital part.

"THE LAWLESS NINETIES"

A smashing drama of the world's first G-Men. How one man fought to rid Wyoming of its desperadoes, outlaws and bandits. John Wayne, the King of the Cowboys, in his greatest pictures.

Also

Another grand episode of the smashing serial:

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

Starring Buck Jones.

A wealthy man makes his indolent son an Assistant District Attorney on the chance that it will make a man of him. The boy awakes to realities when involved in a murder case. A pulsating drama, starring Rod la Rocque and Marion Nixon



Playtime Over

IN the offices of Thomas & Thomas, solicitors, on the thirty-sixth floor of the Empire Building in New York City, Lawrence Thomas, senior, was awaiting the arrival of Lawrence Thomas, junior. It was already ten o'clock, and a fine summer's morning—but Thomas senior was in a fine winter's temper. He rang his desk bell impatiently for the third time since his arrival.

"My son here yet?" he demanded of the tall lady who answered the summons.

"Just coming in, sir," she told him. "He won't be a minute."

"What's he doing?"
"Washing his hands, sir. He drove here, and, while putting away his car in the garage—"

"All right, all right! No more excuses! Send him to me at once, washed or unwashed!"

Three minutes later "Larry" Thomas appeared. He was tall, good-looking, and a trifle pale. He hadn't been to bed all night, and had quickly slipped out of evening dress whilst the lady secretary had been keeping his irate father in conversation. He came along breezily to the old man's desk.

"Morning, dad! Lovely morning, what?"

"Haven't had time to notice," growled Thomas, senior, glancing up from his letters. At once he perceived that Larry, despite the lounge suit, was still wearing a white dress tie and wing collar. "Going to a funeral?"

"No, dad."

Old Thomas thumped his desk. "Yes, you are! You're attending your own! From this moment the firm of Thomas & Thomas comes to an end. It reverts to its original style of Lawrence Thomas—me! You're fired!"

"But, dad, you can't do that—"
"I've done it! I've stood your slack ways quite long enough. You don't realise what work is. But you're going

to. I've fixed you up at Harrison's, as Deputy District Attorney."
"Gee, dad, I'm not suited for sleuthing!"

"You'll have to show your mettle, Larry. No more bottle parties and girl-hunting. Take this letter; put on another tie and collar and your hat, and go straight along to Harrison. He's expecting you."

Larry saw that the old lad meant it. "Okay, dad. And if I make good—"

"Learn discipline, responsibility and punctuality, and—you'll come back here. Good-morning!"

Larry was interviewing Lawyer Thomas Harrison, District Attorney, half an hour later. A fine, upstanding old gentleman with a fierce grey moustache and beetling eyebrows. He stood up when Larry entered, fluttering Thomas senior's letter in his large, capable hand.

"Don't sit, Larry—I'm busy, and you're going to be busy. Assistant District Attorney means you'll do most of the work. Now then, we're in a jam. Can't bring anything off. Every time we make a raid on some suspected place everything's clear."

"Leakage, sir."
"And maybe the leakage is in this office." Harrison's moustache bristled with indignation. "But where? Who? All my staff seem above suspicion." He pressed the bell-button on his desk. "I'm putting you in charge of the investigation department." An office-boy appeared at the door. "Ask Mr. Hill to come here."

A shortish, well-groomed, sleek man entered a few moments later. Full-faced, small moustache, light blue eyes.

"Oh, Arthur, this is Lawrence Thomas, junior! Larry—meet Mr. Arthur Hill." Harrison presented the two young men.

He put down old Thomas' letter. "Arthur, I'm giving you full charge of this office. Larry will relieve you of investigation—"

Hill broke in: "But I've got that all properly wired!"

"You can show Larry the scheme you have in mind. Something has got to be done—we're the laughing stock of all the newspapers."

Hill's face was a study. "I was counting on—" He broke off. "Of course, it's up to you, Mr. Harrison."

"I want you here, Arthur," his chief told him. "You're the experienced man. The Parole Board have had another request for the release of Fred Cole. The application was meant to fail, I think. But it shows activity in the wrong quarters. Take Thomas along to your room and get busy, both of you."

The rest of the day was spent in Hill's sanctum, where Larry was shown the routine work and given lists of places and persons under suspicion of the police. Hill showed him a Press-cutting album of prosecutions.

"We don't seem to have scored many convictions," Larry offered.

"These crime guys have cute lawyers to defend them," Hill answered. "They don't mind what they pay a smart counsel. Arnold Crane's one of their pets—he can talk a jury into believing black's white."

"I'd like to know him," Larry grinned. "Useful sort of fellow."

At the Dover Club

THAT night Larry called in at the news-room of New York's brightest evening paper. A girl with fair, curly hair and demure eyes was tapping a typewriter at the end desk.

"Hallo!" she greeted. "Can't stop to chatter!"

"Hallo yourself." Larry took off his hat, to lounge against a filing-cabinet. "How's Kitten?"

"She's Kit—in office hours."

"Kit, will you go places with me to-night? To the Dover Club?"

"I went places with you last night, Larry. And I don't like the Dover. It's a notorious place."

"I'm going to be notorious," grinned Larry. "Listen. I'm Assistant District Attorney to old Tom Harrison."

"Gosh!" Kit stopped typing. "Did your dad do this to you?"

"He did. But it's not news, as yet." He asked again: "One last fling, Kit? Come to the Dover with me?"

"Call for me at eleven," she agreed. "But we won't stay late."

Eleven-thirty that evening found them in evening dress handing in hats and coats to Annette, the "check" girl at the bureau of the Dover Club.

"It's Mr. Lawrence Thomas, isn't it?" she asked.

Larry laughed.

"Seen my picture in the College Magazine, eh?"

Annette smiled gently.

"Maybe."

Kit didn't like this.

"Let's go, Larry," she whispered.

But a half-tipsy fellow in a light coat and a felt hat had followed them up. He buttonholed Larry as he turned.

"Hallo, hallo! What brings hishter Larry here?"

"Mister Larry's feet," came the quick answer.

"Introduce me, Kit," gurgled the fellow.

"This is Al Wilson, radio announcer." Kit stated, not too cheerfully. "He does the Society gossip column for us."

Wilson ambled off. A pleasant-looking aristocratic man of about fifty came along to the hat-and-coat counter, smiling at Annette. His hand brushed against Larry's shoulder as he took off his hat.

"Sorry!" he cried, at once turning to the young man.

"That's all right," Larry answered.

"It was quite my fault," persisted the pleasant gentleman.

Kit pulled at Larry's arm.

"Come on!"

When they had seated themselves in a darkish corner of the brightly-lit and noisy little club, Kit told Larry:

"That was Arnold Crane, the crook lawyer. I believe he runs this place."

"Crane, eh?" Larry glanced about the dance floor and tables, but the pleasant gentleman had vanished. "I'm told it's Joe Ross who bosses this show."

"Crane puts up the money." Kit shrugged pretty shoulders. "I don't like it here. Let's go somewhere else."

Larry pressed her fingers under cover of the table.

"Don't worry, sister, big brother will take care of you."

He gave orders to the bowing waiter. Arnold Crane had gone to his private room, where he seated himself at his desk. He read some notes left on his pad, nodding to himself. Then he took up the 'phone and dialed to the office, listened awhile, and put the instrument back. Joe Ross was engaged, for the moment.

Joe was trying to calm down a handsome and very angry young woman. She was glaring at Joe.

"You'll get Fred out of gaol, Joe Ross, or I spill the beans! Get that into your thick skull. I'll show up this joint and its faked roulette outfit! Fred's my man and he's not going to

October 3rd, 1930.

serve seven years for something one of you fellows did. Maybe you!"

"See here, Mollie," Ross tried to coax her. "I've been personally to the Parole Board. They won't listen."

"Get Crane to go. He's got to go, see? I'm nigh crazy—I'm desperate!" She suddenly flourished a pistol at him.

As Ross shrank back, she flung the gun noisily on his desk.

"You're not worth powder and shot! I won't waste a minute more with you fellows here. I'll go to the D. A."

She flounced out of the room, slamming the door violently behind her, then hurried across the dance floor, glancing at Larry and Kit, as she passed by their table, with unseeing eyes. She flung herself down on the seat by the telephone call-box.

Ross went round by a back way to Crane's room, to answer Crane's call in person.

Ross told Crane about Mollie, his ugly face full of gloom.

"She swears she'll squeal."

"I'll handle her," Crane answered easily. He lit up a cigar. "I've a spot of news for you, Joe. Arthur has been taken off his job."

"You mean we can't count on Hill any more?"

"I never did count on him," said Crane, puffing rings of blue smoke upwards. "I don't count on anybody, not even you, Joe." He laughed softly and pleasantly. "Playboy Larry Thomas has got Hill's job. We don't need to worry." He held up a warning hand.

"Shut down a moment, someone's at the 'phone." He picked up the instrument on the table, listening-in to the caller in the box outside.

Kit went to the call-box after the dance. She had remembered a mistake in her article for the morning's issue of her paper.

"I'll get the night editor to correct it," she told Larry.

"You only think of your old newspaper, Kit."

He came lazily sauntering after her. He saw her pluck open the door of the box.

Her quick cry brought him at a rush to her side. The huddled body of Mollie Cole had fallen softly outwards at Kit's feet. A crowd gathered round about them. Joe Ross came running out of the private room with Crane at his heels.

"What's the matter?" called Ross, thrusting a way through the horrified crowd. One of the dancers was kneeling by the crumpled-up body. He slowly straightened it, then rose up.

"I'm a doctor—this woman has been shot through the heart." She died on the instant. Does anyone know her?"

"She was in the telephone box," gasped Kit; her face ashy. "She fell out when I opened the door. There was no shooting."

"You heard no report," the young doctor argued, "because of the noise of the band. And there are such things as silencers. Best call the police, Mr. Ross."

Larry asserted himself.

"I'm Deputy D. A. Lawrence Thomas—no one must leave the hall," he ordered. "See that all exits are covered."

Arnold Crane took Ross by the arm. "He's right. Suicide, poor thing. I wonder who she is? Put screens round her, Joe. I'm sure we all deeply sympathise with you in this terribly sad affair."

His quiet, unuffled manner had its effect. The dancers went back to their tables; screens were placed around the body; the police came in and carried it away on a covered stretcher. No one had identified Mollie Cole.

Who is She?

NEXT morning, when Larry went into the D. A.'s office, he found old Harrison in a discontented mood.

"Can't congratulate you on the start you've made, Thomas," came his greeting. "What on earth took you to the Dover last night? It is certainly not the place for anyone working in this office."

"Sorry, sir. I didn't think—"

"You've got to think, if you're going to make a success here," Harrison caught him up. "A night club—a notorious night club, and the new Assistant District Attorney dancing there after midnight. Who was the girl with you?"

He flourished the morning paper at Larry, with its flaring headlines.

"New D. A. involved in the Dover mystery."

"Involved," grumbled Harrison, not waiting for any reply from Larry. "Involved! See what you've done for yourself?"

"I was there with Miss Kit Cathcart. She's on the papers—but I'll swear she didn't put in that stuff."

"How d'you know she didn't? But put all that aside—you've got to clear yourself. Here's a mystery woman shot in a call-box, and nothing to show how, or by whom."

Said Larry:

"It seemed to be just suicide."

"Shot through the heart under the left shoulder-blade. No one could hold a gun that way." Harrison tossed aside the paper. "I'll give you a chance, Thomas, to clear up this case and bring the culprit to justice. If you succeed—well and good. If not, I've no use for you."

Larry went along to Hill's room. There was plenty of sympathy in Hill.

"Rough luck, Thomas!" Hill laid a friendly hand on Larry's arm. "I know what the old man thinks, he's been letting off steam on me. Of course, you oughtn't to be seen at such places as the Dover—but how were you to know?"

A new note of determination showed in Larry's usually careless voice.

"Having got myself in this mess, I'll get myself out."

"What can you do?" Hill asked, shrugging his shoulders.

"Get a search warrant. Comb through that place with a fine comb," Larry answered. "You can give me the necessary order. I'll ring up the police while you get it ready."

"Okay," Hill agreed. "There's a second line in your room."

Larry left Hill busy at his desk writing out an "order for search." He went straight along to his room, but found the 'phone blocked when he tried to ring. Presently he got through.

Half an hour later, Larry and six plain-clothes police were at the Dover. The place looked tawdry enough in the cold daylight. Ross was in his room, studying the morning's paper. He glanced up as Larry entered with the search warrant.

"Wanting me?" he asked.

"I'm from the District Attorney's office," said Larry. "I'm going to look over these premises."

"What for?"

"There was a woman murdered here last night."

Ross took up a cigar, twiddling it between his fat fingers as he studied Larry.

"I remember you now—it's Mr. Thomas." A soapy smile creased the large face as Ross gestured towards the open newspaper. "That kind of thing's most annoying. Look all you

like—it's just too bad that girl should pick on us to kill herself." "She was shot in the back," said Larry.

Ross shook his head. "Suicide." "Did you find a gun?" "Yes." Ross went to the safe behind him, opened it and took out something wrapped about with a not too clean handkerchief. "One of our charwomen found this when brushing out the call-box. It had slipped under a loose board. The poor girl dropped it, of course."

The police sergeant with Larry took the "exhibit," carefully unwrapping the handkerchief. He sprinkled some chemical powder over the butt of the little gun, and finger-prints showed up. "We'll check these down at the mortuary," said Larry. "Coming with us, Ross?"

"I'll wait here for you." When they left the shady little club an hour later, Larry went along to the mortuary, where photographs of the dead woman were being taken. She had not been recognised, nor did her finger-prints help to clear up the mystery of her identity, beyond showing the same as those on the gun.

Caught Out

TWO weeks went by. Larry's every attempt to solve the riddle met with failure. The coroner's verdict was an open one.

"If we could only find out who she was," Larry told Hill gloomily. "That's the puzzle—that's where we've got to begin. It's so queer that no one should know her. That gun was no help—one of a thousand others exactly like it. The number on it shows that it was bought at Chicago. And—that's all."

Hill wasn't very cheerful this morning; nor helpful.

"I've got toothache," he growled. "Caught cold or something. And the news don't make you laugh. There's a tough guy broke prison yesterday. Convict named Cole."

"I saw it," Larry told him. "Know anything of him?"

"He's on the files," Hill answered. "Excuse me, Thomas, I got to have something for my tooth." Larry was poring over the files when Kit came rushing into his room, unannounced.

"Oh, Larry!" she cried. "Just look!"

She dropped a gaily covered cinema magazine on top of his papers. In three-colour process a blonde girl's face smiled at them. Larry stared at the fixed smile; the heavily-shaded eyes; the plucked eyebrows; the marcelled hair; the too marvellous teeth.

"Yes?" he queried, at a loss to understand his little friend's excitement.

"Don't you see? Don't you get it?" Kit grabbed up his pencil and began to shade in the peroxide hair with thick, quick strokes. Deftly she added a line here and there, while Larry watched her with ever-growing interest. Suddenly, the likeness flashed at him.

"Gosh, Kit, it's the girl!"

"Of course it is! I saw this old magazine at a dime store and spotted her at once. It's years and years old, but there's your girl—Mollie Lestrangle. I read up about her in the office 'Who's Who on the Films.' She married a man named Cole. Fred Cole, rather a bad egg—"

"Cole? Why, Kit, that's the convict who got away from Sing-Sing last night!" Larry was as excited now as Kit. "And see here." He lifted the magazine off the office files. "Cole was sent up for seven years for attempted murder. Joe Ross was chief witness against him."

Larry stood up to grab Kit in his arms.

"If you aren't the world's sweetheart, Kit!"

She wriggled free.

"The world's too big for little me!"

"I'm going straight to the Dover. Cole will sure make a bee line for Ross," Larry decided.

"Larry, be careful," Kit warned him.

"That's a bad place."

"I'll be all right," he answered in his light-hearted way.

"I've found out something, Kit—all the honours mustn't go to you. That pistol Ross so conveniently found in the 'phone call-box doesn't fit the bullet the doctor's dug out of poor Mollie."

"I knew it was murder," Kit declared. "But how?"

Larry had got his hat.

"That's the puzzle. But I've an idea—and if I get a chance this morning of a quiet look round at the Dover—"

He checked himself, teasing her. "Well, I'll give you a ring."

Kit told him, cheekily: "I wouldn't say 'No' to a ring from you, big boy!"

Larry went down town to the little club. He found the Dover in the hands of the cleaners.

"No one's here," the chief charlady volunteered. "Will you leave a message?"

"I'll wait."

Larry walked across to the call-box, opened the swing door and went inside. While pretending to put through a call, a nickel piece in his hand, his eyes were taking in every detail of the box. A framed notice on the wall stated:

"Local calls five cents."

It was all quite usual, and there was a loose board in the flooring. He stepped out quietly, someone was moving in the room behind the box. Ross had evidently come back—or had he been there all the time?

Larry thrust open the door marked "Private," and strode into the room.

Hill was pacing the floor, his back turned, his shoulders humped. He called as he turned:

"Gosh, Joe, where have you been?"

He saw Larry, and all speech died on his suddenly dry lips. A sickly grin writhed then.

Larry's face grew hard as flint.

"No wonder I couldn't get anywhere!"

"I don't understand—" Hill began, shrinking back. "I—I only looked in here to ask Ross—"

"To tell Ross, you dirty double-crosser!" Larry jumped at him. "Tell him all that's going on at the office. I'll shake the truth out of you!"

He caught Hill by the collar, but the fellow, cornered, struck out with his left at Larry's chin. The blow sent him staggering backward, but he was at Hill in a flash. A regular dog fight followed; Hill, thick-set and desperate, aimed at laying Larry out by any means, fair or foul. They clinched, upsetting the table with a crash; then, on the floor, they hammered away ruthlessly at each other. A heavy paper-weight, which had fallen from the table, was grabbed up by Hill and raised to give Larry a smashing blow on the temple, but the youngster gripped the murderous wrist with fingers like a vice.

For a tense minute they held each



Larry unthinkingly picked up the revolver as the door was thrust open by Wilson.

other; Hill seeking to batter the life out of Larry—Larry slowly gaining on that upraised arm. With a sudden twist, Larry reversed the position, and, as the paper-weight dropped from nerveless fingers, he had Hill by both wrists.

The struggle continued but a few moments more. Jerked to his feet, Hill was forced backward over the steel arm of the desk chair and held powerless.

"Let—go!" he gasped brokenly.

Sweat was pouring down his face, his breath was coming and going in gusty sighs. His eyes were half-closed, his cheeks were a pasty, yellowish white.

Larry pulled him into the chair and stuck him there like some grotesque doll. Hill looked as if he was going under.

"It's—it's my heart," wheezed Hill.

"Let—me—be—"

Larry crossed to the filter by the window and drew a glass of water, watching Hill warily.

There was no need—the man was done. He couldn't hold the glass to his blue lips when Larry brought it to him.

"Listen, you cur, you'll give me evidence against the crew who run this place—definite, positive evidence, or I'll hand you over to the police," Larry told him fiercely.

"I—understand, Thomas."

Hill slumped forward as he spoke, falling on his knees. Larry jerked him back into the chair.

"I'll give you twenty-four hours to tell all you know."

Hill didn't even hear the threat—his heart was thumping too noisily in his breast.

Silence reigned in the usually noisy little club. The women, white-faced, cleared up their mops and pails and sidled out.

Hill, painfully recovering his wind, managed to get up and pull the chair to the desk. He gazed hopelessly at the disordered room as he sank into the chair.

Crane and Ross let themselves into the Club, and at once scented something to be wrong. They crossed sharply to Ross' room, but all seemed in order there. They came back to the dance floor, then a moan from Hill took them, at a run, to the room behind the telephone call-box.

Hill was laboriously trying to straighten the place. He staggered into Crane's arm with the ink-splashed table which had been overturned. Crane called to Ross to take the table, then half-carried Hill to the desk chair.

"Tell us all about it," Crane ordered.

"Thomas—he's been here. Caught me."

Ross lifted heavy-lidded eyes to Crane's.

"I knew it."

"Caught you—and you squealed?" the lawyer demanded.

Hill shook his tousled head. His hands fingered his torn collar and tie.

"Didn't say a word. He hit me. He knows I'm in it."

Ross muttered:

"Best cut and run."

Crane's generally smiling mouth was set in a snarl.

Both men regarded Hill as though he was some crawling thing to be disposed of quickly. Presently Crane spoke, his smile reappearing.

"Where's Thomas now?"

"Gone back to Harrison. But he'll wait. He said he'd give me a day to come clean and bring him evidence," Hill told them shakily.

Crane's smile deepened.

"And you'll give him evidence, Arthur. You'll meet him to-night at the Wonder Hotel down town. You're October 3rd, 1939.

staying there, see? Hiding from us. You'll book a room and you'll lie low all day. Thomas'll be fool enough to keep things up his sleeve, so's to make a big splash at the end. Phone him now. I'll tell you what to say."

Hill gazed up at the smooth face with half-glazed eyes. He guessed that Ross was fingering a gun in the pocket of his loose lounge suit. Crane took up a sheet of notepaper, writing hastily on it. Ross came close to the wretched go-between, grunting:

"Do as he tells you."

Hill lifted the receiver on the desk off its base, then dialed with a nervous forefinger. He got the D.A.'s office.

"Put me through to Mr. Thomas, please," he staided himself to say.

"It's Arthur Hill this end."

The three waited for Larry's voice to sound crisply in the instrument. Hill took up the notes Crane had scribbled for him.

"That you, Thomas? Hill speaking. I'm all alone here—you know where—and I've got evidence enough to fix the whole bunch. I'll have to hide away till to-night. Meet me at the Wonder Hotel in Forty-Second Street, West, ten o'clock. Ask for Room 214. Two hundred and fourteen, fifth floor."

Larry's voice crackled:

"I'll be there!"

"You might keep quiet, Thomas, till you've seen me." Hill was being prompted now by Crane's faint whisperings. "I got drawn into this—got into debt. Thanks, much—I'll have to ring off. There's someone coming in."

The receiver was clamped down on its stand.

"What's he say?" Crane asked.

"He'll hold up till I meet him," Hill quavered.

"That's fine! And we'll be there, too. And, likely, there will be a little accident." Crane was quite himself again, pleasantly easy. "Things happen so unexpectedly, Arthur. Pull yourself together; Joe will get you a new collar and let you out the back way. Get yourself lunch and a drink, and toddle off to the Wonder. It's a nice little show—they don't ask a lot of tom-fool questions."

A Frame-up

LARRY, after a busy afternoon on the lines of inquiry which had now opened out to him, called at the Wonder Hotel a little before ten o'clock. Just as he was entering the lounge a hand was laid on his arm. He turned sharply—to see Al Wilson grinning in his inane way.

"Just going to have one?" Wilson hiccupped. "Don't mind if I join you?"

"I've an appointment. Sorry."

Larry didn't wait for further argument, but went straight in, letting the swing doors almost nip off Wilson's sharp nose. The Society reporter waited a moment or two.

"Guess I'll see what he's up to."

He thrust open the doors and pushed in. With a nod to the house-porter, he slithered up the stairs in Larry's wake. Larry's long legs took him up the shallow stairs three at a time. He reached the fifth floor and the bedrooms, beginning at two hundred. He strode along to No. 214.

Ho rapped sharply on the panel. There was no reply, so he rapped again, then opened the door.

The room was in darkness, save for the light filtering in, under half-drawn blinds from the street below. Larry felt for and found the switch, and snapped it down. He saw Hill lying out full length in front of the fireplace.

He was facing the gas fire, very still and silent.

"Tooth bad?" Larry called to him, as he closed the door.

No answer. Larry came closer—a sudden doubt assailed him. He knelt by the prostrate man, and, putting a hand on his shoulder, slowly turned him over.

Hill, his eyes half-closed, his face cold and set, was dead.

There was a pistol lying by his side. Larry, unthinkingly, picked it up and had it in his hand as the door was thrust open by Wilson. The two exchanged lengthy stares. Then Wilson, fingers on the door handle, spoke.

"Shot him, hey? I heard you were fighting this morning."

"I didn't shoot him," Larry sharply answered. "I've just found him."

"You didn't give him a chance!" Wilson stuttered. "I'll be going before you have a smack at me!"

He hopped out of the door, and Larry heard him turn the key with a click that brought his danger home to him. He had been framed—the murder of Hill would be fastened on him. And, he had just put his finger-prints on the pistol.

He dropped it as though it were red hot. He had to act quickly. He rose from his knees and went to the window. Not a hope; five floors up and in front of the house. He ran to the door, and was jerking at it when it gave to him, Wilson, with two uniformed police, entered the room, Larry falling back before them.

"I charge this man, Lawrence Thomas, with murder," cried Wilson, pointing a crooked finger. "That's Arthur Hill of the D.A.'s office. They were enemies from the outset—had a fight this morning at the Dover Club."

"Wait a minute, mister," spoke the leader of the two policemen. "Let's get this down." He produced notebook and pencil. "What's your name and address?"

"I'm Al Wilson, radio announcer and journalist. Everybody knows me!" Wilson swelled out his chest, enjoying himself immensely. "You'll hear me to-night telling the world—"

Larry's fist crashed between his eyes, knocking the boaster flat. The police jumped at him, but he had them un-awares. He tripped one with a suddenly thrust out foot and threw the other over Wilson's prostrate body. Then he made a dash for the passage, raced along it and vaulted the stairs in leaps of a flight, one hand on the banisters. He had reached the second floor before the policemen's whistles shrilled out ear-piercing warnings.

Larry ran to a window at the end of the corridor, flung it up, and saw that it gave on the outside emergency stairs. He slithered down these and reached the dark yard at the rear of the hotel. He ran along this and climbed the side gate, then, dropping into the street, walked casually to where he had left his car, got in, slammed the door, and started up. With the whistles dimming his ears, he drove off, making at once for the main thoroughfare.

As he guessed, the police were already calling all cars. He had to work quickly and surely. A hold-up at the Wonder Hotel would have smashed his plans for netting the man who had murdered Mollie Cole and their tool, Arthur Hill.

He threaded his way through the traffic, hoping that the police would not yet know his car or its number. At a public call-box in a side street not far from the newspaper office where Kit was waiting for him, he drew into the kerb and risked a call.

"Meet me outside the Dover—get a taxi. Hurry!"

Her answer came crisply.

(Continued on page 27)

The spectacular story of untamed mountain folk battling the approach of civilisation and fighting their age-old feuds. Starring Sylvia Sidney, Henry Fonda and Fred MacMurray

"THE TRAIL of the LONESOME PINE"



The Deadly Feud

IN a rough old shack in a remote region of the Rocky Mountains Judd Tolliver sat puffing gloomily at his pipe. Melissa, his wife, as she busied herself at the wash-tub, a sad-faced, elderly woman with tragedy lying behind her eyes, was talking—bitterness, infinite hopeless bitterness in her tired voice.

"And so it goes on, Judd—always has gone on, ever since we was married—always will go on, too, because that's all you live for. Killin' them Falins! You've raised Dave to it—you've raised June to it. And you'll raise Buddy to it, and nothin' I can say will ever alter it. Where's the good of it—where's the sense of it? What's June done to inherit this business of killin'? What's Buddy done to be raised for nothin' in life 'cept to kill Falins? Oh, I'm sick and tired of it all."

With a gesture of utter weariness she turned away, and her husband shifted his pipe a little uneasily in his mouth. A frown had come to his rugged face. "Tain't none of my makin', Melissa," he said slowly.

She swung round on him almost fiercely.

"Haven't all the Tollivers said the same for years and more years?" she demanded. "Yet which of you has ever tried to put an end to it all? Never a one of you! Ask Buck Falin, ask any of his boys, and they'll all tell you that it ain't none of *their* makin', either! But it don't stop any of you goin' on with it."

She flung out an arm to a far corner of the room where a young man lay on a bed, his dark eyes fixed steadily

and almost relentlessly on her as she talked.

"Dave this time," she went on with rising bitterness in her voice, "and no fault of anyone's that he ain't lyn' dead before our eyes. And all that's in his mind, and in your mind, too, Judd Tolliver, is for him to get on his feet again so that he can lie up on the hills and kill one of them Falins. And then they'll never rest until they've had both you and Dave, and so it will go on until there ain't none of us left."

"They shot at Dave," answered the old man slowly and stubbornly, "and they'll answer to me for it."

"We shall all answer to you for it," she retorted. "You'll none of you ever be content till they've wiped out the whole lot of us. I'm sick and tired of all this killin', killin', killin'!"

For over a hundred years the deadly feud had raged between the Tollivers and Falins, dying down occasionally for a year or two, blazing up again suddenly like a fire newly roused into life by a stray puff of wind. For a feud once begun and carried on is never likely to end. Those rough, stubborn, prejudiced old mountaineers held it to be unworthy of their heritage to put out the sudden hand of friendship and forgiveness to the enemies of their ancestors. Blind, unreasoning loyalty to their kith and kin demanded blood, and only blood to wipe out the stain of blood; a life called for another life. That new generations arising had no personal grievances of their own against the opposing side mattered not at all. They were taught from their earliest youth the legacy of hate that had come down to them willy-nilly. And it was required of them that they should follow

it blindly and ruthlessly, bequeathing it in turn to their children when they passed on.

At the moment there were five Tollivers. There was old Judd Tolliver and his wife Melissa, Dave, their adopted son, but hating the Falins as fiercely and as ruthlessly as if he had been born a Tolliver; June, a slender, pretty, untamed, wild thing of eighteen, engaged to be married to Dave in accordance with her father's expressed wishes, and perfectly content to be so, since outside the Falins, she had practically never met another young man in her life; and Buddy, her little brother aged four, whom she worshipped with all the love of her simple, wild young nature.

Of the Falins there were only four—but they held it to be a fine advantage over the Tollivers that whereas the latter could only number two grown men among them, they, the Falins, had four.

And Buck Falin and his three stalwart sons were as ruthless as any four men could be.

June came running into the Tolliver shack on the following day wiping the water from her face and hair, and with her wet clothes clinging around her.

"Fallen into the lake," she explained hurriedly in answer to her mother's and father's surprised look. "There's a stranger on his way up here, dad. He's askin' for you—says it's business."

She disappeared into her own little room, eager to change her clothes. For the stranger was young and good-looking, and had laughed at her when he had seen her tumble into the lake. And though the laugh had not been really unkind—he had tried to help her

out, but she had indignantly refused—she was anxious, girl-like, to show to better advantage when he called.

Judd Tolliver looked up, frowning when the stranger came into the shack. He saw a tall, good-looking young man in the late twenties, a man easily dressed and easily mannered, with a quiet voice, steady grey eyes, and the jaw of a fighting man. Though there was nothing aggressive about him when he addressed the old man. He seemed to be anxious to be conciliatory.

Judd Tolliver, however, was suspicious. He was suspicious of everyone strange who came into the shack. They might possibly be on the side of the Falins, and until he had made quite sure that they weren't, he was taking no chances with them.

"My name's Jack Hale," said the stranger briefly.

"Well, what do you want?" demanded the old man.

Hale, ignoring the abrupt rudeness of the question, proceeded to explain. He was an engineer, representing a syndicate who were running a railway through the country for the development of coal mines. They had got the necessary permission from the Government, and all that, he, Hale, wanted was to negotiate with Judd Tolliver for the right to cut through his land with the railway. He added that he was prepared to pay in cash for the right, and the amount would be five thousand dollars and a percentage on the coal that might be extracted from the ground.

But here June, who had come in quietly to overhear the last part, excitedly broke in.

"Five thousand dollars! Why, dad, that's a fortune!" she exclaimed.

But old Judd Tolliver waved her aside impatiently. It was a fortune to him, but in his slow, suspicious way he had no intention of jumping at it. "Well, I reckon I'll consider it," he replied slowly. "But I'll have to talk it over with my boy, and at the moment he ain't in no condition to talk anythin' over with anyone."

Hale followed his eyes to where Dave Tolliver lay on his bed, and a frown came to his face. It struck him very forcibly that from the appearance of the sick man it was going to be a long time before he would be in a condition to talk business of any sort.

"What's the trouble?" he demanded. "Got shot in the arm—and it ain't healin' proper-like."

Hale strode across to the bed. He had originally trained for a medical career and had good knowledge on the subject.

"Let me have a look at it," he said sharply. And then, as he saw resentment smouldering in the other's dark eyes, he added quietly but authoritatively "Do as I tell you, please. You needn't be afraid. I was trained to be a doctor before I took up engineering work."

But he gave a quick exclamation of dismay and anger as he glanced at the young man's arm.

"Have you had a doctor to this?"

"We haven't," replied old Tolliver almost as if he resented the absurdity of the question. "There ain't no doctors in these parts."

"But good heavens, man, this arm is gangrenous! This lad of yours will die unless something's done immediately."

A quick, frightened exclamation from Mrs. Tolliver and a gasp of dismay from June were smothered by Judd's voice as he cut in stolidly:

October 3rd, 1936.

"We're doin' all that can be done and I reckon that's all there is to it," he began when Hale cut him short.

"Then I'll have to operate myself," he exclaimed sharply. "Here"—he swung round on June—"heat me some water, quick, and see that it's boiling. And get me some strips of clean linen, and—"

"You shan't touch him!" old Tolliver broke in fiercely. "We've never had a doctor and we ain't goin' to start it now. The old remedies have cured us up to now and I guess they'll do it again. We didn't ask you to come buttin' in and we don't want you. Now get out!"

Silence, desperate, tense silence for the moment. The old man's eyes were blazing; Mrs. Tolliver's were tragic, pleading. June was gazing, obedient from long years of submission. Dave Tolliver seemed utterly indifferent to the issue.

Hale's jaw, however, had tightened. He was handling a difficult situation and he knew it; knew, too, that a false move on his part at that moment, pregnant with danger, would result in irrevocable failure.

He laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, and when he spoke there was that in his voice which charged the little shack with authority.

"Mr. Tolliver," he said quietly, "I reckon this lad's life is pretty dear to you, and I can save it if you'll let me. You can trust me; I know what I'm doing. He's a young man, same as I am, and he's got to live! Let me carry on and he shall live!"

Silence once more. Old Tolliver's face was working. His wife was crying quietly. Then the old man looked up.

"You mean he'll die if you don't—do things?"

"He will—but I can save him if you'll let me."

"Carry on then," said the old man laconically.

It was a strange scene and for many years it lived with Jack Hale. He had no anaesthetics to deaden the terrible pain that he knew he was going to inflict by the use of the knife; but it heartened him when Dave Tolliver told him laconically that he'd "stick it whatever it was."

With old Tolliver and his wife standing by the head of the bed, with June standing nearby, something like rebellious tumult in her face, and with an old woman in the corner nursing a baby, he began the delicate task of cutting away the poisoned flesh.

He straightened himself up at length. He had cut away all that he had dared to cut, he had bathed and cleaned the terrible wound, dressed it as best he could, and bound it up. That he had hurt his patient terribly in the doing of it he knew only too well; but his patient had borne it bravely, incredibly bravely, and his eyes were showing faint gratitude.

"With any luck he'll do now," said Hale as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

In less than a week Hale's prediction stood fully justified. Dave Tolliver was on the road to recovery, his father, as had the Falins also, had signed the contract giving the railway the necessary permission, and Hale and his men were hard at work.

Drawn Into the Feud

THE railway went ahead fast from that moment; but other things less visible were going ahead also. For June, who had been attracted by Jack Hale from the start, was getting

more and more attracted by him every day. And as her little brother Buddy had formed a very strong liking for Hale—which the latter was not slow to reciprocate—June seldom allowed a day to pass without bringing the child down to the railway. Actually, Hale was not a little worried about these visits. He in his turn had been attracted by the girl, but he had soon learned that she was Dave's girl, and there, he told himself, the matter ended.

He handled the situation as only such quiet, reserved men do, and one morning, when June walked into his little office where he was hard at work, he greeted her with a frown as he turned back to his desk.

"Good-morning," said the girl with the smile of one who is sure she is welcome.

"Good-morning," replied Hale curtly without turning round.

"You don't seem very pleased to see me."

"Well, I'm very busy."

"You always are—when I come down here."

There was a pause, during which Hale wrote furiously. He had noticed the teasing, coquettish note in the girl's voice and he was rebelling against it. He longed to throw aside his work and talk to her, but he knew only too well that if he yielded once he would go on yielding again and again. So his answer came brusquely enough.

"At the moment I'm very busy."

"That means I'm not wanted?"

He merely shrugged his shoulders. He knew he couldn't look her in the eyes and tell her so.

Her anger rose then, swift, primitive.

"I think you're very rude," she said. He swung round at that, firing up in a flash.

"And I think you're very foolish," he retorted.

"Why?" she asked.

He hesitated a moment. It was impossible to tell her what he wanted to tell her, that because she was promised to another man it was unwise for her to be coming continually to his office. So instead he hedged, hardly caring what he said.

"Well, because there's hundreds of better ways of spendin' your time. If you're goin' to marry Dave you ought to be learnin' things."

Her eyebrows went up.

"What things?" she asked simply. There was no escape now and he knew it and made up his mind to go through with it.

"Hundreds of things. You're making money now and your life's going to change. You'll want to know things when you're married, June, and you ought to be spending your time learnin' them, the same as other girls do, instead of loafing around."

"What don't I know that other girls do, and why shouldn't I loaf around, as you call it, if I choose to?" she asked rebelliously.

Once again he fell back on generalities.

"Well, if I were you I should want to learn things and get educated. Other girls do. You told me yourself you couldn't read or write, and that's a mighty poor thing for any girl to say, specially if she's goin' to get married."

"Will you teach me?"

"Of course not," he retorted sharply. "I haven't the time—you ought to be able to see that—and besides, I've got my work to do. And I've got to get on with it now, what's more, otherwise I'll be all behind."

Turning his back on her, he sat down once more at his desk, closing the

discussion, and she went out and walked slowly back to the shack in a flaming temper. For she knew only too well the truth of all that he had said, and the truth hurt. But other things hurt, too, and she began on them the moment she entered the shack.

Her father and mother listened in silence while she told them that it was high time that she had some sort of education. But she failed to tell them from where the idea had come to her. Rather did her conversation suggest that it was Dave who had started it.

But old Judd Tolliver came down flat-footed when she had finished. He declared harshly that it was all nonsense. The Tollivers had been content all these generations without education; what did she want to start now for? And on June retorting that she didn't know and didn't care, but she was going whether he liked it or not, he got up grinning from his chair with a laconic "Oh, is that so, my girl?" and reached for the broad leather strap that had hitherto been used to settle all the arguments of his children in their recalcitrant moments.

But here his wife flung herself in between them, while June stood white-faced but still stubborn.

"Judd, you can't do it—you can't do it!" she panted.

"Can't I? You watch me. If a child of mine disobeys me—"

"I don't want to disobey you, dad," said June. "I've never disobeyed you in my life, and you know it. But I'm a woman now, just an ignorant woman what knows nothin'. And it ain't fair to keep me ignorant all my life. Look at mother here, what chance has she ever had since she married you? Slavin' from mornin' till night, seein' nothin', knowin' nothin'. And it ain't fair that I should have the same now we've got money."

"It's true, Judd, and you know it," said Mrs. Tolliver gently and sorrowfully. "Not that I'm grumblin' 'eas you've been a good man to me. But we've got money now, Judd, and surely it be only right to give the kids better chances than we've had ourselves?"

Old Tolliver relented then—he had to. And that afternoon June left for Cap-

town. But it was not the mail coach that took her, but Hale, whom she artfully waylaid. For she knew that he was driving into Gaptown that afternoon, and she stopped him—somewhat to his dismay—and asked him for a lift. And he, because he couldn't very well refuse, gave her the required lift. And that was how the trouble really began and Hale got drawn into the Tolliver-Falin feud all unwittingly.

It was the following day, and Dave Tolliver, who had been away in the mountains, came back and asked for June.

"Why, she gone off to Gaptown to get eddicated, Dave," replied the old man, looking slightly puzzled. "I reckoned you knew all about it from what she said."

For a moment or two the young man stared blankly at him. But swift anger, blind anger was surging up in his heart, for already rumours had been reaching him of June's constant visits to the railway—though he had been trying his best to dismiss them as idle talk.

"I've never said nothin' to her about it," he answered slowly. "I don't want June no different from what she is."

There was a long and dreadful silence. But the thoughts of both men had gone in the same direction. For old Tolliver, too, had heard whispered rumours.

"I wonder who can have advised her to this?" he said presently and with a troubled face.

"If you don't know I can tell you," rejoined his son angrily. "It's Hale and no one else. I've been hearin' for quite a while that June's been spendin' a mighty lot of time down at the construction camp. And now I'm beginnin' to see why."

The old man's look of anxiety deepened.

"It don't seem to me to sort of fit in somehow," he began, but his son cut him short as he reached for his gun.

"We'll soon find out if it does," he answered grimly.

He went down to the construction camp with black murder in his heart and his loaded gun in his hand. When Thurber, the manager of the works,

told him that Hale was not there he threatened him with his gun—he was in the mood to shoot anyone on sight—but the panic-stricken assurance of the badly scared Thurber that Hale was indeed not there but had gone into Gaptown the previous day soon convinced him that he was speaking the truth. But his anger was boiling more than ever as he left the camp and started to make his way in the direction of Gaptown. For now all he could see was a deliberately planned elopement between June and Hale.

But as he strode along through the pine trees rude interruption came in the shape of a bullet that came whizzing past his head, making him drop swiftly in his tracks. For that bullet told him that long before he ever found Jack Hale he had another enemy with whom to settle. It told him that the Falins were out once more on the blood-feud and if he failed to get this particular Falin, then the latter would undoubtedly get him.

It was no unusual scene that those age-old mountains saw that afternoon. It was a scene that they had witnessed many and many a time before—two desperate men stalking each other with swift death staring each of them in the face. It was a scene of two men, with murder in their hearts, slipping from tree to tree, from boulder to boulder with the swiftness and silence of panthers, firing every now and then and dropping as quickly from sight—yet ever narrowing the circle as they drew nearer and nearer, each waiting like panthers for the last desperate spring of all with death for one or both of them at the end of it.

Suddenly in the silence two shots rang out in quick succession, close to each other, echoing and re-echoing over the hills, and then with scarcely a second's interval two figures seemed to spring out of the rocks from nowhere, two figures that launched themselves simultaneously at each other.

Over and over they rolled on the rough ground, each striving for the mastery, tearing at each other like wild cats, while the air was heavy with the sound of blows and curses. And nearer, ever nearer, they drew to the edge of



Jack Hale began the delicate task of cutting away the poisoned flesh. . . .

the mountain on which they had been fighting.

And then, suddenly, with a tremendous effort Dave Tolliver wrenched himself free and was on his feet. But Falin had gained his feet, too, and with a snarl hurled himself at his opponent. But even as he did so the younger man swerved, and his fist, with all its owner's weight behind it, crashed in on Falin's jaw. As he staggered back he stumbled as he did so, slipped, lost his footing, and grabbing desperately at the ground, disappeared over the edge.

Dave Tolliver stood still, panting furiously.

"That's one of 'em settled," he ejaculated as he turned and walked away.

The moment that Hale came face to face with him in Gaptown on the following day, he knew from Dave Tolliver's face that there was big trouble ahead, and cursed himself for allowing himself to get mixed up in it. But he faced him steadily enough.

"What have you done with June?" was the younger man's first question.

That told Hale all there was to know. He read hate and murder in Dave's eyes, and a sense of utter weariness at the futility of it all surged over him. But he knew it had to be met and was determined to do his best.

"Look here, Dave," he exclaimed, "I know exactly what's in your mind, but you're wrong—dead wrong."

The other's voice was ice-cold when he answered:

"You've tricked June into runnin' away with you!"

"Oh, you're a mile out! If only you're listen to me—"

"I wouldn't believe a single word you said."

"Righto, then have it this way."

And in a flash Hale lashed out, catching the other on the jaw, and the fight was on. But as they fought there was this difference between the two men. Dave was fighting to kill, but Hale was not. Even in his anger he held himself in check. For June's sake he was determined to do little more than defend himself.

And then all of a sudden dramatic interruption stepped in. For Hale had hit out at Dave and had sent him staggering back against the empty shack by the side of which they were fighting, and was waiting for a new onslaught which never came. For all in a flash came a hatchet, hurled with terrific force, which only missed Dave Tolliver by inches, and buried itself deep in the woodwork. And as Hale swung round with an oath he saw three men running towards them and knew in a flash that it was the Falins!

But he laughed from sheer joy. For now he saw the solution of the problem. For he noticed in a second that the three rapidly advancing men were gunless. And in a second he was by Dave's side.

"This is where we join forces, Dave," he said. "Come on, lad, we'll beat 'em to it."

He fought differently now, fought with the venom he had lacked when he had been fighting Dave. But he could very soon see which way the fight was likely to go, and managed here and there to pant out instructions to Dave—little short breathless sentences, but each charged with meaning and truth.

"You've got—to get—away—from this. They mean—to kill—you—but they—won't kill—me. Slip out—and get—June! She'll explain—up in the town—I'll hold 'em."

Perhaps then it filtered into Dave Tolliver's bemused brain that he had October 3rd, 1936.

been wrong, had done Hale an injustice. Perhaps June was the magnet. Under no other circumstances would he have left Hale alone.

But Hale managed his part well, and it was not until Dave had completely disappeared that the Falins discovered the trick that Hale had managed to play on them.

Hale leaned against the shack struggling for breath, and Buck Falin addressed him.

"I reckon you'll be sorry for this, Hale," he said with deadly meaning in his voice. "You've butted into our private quarrel and we're not forgettin' it."

The Falins Keep Their Word

THE months had rolled by. June was still away, having gone under Hale's advice to his sister in Louisville, from where she was writing to her family, telling them of her progress. But there was no more enmity between Hale and Dave. And Hale knew full well that both Judd Tolliver and his adopted son were his sworn friends, even though they never said so. He had ranged himself on their side against their enemies, and they would never forget it.

But he had lost a lot of heart in his work now. June to him was irrevocably gone. In the fullness of time she would come back and marry Dave. Though he told himself that it would be better so. He, Hale, had only butted in by accident. Dave had always been her man, and she was irrevocably Dave's girl. Probably by now she had forgotten him altogether.

But he had other troubles even more serious than this. For not only was the feud between the Tollivers and the Falins even more bitter than before, but he was very seriously mixed up in it, too. Mysterious outrages were constantly happening at the railway construction camp. One day a big fire occurred which destroyed any amount of material. No one could say exactly who had done it; but Hale knew that it was the Falins, though he gritted his teeth and swore by all his gods that a whole army of Falins shouldn't stop him from completing the work he had set out to do.

Old Judd Tolliver had come down to Hale's little office one day, and the two were talking together when the telephone-bell rang. And to Hale's amazement he heard June's voice at the other end. Though there was hardly a tremor in his own voice when he answered:

"Hallo, June, is that you? How are you? Here, hang on a second. Here's your father and he'd like to speak to you."

He swung round on old Tolliver.

"Here's June on the 'phone. Come and talk to her."

He stood watching the scene with amusement in his eyes. Judd Tolliver was holding the receiver as if it had been some species of deadly snake, though excitement and amazement were in his eyes. For it was the first time in his life that he had ever used a telephone.

And then all of a sudden from outside, not half a mile away, came a terrific explosion, rattling the windows of the office and dying away into dreadful silence.

In a flash Hale was out of the office, and old Tolliver, who had dropped the receiver with a clatter, was rushing after him. And as they ran a scared, white-faced man came running towards them.

"They've blown up the bridge! I

saw your buddy on it, Mr. Tolliver, only a few minutes ago!"

Two hundred miles away, June, through the telephone, heard the terrific roar of the explosion, and her heart missed a beat at the sudden silence which succeeded it.

"Dad, dad," she screamed, "what is it—what is it?"

For minutes that seemed like hours she waited, scarcely daring to breathe, in an agony of apprehension. She got through to the exchange, but all they could tell her was that the line was still connected, that possibly they had been called away and would come back. So she told them that she would hold on—and more agonised minutes drifted slowly away.

And then all of a sudden she heard the murmur of voices, and once more her heart began to pound anew.

The sight of what was taking place was mercifully hidden from her. She could not see that dread procession that filed into the little office where the telephone receiver still swung on its hook, unnoticed, unheeded by all. She could not see Jack Hale as he strode in, his face stern and set—could not see him lay Buddy's little mangled body down, cover it gently up, lay his hand on old Tolliver's bowed shoulders, mute sympathy in his eyes and in the gesture.

But she could hear her father's voice as it floated out to her, clear and distinct, with such awful horror in it as she had never heard—the voice of a man in a dream.

"Dead? My Buddy dead? Killed by them Falins—"

And for the first time in her life she slid to the floor in a dead faint.

The End of It All

IT was a week later; the worst days Hale had ever known in his life.

Little Buddy had been laid to rest, but all the life seemed to have gone out of the Tolliver household. Mrs. Tolliver only sobbed and wept, raved and stormed in turns. In turns she blamed her husband, blamed her adopted son. And they listened in silence, realising the uselessness of words.

And then, one day, when Hale had come down to see them, June suddenly walked in, and it begun all over again. For June had accused them all of lethargy—had declared that they were doing nothing. And had at the finish flung fiercely round on Dave.

"Dave," she exclaimed, "why don't you act as a Tolliver should act? Why are you sittin' here doin' nothin'?"

He shrugged his shoulders helplessly. But here Mrs. Tolliver broke in.

"You don't know what you're sayin', June. Where's all these killin' leadin' us to? What's the use of goin' on with 'em? Someone's got to stop it."

But the girl flamed up furiously.

"Then it can be up to the Falins and not us!" she flung back. "They've killed my Buddy, and all you do is to go up to the sheriff and ask him"—the bitterness in her voice was beyond all words—"ask him to interfere! Why ain't we interferin'? Why ain't you takin' a hand, Dave Tolliver? You've asked me to marry you—right, and so I will if you'll act like a Tolliver!"

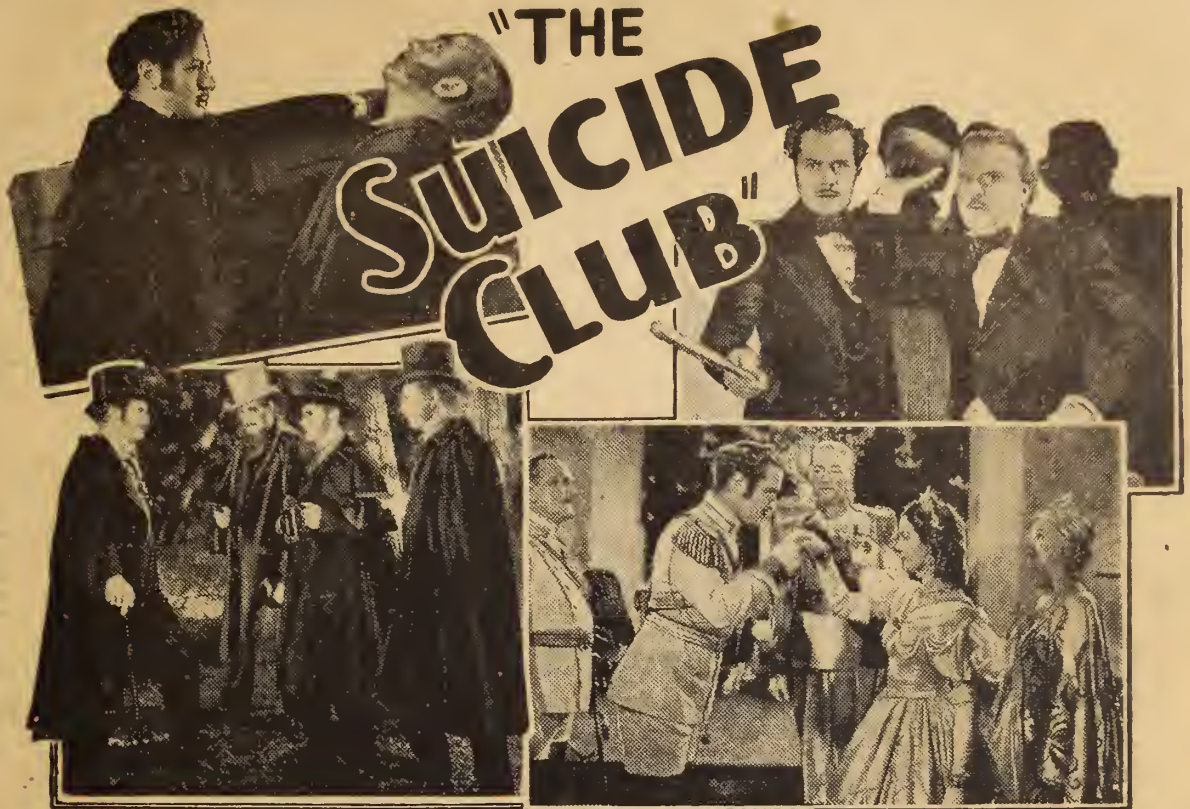
In a second he was up from his chair, reaching for his gun, but even as he did so Hale sprang up and caught at his arm.

"You leave me alone," flashed out the younger man ominously, "or it will be the worse for you."

But Hale still held him tightly, and

(Continued on page 26)

A young man becomes involved in the intrigues of a sinister association. A dynamic story, with action, mystery, suspense and humour. A fast-moving, swash-buckling romantic type of story that fits Robert Montgomery like a glove



"THE SUICIDE CLUB"

A Pig in a Poke!

THIS April morning, Colonel Geraldine, equerry to the Crown Prince of Karovia, was searching the royal palace for his young master. The king was in full council—the ambassador of the neighbouring kingdom of Irania was present with important proposals.

Geraldine at last found Prince Florizel in the kitchens, in the midst of a loudly applauding crowd who were watching him trying to walk a slack wire fastened from one end of the room to the other.

"Good gracious, your Highness!" cried Geraldine, shocked beyond measure. "What are you doing?"

"Bringing the carnival in—since I'm not allowed to go out to it," Florizel answered. "Don't worry me, or I'll fall!"

He appeared a handsome young man as he balanced himself precariously. He was tall, dark, faintly moustached—and he wore his dark grey flannels and white shirt with royal distinction. All the same, he fell off the wire into Geraldine's promptly outstretched arms.

"Enough of this!" cried the irate colonel, rushing the wriggling young man upstairs to his bed-room. "Get dressed at once!" he dared to command. "The king is tired of waiting for you. You've got to marry the Princess Brenda."

"That little wretch?" gasped Florizel.

"I say, Geraldine, that's a bit thick!"

"You tell his Majesty so." Geraldine forced the young man into his regimentals and hurried him away. Florizel entered the council somewhat short of breath, but looking every inch a prince. He saluted his father, bowed to the

Iranian Ambassador and the councillors present, took his seat and sat very erect. "Proceed, Excellency," ordered the king.

The Iranian Ambassador, standing in his place, coughed a little.

"You must understand, sir, that our Court is quite willing that her Royal Highness should accept your Majesty's gracious proposal. It will cement old friendships and ensure the safety of both kingdoms. But"—here the old fellow coughed again—"but the Princess Brenda is somewhat difficult. She hasn't seen his Royal Highness the Prince for many years, and—and to give you her own words, sir—she says she won't buy a pig in a poke."

"I quite agree," said Florizel. "Silence!" cried his father. "I will settle this affair. The princess shall be afforded an opportunity of seeing you—and you will behave as unlike a pig as possible. Gentlemen, the council is at an end. Good-morning to you all."

Left alone with his son, the king told him:

"Florizel, my son, revolution is in the air. We have very little money in our coffers. A lovely young partner, with millions to bring into our impoverished country, means that trade will recover and our people be happy once more."

"But Brenda!" sighed Florizel. "A girl with plaits and eyes like beads."

"Some beads are beautiful," said the king. "Call Geraldine in."

When the colonel had duly saluted, the king gave his final orders.

"You will go to England, Florizel, to learn manners. Geraldine will go with you. When you return, you will marry Brenda."

"Your Majesty," said Geraldine

quickly, "I shall be delighted. I have long desired to bring your Majesty one of England's famous Christmas puddings."

"They're even worse than Brenda," said Florizel.

"Attention, both of you!" the king commanded. "Five years ago a revolution nearly succeeded. A thorough-paced rascal—a doctor of philosophy named Noel—stirred our people to madness. We managed to crush the revolt, but Noel escaped. He may be alive and still plotting against us, Geraldine, we must have this marriage—and I shall hold you responsible for it."

That same evening Florizel and his equerry were aboard a packet-boat hound from Antwerp to the port of Dover.

They travelled under the assumed names of Theophilus Godall and Major Hammersmith. The journey was very dull—until they were almost at the end of it. Then a steward came along the decks of the steamship to Florizel.

"Mr. Godall, a lady has asked me to give you this letter."

"Don't take it," whispered Geraldine. "It's a trap of some sort."

But Florizel had opened the letter. He read it through.

"I will come immediately."

He rose from his chair, tossed the note to Geraldine, and proceeded to state cabin number 3. Here he found a raven-haired and agitated young woman standing by the door.

"You are Mr. Godall?" she asked swiftly. As he bowed, she went on in a shaking voice. "I am in great peril, sir. I am bearing a most important document. There are those abroad who have tracked me and who will endeavour to steal this."

She held out a

long, heavily sealed letter. "Will you take it and keep it until I leave the ship? If you will do me this great kindness—and I know you will, because you are a gentleman—you can hand it back to me as I come down the gangway. Once on English shores, I shall be safe."

"I will do it for you, madam, with pleasure." Florizel had taken in the pale beauty of the girl's face. She was very handsome—and vaguely familiar. He believed he had seen her somewhere in Karovia.

Almost as he spoke, a dark, heavily built man burst into the cabin. He stepped past the prince and confronted the girl.

"Give me that letter!" he demanded. "Stand away, you!"

He thrust out an arm to keep Florizel at bay. But the latter caught the fellow by the collar and flung him aside.

"Your quarrel is now with me," the prince cried fiercely. "I will guard this letter with my life!"

The dark man glared at him. "I warn you, Mr. Godall!" he croaked. "You observe I know your name. I solemnly warn you!"

He strode from the cabin just as Geraldine came excitedly running in to rescue his royal charge.

The Young Man with the Cream Tarts

THE next evening "Mr. Godall" and "Major Hammersmith" were dining at a little restaurant in Soho. They were discussing the mysterious lady.

Said Geraldine with conviction: "She is a spy sent to kill you or get you into some dire trouble. She didn't come off the ship—you still have the letter—and I suggest that you destroy it at once."

"My dear fellow, I can't do that." The prince took the sealed envelope out of his pocket. "It is a sacred commission."

"Fiddlesticks!" Geraldine snatched up the letter and tore it open. A perfectly blank sheet of folded foolscap was revealed.

"It's lucky I'm here to look after you," said Geraldine.

Florizel was vexedly studying the blank paper when a great noise and much laughter from the tables by the door caused both of them to stare in that direction.

A young man, followed by two commissionaires, had entered the restaurant. Each commissionaire carried a large silver dish of cream tarts. The young man begged the company at each table, as he came to it, to taste these tarts, protesting that they were the most delicious in the whole world. Sometimes his offer was accepted; sometimes harshly refused. In these latter cases the young man ate the rejected tart himself.

Presently he came to Florizel. "Sir," said he, "will you honour me?" He offered the prince a tart. "I can vouch for the quality of these confections, having eaten two dozen and three of them already."

"Don't touch it!" cried Geraldine. "I will eat one," said Florizel, "on condition that you sit down and join us at supper."

The young man hesitated. "I must either eat or give away the rest of these tarts." He suddenly laughed. "There are but seven left. I will liquidate the last five if your friend and you will eat one a-piece."

Geraldine was beginning a protest when Florizel took a tart and devoured it in a couple of bites. The young man

started on the five he had promised to eat: Geraldine, with many misgivings, ate the last one. The young man dismissed the commissionaires, tossing them his purse.

"There," he cried, "all is finished! I am penniless, and I have ended a most foolish career by a crowning act of folly. I will sit to your table, gentlemen, and will take wine with you. I confess to being somewhat surfeited with food."

He dropped into the chair next to Florizel, who filled his glass with champagne.

"Here's your health, sir," said the prince. "My name is Theophilus Godall; my friend is Major Alfred Hammersmith. We are, like yourself, men of broken fortunes, making a night of it on the last few pounds we have managed to save from the wreck of our estates."

"How?" the young fellow exclaimed. "Are you ruined, like me? Are you"—he lowered his voice and glanced around—"are you going to avoid the consequences of your folly by the one easy path?"

Geraldine, taking his cue from Florizel, answered boldly:

"Yes, sir—we are."

"You are determined to end life to-night? Good!" The young man swigged off his champagne. "Then we are well met, we three. Come with me, Mr. Godall, and you, Major Hammersmith—to the Suicide Club!"

The three companions went together in a four-wheeled cab through the dark streets of Soho, almost deserted at this time of night. Another cab followed them secretly.

They came to the entrance of a narrow court, where the young man stopped the cab. The second cab passed by quickly, stopped farther on, when two people alighted to watch the prince.

"You must please pay the fare," the young man stated. "I have not one farthing of money."

Colonel Geraldine paid the jarvey and they alighted. The young man led the way up the court until they came to a narrow doorway.

"Wait for me here," he whispered. "I must arrange things with the president before you enter. My name, by the way, is George Barnley. Make a note of it—you will read about me in to-morrow's issue of 'The Times.'"

When they were alone, Geraldine spoke earnestly to the prince.

"Of all your follies, your Highness, this is the wildest and most dangerous."

"Are you afraid?" Florizel whispered back.

The colonel drew himself erect. "A Geraldine is never afraid. But Major Hammersmith remembers that he is responsible for you."

"I absolve you from that responsibility," Florizel told him.

Mr. Barnley had returned. He beckoned to them.

"The president will see you. Be frank in your replies to his questions."

They went along a gas-lit corridor to a small room. Mr. Barnley, with a ghastly grin, went out of this room by a door on the far side. A murmur of voices reached them when the door was opened—the sounds of melancholy music. Again Geraldine begged the prince to come away.

"I have set my heart on solving this puzzle," Florizel told him.

The inner door opened, and again they heard the wailing music. A tall, thin man entered, sallow-cheeked, sunken-eyed, and dressed in old-fashioned evening clothes, with a double tie of

white satin about his linen collar. His shirt was frilled down the front, and his bald dome of a head was fringed with long, greying hairs which dangled over his shoulders. He bowed slightly to them.

"You wish to speak with me?" he asked.

"We desire to join your Suicide Club," said Geraldine.

"What is that?" came the smiling answer. "Some little joke of yours, gentlemen? This is a private dwelling-house in which I reside."

"Sir," spoke Florizel in his impetuous way, "we are here upon the invitation of Mr. George Barnley. You are either going to admit us, or you will bitterly repent having allowed us to come so far as this room."

The president laughed. "That is the way to talk," he approved. "This is, to you, a frolic for April Fool's Day, but I like you, and I will admit you." He took a small Bible from his pocket and placed it in Florizel's hands. "Repeat after me, if you please."

The oath was a very binding one. It was a sacred pledge never to reveal or even hint at the mysteries of the club. Geraldine liked the adventure less than ever, but took the oath after Florizel had done so. They followed the president into the club lounge.

It was an ordinary club-room with easy-chairs and a comfortable fire burning in the grate. Two waiters moved about among the members, bringing them refreshment. The company was chiefly that of oldish men, but there were others like young Mr. Barnley also present.

A sad-faced youth was at the piano; two of the men were playing chess in a corner; Barnley was standing by the fire. The president whispered to Florizel:

"The entrance fee and first year's subscription is one hundred pounds each, if you please."

Florizel nodded to Geraldine.

"Please write a cheque for two hundred pounds, Hammersmith, payable to bearer. I will settle afterwards with you."

The money was paid over. They signed their names. The president smiled as he looked over their shoulders. "All bear assumed names here," he sighed. "It is odd that so few have courage to end their lives in the full glare. Why are you wishing to die, Mr. Godall?" he asked.

"I have no more money."

"That is reason enough," said the president. "Now, sir,"—he addressed Geraldine—"what is your reason? You evidently have money."

Florizel answered while the colonel was hesitating:

"My poor friend was cashiered last week for cheating at cards."

"Excellent," approved the president, while Geraldine went scarlet with vexation. "Take your seats, gentlemen. Order champagne—it is usual; and the hour is at hand when we commence our play."

They seated themselves near to an old fellow on a couch who had been glancing at them.

"You are newcomers?" he asked. "Friends of young Barnley—a mad fellow! I am Dr. Malthus. I have been a member for two years."

"Two years?" said Geraldine, much relieved. "But I thought—"

"Quite so," Malthus checked him. "But I have been extraordinarily unlucky. Everybody gets the ace of spades but me. But I love the thrill—and I

shall get it one night. You may not know the procedure—allow me to explain. No one really likes committing suicide. It is sometimes—er—painful; sometimes incomplete. Well, here, the president arranges it all. Another, quite nicely, does the killing for you.”

“But that is murder!” gasped Geraldine.

At this moment the president's voice was heard:

“Gentlemen, the deal! Please follow me into the eard-room.”

They walked, in twos and threes, past folding doors which had been thrown open, into a long, narrow room, the centre of which was occupied by a green-clothed table. The company settled down in chairs around it. The president took a pack of cards from a side table.

There was a vacant chair opposite Florizel's, and, just as the president was about to deal the cards, a girl in black entered. She took the vacant chair, her dark eyes fixed and unseeing.

It was the mysterious lady of the sealed envelope.

“Attention, please!” came the president's cold voice. He began to deal out the cards, walking behind each chair to lay a card in front of the player. “The ace of clubs represents the officer for the night—the ace of spades stands for the lucky one who is to leave this vale of tears.”

Florizel was dealt the nine of clubs; Geraldine received the three of spades. The fatal cards did not appear until the second round. Then the girl turned over her card to show everyone that the ace of clubs had fallen to her.

A tense minute later Mr. Barnley received the ace of spades.

“Please to return to the lounge,” said the president. “All except Miss Vandeleur and Mr. Barnley.”

Florizel tried to speak to her, but she only regarded him with a stony stare. Dr. Malthus caught at his arm.

“Help me back to my chair,” he breathed thickly. “I feel absolutely shattered. I must really give up playing.”

The next morning, while breakfasting at their hotel, Geraldine read out from “The Times” to the horrified Florizel: “We much regret to announce that Mr. George Barnley, well known in London sporting society, met with a fatal accident last night whilst returning from the theatre to his rooms in Savile Row. A large coping stone fell on his head from the roof of a house near by as he was passing beneath, and instantly killed him.”

Miss Vandeleur is Again Lucky

DESPITE Colonel Geraldine's arguments, Florizel persisted in returning to the Suicide Club the following night.

The president told them:

“I expected you.”

The deal, this time, was soon over. Florizel received the ace of spades in the first round and Miss Vandeleur the ace of clubs.

“Strange fortune,” smiled the president. “Our new lady member, twice running, has had the luck to officiate.”

When the others had withdrawn, he told Florizel:

“You will please accompany Miss Vandeleur in the closed carriage which waits at the end of the passage. She will arrange your death most charmingly.”

There was no chance of a word with Geraldine. Florizel, always polite, entered the carriage with the mysterious lady. She made no reply to any of his questions as they drove out of Soho towards Regent's Park.

She told the driver to halt and wait

when they approached the Zoo. She then addressed Florizel:

“Get out, please. We are going to see the lions. You will enter the last cage, and—and, afterwards, I shall go home.”

But when they were in the lions' house her nerves failed her. She had begun to open the door of one of the cages with a key taken from her bag, when suddenly she burst into tears.

“My dear lady,” cried the prince, “what is the matter? Are you ill?”

“Noel shouldn't have expected it of me,” she sobbed. “I can't do it! Let us go.”

“You killed Barnley,” the prince wondered. “Why not me?”

“I didn't kill him. I talked to him like a sister and—sent him to his people in Scotland. I paid his fare. Anyone can put a death notice in a newspaper.”

The prince considered this for a few moments, then he spoke very seriously: “You mentioned the name of Noel just now. I have heard of a Dr. Noel.”

“He is the president of the club,” Miss Vandeleur dried her tears. “Where is our cabman?”

They were at the gates of the Zoo. There was no sign of the carriage.

“Why did you join the Suicide Club, Miss Vandeleur?” Florizel asked.

“Because I am being forced into a hateful marriage. I ran away—after telling my people I would not buy a pig in a poke!”

“Dear me!” said the prince. “You must be little Brenda grown up.”

“I followed you,” she confessed. “I wanted to know what kind of a man you had become—if you were a man of courage. You were a most odious little boy.”

A shot rang out and a bullet whistled past them through the night air. The prince caught at his companion's hand



Noel flung up his arms as he overbalanced. . . .

and raced her into the roadway. They ran along the Albert Road, stopping at the entrance to a small inn. The prince hammered at the door and they were admitted in rather breathless condition.

Safe in the little hostelry, Brenda said:

"That was Noel. He hates you. It was to save your life that I went into the club. I bribed him to deal me the ace of clubs. I knew he'd give you the ace of spades."

Further knockings at the door brought them to silence.

Florizel rose.

"Put out the lamp," he told her, "and stand clear! This must be someone come to finish where you have failed."

A man, be-cloaked and in a great hurry, rushed in when Florizel opened the door. At once Florizel closed with him and threw him heavily.

"Leggo!" gasped a well-known voice. "It's only me!"

It was Geraldine. The prince raised him up.

"My dear fellow, a thousand pardons."

The colonel grunted:

"There's another madman outside, firing off a pistol at everything he sees!"

Trapped!

THE three breakfasted together next morning at the little inn.

Geraldine was being very polite to the princess when the waiter knocked over his coffee cup. Brenda jumped up hastily from the table.

"You clumsy idiot!" shouted the colonel.

"I'm terribly sorry," the waiter apologised. "My nerves, sir—all to pieces. Egg and bacon, sir?"

"No!" thundered Geraldine.

"It's my little dog, sir," went on the old man in tears. "He killed a parrot, sir, that flew in from the Zoo. And he's to be tried for murder."

Florizel put down his newspaper.

"Try a dog for murder?"

"Yes, sir. It's one of the new laws, sir. I'm—I'm heartbroken, gentlemen." He raised terrified eyes towards Brenda, standing by the window. "I love my little dog. He's all I have in the world."

"I will go with you to this strange court," said Florizel. "I will save your dog."

"Thank you indeed, sir. Will you come now? It's a lot to ask you—"

Florizel was already at the door.

"I will put on my coat at once."

The old man went to a side table and took up a small round parcel. He brought it to Geraldine.

"Your Christmas pudding, sir. The cook had one left over. I managed to get it for you—ten and sixpence, sir."

Brenda went quickly to Florizel, when he came back with hat and coat:

"Don't go!" she murmured. "I am afraid for you."

"We are in England," Florizel reminded her. "Come, Hammersmith."

The colonel snatched up his round parcel.

"Excuse us, princess," he bowed.

"We will return in a few minutes."

They went to a tall house up a side street. The old waiter knocked at the door and they were admitted by a man in livery.

He escorted them to folding-doors on the left of the passage. These were thrown open and Florizel and Geraldine stepped into a large bare room.

Before them was a long table at which several people were sitting, all facing the door. The judge rose to his

October 3rd, 1936.

feet as the folding doors were sharply clapped together by two men. He spoke very pleasantly:

"Good-morning, Mr. Godall. Good-morning, Major Hammersmith. Most kind of you to come."

It was the president of the Suicide Club!

"What do you want of us, sir?" Florizel inquired, sternly regarding that venerable face with its burningly dark eyes.

"My dear prince, I am Dr. Noel," came the ready answer. "Your father threw me into prison, with the order that I was to be hanged on the following morning. Hanged—because I had dared to offend him and his autocratic rule! Kings are superfluous in these days. The people must rule. It is strangely fortunate for me to catch both you and the colonel at one cast of the line. News of your arrival was brought me by one of our spies—but I knew we must employ cunning to properly get you. Hence the cream tarts and Mr. Barnley. Hence the Suicide Club and its amusing ritual. It has brought us two hundred pounds, you will recollect." He chuckled a little. "The jury will give you a hearing—and hang you immediately afterwards. Behold the gallows!" He dangled a slip-knotted rope hanging from a ceiling hook behind him.

Geraldine glanced towards the men by the door.

"Stand away!" he cried, raising the small round parcel which contained his Christmas pudding. "I suspected some plot. I will throw this bomb—and you shall all perish with us!"

He backed against the inner wall. Florizel, walking-stick tightly gripped, moved close to him. The pudding was upraised—the president and the jury sprang towards the windows, their faces ashen with terror. But one of the men at the door began to creep in on Geraldine.

Florizel, without turning his head, had seen the fellow. He waited until he was almost at Geraldine's back: then Florizel's gloved fist shot out, catching him at a blow. Geraldine, with a yell of rage, threw the pudding at the president. It struck him between the eyes.

Pandemonium followed. Florizel fought with cool desperation, overthrowing first one and then another of the mob. Geraldine performed prodigies of valour.

The president wiped away the sticky contents of the burst parcel from his livid face.

Florizel reached the folding doors and jerked them open.

"Come, Geraldine!" he called, as he dashed along the corridor. He pulled open the front door and rushed into the street.

A policeman was standing by the railings of a house near by. The policeman was talking to the cook in the area below and came away with reluctance. Meantime the front door had slammed to.

"My friend is in there," Florizel told the officer in a breath. "He is surrounded by anarchists! I call upon you to help me save him!"

The policeman blew his whistle. He then approached the door and knocked upon it. It opened at his touch—the passage was empty. Florizel ran in with the policeman—the folding doors were wide. There was no sign of anyone. Everything had gone, table, chairs and the slip-knotted rope!

Florizel, after a vain search of the empty house, returned to the inn. A note was waiting for him. It was from

Brenda, telling him that she had been compelled to return with her escort to Irania.

While he stood in the porch considering her note, a furtive youth came up to him.

"Are you Mister Godall?" he asked. Florizel nodded. "I'm sent to tell you Major Hammersmith is in great danger, sir. If you would save his life, you must come to this address at ten o'clock this evening."

He thrust a card into Florizel's hand. "You're to come in by the garden gate. And you're to come alone."

Retribution

IN face of his oath, Florizel could not call in the police. A better plan came to his mind; he would ask for help from a few trusty officers and gentlemen attached to the Karovian Embassy in St. James's Square. He began collecting them at dusk, calling for them in a hansom cab which he drove himself in order to secure secrecy.

He brought them in pairs to a furnished house in St. John's Wood which he had hired for the occasion, and entertained them with lavish hospitality. He explained the position.

"I must go alone to meet this fellow Noel," he told them. "It is another trap, of course; but as the garden of this place backs on to the garden of the house where I am supposed to be rescuing Geraldine, it will be only necessary for you gentlemen to climb a wall and come to us, with your pistols and my rapiers, at ten minutes after ten. I shall ask you to see that Dr. Noel has fair play."

At ten o'clock precisely Florizel presented himself at the garden gate of the other house. The furtive youth opened the door when he rang the bell.

"This way, sir." He directed the prince under the dark trees towards the back of the mansion. Three men suddenly sprang out from the shadows. One held a lantern, which he flashed on Florizel; the others covered him with their revolvers.

"You will not need your walking-stick," spoke the leader, snatching it away from Florizel. "Follow us and do not attempt to call for help. If you do"—he grimly flourished his gun—"you will be shot down like a dog!"

They entered the house from the back. Noel and his myrmidons were gathered into the large stone-floored kitchen. Geraldine, his hands tied behind his back, was being held by two of the fellows.

"You shouldn't have come!" he called heartbrokenly. "My life is worth nothing!"

"It is very dear to me," Florizel answered. He saw Noel advancing towards him, smiling in his hateful way. "You will release my friend!" he commanded.

"We will release you both, Prince Florizel," said Noel. "By means of the rope you have once avoided. We shall hang you together—it will be a fitting end to a couple of tyrants who have too long opposed the people. A deep grave has been dug outside—it will hold you both most comfortably."

At this moment the rescue party, headed by Major O'Rook and Captain Rich of the Embassy, burst into the room. O'Rook shouted:

"Hands up, all of you! The game is finished!"

The surprise was complete. The murderous gang put up their hands. Geraldine was released, and, with clenched fists, faced Dr. Noel.

(Continued on page 28)

Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



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EPISODE 9—

“Human Targets”

READ THIS FIRST

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way to the Valley. Dying, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch; and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delaney, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Old Grayson is murdered the next day, and leaves Mary a wallet containing the map of a secret gold mine. Later, a railway agent offers a high price for the Grayson land, but is wounded by a gangster's bullet before the deal can go through. Then, operating in league with renegade Indians, the outlaws raid Mary's cattle.

They are seen by Buck and Mary, who ride for help but are set upon by Redskins. In the scuffle one of the renegades tries to knife the white man.

Now Read On

The Herd Lost

MARY'S scream had warned Buck, and he turned in the nick of time to meet the onslaught of the Indian who had sneaked up on him from the rear.

The renegade's dagger was upraised for a death-stab, but ere the blow could fall Buck drove his fist into the assassin's jaw with an impact that hurled the fellow to the dust. Then he yelled a command to Mary, bidding her ride onward for the Hidden Valley Ranch and bring help without delay.

Farther down the trail the girl uncovered her face as she heard the big nester's stentorian tones and saw with relief that he had balked the attempt on his life. And next instant, even as Buck was sailing into the other Redskins, whom he had scattered a few seconds previously, Mary Grayson pulled her horse round and spurred in the direction of home.

About a minute later she was passing Sandstone Bluff, and once she had skirted the bold promontory she came in sight of her ranch, towards which she galloped at the top of her pony's speed.

Some of the boys emerged from the bunkhouse as she drew rein abreast of that building's doorway, and her foreman Steve was among them. It was he who called out in alarm as he saw the expression on Mary's countenance.

“Anything wrong, Miss Grayson?” he queried sharply.

“Plenty!” Mary answered. “Outlaws are running off that herd of cattle beyond the Bluff. They've got some renegade Indians working with them, too, and Buck Grant has tangled with four of them. Quick, there's not a moment to lose!”

Her foreman soon had the rest of the hands assembled, and once they had

saddled their brones the cowboys lost no time in swinging themselves astride their mounts and pounding along the trail, with Mary Grayson in their midst and Steve sharing the lead with the thick-set figure of Spooky. Indeed, it was not long before Spooky was at the head of the party, urging his mustang across the verdant range like a man possessed.

His anxiety to reach the scene of the raid might well have set the others wondering, but they could never have guessed that he and Buck Grant were close friends—any more than they could have guessed that they were both members of that gallant organisation known as the Texas Rangers.

Rounding Sandstone Bluff, the rescuers suddenly beheld Buck and his antagonists a couple of hundred yards away from them. The white man was still laying about him with his bunched knuckles, but the Indians were game enough, and were doing their utmost to close with him when they became aware of the band of riders who were sweeping into view.

One glimpse of the newcomers was enough for the Redskins, and on a common impulse the four of them took to their heels, leaving Buck Grant where he stood and throwing themselves on to the backs of their horses. Then they made straight for the wood where the main body of the renegades was ensconced, and they were fleeing wildly in that direction when Buck was joined by Mary Grayson and the boys from the Hidden Valley outfit.

“Are you hurt, Buck?” Mary gasped. “Just my feelings, that's all,” the big fellow answered cheerfully enough. “But come on! That herd of yours on the other side of the wood needs lookin' after.”

His bronc Silver was near by, and a running jump carried him into the faithful creature's saddle. Another moment and he was leading a stampede towards the strip of forest, which the fugitive Indians had now reached.

The wood lay directly between Buck and the herd, for by this time Dirk and his pack of outlaw accomplices had run the cattle southwards from their pasture. It was the big Ranger's purpose, therefore, to cut clean through the forest with Mary Grayson's employees in an effort to intercept the rustlers. But he did not bargain for the volley of rifle and revolver-fire that burst all at once from the edge of the tall timber.

It was a murderous challenge that caused Buck and his companions to pull up sharply and dive for such cover as was available, and Buck made it his business to take care of Mary and hustle her behind a cluster of rocks. Then he opened fire on the wood, and the guns of the Hidden Valley boys were echoing the blasts of his forty-five when the Grayson foreman crawled across to him.

"Them Redskins must have had some pals lyn' doggo in the timber," Steve said to Buck and Mary. "I'll guarantee they're Red Eagle's bunch of cronies, though it's gonna be hard to prove it unless we can round 'em up."

"Who's Red Eagle?" Buck demanded. "Son of an old chief up in the reservation," was the laconic reply. "The old feller's all right, but the son and some of the younger bloods are a hot-headed lot. They're bad medicine, take it from me, and it's strong liquor that makes 'em so."

Buck ground his teeth together. "I get it," he said. "Those rustlers who jumped the cattle are usin' the renegades to cover their escape. If we're gonna save the herd we'll have to shoot our way through that wood."

"Yeah?" Steve grunted. "Well, I'm figurin' it will be a tough job. Them renegades are in a strong position, and judgin' by the flashes of their guns they ain't weak in numbers."

The foreman's pessimistic words were confirmed. The sun was going down behind the western hills as he spoke them, and the moon and the stars were out before Red Eagle and his band finally retired, in face of a gradual advance on the part of the white men.

The Indians had maintained a resistance as effective as it was stubborn, and, with their work well done, they were galloping off through the wood when Buck and his companions gained the fringe of the trees at last.

For Mary Grayson's party it was an empty victory indeed, but as they heard the receding hoof-beats of their unseen enemies' mustangs they hurriedly secured their own mounts and charged in pursuit. Yet on penetrating the forest and pushing out on to the plain beyond, they saw that the renegades were far ahead of them—a dim cloud of horsemen vanishing into the fastnesses of the mountain country.

Then something else caught the attention of the baffled white men. It was the spectacle of two cowboys bending over a stricken comrade on the otherwise empty pasture where Mary's cattle had been grazing prior to the raid.

They were the punchers who had been in charge of the herd, and, riding over to them with Buck and the rest of the men, Mary spoke in an urgent tone.

"Who is it that's hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"It's Lefty, Miss Mary," one of the herdsmen told her. "He's in a pretty bad way. Tim here has got a slug in the shoulder, too. We did our best, but them rustlers was too many for us, I

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guess. I wish you could've shown up sooner. The cattle would have been saved, then."

"We were held up by a bunch of renegades," Buck put in. "Which direction did those rustlers take?"

"They drove the cattle south," came the answer. "Looked as if they were heading for Dead Man's Pass. They'll be there by now."

Mary exchanged a despairing glance with her foreman.

"Dead Man's Pass," she said heavily. "That's the last of my herd."

"You're right, Miss Mary," Steve muttered. "Your father allus said that a cow through Dead Man's Pass was a gone critter. Once a rustler gets a drove beyond that point there's no chance of finding your stock any more."

"We can try, can't we?" It was Buck's voice again. "Come on. Let's give it a whirl, anyway. A couple of you take Tim and Lefty into town and have the doctor look them over. The rest of us will make for the pass."

The encouraging strain in which he spoke was infectious, yet in their hearts those who accompanied him southward to Dead Man's Pass felt that their quest was a vain one. Nor were their convictions ill-founded, for, although they searched the hills until they were saddle-weary, they discovered no trace of the missing cattle.

There was a hint of dawn in the sky when the party at length returned to Hidden Valley, and, as he prepared to bid Mary good-bye in front of the ranch-house porch, Buck could not help noticing how drawn and pale her features were.

"You're all in, Mary," he said to her. "Better get to bed and get some sleep."

"I'm not tired, Buck," she murmured. "Just depressed. I was going to sell those cattle to-morrow and realise some money on them. Now I'm flat broke—no money for supplies, no money to pay the men their wages."

"Aren't you forgetting the offer the railroad company made you for your land?" Buck told her reassuringly.

"But that deal will take time," she pointed out, "especially with Blake, the railroad representative, lying up there in one of my guest rooms and hovering between life and death. No, it's ready cash I need. I only wish I knew where that gold mine of dad's was located. A few nuggets out of it and I could pay my way."

Buck eyed her whimsically.

"Why don't you get the chart of the mine from the Phantom?" he suggested. "You say he's taking care of it for you."

"Well, I surmise he is," Mary answered. "But, not knowing who he is or where to locate him, how can I possibly get word to him that I need that map?"

Buck managed to check the smile that came to his lips.

"Maybe he'll find out for himself," he said. "He seems to be the kind of hombre who has ways and means of picking up information."

And shortly after making this cryptic and unenlightening observation, Buck Grant took his leave and set out for his homestead on Dry Creek.

The Phantom's Message

THE following evening Harvey Delaney dropped in at the Hidden Valley outfit to see Mary Grayson, and he had not been there long before the girl was telling him of the predicament that she was in.

Delaney listened to her story sympathetically, and when she had finished talking he leaned towards her and addressed her in an earnest tone.

"You're sure in a spot, Mary," he said to her, "but I'd like you to know that you can count on me for anything you need. Of course, I can't offer you the price for your ranch that the railroad company has mentioned. Nevertheless, if you're willing to take ready cash—"

"Oh, no, Harvey," the girl interrupted. "It's very kind of you, but it would hardly be fair to go back on the deal that I was arranging with Mr. Blake when he was shot down. I practically gave him my word that I'd do business with his company."

Delaney looked at her shrewdly. "Then maybe I could make you a loan," he volunteered. "I'll let you have what money you need, and you can pay me back when you sell your property to the railroad."

"No thanks, Harvey," Mary rejoined. "I couldn't think of imposing on you to that extent. I'm afraid you misunderstood me when I started to speak about my troubles. I wasn't hinting that you should help me out."

"I know that, Mary," the neighbouring cattleman said gently, "and I'm not surprised that your scruples won't permit you to borrow off me. But it would be a salve to your conscience if we made a business arrangement of the whole thing, wouldn't it?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, call it a mortgage if you like," Delaney explained. "I'll lend you a sum of money at an agreed rate of interest repayable within thirty days—your ranch to stand as security in the event of default. Of course, I don't need any security so far as you're concerned, Mary. We've been friends too long for that. But if we draw up an agreement and conduct this matter as a business proposition, then you won't have to look upon it as an act of charity—which is your only objection to my offer, I take it."

Both Delaney and Mary were unaware of the fact, but an attentive ear was pressed close to the keyhole on the other side of the door behind which they were talking. It was the ear of Lizzie, Mary Grayson's housekeeper, an honest enough young woman, but a born eavesdropper and an inveterate gossip.

Lizzie had heard all, and she continued to listen-in to their discussion until Mary and Delaney moved away from the door, and their voices became an indistinct murmur. Then she went out on to the ranch-house veranda, and, catching sight of a cowboy who was loitering near the porch, she hastened to transmit her news.

The cowboy in question was none other than Spooky, and Lizzie beamed at him smugly.

"Everything's going to be all right now," she declared, in the knowing accents of one who enjoyed imparting information.

Spooky stared at her in a puzzled fashion.

"Everything's going to be all right now?" he reiterated. "What do you mean?"

"I just heard Miss Mary and Harvey Delaney talkin' in the lounge," the housekeeper replied. "Poor thing, Miss Mary was all het-up on account of havin' no ready cash, an' that nice Mr. Delaney allowed as he'd lend her as much money as she wanted—on the security of her ranch."

Spooky gave a slight start, but, recovering himself, affected to be as pleased as Lizzie evidently was. At the first opportunity he slipped away, however, and a minute after he had left the housekeeper he was riding in the direction of Dry Creek, determined to

acquaint Buck with the tidings that he had received.

Buck was not alone in his cabin. He had received a visitor in the person of Judge Holmes, and the pair of them were deep in conversation when Spooky broke in upon them.

"Hey, Buck," the little fellow exclaimed without preamble, "there's something you oughta know. Delaney's at Hidden Valley offerin' Mary Grayson a loan on the security of her ranch. I ain't got nothin' against Delaney, but I don't like the sound of a proposition that has a mortgage mixed up in it."

Buck stood up, and so did Judge Holmes. But whereas the expression on the younger man's countenance was tense and grim, that on the features of the judge was mildly impassive.

"Why now, Spooky, you're not being very fair to Delaney," Holmes protested.

"He's been a friend to the Graysons all along, and I call this a real neighbourly gesture. Buck's just been telling me what the loss of that herd meant to Mary, and naturally Harvey Delaney would want to help her out. He's got plenty of money to do it, too."

"Yep, and plenty of mortgages on other ranches as well, according to all accounts," Buck cut in.

"Why, surely you don't suspect him of having any ulterior motive?" the judge queried.

"I suspect anybody who's trying to get a foothold in this country," was Buck's retort, "especially with the railroad aiming to lay a line clean through it. The man who holds territory here can stick out for a fortune when the railroad company wants to buy. And just because Delaney has been friendly with the Graysons all along, that won't make his mortgage any the less binding. He wouldn't be the first hombre to forget friendship when there was a stack of dough in sight."

Judge Holmes pursed his lips.

"That's true," he reflected, "and a mortgage would certainly give him power over Mary. Yet it might be kind of difficult for you or me to tell her that, Buck. She thinks a good deal of Delaney."

The stalwart Ranger gave him a sidelong, thoughtful glance.

"There's someone else whose opinion she values pretty highly, judge," he commented. "I mean the Phantom Rider. She doesn't know he's Buck Grant, but from the way she's talked it's clear she has a lot of faith in him."

"I get it, Buck," Spooky interposed. "You're gonna ride as the Phantom again, an' give her a piece of advice."

"Spooky, you're almost too intelligent to live," Buck said with a grin.

"But, by the way, have you got that chart I asked you to take care of? I want it, for to-morrow I'm ridin' north to locate the secret mine. If I can lay my hands on any gold, that may be there, Mary Grayson's immediate troubles will be over."

The map of the mine was produced, and Buck thrust it into his pocket. Then he rigged himself out in the garb that he wore as the Phantom, and, Spooky having saddled Silver in the meantime, the big fellow was soon galloping along the trail that led to the Hidden Valley outfit.

He prayed that he would not be too late to prevent Mary from coming to any definite arrangement with Harvey Delaney, and when he at length reached the vicinity of the Grayson ranch-house he lost no time in dismounting from his horse and advancing towards the building on foot, leaving Silver tethered in a cobbie that was within a stone's throw of the veranda.

Everything seemed in his favour. No one was about, and the only light in the ground floor of the ranch-house came from a room which he knew to be the lounge; and as he reached the open window of that lounge he peered cautiously over the sill and saw Delaney and Mary seated at a table there.

Delaney was reading the contents of a document which he had apparently drawn up, and Buck heard his voice clearly.

"Thirty days from the above date," the man was quoting, "I, Mary Grayson, promise to repay Harvey Delaney the sum of ten thousand dollars, and hereby pledge the Hidden Valley ranch as security for payment of same."

He paused, and then:

"Well, Mary," he continued, "that's the agreement, and I'm glad I've finally persuaded you to shelve your scruples in regard to borrowing money from me. For I don't think I need mention that you haven't a better friend in Benson County."

"I'm very grateful to you, Harvey," the girl said, "for I really am up against it."

"All right, then," Delaney announced. "Put your signature to this, Mary, and I'll let you have my cheque for the ten thousand."

Mary picked up a pen, and the neighbouring rancher thrust the document towards her. Another moment and the transaction would have been carried out, but even as the girl was on the point of attaching her name to that deed she heard something fall with a light thud behind her chair.

She started, looked round quickly, and caught sight of a crumpled fragment of paper lying on the floor. It was wrapped around a stone, and in the very instant that she snatched it up it dawned on her that it must have been thrown through the window.

"What is it, Mary?"

Delaney spoke the words, but without answering him the girl stumbled across to the window, and as she looked out into the night she discerned a familiar figure running in the direction of a cobbie—the figure of a man in a white cloak—the figure of the mystery rider whom she knew as the Phantom.

With a sharp intake of the breath, Mary drew back from the window, and, unfolding the missive that she had picked up, she scanned it rapidly, and read as follows:

"Don't accept a loan from anyone, not even Harvey Delaney.—THE PHANTOM RIDER."

"Mary, what is it? What's that note you picked up? Let me see it."

Delaney's voice aroused her. She found him standing by her side, but it was obvious he had not desecrated the Phantom. His eyes were riveted on the scrap of paper which she was holding, and which she now made haste to conceal.

"I can't show it to you, Harvey," she gasped.

"But why?"

She did not explain—scarcely knew what to say. She only knew that she was prepared to follow the Phantom's counsel, blindly. Delaney was her friend, but the Phantom had proved himself an even greater friend, and even though his identity was unknown to her she felt that it was impossible to question his judgment. Indeed, the very mystery that surrounded him seemed to lend force to this message from him.

At last she found her tongue.

"Harvey," she stammered out, "I—I can't accept that loan."

"What do you mean, Mary?"

"It's something I can't discuss, Harvey—"

And then she stopped, for at that moment Lizzie burst into the room, her eyes goggling, her face drained of every vestige of colour.



"You've heard of the Phantom Rider, ain't you?" the white man queried.

"Miss Mary!" the housekeeper screeched in alarm. "Miss Mary, I just saw that ghost man from the window of my room! Him they calls the Phantom! I saw him—plain as daylight—ridin' away into the brush!"

Mary stole a furtive and uncertain glance at Harvey Delaney. His countenance seemed to have grown suddenly rock-like in its hardness, and there was a glitter of resentment in his eyes; and, seeing the look on his features, Mary experienced a feeling of awkwardness, for she knew that it must appear as if she did not trust him.

Yet, much as she hated the idea of him taking offence, she could not bring herself to reconsider her impulsive decision and go against the Phantom's advice.

The Northern Trail

IT was early morning, and Dirk and his fellow-rustlers were assembled in the remote cabin that was their hide-out.

With them was their leader, courting, as usual, the deepest shadows of a room whose windows were thickly curtained, and in the semi-darkness he and his hirelings were holding a conference upon their ambition to acquire Hidden Valley and the rest of the territory through which the railroad company was to lay its line.

"Well, anyway, boss," Dirk was saying, "you've got to give us credit for a clean job the other night. We lifted that Grayson herd, and we've already turned the cattle over to Lopez, the buyer from Mexico."

"Which means them steers are safely over the border," put in Keeler, another of the gang.

"Yes," agreed the dim-seen leader of the band, "and the loss of her herd leaves Mary Grayson with no resources except the gold diggings her father discovered."

He paused, and then drummed his fingers on the surface of a scored table at which he and his men were seated.

"The Phantom has the only means of locating that mine," he went on truculently. "If we only knew where to look for it, we might trap him there—yeah, and net a fortune into the bargain."

"We know that mine is somewhere north of Music Mountain, boss," stated Dirk. "I'm goin' up that way myself this mornin' to meet Red Eagle and his renegades, and pay 'em the dough you promised 'em for helpin' us. I fixed up to see them near Navajo Canyon. Wonder if there's any chance o' me runnin' across the Phantom while I'm around there."

It was a possibility that seemed to impress the gang-leader, for he leaned forward quickly in his chair.

"You never know, Dirk," he said. "Listen, take Gabe and Keeler and Roscoe with you. If you do happen to

spot the Phantom, stick to his trail. He may lead you to the mine. And if he does, let him have it in the back as soon as you're certain you've reached the diggings."

Ten minutes later Dirk was riding from the hide-out with the three men who had been detailed to accompany him, and it was at a smart trot that they pushed through the hills, their objective being Navajo Canyon, away to the north.

If the gangsters had but known it, they were not the only ones who had business in that locality on this particular morning, for about the time that they set forth on their journey, Mary Grayson was preparing to leave Hidden Valley ranch and make tracks in the same direction.

In fact, at the very moment when Dirk and his comrades departed from their headquarters, Mary was bidding good-bye to her friend Helen Moore in front of the ranch-house porch.

"But who is this man Hudson that you want to see?" Helen asked, as the other girl climbed astride a pony that had been saddled for her.

"A man who was a close friend of my father's," Mary replied. "He owns a ranch to the north of a place called Navajo Canyon. I was looking through some correspondence in dad's desk last night, and it seems to me that Hudson may have been in his confidence—and perhaps know something about that hidden mine."

Having explained the reason for her decision to travel north, Mary left her friend and took the trail that led towards Music Mountain, and some two or three hours later she might have been seen skirting the slopes of that barren elevation. Then she pressed onward into a sombre gorge—the ravine known as Navajo Canyon—and it was as she emerged from this, after covering the length of it, that something slithered through the dust immediately ahead of her bronc.

It was a rattlesnake that had dragged itself from some rocks near by, and it speedily vanished into a mass of chaparral thickets on the other side of the trail. But its momentary appearance startled Mary's horse, and, cavorting in its alarm, the pony threw its rider heavily to the ground.

The shock of the fall drove the breath from Mary's body, but, recovering herself, she glanced quickly and fearfully in the direction of the thickets. There was no sign of the rattlesnake, however, and she realised with a feeling of thankfulness that the serpent had probably been as scared by the encounter as her horse.

She then became conscious that her right ankle was paining her. Her foot must have been twisted in the stirrup when she had fallen, and as she made an

effort to rise it gave way beneath her the instant she laid her weight on it. With an exclamation she sank down again, and was nursing the injury tenderly when she heard a shout and looked round to see a horseman approaching her from the canyon.

"Buck!" she ejaculated. "What are you doing here?"

"I've been scouting around to see if I could find any trace of that mine for you," he answered in a tone of concern. "But what happened, Mary? Are you hurt?"

She told him how she had been thrown, and, dismounting from his bronc, he examined her ankle and noticed that it was swollen. Then he indicated a dilapidated cabin which stood about three hundred yards beyond the mouth of Navajo Canyon.

"I'd better get you over to that shack and do a little doctoring," he said. "Looks to me like you've got a bad sprain there."

He secured her horse and lifted her into the saddle, then swung himself on to Silver's back and led the other pony to the cabin he had espied; and on reaching this he carried her inside and placed her on a chair.

The chair was thick with dust. So was every other article of furniture in the dwelling, which had obviously been untenanted for a considerable time.

"Nice lay-out," Buck commented ironically. "Say, you get your riding-boot and stocking off, while I see if I can find some water."

He went out of the cabin, and was just in time to see Silver cantering off with Mary's horse through a tract of brushwood not far from the shack, whereupon he promptly sprinted after the two broncs and caught up with them as they were slaking their thirst at a stream on the other side of the thickets.

He allowed the animals to drink their fill, and then tethered them to the limb of a tree close by. Next he dipped his sombrero into the stream, and, leaving the ponies where they were, carried the hat back to the cabin.

Mary had removed her boot and her stocking, and, using his sombrero as a basin, he bathed her injured ankle and afterwards bound it tightly with a handkerchief.

A confusion of sounds caused Buck to rush to one of the grimy windows. Three horsemen were galloping towards the dwelling.

They were renegade Indians, their long hair flying in the breeze, their voices raised in a chorus of shrill whoops that were accompanied by the blasts of fire-arms which they were flourishing in their hands.

"Redskins!" Buck jerked. "And heading straight for this shack!"

"Who are they firing at?" Mary gasped.

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"Nobody," the big Ranger answered. "They're just getting rid of some high spirits, I guess. If you ask me, they're tanked up."

"Tanked up?" Mary echoed.

"Yeah—drunk," Buck said to her. "By thunder, I'd like to know where they get their liquor from! These Indians are supposed to be civilised. They wear white men's clothes, they ape white men's ways, and they're taught some sort of schooling. But when it comes to taking whisky they revert to type, and there's no telling what mischief they're liable to get up to. It might be wise to keep out of their way. Look, that pantry over there."

He motioned to a cupboard at the far side of the room. A poster had been nailed to the door of it, a faded reward notice bearing the picture of some forgotten bandit and offering a reward for the latter's capture, dead or alive. But Buck paid little heed to that bill as he assisted Mary across to the pantry and entered it with her.

She had snatched up her stocking and her riding-boot, and she donned them in the gloom of the cupboard as she and Buck stood there behind the door, which they had pulled shut. Meanwhile they could hear the renegades approaching rapidly, and soon they realised that the Indians were drawing rein outside the cabin and dismounting.

"Lucky I left our horses out of sight," Buck whispered to Mary in the darkness of the pantry. "Unless those drink-crazed fools blunder off through the thickets in search of water, they'll never guess that anybody else is around."

The three Redskins lurched into the dwelling, talking loudly in their native tongue and brandishing their guns. They had ceased their display of random shooting, however, and in their hiding-place Buck and Mary heard the clatter of the weapons as they were laid heavily on a table—two revolvers and a magazine rifle.

Buck had some slight knowledge of the dialect in which they were conversing, and from their slovenly speech he gathered that they were expecting someone to meet them at the shack.

He also learned that one of the renegades was known as Red Eagle, a fact which convinced him that these were three of the party who had covered the escape of the rustlers when Mary's herd had been "lifted."

Each of the Redskins had produced a flask of rye whisky, and they were imbibing the strong spirit freely. Indeed, they had drained them dry when the pounding of hoofs at length caught their attention, signalling the arrival of another group of horsemen.

Then they heard a white man's voice, a voice which was familiar to Buck, and one which he immediately recognised as the voice of the ruffian known to him as Dirk.

"Hallo, there, Red Eagle!"

Dirk spoke the greeting as he came into the shack with Gabe, Keeler and Roscoe at his heels, and the Indians rose unsteadily, whereupon the four rustlers were quick to divine from their bleared eyes that they had been drinking.

Dirk frowned slightly and looked at Red Eagle, a tall, lean Indian with a face that was both crafty and insolent.

"Fire-water, huh?" the white man said.

"Sure," the Indian rejoined. "Fire-water—plenty good."

"Yeah?" growled Dirk. "Well, better go easy on it—you an' your friends. I know the boss supplies you with it, but he don't expect you to soak yourselves in it."

Red Eagle eyed him mockingly, and then, after a brief silence, Dirk addressed him again.

"Listen," he said, "we're here to slip you some dough for what you did the other night. But afore we pay you off I want to mention another job that we'd like you to tackle."

"So?" Red Eagle grunted. "What you want me do, huh?"

Behind the closed door of the pantry, Buck and Mary were listening with bated breath, and Dirk's next words caused them to stiffen involuntarily.

"You've heard of the Phantom Rider, ain't you?" the white man queried. "And you know the sort of rig-out he wears, don't you?"

"Sure," was the Indian's laconic reply.

"All right," Dirk went on. "We've got a hunch he may be somewhere in the hills north of here, lookin' for a lost gold-mine, and it's occurred to me that you might get your band together and spread out in the hope of spottin' him."

Red Eagle's sloe-black eyes seemed to narrow.

"So?" he remarked again. "And if we do spot him?"

"Trail him till he finds the mine," Dirk answered. "Then feed him lead. But get this, Red Eagle—you'll have to sober up, for right now you couldn't hit a barn door with a load o' buckshot."

It was an observation that kindled an expression of resentment on the Indian's features.

"You dare say that to me, Dirk?" he mouthed thickly,

(Continued on page 28)

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October 3rd, 1936

"SEVEN SINNERS"

(Continued from page 8)

He beamed at the priest. "Those clothes suit you, but if you're thinking of trying any more disguises, you cure your limp—it betrayed you. I found out that a Dr. Evans had signed the death certificate, and when I went to see the doctor he had been lured away. He was killed at Ramley in that train smash. The man who derailed the Nice express this time shoved a lorry across the permanent way. That's two crimes you people are responsible for."

The three conspirators glanced at each other in fear.

"A ring on Evans' hand made me suspicious about the Pilgrims of Peace." He looked at the priest. "I got a call through to Buenos Aires, and though you told me, Hoyt, you had never been there, the police of South America knew you. They're expecting you—all of you—on the John Murdoch."

He took out a slip of paper. "I happen to have an agent on that ship, and this cable states that your destination is South America, and that the John Murdoch is stuffed full of guns, bombs, and machine-guns. You'd get a pretty stiff sentence for gun-running, but for murder—"

"We've never murdered anyone," Sir Charles whimpered. Harwood could see the man shaking. "This is the first I've heard about Evans. He was my best friend, and—"

"Keep your mouth shut, you fool!" snarled Hoyt.

"You'd better talk soon or you'll be for the high jump," mocked the detective, and leaned forward. "Maybe I can help you. You see, I don't think you had a hand in these murders. I don't think any of you have the nerve to send a train crashing off the lines and needlessly killing people, but your ringleader would. Tell me his name, and—"

He took out a cigarette and lit it. "And I might do my best for you."

"He's bluffing!" cried Hoyt. "Hold your tongues!"

"I assure you that I—" Harwood happened to look up and noticed that in a mirror he could see the rest of the dining-car. His voice died away because he could see a man's back—a man that held a cigar quite close to his ear—the man who had sat next to Sir Charles Webber at the Guildhall banquet. Even as he watched, the man got leisurely to his feet and strolled out of the compartment.

Harwood glanced at Caryl.

"I now know who is the ringleader of this bunch. A very ruthless man, who would not hesitate to double-cross any person that stood in his path." He studied three frightened faces. "Are you going to talk or are you too scared of him? Nothing can happen to you in an express travelling at eighty miles an hour, and—"

"But, John"—Caryl touched his arm—"we're not travelling all that fast. The train is stopping."

"So we are—curious." Harwood was puzzled. "Sounds as if we were coasting along." He rushed to a window and tried to peer forth into the darkness. "We're not doing more than twenty miles an hour."

Harwood suddenly thought of the man whom he knew to be the train-wrecker. Might the man not attempt a third crime? In this train were the only people who could betray the mur-

October 3rd, 1936.

derer's secret. The sound in the train changed to a dull rumbling.

"We're in a tunnel!" he shouted.

They saw him race up the saloon car and fling open a door. Next moment Harwood was back in the saloon, and they saw by his face that something was radically wrong.

"The coach has been uncoupled," he cried. "It looks as if we're going to stop in a tunnel."

"He's tricked us!" screamed Sir Charles Webber. "I warned you not to trust him."

"Come on!" Harwood beckoned to Caryl. "We've got to get out of here."

The detective and Caryl, followed by the others, dashed down the saloon. The coach groaned to a stop with a shudder. On flinging open the door, at first they saw only blackness.

"That white patch," Hoyt pointed. "That's the mouth of the tunnel. It's gone black. What's that I can hear?" "Good heavens," gasped Harwood, "it's a train!"

In that moment Harwood saw everything. He realised now why the ring that had been found on Dr. Evans had been given to him. It was to lure him to this coach, which the wrecker had uncoupled knowing it would come to a stop in this tunnel.

The roar of the train grew louder. With screams of fear Elizabeth Wentworth dashed back into the saloon, followed by Webber and Hoyt. Harwood could see the flames from the smoke-stack of the oncoming engine.

"We've got one chance," Harwood yelled, and gripped the girl's arm. "A refuge in the tunnel for line repairers." They leaped down on to the track.

Paul Turbe sauntered into a Gaumont-British news theatre and selected a comfortable stall. They were showing pictures of the terrible smash that had occurred in a tunnel when a coach had been uncoupled. Everyone had been killed, according to the report.

The Assistant Prefect smiled as he watched the gruesome scenes. He decided he would like a cigar. He bit off the end and placed the Corona in his mouth. He fumbled for a match.

"Excuse me," said a hoarse voice behind him, and a lighter flickered into flame.

"Thanks," murmured Paul Turbe, and, turning round, stared into the face of John Harwood.

Paul Turbe drew a gun and tried to make a get-away, but there were too many men watching that news theatre and inside that news theatre; men who were after Turbe—real Scotland Yard men. Only one man died in the gun fight, and that man was Paul Turbe.

The Buckley registrar was astounded when Harwood and Caryl walked into his office. He beamed at them.

"You've come to register your child?"

"No, sir," chuckled Harwood. "You see, we've just had a telegram from a Lady Morland in Scotland. You wouldn't know her, but she's found her necklace, got caught in some dress or other. Of course, that doesn't mean anything to you, but it means a lot to us, because now we won't get fired, and as we've just collected quite a nice reward for assisting in killing a most unpleasant scoundrel, we thought we'd celebrate by getting married."

(By permission of Gaumont-British Distributors, Ltd., starring Edmund Lowe as Harwood and Constance Cummings as Caryl Fenton.)

"THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE"

(Continued from page 18)

when he spoke his voice was steel-like. "This is my show, Dave," he replied. "not yours! There's been enough killing in this family and there's going to be no more. I loved little Buddy as a brother just as you did, Dave; but I brought all this trouble on you, and it was I who was responsible for Buddy's death."

He looked round sternly as he picked up his gun from the table.

"Let no one attempt to stop me," he said. "I'm goin' over to the Falins, and if they don't wipe me out I'm wiping them out."

But even as the door closed on him June was rushing after him, though her mother caught her and held her.

"Let me go—let me go!" panted the girl. "He'll be killed—he'll be killed!"

In a flash she had thrown herself into her father's arms and was pouring out her words in an incoherent stream.

"Oh, let me go—go after him—stop him! They'll kill him, and—and I love him! Oh, I can't help it, but I've always loved him, and if they kill him I'll die."

Just for a moment there was a deathly silence. Over his daughter's head old Tolliver's eyes met Dave's. The latter had gone a little white, but his jaw had come out. Without another word he walked across to the door. But there was no gun in his hand as he went out.

Hale, striding along in the direction of the Falins, swung round as he heard footsteps behind him.

"This is my job, Dave," he said curtly. "I don't want you here."

Dave's answer was to slam out his fist with all the force behind it he could muster, catching Hale on the point of the jaw and sending him sagging limply to the ground.

Just for a second he stood looking down on the inert body, strangely sorrowfully. Then he picked up his gun, tossed it among the bushes and with his hands in his pockets set out at a smart pace for the Falin's shack.

Buck Falin and his sons sat in their shack, the old man with his head resting in his hands. And once more he gave vent to his feelings as he had done many times before during the last few days.

"We've always fought against men, we Falins. And now we've killed a kid—a pretty little innocent kid. And they'll label me in these parts as the man who kills kids."

Wade Falin spoke suddenly, as he lounged against the window.

"Holy smoke! Here's Dave Tolliver without his gun!"

In a flash he had snatched up his gun, but his father leaped at him and whirled it out of his hand.

"Stop that!" he commanded and held up his hand for silence.

They all looked on, wondering—heard the footsteps getting nearer, heard a knock on the door.

"Who's there?" demanded the old man.

"Dave Tolliver."

"What d'you want?"

"To talk with you—and I've got no gun."

It was a strange scene. Dave stood erect, his hands at his sides. Buck

Falin faced him, his sons behind him. And then Dave spoke.

"I came to tell you, Mr. Falin, that we're through. You've licked us and we know it. Can't we stop all this killin' now for ever?"

The old man gazed incredulously at him for a space.

"Are you—speakin' truth?" he demanded at length.

"I mean every word I've said. We want to finish with the feud."

The old man's eyes bored him intently. But they went down the next minute.

"I just don't know what to say," he answered. "There ain't no words of mine, worse luck, that can bring your poor little Buddy back, but I'll be sorry for it all the days of my life, Dave Tolliver, and I'd like you to know it. I've never killed a kid yet—and I want you to believe that I never meant to."

"Thank you, Mr. Falin."

"Will you—will you shake hands, Dave Tolliver?"

He put out a hand, and the next moment the younger man had gripped it tightly.

The old man stood silent while the door closed. Wade Falin broke the silence and there was a laugh in his voice. For he had picked up his gun and was watching Dave as he strode away.

"Gosh, dad, that was real cunnin'. Why, I thought you meant to let him get away first of all. As it is—"

His gun went to his shoulder, there was a quick report, he saw Dave stagger and fall. But the next minute another shot rang out, and Wade Falin sagged to the floor and lay very still. And his father, with the smoking gun in his hand and his eyes blazing with wild fury spoke:

"The rat—the dirty rat!" he exclaimed furiously. "Fetch Dave Tolliver in, all of you. If he dies, I'll kill the rest of 'you!"

It was old Falin himself who carried Dave into the Tolliver shack and laid him down. It was old Falin himself who faced Judd Tolliver as a brave prisoner faces the firing party.

"I've got to tell you, Judd Tolliver," he began, but in a moment his voice faded away. For Dave's eyes had opened and he was signing them all to listen, as to their amazement his hand went out and gripped Buck Falin's.

"Let me—do—the tellin'," he murmured faintly. "The feud's—over. We've shaken hands—you've got to, too, dad. Comin' away I fell on my gun."

Buck Falin's head went down, and Dave's faint voice murmured on as he smiled at June in the shelter of Hale's encircling arm.

"It's all right now. You two'll—be able—to get married—and—"

As Buck Falin put out his hand and Judd Tolliver gripped it Dave's smile deepened.

"Swell," he murmured. "Now I don't care—what—"

His voice trailed away, his head drooped to the pillow. But the two old men both stood gripping hands tightly. Death had taken yet one more victim; but both knew that it was the last that the feud would ever claim. The feud between the Tollivers and the Falins was at an end.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures. Ltd., starring Sylvia Sidney, Henry Fonda and Fred MacMurray.)

"THE DRAGNET"

(Continues from page 12)

"Okay. I'll be there. It's a trick box all right."

Larry slained down the receiver. He ran his car a little way down the street, then left it parked outside a house. He must trust to his legs now.

Meanwhile, at the Dover Club, things were happening. Ross, returned from his pilgrimage to the Wonder Hotel, had moved about the club in his usual manner, feeling rather sick inwardly, but, outwardly, all oily courtesy to his patrons.

As Ross had passed by a solitary diner in correct evening clothes, this gentleman had risen softly and had come behind him, right hand in the pocket of a brand new dress jacket. Something like a short stick stuck out the pocket.

"Keep walking, Joe. Keep smiling. I've got you covered, and I'll hole you through and through if you won't! It's Fred, all right, don't worry. Keep walking—straight to your office, Joe."

Ross, with the gentleman in correct clothes close behind him, had "walked," more or less naturally, across the floor back to his office.

"Which of you killed Mollie?"

"I didn't, Fred. I swear it!"

"Didn't you, Joe? Just too bad!"

Fred Cole, hatchet-faced, pale and deadly with determination, was caressing the trigger of his pistol.

"It—it was Crane," Ross muttered thickly. "Shot her—before—before—I could stop him."

"You're a liar, Joe."

"It's the straight truth."

Cole played with the pistol lovingly.

"Get him here, Joe. Telephone for him," came the quiet order.

Ross took up the instrument and dialed a number, his fat hand shaking.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"SEVEN SINNERS."—John Harwood, Edmund Lowe; Caryl Fenton, Constance Cummings; Paul Turbe, Thomy Bourdelle; Axel Hoyt, Henry Oscar; Sir Charles Webber, Felix Aylmer; Elizabeth Wentworth, Joyce Kennedy; Registrar, O. B. Clarence; Chief Constable, Mark Lester; Wagner, Allan Jeayes.

"THE DRAGNET."—Larry Thomas jun., Rod La Rocque; Kit Cathcart, Marion Nixon; Mollie Cole, Betty Cempson; Joe Ross, Jack Adair; Arnold Crane, John Dilson; Arthur Hull, Edward Keane; Al Wilson, Donald Kerr; Thomas Harrison, Joseph W. Girard; Fred Cole, John Bantry; Lawrence Thomas sen., Ed le Saint.

"THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE."—June Tolliver, Sylvia Sidney; Dave Tolliver, Henry Fonda; Jack Hale, Fred MacMurray; Thurber, Nigel Bruce; Judd Tolliver, Fred Stone; Melissa Tolliver, Beulah Bendi; Buddy Tolliver, Spanky MacFarland; Buck Falin, Robert Barrat; The Sheriff, Samuel S. Hinds; Wade Falin, Henry Kleinbach.

"THE SUICIDE CLUB."—Princess Florizel, Robert Montgomery; Princess Brenda, Rosalind Russell; Colonel Geradine, Frank Morgan; President of Club, Reginald Owen; George Barnley, Louis Hayward; King, E. E. Clive; Major O'Rook, Tom Moore; Captain Rich, Leland Hodgson.

Crane said he would be over in ten minutes.

Only the tick-tock of the clock on the mantel behind the perspiring Ross disturbed the silence until somewhere about ten-thirty, when the office door gently opened to admit a sergeant of police and two policemen. The sergeant, levelling a pistol at Cole, spoke sharply:

"Game's up, Fred! Drop that gun!"

As Cole sulkily obeyed, Ross put up his hands.

"Glad you've come, officer. Ho'd got me in a jam."

Cole, white as chalk, muttered:

"He killed my wife. Shot her dead in the 'phone call-box outside."

The sergeant signed to the two policemen who closed in on Cole, and, without any fuss, put handcuffs on his wrists.

"Stop Him!"

ANNETTE, the check girl, was off duty for a few minutes and somebody else was on the door when Larry and Kit walked in.

"Cards, please," came the challenge.

"This is a members' only night."

Larry stepped up to the man, poking a gun under his ribs. Kit closed the outer door and dropped the bolt.

"Keep quiet," said Larry in level tones. "The police are in possession. Tell me about that call-box and save your dirty skin."

"There's a box drawer that pulls out, gov'nor—so's the gov'nor can see who's telephoning," whined the man.

"And the gov'nor is?"

"Crane, sir, He's the real guy here."

Larry and Kit entered Ross' room just as the police were marching out with the gaol-breaker Cole.

The telephone tinkled on the desk where Ross was lighting a cigarette. The sergeant snatched up the instrument, the rest all suddenly silent.

"Mr. Lawrence Thomas?" The sergeant put down the 'phone as he turned to Larry.

"Yes."

"You're wanted on a charge of murder at the Wonder Hotel."

"That's the man who helped to kill Arthur Hill." Larry jumped at Ross, clutching him round the throat. They glared at each other. "Spit it out, Ross!" Larry ordered.

Ross made no attempt to struggle. His beady eyes met Larry's in sullen defiance as he snarled:

"I know you killed him, and I'll give evidence to that effect. I saw you go in."

"So you were there?" Larry released the fellow. "Note that, officer!"

Kit, clinging to Larry's arm, drew him away. The policemen escorting Cole paused, waiting for orders.

A trampling of hasty feet heralded the arrival of a flying squad of police sent in search of Larry. They were in charge of an inspector, who at once took over. He addressed Larry:

"Take it quietly, Thomas. You've put yourself wrong by resisting the police in execution of their duty. Anything you say will be taken down."

"I ask nothing better," Larry told him. "I've found papers hidden in Hill's desk which told me what I wanted to know. He was on the payroll here—there's proof beyond all question. He knew too much, and so they killed him, trying to plant it on to me. I had to get back here. I knew Cole was coming for revenge and I didn't want him to forestal justice."

Cole, manacled and seething with passion, spoke out:

"I'd have had 'em both if you fellers hadn't pushed in. I'll get 'em yet."

"Silence, you!" shouted the inspector. "Go on, Thomas, I'm taking notes."

October 3rd, 1936.

At this moment Crane walked in, clean and spry and cool as always.

"What's this, inspector? People in the hall are beginning to fear a raid."

The inspector tapped his notebook with his pencil.

"Go on, Thomas."

Larry handed him the pistol from his pocket.

"Found in Hill's desk. You'll find it fits the bullet that killed Mollie Cole. It hasn't been fired since. Hill was to get rid of it, but didn't get a chance. It's Crane's gun—you'll be able to check up on that." He shot Mollie Cole through the wall here."

"Through the wall?" the inspector asked.

Crane merely smiled.

"Yes," Larry advanced to the wall between the phone box outside and the room itself. Here was a small knob in the beading of the panels. Larry took hold of the knob and drew out a hidden drawer. At once a gap in the wall appeared, and the interior of the call-box was visible to all. On the back of the drawer was lettered:

"Local calls 5 cents."

"Fits into the frame," Larry explained. "You'd never guess it from the box. Crane put the bullet into Mollie's back while Ross rang off the phone from this desk."

"A pretty story," sneered Crane. "I'm glad you're writing it down. What interest could I have in killing the woman?"

"You killed her all right!" Cole hissed. "Same as you had me put away. We knew too much. And now you've done in that fool Hill. I'll tell you everything, inspector—how the wheel's faked—how the dice are loaded—how Crane has lined his pockets, the tyre. How we've all been his dupes, first to last. Even Joe Ross—"

The inspector suddenly dived at Crane, who had his hand to his mouth. "Stop him!"

A brief, violent struggle followed, then Crane was handcuffed between two of the police. He was still smiling.

Larry and Kit were allowed to go. As they climbed into Kit's car, she gave the wheel seat to him.

"I'm going back to dad to-morrow," Larry told her. "Partners once more. What about you coming in, too; in the firm of Thomas & Thomas?"

Kit rested her head on his shoulder. "Suits me," she whispered.

(By permission of Pathe Pictures, Ltd., starring Rod la Rocque and Marion Nixon.)

"THE SUICIDE CLUB"

(Continued from page 20)

"You will answer to me, you scoundrel!" he cried.

O'Rook had handed Florizel a pair of rapiers. The prince offered the hilts of them to Noel.

"Choose, if you please. I challenge you to a duel to the death. These gentlemen will keep the ring for us."

"I ask nothing better," answered Noel. "My quarrel, after all, is with you, Prince Florizel, as the representative of a tyrannical monarchy."

A ring was formed and they fought with ferocity, Noel showing himself a swordsman of no mean ability. Twice he was nearly disarmed by Florizel, and twice saved himself, to press the prince with new and surprising vigour.

At last Florizel forced him into the garden. The crowd—Noel's men and O'Rook's—followed to keep silent watch. Noel pressed the attack, and, for a few tense minutes, held Florizel at bay. Then, step by step, the prince forced his opponent backward until he was standing, all unaware, on the brink of the pit he had dug for his victims. Here Noel fenced with great desperation and actually succeeded in wounding Florizel in the left arm.

The prince suddenly broke through Noel's guard and struck his rapier sharply out of his hand. Noel flung up his arms as he overbalanced and fell backwards with a crash into the open grave!

When his men came hurrying to lift him out, they found that he had broken a leg in the fall.

Florizel handed his rapier to O'Rook. "Honour is satisfied," he stated. "See that he is taken to a hospital at once."

He turned to go. From somewhere out of the crowd came Brenda, hatless and frantic in her haste. She flung her arms about Florizel.

"My prince!" she cried in rapture. "I adore you!"

"Darling girl," whispered Florizel. "Calm yourself. We are not alone."

Six weeks later, the Princess Brenda was married with great pomp and ceremony in the lovely old cathedral of Irania to his Highness, the Crown Prince of Karovia!

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Ltd., starring Robert Montgomery and Rosalind Russell.)

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

(Continued from page 25)

swaying a little on his feet. "Me, best shot in all this country? Huh, I outshoot you, anyhow!"

The white man's upper lip curled in a sneer.

"Don't make me laugh," he scoffed. "I'll bet you five bucks against your mustang that you can't outshoot me."

Quick to accept the challenge, Red Eagle snatched his forty-five from the table and rammed it into his holster with an uncertain gesture. Then he commanded Dirk to select a target, and, looking about him in a somewhat amused fashion, the rustler suddenly pointed across the room.

"There you are," he said. "We'll aim for that guy's nose. That's the target. We draw and shoot, and the first bullet that hits the mark is the winner. Keeler here can give the word to fire."

Within their hiding-place, Buck and Mary wondered what Dirk meant by "that guy's nose." They did not know that his extended hand was indicating the photograph on the bill which was pinned to the door of the small pantry where they had concealed themselves!

"Good!" they heard Red Eagle say. "Me think you lose five dollar, Dirk."

There was a pause, during which the two marksmen looked towards Keeler for the signal; Dirk steady and confident to the point of contempt, Red Eagle no less confident, but far from steady.

"Go!" Keeler ejaculated all at once, grinning as he pronounced the word, and on the instant Dirk and the Indian plucked their irons from their holsters and pumped lead at the door of the cupboard, the bellow of the guns resounding deafeningly through the shack!

(Another smashing episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones.)

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Men of Muscle

UP on the Colorado River, where it runs through the mountains of the barren Gila country and divides California from Arizona, the age-old pinnacles and crags that tower into the vault of the sky seemed to listen stolidly to the voices of progress which had been raised in their midst.

The voice of progress was made up of a conglomeration of sounds—the clatter of machinery, the remote grinding of powerful drills, the deep rumblings of dynamite-charges detonated by the thrust of a plunger, the rattle of tip-cars that came shunting along a narrow-gauge track and hurled load after load of dirt and rubble down a sharp embankment—and, like an undertone, the shouts of men who banded instructions while the din went on around them.

Coming upon the scene unexpectedly, you might have pondered over the reason for this activity in a locale which was without a doubt one of the remotest and most desert regions in the United States of America. But if you had seen two grimy workmen who emerged from a yawning cavern in the face of one of the hills, and if you had listened to their conversation, you would have been speedily enlightened as to the nature of the project that was afoot.

The two workmen in question were members of a drilling crew, one of them answering to the name of McClintock, the other being known simply as Oscar.

"But I don't see the choke," said Oscar, who was Dane by nationality and dumb by nature.

McClintock stopped and looked at him with the air of a patient and long-suffering man. He was six feet and a couple of inches of bony American,

with a whimsical face that might have been stamped out of a piece of old leather, so weather-worn had it become.

"Yuh don't see the joke?" he murmured. "Well, I'll explain it to yuh again. This stupid guy that don't know nothin' about hard rock miners, he says he don't see the sense in us fellers buildin' a tunnel 'way out here. So I says this tunnel ain't no short cut, but a diversion tunnel."

"Den vot dis stoopid guy say?" inquired Oscar, who had been listening with careful attention.

McClintock grinned.

"Diversion?" he says. So I say 'Yeah, a diversion tunnel—for takin' the waters o' the Colorado. Otherwise where d'yuh think the river would go while we was buildin' the dam?'"

"Go on," Oscar coaxed.

"Well," announced McClintock, "all of a sudden this guy up an' says, 'Oh, I understand now. To divert the water, eh? When you mentioned diversion I thought you meant you were just buildin' the tunnel for fun.'"

Mac capped the anecdote with a gust of raucous laughter that went echoing along the cavern from which he and Oscar had just emerged. But the Dane's features remained immobile, for he still didn't see the "choke," and so his elongated comrade's voice registered mirth unaccompanied.

If Mac's bellowing merriment filled the mouth of the tunnel, however, the sound did not travel far into the interior of that cavern ere it was drowned by the other noises that prevailed there.

These noises were caused by machine-drills that were biting into the rock, implements which could break up the toughest stratum that the world's crust could boast, and which had

already helped to bore out this very tunnel to a distance of a quarter of a mile in the course of a month or two.

They were handled by men of might and muscle, as strong a breed as any you could wish to find, and these men were in charge of an overseer who held his job by reason of the fact that he was worth any two of them in a scrap.

Yet the overseer, Casey, was not by any means the dominant personality there. For the famous Black Jack Riley was present—Black Jack Riley, the hardest of hard cases—no mere foreman of a drilling crew, but boss of all the crews—in other words, the man responsible for seeing that the task of building the tunnel went ahead per schedule.

He topped the six-foot mark, did Black Jack Riley, though his bullock shoulders and his barrel chest made him look an inch or two shorter than he actually was. Two hundred and ten pounds of flesh and bone and muscle, built on the lines of a buffalo, with a mane of red hair and a face as craggy as the rock-chunks which were carried out of the tunnel by the train-load every day. That was Black Jack Riley.

He was now looking on at the men who were operating the drills, and there was an expression of sourness upon his rugged countenance, an expression that reached its height as he turned to Casey, foreman of the drilling crew.

"This ain't a life-job," he said in a voice that rasped like a file. "Try an' get it into your head that we're workin' against time. Your crew ain't diggin' enough tunnel—that's the long an' short of it."

"But I tell you, Black Jack, I'm doin' all I can," Casey protested, "and

my men are puttin' all they've got into it. You can see that for yourself."

Riley's big mouth twisted into a contemptuous sneer, and he was about to make some harsh and ironic retort when a man came across to him from a 'phone that was fixed to the cavern's wall.

"Super wants to see yuh, Black Jack," the man informed him.

Even Riley was answerable for his actions to someone higher up, and that someone was the superintendent who was in full control of this gigantic project to dam the waters of the Colorado. Without a word, therefore, the tunnel boss strode towards an escapeway or shaft that was connected with the plateau-summit of the hill.

An elevator carried him up through the core of the promontory to the clean, pure air and the welcome light of day, and leaving the pit-head, he walked in the direction of a group of buildings situated not far from that particular outlet.

These buildings formed a kind of settlement, with quarters for the men, a clinic for the treatment of casualties, offices for draughtsmen and clerks and the like, and a canteen big enough to seat a small army.

The superintendent's sanctum was located in the structure occupied by the "collar-and-tie-brigade"—as the miners facetiously called those who worked with the pen and not the drill—and two or three minutes later Black Jack was in conference with his chief.

"Riley," the superintendent declared, "this job is not going through as it should. We're under contract to complete that tunnel so that work on the actual dam can begin before the Fall. But it looks as if we won't do it."

Black Jack squared his mighty shoulders, and an aggressive expression appeared on his craggy face. In contrast to the dapper, quiet-spoken and cultured man seated at the desk he was like some ugly but magnificent barbarian.

"Now, listen, super," he growled, "I've just been talkin' to Casey about that, and although I'd be the last to admit it to any of the men I can't drive 'em any harder. They're goin' top speed right now, and if you want to finish ahead of schedule we've got to have another drill crew."

The superintendent smiled. "Well, that's why I sent for you," he remarked. "You've been shouting your head off for more men all along, so we're bringing in an extra crew this afternoon. An efficient gang of men they are, too, I can assure you. Real tunnel stiffs, Riley, with a good boss in charge of them. I can guarantee that."

"Yeah? Who is the boss of this new crew, anyway? Maybe I've heard of him. I've been around enough."

For answer the superintendent produced a sheet of paper, and glancing at it, Black Jack saw that it contained the names of the men belonging to the additional crew which had been hired.

The list was headed by one name that stood out before Riley's eyes as if it had been typed in letters of red; a name that caused him to stiffen; a name that set the muscles of his jaw twitching spasmodically in a way that spelled antagonism.

"Hard Rock Harrigan!" he said through his clenched teeth.

"Yes, Hard Rock Harrigan," the superintendent observed. "You'll agree he's a good drill boss."

Black Jack's brows were beetling. Harrigan of all men! They had to pick on that gang. Only too well did he know Harrigan. They'd worked

together before—on many a job that had been hailed as one of the wonders of engineering—but they'd never worked hand-in-glove as foreman and under-foreman should.

If there was one man in the world who was poison to Black Jack Riley, that man was Hard Rock Harrigan.

"Yeah," growled Black Jack in answer to the super's comment. "Yeah, sure—he knows his job all right."

The superintendent eyed the big tunnel boss keenly. He was well aware that Riley and Hard Rock Harrigan had never hit it off on previous occasions.

"Now, listen, Black Jack," he warned. "I don't want any trouble between you and Harrigan."

Riley thrust out his jaw.

"I ain't gonna start anything," he said with a particular emphasis.

"That's fine. I don't want you two taking out any time for private scraps on this job, for if you and Harrigan co-operate we'll finish ahead of schedule, and everyone will benefit by the bonus which has been promised as a reward for work well done."

"Well, you don't need to worry about any trouble comin' from my end," Black Jack grunted. "I want my share of that bonus as much as anybody. Besides, that Irishman can make more tunnel than any drill boss I know—"

He paused and rubbed his fingers over the knuckles of his right hand thoughtfully, as if he were dwelling upon the damage those knuckles might do to Harrigan in the event of a rough-house.

"Yeah," he repeated slowly, "I want my share o' that bonus, and I've gotta admit that Hard Rock Harrigan can handle a drill crew. So I'd hate anything to happen to him."

With that he departed from the office, and walking back towards the shaft by which he had ascended from the tunnel, his firm and heavy steps took him near the canteen.

It was as he was passing this building that he saw a number of plates standing on a window-sill. Each of these contained an appetising confection made by the hands of the kitchen-staff, and framed in the window was an attractive, dark-haired girl who was busily squeezing cream on to the pastries through an icing-cone.

She was Ann Anderson, commonly known as Andy, in charge of the canteen arrangements, and a prime favourite with the men.

"M'hm!" said Black Jack, stopping to cast eyes on the contents of the plates and the girl who was bent over them. "Vanilla pie!"

The girl raised her head and smiled at him. She knew Black Jack's liking for this special dish. She was also aware that he considered himself a great lady's man—which was certainly laughable, for he was about as good-looking and gallant as a gorilla.

"M'hm!" Black Jack repeated. "Vanilla pie's my weakness. Guess I'll take a slab now, Andy."

He reached out a vast paw, but Andy checked him and slapped him across the fingers with a hand that was half the size of his.

"You will not," she said. "You'll wait like the rest of the men."

"Yeah? Suppose I don't wanna wait, Andy?"

The girl fixed him with a glance that was meant to be stern.

"You listen to me, Black Jack Riley," she told him. "When you're around that tunnel you can give all the orders you want to, but I'm boss of this mess-hall, and what I say goes."

"Well, maybe you won't have enough pie to go round," Black Jack grumbled. "I gotta new drill crew comin' in this afternoon. They're liable to eat everything in sight—and you know what kind of an appetite that guy Harrigan has."

"Harrigan?"

Andy uttered the name in a breathless tone, and Black Jack was none too pleased as he saw the expression of intense excitement that dawned on her pretty face.

"You don't mean Tim?" she gasped. "Sure! Didn't they tell you about it?"

There was a warm flush on Andy's cheeks.

"Well, they told me there would be an extra crew," she said joyously. "But they didn't—I didn't know—"

She did not finish the sentence, but suddenly she began to smother one of the vanilla pies with cream, heaping the delicacy until it looked as if a miniature snow-capped mountain-peak were rising from it. And it came to Black Jack's mind all at once that Hard Rock Harrigan had always shown a partiality for vanilla pie, with loads of icing.

His brow darkened. He had a pretty shrewd idea that the pastry on which Andy was now working so eagerly was going to be reserved for Harrigan.

The Coming of Harrigan

BY arrangement with the railroad authorities, the long-distance train from Los Angeles to Santa Fé halted that afternoon on a section of line which was within easy reach of the Colorado River diversion scheme.

Down from that train stepped a bunch of stalwarts who were led by the renowned Hard Rock Harrigan.

He was seventy-two inches and fourteen-odd stone of Irish-American, and as handsome a "devil" as had ever sailed from Dublin Bay. He had the torso and the arms of a weight-lifter and the legs of an athlete, and set on his powerful shoulders was a head that was crowned by a well-brushed thatch of light-brown hair.

His eyes were the twinkling eyes of the true Hibernian, and his bronzed face seemed to radiate good humour. His manner was one that guaranteed him popularity among the majority of his fellow-men, just as his physique commanded respect.

Already in the course of the journey Tim Harrigan had broken up a fight that had started between two or three of the husky miners who were in his charge, but before turning his back on the train the big Irish-American was destined to play the part of intermediary in another dispute.

This second altercation did not concern his comrades, however. It arose between a conductor who had chanced to descend to the track and a slightly built young man whom the official had seen under one of the coaches.

The slightly built young man was of good appearance, but it was obvious he possessed no railroad ticket. He was one of those unfortunates who had been hit by the wave of financial depression that had swept the United States, and it was clear he must have stolen a ride on the train at Los Angeles for the purpose of trying his luck elsewhere.

In short, he had been "bucking the axles"—a common enough practice among hoboes, but one with which brakemen and train conductors had little patience.

"Hey, what are you doin' there?"

the angry official demanded, summoning him forth.

The young man crawled out abjectly, and watching him, Tim Harrigan and his men could not help feeling sorry for him. Though his clothes were frayed the fellow looked a decent sort of lad, and in spite of the fact that he had done wrong by obtaining a free ride on the train, there was something about him that would have roused the compassion of anyone but a stony-hearted railroad conductor.

"I wasn't doing anything," the youngster faltered. "I was just—"

"Just enjoyin' the scenery. I suppose," the conductor broke in with harsh sarcasm. "Yeah, and it's a nice view, ain't it? Huh, cheatin' the company, eh?"

His victim made a gesture of appeal. "I didn't do it from choice," he groaned. "I'm—I'm broke. I'm—flat."

"Is that so? Well, I'm gonna knock you a lot flatter!"

There was an ugly expression on the conductor's face, and, a bully by nature, he suddenly lashed out at the younger man, hurling him to the ground.

Five seconds later the youth was on his feet again. He knew he was in the wrong, but he did not see why he should be treated like a dog, and he attempted to protest hotly, whereupon the train official dealt him another blow.

This time the youth was goaded into defending himself, and as he launched himself at the conductor Hard Rock Harrigan and his comrades gathered round to encourage him and show where their sympathy lay.

But encouragement alone could not sustain the youngster. He had not eaten in twenty-four hours, and was no match for the older man. In half a minute he was biting the dust once more, and then, as he was gamely rising to take still further punishment, the brutal train official whipped out a truncheon and struck him across the skull with it.

That was too much for Tim Harrigan. Legally the conductor had been entitled to give the young fellow a dressing-down, but there had been no necessity to adopt such vicious and cowardly tactics, and with an indignant cry Hard Rock caught hold of the man by the shoulder and swung him round.

"Why, you dirty rat!" he ground out. "I—"

"Oh, you want some, too, do you?" the official snarled, and brought down the truncheon savagely on the Irish-American's outstretched arm.

The impact drew a hoarse grunt of pain from Hard Rock's lips, and momentarily he recoiled. Then with that same arm which had been hit by the truncheon he loosed a sledge-hammer punch that cracked home on the conductor's jaw.

The railroad employee came to earth four paces away, and lay spread-eagled with a blank expression on his face. When he recovered consciousness it was to find Hard Rock standing before him with bunched knuckles.

The young fellow whose part Tim had taken was close by. He had struggled up and was swaying a little on his feet, and, after satisfying himself that the conductor had no wish to resume hostilities, the stalwart Irish-American took charge of the youth and escorted him from the scene.

Followed by his drilling crew, Hard Rock led the youngster to the settlement from which the construction of the Colorado tunnel was being directed,

and some time later he was reporting to the superintendent.

He had learned by then that the young man who had "bucked the axles" was known as Michael McGinnis, and he took the opportunity of introducing him and recommending him for a job.

"It would have done your heart good to see the way he stood up to that conductor, superintendent," he declared, after reciting the incident that had occurred down at the railroad track. "Yeah, and the guy was a foot taller than him, too. So I'd like to take him on with me—if it's okay with you, chief."

The super eyed McGinnis shrewdly. "Have you ever done any tunnel work, son?" he asked.

"Well, no," came the reply. "But I've got a college diploma here that says I'm an engineer, though I haven't had much chance to prove it yet."

Young McGinnis produced a document which he handed to the superintendent, and, having glanced at it, the latter nodded approvingly. Then all at once a gruff voice took up the discussion.

It was the voice of Black Jack Riley, who was present at the interview, and who had been looking at Tim Harrigan cynically.

"D'yuh know how to read blue-prints?" Black Jack demanded of Michael McGinnis.

The youth answered in the affirmative, and Riley turned to the super.

"I can use this kid," he stated. "He's just the man I want. How'd yuh like to work for me, McGinnis?"

The college graduate fidgeted uncomfortably.

"Mr. Harrigan asked me to work with him," he began, but was interrupted before he could utter another word.

"Mister Harrigan is outa luck, I'm afraid," Black Jack said grimly.

"Come on with me, kid, and I'll wise yuh up to your job."

With a nod to the super he took Michael McGinnis by the arm and strode towards the door. Then on the threshold he paused and looked back at Hard Rock Harrigan in an ironical fashion.

"I hope I haven't put you out, Mister Harrigan," he remarked.

Tim's blue eyes beamed at him. "Oh, no, no," he rejoined with studied politeness. "I realise that you have to have some brains on your end of the job."

"You said it," Black Jake rumbled, and then, checking as the significance of Tim's comment reached his somewhat sluggish mind, he pulled down his brows in an ugly scowl.

A moment afterwards he and McGinnis had departed, and as the door closed behind them the superintendent spoke to Hard Rock sternly.

"Harrigan, you and Riley can't be together for a minute without looking like a pair of fire-crackers that are ready to explode," he said. "But I'm warning you, I don't want any nonsense on this job."

"What nonsense?" Hard Rock asked, with an air of injured innocence.

"You know what I mean," the super retorted. "There's a crazy tradition among you miners that if a fellow can lick his boss he takes over his job. That tradition has cost me a lot of good men, and we can't afford to have any more of it. Understand this, Harrigan—there's a nice, fat bonus waiting for us if we finish ahead of schedule, and you're in on it, too, provided you don't have any scraps with Riley."

Hard Rock smiled angelically.

"Why, the idea never entered my mind, super," he said. "I came here to push this tunnel through, and I'll be as meek as a lamb."

"That's fine," his chief announced. "Oh, by the way, Hard Rock, you'll



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find a lot of your old friends here. There's McClintock, Oscar, Clancy—and oh, yes, Andy's here, too, in charge of the mess-hall."

Two minutes later Tim Harrigan was forcing his way through a crowd of men who were gathered around the canteen entrance and who were receiving vanilla pies from the fair hands of Ann Anderson, and as the girl set eyes on him her pretty face took on that delightful colour which Black Jack had jealously noted earlier on in the day.

"Hallo, Andy!" Tim greeted her gaily. "Gee, you're a sight for sore eyes—and those pies aren't so hard to look at, either. But on the level, you're the first person I asked for when I got here. Says I to the super, 'Now, tell me—is Andy here?' And if he'd said 'No,' I'd have walked out on the job. 'Tis the gospel truth."

"Just as full of the old blarney as ever, aren't you?" she laughed. "But don't worry; I've saved you a piece of pie."

She went on serving the other men while Tim kept up a running conversation with her, and then at last she gave him the special hunk of cream-smothered pastry that she had held in reserve for him. Delectable it was, too, and when Hard Rock eventually moved off his teeth were working overtime.

Ten yards from the canteen he encountered Black Jack Riley—Black Jack, who was on his way to the mess-hall, and who had stopped suspiciously at sight of the miners who were streaming from it.

Now he looked at Hard Rock Harrigan; then he shot a glance in the direction of Andy, and he saw from the expression that appeared on the girl's features that she had forgotten to spare him even a morsel of pie.

Black Jack slid his mortified gaze upon Hard Rock again, and he clenched his fists as he observed how the latter's smiling lips were plastered with cream. "Vanilla!" Hard Rock murmured dreamily to Black Jack, running the tip of his tongue round the outside of his mouth as he spoke the word.

On the Spree

PRECISELY one week later, while Hard Rock Harrigan's crew was taking a shift in the tunnel, the burly figure of Black Jack Riley came plodding along the narrow-gauge track which had been laid for the transit of the tip-wagons.

Reaching the blind end of the cavern, where Tim and his men were engaged in the task of boring onward through the strata, Black Jack raised his voice above the grinding of the drills and the clatter of a big grab that was scooping up the rubble.

"Good-day to you, Mr. Harrigan," he said.

He spoke with an elegant courtesy that was obviously forced, and Hard Rock answered him in the same tone. Mindful of the superintendent's words and the promised bonus, both of them were doing their best to smother their animosity for each other.

"And good-day to you, Mr. Riley," Tim greeted.

"You're making good headway, I see," remarked Riley.

Hard Rock smiled. "'Tis a good crew I have workin' for me, Mr. Riley," he pointed out.

"Yeah," agreed Black Jack. "But it takes a good man to pick a good crew, Mr. Harrigan."

Again Hard Rock smiled. "Thank you, Mr. Riley. I appreciate that, coming from you."

"You're welcome, Mr. Harrigan," said Black Jack, and turning, retraced

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his steps towards the mouth of the tunnel.

Hard Rock's comrades were gazing at one another. Said McClintock to Oscar the Dane, both of whom had been transferred to the handsome Irishman's crew:

"How long has this being goin' on? Great snakes, when they've been workin' on the same lay-out before, Harrigan has allus been waitin' for the chance to fight Riley for his job. Somethin' has allus prevented it, but—"

"Harrigan would fight Riley for der sheer fun of it, ehob or no ehob," Oscar interrupted. "Mark my vords, Mac, dis is joost der calm before der storm. De bigger der calm, de bigger der storm."

Oscar was right, and it was patent to everyone that the politeness that reigned between Black Jack and Hard Rock could not last. Outside of working hours, there occurred too many small incidents that were calculated to make trouble between them.

Andy Anderson figured in some of these. It was noticeable during meal-times that Hard Rock's plate was always heaped high, whereas Black Jack's contained a sufficient but not magnificently abundant quantity which put him on a level with the other men. There was one occasion, too, when rice pudding was served up as a sweet—a dish that had never been to Riley's liking—and it went against his grain when Hard Rock was handed a slab of pie which had been baked by Andy's own hands.

Why Harrigan should have special consideration was something that passed Black Jack's understanding and tried his patience. What did Andy see in the fellow, anyway—to favour him like this?

"Lemon," Tim remarked, tasting the pie and glancing at Black Jack, who sat at the same table along with the superintendent, the draughtsman and the hospital staff.

Black Jack ground his teeth and glared at the rice pudding which he was expected to eat. Before he could make any comment, however, a man came into the mess-hall carrying a suitcase and looking somewhat the worse for wear.

He was one Murphy, who had been boss of a drill crew that worked on the night shift, and with a face as forelorn as it was bruised he had entered the canteen to say "good-bye."

"What's wrong with Murphy?" asked Michael McGinnis, who was sitting next to Hard Rock. "Why is he quitting?"

"Callahan whipped him," Hard Rock answered, "so he steps into Murphy's job."

McGinnis frowned. "I may be dumb," he murmured, "but I still don't see why he has to quit."

"It's a tradition among the miners, Micky," Tim Harrigan explained. "Once a guy takes a licking from a man under him, his authority is gone. And once he's whipped he'd better move on so he won't get talked about."

"That doesn't seem right to me,"

"The super don't think so, either," Hard Rock said, "but there's nothing he can do about it. It's life, kid, you know—the best man always gets on top."

Perhaps it was without intention, but he happened to look at Black Jack as he made that statement, and, meeting Riley's eyes, he read a challenge in them. Then the defeated Murphy approached the table, and words of genuine commiseration were extended to the man by his erstwhile colleagues.

Murphy took his leave shortly afterwards, passing out of the canteen and out of the life of the camp; and later, when the meal was over, there was a general exodus from the mess-hall.

The men who were off-duty had

arranged to pay a visit to the nearest town, and enjoy the delights of civilisation for a few hours. Now it happened that Black Jack Riley was one of those who had been looking forward to this particular "spree," and he had already announced that he and some of his special cronies intended to make the journey in a car which belonged to an individual named Johnson, one of the engineers.

On inquiry, however, Black Jack learned to his chagrin that Johnson had been approached by Hard Rock Harrigan, and had agreed to drive Tim and his whole drill crew to Salton, where the miners were to disport themselves.

Riley and his party were therefore compelled to take one of the ramshackle buses that plied between the construction camp and the town, and the tunnel boss was in no pleasant mood when he arrived at Colombo's Bar and Restaurant, the centre of such night-life as Salton boasted.

Tim and his friends were present, and Black Jack cast dark glances in his direction.

"Tho ham!" he growled. "He knew I was gonna fix things with Johnson, so he steps in first and grabs a lift. An' I have to ride in that broken-down bone-shaker!"

He fed his wrath with two or three quick whiskies, and was still muttering hostile comments regarding Hard Rock Harrigan when he heard a good deal of noise and disturbance coming from another part of the room.

The disturbance consisted of shouting and laughter, and Black Jack traced it to a table at which Micky McGinnis was seated with one of the miners. These two had apparently been drinking more than was good for them, and, though they were merely acting in a high-spirited fashion, their uproarious behaviour was causing the proprietor of Colombo's Restaurant a good deal of concern.

Signor Colombo was a small, fat Italian who employed three former prize-fighters for the special purpose of keeping unruly customers in check, and he made haste to summon these "bouncers" to his side.

"I told you to watcha da tunnel men," he snapped. "Dey are toughs when dey get drunk, and liable to break up everyt'ing."

One of the prize-fighters nodded comprehensively, and with a glitter in his baleful eye he strolled across to the table at which Micky and his fellow-reveller were sitting.

He ignored the college graduate, and confronted the latter's companion, who was standing up and beating time to an orchestra that was playing dance-music. "Havin' lots o' fun, buddy?" the prize-fighter inquired ominously.

Micky's companion blinked at him in a foolish manner.

"Havin' the b—best time in m—my life," he said with a smirk.

"Yeah?" the bouncer rejoined, and then slammed him fairly and squarely in the jaw.

The "drunk" from the construction camp went down like a pole-axed bullock, and his fall excited attention, bringing a crowd to the spot. It was a crowd that included both Hard Rock Harrigan and Black Jack Riley, and, looking at the man on the floor, who lay face-forward, Black Jack addressed Tim sardonically.

"Is that the way you let 'em treat your crew?" he queried. "If that bruiser did anything like that to one o' my men, I'd mop up the place with him."

Hard Rock glanced at him, and then, showing his way to the forefront of the crowd, he stooped and turned over the

victim of the prize-fighter's punch. In another moment he was returning to Black Jack's side.

"You'd better start moppin', Riley," he drawled. "That's one of your men."

He was right. The individual on the floor was one Clark, who was closely associated with Black Jack in the work on the tunnel, and, on realising this, the chest of Riley seemed to swell by three or four inches.

In silence he made for the bouncer who had laid Clark low, and, with a seeming admiration that was not borne out by the expression on his craggy face, he prodded the bulging muscle of the pug's thick arm.

"You must have a powerful wallop, brother," Black Jack mused. "You knocked that guy flatter than a pancake."

The prize-fighter grinned smugly.

"Yeah," he said. "When I slaps 'em down, mister, they stay there."

Black Jack raised his heavy brows slightly. Under his own shirtsleeves his own enormous biceps were flexing spasmodically.

"The guy you socked was a nice feller, too," he mentioned. "What was he doin'?"

"Ah, I just didn't like his pan," quoth the pug, "and I thought I'd change it for him."

"Yeah? Well, I don't like your pan, neither, so I'm gonna change it, too."

The words came from Black Jack's throat like a rising mutter of thunder, and with them came a right-hand buffet that was like a bolt from the blue. In one instant the startled pug was attempting to ward it off—in the next it had landed on the point of his chin and he was more well-and-truly "out" than ever Clark had been.

But the flooring of the prize-fighter was a signal for Signor Columbo's other bouncers to take a hand, and next second these were charging to the attack, eager to avenge their comrade by beating up the tunnel boss.

Riley stood firm, and met the foremost with a battering-ram blow that stopped him in his tracks. The other, dodging in, managed to catch Black Jack with a punch that shook him, but speedily came in for a storm of retaliation.

The first man now gathered himself together and sailed into the battle, and, tough as he was, Riley might have found the two hefty prize-fighters a formidable handful. Yet he was not left to tackle them alone, for all at once Hard Rock Harrigan was in the thick of the affair—Hard Rock, who had always been at loggerheads with Black Jack, but who could not stand by and see a construction man in difficulties.

And maybe, in spite of their many differences, Hard Rock Harrigan and Black Jack Riley held a secret admiration for each other, though neither of them would ever have admitted it openly.

At any rate, Hard Rock took one of those bouncers in his stride, and while Riley was hammering the wits out of his particular opponent, Harrigan was likewise using his fists to some purpose.

In the space of one minute two senseless pugs were huddled across the prostrate body of the prize-fighter who had struck Clark, and it was only then, with the applause of the onlookers ringing in his ears, that Black Jack realised it was Hard Rock who had aided him.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Harrigan?" he growled. "You have to butt into everything, don't you?"

"The pleasure is mine, Riley," Hard Rock began, and then suddenly he



Fists raised, they prepared themselves for the slaughter, and in another moment the fight would have been on.

checked as he saw Black Jack clap a hand to his ribs and wince from a stab of pain.

With a look of concern on his handsome face, Tim Harrigan caught hold of the tunnel boss.

"What's the matter, Black Jack?" he exclaimed.

Riley braced himself with an effort and shook free.

"Nothing," he grunted. "Nothing. Just a little indigestion, I guess."

There was a silence, broken all at once by McClintock, who came lunging through the crowd with Signor Columbo in his grasp.

"Here's the guy that set them bouncers to work!" he proclaimed. "Let's hang him to one of his own chandeliers!"

A wail of distress rose from the fat little Italian.

"Please!" he cried. "Meesta Riley—Meesta Riley—everybody—come on, you have-a da drink on da house to show there's no ill-feeling!"

"A drink on the house!" someone yelled. "You mean drinks on the house!"

There was a stampede towards the bar, but Hard Rock Harrigan did not join in it. Nor did he allow Micky McGinnis to do so.

"Hey, kid," he said, catching the youngster by the arm. "Nix on that stuff for you. These tunnel stiffs can take it, but it's no good to a feller that needs the clear eye for blueprints."

Micky McGinnis hesitated a moment, and then he nodded slowly.

"Maybe you're right, Hard Rock," he agreed. "I'll stick to soda-and-milk."

Ready to Explode

It was Sunday, and, contrary to his usual custom of getting away from the camp on the day of rest, Hard Rock Harrigan had turned down the

offer of a trip in Johnson's automobile, and had elected to spend a lazy morning and afternoon.

Soon after lunch he chanced to be walking in the neighbourhood of a bungalow which had been built as a home for Andy Anderson, and it was as he was drawing near to it that he saw a vision of loveliness on the porch.

The vision was Andy, but she was dressed in her newest frock, and for a moment Tim Harrigan was dumb-founded. Then, wondering why he had never realised just how beautiful she was, he marched across to her and gazed at her with frank admiration.

"Andy," he blurted, "you look wonderful! Gee, are you really the same girl that serves up the chow to us? On the level, 'tis a regular lady you've made of yerself."

"Just because I've put on a new dress?" she asked quizzically.

He fidgeted uncomfortably.

"No, but you sure look different, Andy."

"Do I? Well, I'm actually no different than I was yesterday. You haven't been around on a Sunday before, that's all. But you'll have to excuse me, Tim. I've got one or two things to attend to in the house."

She turned away, but with a quick gesture Hard Rock ripped a button off his jacket.

"Oh, say, wait a minute, Andy!" he exclaimed. "Would you mind sewin' this on for me? It came off this morning."

She looked round and glanced at the button in his hand.

"It won't take you more'n a few seconds," Tim coaxed. "I'll sit in the parlour while you're doin' it."

A quarter of an hour later Hard Rock was still in the parlour. The button was on his coat again. He was wrapped up in an earnest conversation with Andy, feasting his delighted eyes

on her the while, and at the same time feeding his mouth with fudge comfits from a silver dish near at hand.

Hard Rock was glad he had not gone on that car-drive with Johnson. He felt he could stay in this parlour the whole day, talking to Andy as he was now.

The tête-à-tête was not destined to last long without interruption, however, for all at once there was a knock on the front door and a familiar voice called Andy's name inquiringly.

It was the voice of Black Jack Riley, who had also remained in the camp, and who had apparently thought he might as well drop in on the pretty canteen girl for the want of anything better to do.

Andy went to the door, and, though it opened right on to the parlour, Black Jack did not see Tim. He saw only the same vision of loveliness which had dazzled the eyes of Hard Rock Tim Harrigan some fifteen minutes previously.

"Andy!" the tunnel boss ejaculated with mouth agape. "Hey, what's this? Let me get a look at you. Hully gee, why ain't you never dressed like this before? You're a knock-out!"

"Don't show your ignorance," drawled Tim from the background. "She's no different than she was yesterday."

Black Jack started, and then his face clouded. Coming into the room he glowered darkly at Hard Rock, who was reclining at his ease on a couch and chewing a fudge sweetmeat.

"What're you doin' here?" Riley breathed.

"What's the matter?" Hard Rock asked. "Disappointed at finding me here?"

"I'd be disappointed at findin' you any place," Black Jack ground out.

He scowled at the handsome driller for a moment—then, remembering Andy, he turned to her and began to ape a lady's man.

"Boy, you look swell, though!" he enthused.

"Just because she put on a new dress?" Tim queried, remembering the words that Andy had addressed to him earlier on.

"Who's talkin' to you?" Black Jack snarled over his shoulder.

Hard Rock went on eating fudge, and, giving his attention to Andy again, Black Jack assumed a look of admiration.

"Gee, I like that dress, baby!" he said. "But why ain't I seen you like this before?"

"Because you haven't been around on a Sunday before," Tim interposed from the couch.

Black Jack gritted his teeth to stem a flood of oaths, and, having succeeded in quelling his anger, he concentrated on Andy, and favoured her with a leer that was meant to be an irresistible smile.

"Say, you've been holdin' out on me, honey," he declared. "If I'd known you was as good lookin' as this, I'd have gone for you in a big way. Yeah, and I'm gonna make up for lost time right now."

With considerable fondness he attempted to put an arm round the girl's waist, but she drew back.

"Don't do that, Black Jack. I don't like it."

"How'd you know you don't?" the tunnel boss chuckled, persisting.

She tried to push him away, but he would have none of her rebuffs, and was still bent on giving her a bear-like hug when he suddenly found Hard Rock Harrigan beside him.

"Let her alone," Hard Rock said quietly.

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"What's eatin' you?" Black Jack retorted. "Do you think you can do any better? Ah, come on, Andy. Gimme a little kiss. What's the use of dollin' up if you don't want to be petted?"

"Let her alone, I said!" jerked Hard Rock, swinging him round.

The eyes of the tunnel boss seemed to glint, but no more than the eyes of Hard Rock Harrigan. It looked as if the long-anticipated explosion were about to take place.

"Since when have you been head man around here?" Riley granted.

"Stop it!" cried Andy, slipping between them. "Stop it, you two!"

"Who does he think he is, pullin' that stuff on me?" Black Jack shouted. "I'll bust him wide open!"

"You couldn't bust a paper bag," Hard Rock said scornfully.

Black Jack brought up his fists, and so did Hard Rock, but once again the shrill voice of Andy rose between them.

"Stop it! Stop it!"

"Don't interfere, Andy," Tim commanded, his big muscles twitching with eagerness for the fray. "I'd give a month's pay to take a crack at this gorilla."

The girl's voice rose to a still higher pitch.

"No! No! If either of you had any sense you'd realise what you're doing to me! Yes, to me! Don't you see that? If the super finds out you've been fighting about me, I might as well pack my trunk and get out of here."

"Now listen, Andy," Hard Rock protested, "this thing started long before we ever knew you."

"Yes, but I'll thank you not to finish it in my house," she rejoined, still doing her utmost to keep Tim and Black Jack apart. "If anything happens, I'll get the blame—and I'll lose my job just as sure as fate!"

She was not so much concerned about her job as the damage they might do to each other. But the argument she had put up was a sound one, and she felt a wave of relief pass through her as she saw that it had produced some effect on the two men.

"Listen," she went on swiftly, "I want you to promise that you'll drop this thing—right now. Black Jack, do you understand? I want your word of honour."

Riley glared at Hard Rock, then shuffled his feet in an awkward manner.

"All right, Andy," he muttered. "I don't want to get you into no trouble."

He lumbered past Hard Rock, and, once again his cool and customary self, Tim selected a fresh comfit from the dish into which he had already been dipping.

"Fudge" he remarked to Black Jack solemnly, as the tunnel boss was marching towards the door.

Riley scowled at him and slammed out of the bungalow. Then Hard Rock turned to Andy.

"I'm sorry we had to have any unpleasantness here," he said.

"You're not sorry at all!" the girl challenged bitterly. "You've just been looking for an excuse to start something!"

"Well, I couldn't sit here and watch him maul you without doin' anything about it, could I?"

Andy tossed her head impatiently.

"Oh, Black Jack didn't mean any harm!" she answered. "Besides, I've been around these camps long enough to know how to take care of myself without you starting a row. Which reminds me—I don't want you to pick up this fight again when you get outside."

Hard Rock was silent for a moment, but suddenly he grinned his Irish grin.

"No, of course I won't," he told her. "And just to prove it, I'll spend the rest of the day with you."

"Oh, no, you won't!" she declared.

"You're leaving right now."

Hard Rock looked dismayed.

"Now, listen, Andy—"

"You heard what I said," she interrupted with emphasis.

The handsome Irishman shrugged his shoulders. It seemed that he was unpopular, he reflected.

"All right, Andy," he murmured, "if that's the way you feel about it."

He drifted out of the little house, not before helping himself to another piece of fudge, and he slouched off in the direction of his own quarters, somewhat gloomily. But if he had happened to turn his head, he would have seen Andy gazing after him through one of the bungalow windows—and he would have seen, too, that there was an affectionate and tender smile on her lips.

For the girl did not breathe who could have been angry with Tim Harrigan for long.

The Fight Scheduled

MONDAY had dawned, and, working on the afternoon shift, Hard Rock Harrigan and his crew were drilling as if their very lives depended upon extending the tunnel.

A ceaseless clamour filled the great, sombre gallery, the clamour of the drills and of the giant mucker that clutched dirt and stones by the hundred-weight and loaded the waiting tip-wagons. Yet, vigorously as they toiled, the men in Tim's charge were in cheerful mood, and in lusty accents they sang a ditty that had become a kind of slogan with their foreman.

"H-A-double-R - I - G - A - N spells Harrigan.

Proud of all the Irish blood that's in me,

Divil a man can say a word agin me. H-A-double-R-I-G-A-N, you see.

It's a name that no shame Ever has been connected with, Harrigan, that's me."

The voices mingled with the tumult of machinery, but from some farther point there came at intervals a deeper and more ominous sound. It was the muffled thunder of exploding dynamite charges, which were being set by another party of workmen detailed to open up a new escapeway.

When that escapeway was completed, a fresh link would exist between the tunnel and the plateau high above—and, lest a cave-in should take place at any section farther back, these shafts were a necessary safeguard for the drillers, providing them with outlets which could be used in an emergency. Otherwise, in the event of such a collapse occurring, they might find themselves trapped in an airless vault.

However, the operations of the blasting gang up on the plateau were not appreciated by Hard Rock's crew at the moment. For each time a charge exploded it reverberated through the whole core of the hill, and had the effect of bringing down showers of dust upon the drillers. Worse still, the shocks were dislodging some of the timbers that had been built up temporarily to support the walls and roof of the tunnel just where Tim and his comrades were at work.

"Hey, Hard Rock," called M'Clintock all at once, "whenever them guys blast up there it knocks the shoring down. We're liable to have a fall right over our heads. Can't they lay off for a while?"

Hard Rock pursed his lips.

"Yeah, I was just thinkin' the same thing," he said. "Knot-head, telephone Escapeway Three and tell 'em to stop blasting."

The fellow known as Knot-head went back along the gallery to a 'phone. Incidentally, the new shaft was intended to link up with the tunnel about seventy yards beyond this point.

"Give me Number Three," said Knot-head, lifting the 'phone receiver from its hook.

He was connected with the man who was superintending operations on the plateau far above, and gave him Hard Rock's message. Then he returned to the spot where the handsome Irish-American and his crew were engaged in drilling.

Once again the group of miners had taken up the chorus of their song, and for a while they rendered it without the disquieting accompaniment of the dynamite explosions. Then, quite suddenly, and as if in defiance of Hard Rock's request, another blast rumbled in their ears.

Almost simultaneously two men came marching along the tunnel. One of them was Black Jack Riley, and his face looked ominous. The other was Micky McGinnis, who seemed uneasy.

"Harrigan," barked Riley, "I've just seen Bellamy, up at Escapeway Number Three. What's the idea of givin' him orders to stop blasting?"

Hard Rock eyed him whimsically. "Maybe the noise bothered us," he murmured.

"Cut the wisecracks, Harrigan," the tunnel boss snapped. "And understand this. I'm runnin' this job, so any time you want anything you can come to me, and I'll give the orders."

"Well, go ahead and give them," Hard Rock suggested.

"I did give them," Black Jack grated. "Bellamy and his gang are to keep on blastin'. They was ordered to sink that shaft to the specified level, and then cross-cut through the stratum into the wall of the tunnel. And, by

criminy, Harrigan, they're gonna do it without you tellin' them to lay off!"

Hard Rock stared at him for a moment, and then jerked a thumb upward to indicate the roof.

"Do you want to see this shorin' come down on us?" he demanded.

"It's up to you to fix it so it won't come down," Black Jack retorted harshly, "and I don't want no arguments, neither. The trouble with you is you're gettin' too big for your job, Harrigan."

"Would you like to give me yours?" Hard Rock spoke the words grimly.

He was in a burning rage over Black Jack's savage reprimand, just as Black Jack was in a flaming temper over the foreman-driller's interference with the blasting gang.

"Would you like to give me yours, Riley?" Hard Rock repeated.

The eyes of the tunnel boss narrowed, and a battle gleam was kindled in them.

"Any time you think you can take it from me," he said.

"Then maybe you can guess what I'm thinkin' right now, Riley."

The bystanders were gathering round, agog with interest and excitement. The long-awaited outbreak of hostilities between Hard Rock and Black Jack had come at last, and a fight that promised to be the greatest clash of all time was about to commence. A fight between the two hardest cases in the whole of the industry—a fight that had often been visualised, though no man had ever felt able to forecast how it might go.

"Listen, Harrigan," Riley snarled. "Bonus or no bonus, I'm gonna pin your ears back right now!"

"Now you're talking my language!" Tim whooped. "Come on, let's go!"

He peeled off his shirt, and the singlet underneath it left his magnificent arms exposed. Black Jack likewise proceeded to remove the shirt he was wearing, but in his eagerness for the fray to begin he did not complete the opera-

tion, and next second he and Hard Rock were squaring up to each other.

Fists raised, they prepared themselves for the slaughter, and in another moment the fight would have been on. But suddenly a man came running along the tunnel with news that checked the combatants—a man who belonged to Bellamy's crew of dynamiters.

"Hey, Riley," he cried, "you'll have to come an' take a look at the new shaft! Bellamy wants your advice."

Black Jack compressed his thick-lipped mouth, and then, with obvious reluctance, he thrust the tail of his shirt into his trousers again.

"We'll postpone this until to-night, Harrigan," he said.

"Okay," Hard Rock answered. "I understand. Business before pleasure—Mister Riley."

"Yeah," Black Jack rasped. "I'll be lookin' for yuh about eight o'clock—back of the bunkhouse."

He paused and glanced at the damaged shoring of the tunnel; seemed to hesitate for a brief interval, and finally addressed Hard Rock's men collectively.

"Maybe you fellers had better get back outa the tunnel for a spell," he growled. "Kinda looks as if it might be dangerous down here, after all."

"Why not stop blasting until everything's set, then?" Micky McGinnis proposed, but Riley gave him an angry glance.

"Just to suit Harrigan, eh?" he bit out. "No, that shaft is gonna be finished pronto."

He stamped off, and Hard Rock's men trailed after him. But Hard Rock himself did not follow immediately, and, with Micky McGinnis by his side, watched Riley and the miners scramble aboard the train of tip-wagons which were just pulling out with a full load of rubble.

Slowly the train moved off down the tunnel, and Hard Rock and McGinnis let it go. Calmly and without haste



Hard Rock and the tunnel boss were the first to be dragged from the shaft.

the former was drawing on his shirt again.

"Gosh, Tim," McGinnis said all at once, "it's a pity you and Riley have to fight! Both of you are such square guys. Yes, Riley's got his good points, too, and you'd realise it if you'd only try to like him."

Hard Rock gave him a sidelong look. "There's nothing you can tell me about Riley that I don't know already," he stated. "Sure, he's got his good points, kid. He's the straightest man I ever knew—"

"Then why do you want to fight him?"

"Aw, don't you worry about me and Riley, kid!" Tim rejoined. "This had to happen sooner or later. We just never hit it off, that's all. We—"

And then he stopped, for at that moment there was an ugly rumbling that struck ominously upon his ears—not the report of a dynamite blast, but a long-drawn growl that swelled louder until the tunnel was filled with the echoes of it.

The dim lights in the gallery went out, and in the black darkness that fell upon them Hard Rock and McGinnis stood silent until the reverberations of that unnerving tumult subsided gradually into a deathly quiet.

An awful suspicion dawned on Micky McGinnis, and if he could have seen the look on Hard Rock's face, suspicion would have become certainty. For the ace driller knew what that sound had meant—knew that the continual blasting must have worked upon some weak point in the gallery's shoring away far back—knew that a collapse had suddenly taken place.

Without a word he took a flash-lamp from his pocket, and, the finger of its beam pointing the way for him, he began to walk deliberately along the tunnel.

McGinnis followed him, and a minute or two later they found themselves standing before an immense fall of earth and rock that choked the gallery from ceiling to floor, a mighty landslide that blocked out all light and all air, and which was to them impenetrable.

"Huh, didn't expect the danger to come from this section!" Hard Rock mused.

There was scarcely a trace of unsteadiness in his voice, and McGinnis marvelled at his coolness. He himself was shaking like a leaf.

"I guess we're shut in tighter than a drum, kid," Hard Rock went on. "No tellin' how far back it's caved in, either. I wonder if Riley and the boys got clear before it happened."

"Tim," McGinnis faltered, "isn't— isn't there any escapeway we can use?"

Hard Rock shrugged his shoulders.

"Number One and Two shafts are on the other side of this cave-in," he muttered, "so they might as well be in China. Number Three is the one Bellamy has been workin' on, and if he can get it finished it should come through—let's see—about thirty paces back the way we've come. But I wouldn't be surprised if that's crumbled, too. H'm, maybe we could find out—if the 'phone's still operating."

The 'phone was out of action, however. The line was dead—had been broken off short on the section where the collapse had occurred.

"What chance have we got?" McGinnis asked huskily as they stood beside the useless instrument that was fixed to the wall.

"We can live as long as the oxygen lasts," Hard Rock answered simply. "The rest is up to Black Jack, assumin' he's still alive. I mean—if he can't get us out nobody can."

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"Tim, can't we—can't we do any- thing ourselves?"

Hard Rock smiled a grim smile. "We could play casino if we had a deck of cards," he observed.

There was a silence, and then all at once the stalwart Irish-American began to chuckle.

"This is a swell time to laugh," Micky McGinnis said in a querulous tone.

"I was just thinkin' about Riley and what a tough break this is for him," Hard Rock explained. "He was goin' to try and pin my ears back to-night, and now it don't look as if he'll get the chance. Will he be disappointed?"

Once more he laughed, but checked abruptly as another thought occurred to him.

"Say, it's a tough break for me, too," he grunted. "Funny thing how luck runs. Three times while I've been hard rock minin' I've been on the point of fightin' Riley, and each time something has happened to cheat me—like this cave-in, for instance. Can you beat it?"

Micky McGinnis was not interested. He was wondering whether he would ever see the light of day again, and, before long, he was pretty sure that he never would. The atmosphere seemed to be growing fetid and hot, a sure sign that the oxygen was being steadily used up.

Hard Rock was plainly aware of this circumstance, too. For the second time that afternoon he stripped off his shirt, and McGinnis imitated him mechanically.

"That slide has shut out the air all right," Hard Rock mentioned. "No mistake about that."

"I wish I could stop the ringing in my ears," said the younger man.

The Irish-American nodded. "You'd be used to that if you'd been in a jam like this before, kid. Say, the best thing for us to do is just to sit down and relax—take the strain off the old heart."

He squatted on the floor of the tunnel, the flash-lamp still in his hand. Micky McGinnis slumped down beside him and stared into space, his lips moving slightly as if in utterance of a silent prayer.

The heat was becoming even more stifling as the air was running out. Trapped, the two men sat there mutely for a long time, knowing that each breath they took was draining away the oxygen in the atmosphere and bringing them nearer to their doom. And at last they were feeling for their throats, experiencing difficulty in respiration.

McGinnis was seized by a fit of coughing, and, before the bout had passed, Hard Rock had started to cough as well.

"How're you doin', kid?" he asked as soon as he had partially recovered.

The college graduate answered him in a choked and suffocated voice.

"On the level, Hard Rock. What— are the chances—for us?"

Tim Harrigan ignored the question. Very deliberately he drew out a diary, tore a couple of leaves from it, and handed one to his youthful companion. "What's this for?" McGinnis queried tremulously.

"Oh, I just thought that you might like to write something to someone, kid! You know—just—in case—"

He commenced to scribble on the leaf that he had retained, but after a few seconds he looked up.

"How do you spell Andy's name, kid? Is it Ander-son or Ander-son?"

"Oh, what difference does it make, Hard Rock?" Micky McGinnis groaned.

Against Time.

THE camp was in an uproar. An emergency siren was wailing mournfully, an ambulance was storming from the direction of the clinic and men were running in droves towards the tunnel-mouth.

Ann Anderson came out of the canteen and clutched a miner who was hurrying past.

"What's the matter?" she asked anxiously. "What's happened?"

"Cave-in," was the laconic reply. "Riley and some of the boys just escaped, but Harrigan and McGinnis are missing!"

Five seconds later Andy was racing from the camp, her heart pounding like a trip-hammer, her face white as death. Breathless, and with a stabbing pain in her side, she reached the entrance of the tunnel and passed into it with the gangs of workmen who were also headed for the scene of the disaster.

In the depths of that tunnel, where the fall had occurred, miners were slaving like madmen to dig their way through the debris, and a giant mucking machine was aiding them in the colossal task. Meanwhile, Black Jack Riley was striding from group to group and shouting stentorian commands—exhorting the toilers as he had never exhorted men before, though in his heart he felt that their efforts were well-nigh hopeless.

It was as Andy appeared on the scene that Black Jack turned to a colleague and spoke his thoughts.

"Not a chance," she heard the tunnel boss say. "From the look of things, the cave-in goes a long way back. Even if Harrigan and McGinnis are still alive—shut up at the far end o' the tunnel—it might take a month to reach 'em. Yeah, and usin' dynamite, at that. There's only one thing to do, Casey. Try to reach 'em from No. 3 escapeway."

"But it ain't completed."

"It's within fifteen feet of the tunnel," Black Jack retorted.

"Even so, Bellamy told you that the shaft was fallin' in."

Black Jack clenched his teeth. "Never mind what Bellamy told me. I'm goin' up there. You take charge here—and keep the men workin'. Try an' drive a pipe-line through. If you can do that, you can at least force air through to McGinnis and Harrigan."

"Yeah—if they've still got any use for air by the time it gets to 'em."

Riley turned away, and several bystanders moved after him, Andy amongst them. Using the elevator of escapeway No. 2, which was close by, they ascended to the plateau and hastened to the shaft which Bellamy had been sinking when the cave-in had interrupted proceedings.

"I'm goin' down, Bellamy," Black Jack said to the man who was in charge of the gang there.

"But it's no use," the other protested. "The bottom of the shaft is all choked up, and everything you touch just crumbles away on you. You can't get through."

"You can't, eh?" Black Jack's face was resolute. "Well, I'll get through."

"But the hole's liable to cave in on you. It's madness to go down there, Riley."

The tunnel boss squared his shoulders.

"I'll take the chance," he answered. "We've gotta do something for those two fellers, ain't we? And besides, I've got a date with that guy Harrigan at eight o'clock to-night, and I'm goin' to see that he keeps it!"

A few minutes afterwards Black Jack was being lowered into the shaft by a rope, his barrel body swinging to and fro amidst streams of dust that fell constantly about him from the walls.

He reached the base of the pit, which was on a level with the tunnel but separated from it by fifteen feet of solid rock. Then, standing knee-deep in debris and broken shoring that had tumbled from the upper part of the escapeway, he shouted to the men above to lower a case or two of dynamite and the necessary blasting equipment.

His instructions were obeyed, and soon Black Jack was engaged in the task of fixing the charge, while dust and an occasional clunk of stone fell around him. But at last he shouted to his comrades to hoist him up, and he was carefully hauled to the summit of the shaft, where he promptly gave orders to scatter.

The crowd which was gathered around the guard-rails at the top of the escapeway at once retreated to a safe distance, and by means of a plunger the dynamite in the pit was exploded, the muffled roar of the blast being followed by a cloud of fumes that ascended slowly into view.

Riley went to the edge of the shaft again, and, though the walls down there seemed intact, he knew that the danger of them caving in had been increased a hundredfold. Yet without hesitation he commanded Bellamy and his men to lower him away once more.

This time he did not descend alone, for Oscar the Dane insisted on accompanying him, and it was with bated breath and with terror in their hearts that Andy and the other onlookers watched those two heroic figures sinking towards the bottom of the escapeway.

Black Jack and Oscar gained the base of this pit that had been ren-

dered so unsafe by the tunnel collapse, which seemed, indeed, to have undermined a considerable portion of the hill. As they stood there a timber prop fell from somewhere aloft and crashed between them, but they paid no heed to it, for they were staring through a dark breach that had been caused by the dynamite—a horizontal breach in the fifteen-foot wall of rock that had separated the shaft from the tunnel.

Riley and the Dane stumbled through, and in another thirty seconds they located Harrigan and Micky McGinnis, both of them huddled near the useless telephone beside which they had sat down to die.

"They weren't caught under the cave-in, then," grunted Riley. "No, and they had the sense to keep clear of the spot where we were liable to blast our way through to 'em."

"Arc dey—arc dey alive?" whispered Oscar, peering at the inert forms of the ace driller and the young draughtsman.

Black Jack betrayed no emotion, yet his voice was not quite steady when he spoke.

"They're awful still," he said. "But I don't know. Come on, let's get 'em outa here."

He lifted Hard Rock, leaving Oscar to deal with McGinnis, and a little while later the two rescuers and their human burdens were in escapeway No. 3, where strong hands pulled them up by ropes.

Hard Rock and the tunnel boss were the first to be dragged from the shaft, and McGinnis and Oscar were helped out immediately afterwards. Then without delay the victims of the cave-in were rushed to the camp hospital, and here an anxious mob waited till dusk for word of them.

At dusk an attendant appeared with the news that Harrigan and McGinnis had been treated by the doctor

and were fully recovered from their experience, and these welcome tidings produced a murmur of relief, which perhaps came more fervently from Andy Anderson than from anyone else in the crowd. Then, as the throng began to break up, Black Jack Riley caught the hospital orderly by the arm.

"Say," he declared, "now that Doc Wagner has finished with Harrigan an' McGinnis, maybe he can take a look at me. I've felt twinges o' that indigestion again, an' I'd like him to give me somethin' for it."

Black Jack was conducted into a surgery, and presently he was being given a thorough examination by Dr. Wagner, a capable-looking man of about fifty years of age. It was an examination which was accompanied by a good many questions on the part of the physician, and when he had completed his diagnosis he went out of the room and summoned an assistant.

"Fix Black Jack up with a dose of digitalis," he said in a low voice.

The assistant raised his eyebrows. "Heart, eh?" he murmured, glancing into the surgery, where the tunnel boss was buttoning up his shirt.

"Yes," Dr. Wagner rejoined. "I suspected it when he came to me three months ago, and now I'm sure. It sounds like a valve lesion. He'll be all right so long as he takes things easy." "Are you going to put him wise?"

The doctor shook his head. "Not if I can help it. But what I'm worried about is this fight that's on for to-night. Has Harrigan left the hospital yet?"

"Yes, I heard him talking to some of the boys outside a minute ago. He wants to thank Riley for getting him out of that tunnel—and to remind him that they've got an appointment for eight o'clock."

Dr. Wagner pursed his lips, and a cloud seemed to gather upon his brow. "As soon as you've fixed up Black



"The date's off, Riley," Hard Rock said with an effort, "and so is the fight."

Jack with that dose of digitalis, send Harrigan to me," he said.

Black Jack Riley was allowed to depart from the hospital a short time afterwards, and, not long after he had gone off in jubilant mood to prepare himself for battle, Tim Harrigan was shown into Wagner's consulting-room.

"I hear you want to see me, doc," the Irish-American remarked genially, showing no traces of the ordeal through which he had passed. "What's on your mind, anyway? Spill it and make it snappy, for I've got a very important engagement."

Doctor Wagner looked at him earnestly.

"That's what I want to talk to you about, Tim," he said. "Why do you want to fight Riley? Why do you hate him? He saved your life, you know."

"Aw, Doc, you don't understand." Hard Rock's eyes were twinkling. "I don't hate Black Jack—and I don't think he really hates me. We just rub each other up the wrong way, and this fight had to come. I know he saved my life, and nobody could appreciate it more than I do, but it's got nothin' to do with our scrap."

"Black Jack don't have to be told," he added, "but I'd have done the same for him this afternoon if he'd been in my shoes. Besides, Doc, he'd be the most disappointed man on earth if I called off this fight."

"Nevertheless, Tim," Doctor Wagner said, "that's just what I want you to do."

Hard Rock stared at him for a moment, and then an expression of comprehension dawned on his handsome features.

"I get it," he declared. "The superintendent put you up to this. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but it's too late now to call off."

"Listen, Tim, if anything should happen to either you or Riley it would hold up the work on the tunnel, and this cave-in will cause enough delay in itself. Now I feel there must be some way of patching up this affair between you and Black Jack."

"But I don't want it patched up," Hard Rock interrupted impatiently, "and Riley hasn't said anything about calling it off. Look here, Doc, this fight has been coming on for a long time, and nothing you or anybody else can say will stop it. You know the traditions of the mining camps as well as I do."

Wagner drew in a long breath. "I didn't want to take anybody but my assistant into my confidence, Tim," he said in a deliberate tone, "but I can see I'll have to be frank with you. Tim, Black Jack is a sick man."

There was a silence during which Hard Rock's gaze remained fixed on the doctor incredulously. Then all at once he laughed.

"Black Jack—sick?" he echoed. "Say, Riley's never been sick in his life. He could push this building over right now. Ah, don't try to kid me, Doc."

"I was never more serious in my life," Wagner answered slowly. "Any over-exertion, and Riley may go out like the flame of a candle. It's his heart, Tim."

Hard Rock's face was a study in concern now.

"Poor Black Jack," he muttered. October 24th, 1936.

"Why didn't you tell me this before? You know I wouldn't fight a sick man, Doc."

"I figured you'd feel that way about it, Tim."

"Sure. Come on, let's go to Black Jack and explain it."

Doctor Wagner took hold of the younger man by the shoulders and regarded him solemnly.

"Listen, Tim," he observed, "when you tell a man like Riley that he has heart trouble, one of two things is bound to happen. Either he doesn't believe you and won't take advice—or, he gets heart conscious and becomes a chronic invalid because he's afraid he'll go off any minute."

A queer look had dawned in Hard Rock's eyes, a look of blank dismay. He realized now what Wagner was driving at.

"You—you mean," he stammered, "you mean you want me to walk out on this fight without telling Black Jack why? Great Scott, you don't know what you're askin'. You don't know the tough spot you're puttin' me in. Tough spot! Why, I'd be laughed out of the camp, and the thing would follow

me wherever I went. I'd never be able to live it down—I'd be through, Doc!"

He swallowed, and then went on speaking in a choked voice.

"Say, what did you put this up to me for?" he cried. "Why didn't you put it up to Black Jack and make him quit?"

"You know Black Jack, Tim. He'd be afraid the boys might think he was backing out. He'd fight you if he knew he was going to drop dead the next minute—and very likely that's just what would happen."

"But what about me, Doc? What will the boys think o' me for backin' out? If I can't tell Black Jack the reason, I can't risk tellin' them. Besides, Black Jack's got to find-out sometime, hasn't he?"

Doctor Wagner frowned. "Riley thinks he has indigestion," he murmured. "If he keeps thinking that, I can get him to ease up and I'll pull him through. Yes, with care his heart can be restored to normal in the course of time."

He paused, and glanced at Hard Rock keenly.

"But in his present condition," he resumed, "I wouldn't even like to take

the risk of being candid with him. I put it to you, Tim, and I mean it—the very shock of learning the truth might kill him. Now that's the whole truth, and I haven't exaggerated. If you want to chance it, we'll call Riley up here and tell him, but, I'm warning you, it may be his death-warrant."

Again there was a silence. Hard Rock had sunk into a chair, and was staring straight ahead of him with an anguished expression on his face. The struggle that was going on within him, was clearly depicted in every movement of his strong features.

"I didn't want to be so frankly alarming," Doctor Wagner said presently, "but you forced me to make the position absolutely clear, Tim. And now the decision rests with you."

"Yeah," Hard Rock groaned, biting at his nails. "Yeah."

"I know I'm asking a lot from you," the doctor proceeded. "I know it calls for no ordinary amount of moral courage on your part, Tim."

Yet I'd like to remind you again of one thing. When you were walled up in that tunnel this afternoon, it was Black Jack Riley who went down for you."

"But I tell you I'd have done as much for him!"

Wagner looked him straight in the eyes.

"That's just what I'm asking you to do," he rejoined significantly. "If he hadn't reached you just when he did, you wouldn't be standing here, and I'm asking you to save his life in return."

Fallen Idol

THE time was five minutes past eight, and behind their quarters a big crowd of miners were forming a deep circle around the burly figure of Black Jack Riley.

Black Jack was in high spirits. After that dose of medicine which had been given to him at the hospital he had felt no trace of the ugly, stabbing pain that had been troubling him lately, and he was pacing back and forth with an air of intense anticipation.

(Continued on page 27)

NEXT WEEK'S BIG PROGRAMME!



PAT O'BRIEN and JAMES CAGNEY

—IN—

"CEILING ZERO"

Trouble follows when Dizzy Davis, an experienced but irresponsible airman, joins Federal Air Lines as a pilot, and as a result of one of his selfish actions a flying chum crashes to death in a fog. After he has learned that his licence will not be renewed, however, Dizzy makes amends—in his own fashion. A grand drama of the air.

"CRASH DONOVAN"

A daring champion of the speedway and ace attraction of the circus is lured into the police force as a motor-cycle cop. He becomes involved in many adventures. A thrilling drama, starring Jack Holt.

Also

The opening chapters of a mighty new serial of a king of wild horses and an outcast wonder dog:

"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

Starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.

AND

THE GRAND FREE GIFT!

Three directors of a bank trick their President, who is sent to a desolate prison to serve a long sentence. Years later the banker and a scientist escape, and when the latter dies a strange secret is revealed. It enables the wrongfully imprisoned banker to return to Paris and exact a terrible revenge. Starring Lionel Barrymore

The "DEVIL DOLL



The Escape

KEEP still, my friend." The two men were up to their waists in water. Ferns, plants, and overhanging branches brushed their faces. Bent double, their eyes seemed to be wide and staring—that was fear and desperation.

From the distance came the sound of baying dogs.

Both the men were elderly. One was thin, haggard and gaunt, but the other was bigger and broader, and his arms kept the smaller man from being swept off his feet by the current of the stream.

"Oh, Lavond, my friend, will—we will make it?"

"Yes!" rasped the bigger man. "The dogs lost our scent when we crossed that river. They think we're still on the island."

"Two miles from here lies an old disused boat," the frail man spoke eagerly. "Word was passed to me in the prison that it had been secreted near an old ruined farmhouse, but it means going across country full of treacherous morasses and bogs."

"We've got so far and we'll not be beaten," Lavond answered. "We've got away from the guards, thrown off those cursed dogs, and if we can get to that boat before dawn we shall escape."

"Food has been put in the boat. Two hours' paddling up-stream should bring us to a large waterfall, and there Malita waits me."

"Malita is your wife?" Lavond's bushy eyebrows met in a perplexed frown. "A desolate swamp seems a strange place, Marcel, for a wife to have spent so many years waiting for a husband."

"Malita has had work to do." Marcel smiled strangely. "And I've got work to do once we get there. In all my five years in prison I've dreamt only of my work."

"My work is no dream." The big man gave a mirthless laugh. "I've been awake for seventeen years."

"But you have only hatred in your heart. My work will help the world to live!"

"My work will help three men die!" Lavond spoke with bitter hatred.

Lavond had every reason for his hatred. Seventeen years ago he had been the head of a famous bank. He had been betrayed and tricked by his three partners, convicted, and sent to prison for twenty years for forgeries and swindles his partners had perpetrated. Now he had escaped after serving over three-quarters of his sentence.

Marcel had been imprisoned for cruelty to wild beasts and for badly wounding the gendarmes who had come to arrest him. His sentence was ten years, and he had served half.

The two men had shared the same cell for those five years, and it had puzzled Lavond why this strange, kindly little man had been convicted for cruelty to animals. The banker had talked a great deal of his own grievances, but Marcel had said little about himself, except that the charge of cruelty to animals was false. He had resisted arrest because these fools were stopping his life's work. After a while he told Lavond of his plans for escape, and the two men set to work to tunnel a way out of their cell.

They had levered up a huge stone,

but before daybreak the stone had to be replaced and the earth they had dug up secreted under their beds. When they went out on working parties, they managed to remove some of the earth stowed away in cloth bags under their rough calico suits and to dump it when warders were not looking in their direction.

A slow and desperate task. So little earth could be removed that it was two years before they completed a small tunnel under a wooden stockade. Within an hour of their escape the bloodhounds were on their trail, but so far they had eluded the pursuit.

It would have been a stupendous task at any time to cross the morass to the river, but with one man sick and ailing it was a miracle that they succeeded. But Lavond was a dogged fighter, and though Marcel repeatedly begged him to go on and leave him, the banker just shook his head. Once they floundered into a bog that would have sucked them down if Lavond had not clutched at an overhanging branch of a tree and managed to scramble back to firm ground.

For the last half-mile to the river the smaller man had to be carried, and when they did reach the bank they could not find any sign of a boat. They were despairing, when they came to a small backwater near the ruined farmhouse, and there under a tree they found the boat and food.

Lavond lifted his companion into the boat and soon was paddling up-stream. He wanted to be well into the interior before dawn. At the first streaks of grey the banker went close into the bank, and they lay hidden under great

overhanging trees. They rested, ate, and regained their strength.

They saw no sign of prison guards or human beings, and Marcel was all for pushing on.

"What is one day when one has been in prison for years and years?" Lavond shook his head. "Why take a fool risk just for the sake of a few hours? I do not think they will ever trace us to this river, but if a report came back to the prison that two scarecrows had been seen paddling on this waterway they would be suspicious at once. Have patience, my friend."

It was dusk when Lavond pushed the boat from the bank and began to paddle steadily up-stream, with Marcel steering and trying to peer into the darkness. Often they ran into sunken trees and overhanging boughs. Once they ran aground, and it took half an hour to find the correct channel.

The river had grown narrower. Marcel explained that the lock gates were all broken, and that only in flood times did springs and rains keep the river to a reasonable level. At last they came to the waterfall and a ruined shack.

Marcel was not unduly surprised. He confided to Lavond that he had expected trouble from the authorities, and had made elaborate plans with Malita in the eventuality of escape. It had taken Malita, the woman, much scheming and bribery to get a message to her husband in prison. The guard had thought it but a loving message, but it was in code and told the prisoner a great deal.

"Somewhere in this shack we shall find a secret panel," Marcel assured Lavond.

Actually they found a message under a floorboard saying that there had been a report of some company opening a lumber camp near the waterfall so she had gone away. She had left a map of her new hiding-place. This time Malita had gone to a shack away in the forests, and marks on the map showed it to be marsh land.

"Your wife has chosen a desolate sort of place," Lavond muttered. "It is even worse than here."

"It is because of our secret work," Marcel answered. "None must ever know of our work until it is time for us to reveal our secret."

They tried to leave that night, but Marcel collapsed, and the banker carried the scientist back to the shack. It was a fortnight before they could start, and then it was not possible to cover many miles at a time. Eventually the great forest was reached, and by the narrow river they found the flat-bottomed punt that Malita had promised in the letter she had left with the map.

A queer woman with a white streak in her black hair was bending over a bubbling vessel of liquid that gave forth acrid fumes. The whites of the woman's eyes seemed to be wide and staring—one pupil green and the other brown. A long thin nose; and when she moved she had to use crutches because one leg was paralysed.

A queer creature was Malita. The fierce barking of many dogs made her look round. A huge St. Bernard appeared at the doorway of the laboratory and stared at her solemnly.

"What is it, Prince?" she cried. "What are you trying to tell me?" The barking continued, and then the dog turned in the direction of the sound.

Malita hobbled out on to a porch. "Lachna! Lachna!" she called October 24th, 1936.

shrilly. "What is wrong with the dogs?"

A tall, slovenly girl, who was not bad looking and yet whose face seemed blank, shuffled from a kitchen and wagged her head vacantly.

Malita saw that the dogs were all down by the water's edge, and then her eyes seemed to grow to twice their size as the light from the open door revealed a boat.

"Malita!"

Surely she knew that voice.

Then she glimpsed a man standing in the boat and holding an oar. He was a stranger to her.

"Malita!"

Seated in the stern of the boat was another figure, whom she instantly recognised.

"It's Marcel! My husband!" Malita cried to the maid. "Call off the dogs, Lachna. Call off the dogs quickly!"

When Lavond stepped on to the bank he carried Marcel in his arms. The little man was quite exhausted, but strength came back to him now and he managed to stand upright. The banker stared in perplexity at the strange woman who clasped Marcel in her arms and wept over him.

"Oh, you've come—you've come!" cried Malita. "Did they pardon you?"

"We escaped."

"But the police—they'll follow you."

"No, no, they lost our trail weeks ago," Marcel answered, and then smiled round at Lavond. "Come, my friend, let us go inside."

With Lavond's help they got the sick man inside and put him in a large arm-chair near the fire. The woman knelt by his side and the sick scientist laid his hands on her head.

"You've been working. I knew it by the howling of the dogs." A queer, pathetic smile showed on his face for a second. "But you've failed—you've failed again. I can see it in your face."

"Yes, I have failed." The woman's voice was filled with such despair that Lavond stared at her in amazement. What in heaven's name did all this mystery mean?

A Modern Miracle

MARCEL lay back, but recovered when Lachna brought a basin of hot broth. Colour returned to the wasted cheeks.

"Malita, I have discovered the secret. It came to me one night in that cesspool of stupid brains."

"Marcel! Marcel!"

"No more failures, Malita. The next one will have a perfect brain."

"Marcel!" Malita touched her husband's arm as she looked anxiously at Lavond. "But we're not alone!"

"Oh, Paul!" Marcel smiled. "In my excitement I forget everything. Malita, this is my friend, Paul Lavond. We escaped together. He saved my life more than once."

"I am grateful, monsieur."

"Madame"—Paul Lavond gave a little bow. "Your husband gave me the courage to go on. A very brave man, madame."

"Malita, we need have no secrets from him." The sick man sat up and his eyes burned feverishly. "Now, Malita, where are they?"

"They're in the next room," Malita said, after a moment's hesitation.

"Malita! Lavond! Help me!" Marcel cried, and held out his hands.

They got Marcel to his feet and, leaning on their shoulders, he managed to cross the room to a door. This Malita opened, and Lavond blinked his eyes at the laboratory, with its bottles, trays, retorts, switchboards, and even machinery.

New life seemed to run in the

scientist's body, and he freed himself. He pointed to a switchboard. "Malita, shut off the plant," he ordered, and the faint humming died away when the woman moved a lever. Then the woman opened a steel door of what Lavond took to be some sort of oven and brought forth a tray, which she placed on a table that seemed to be made of glass.

The tray was covered with toy dogs, and Lavond marvelled as the scientist picked up one and stroked it caressingly.

"Oh, careful—careful, Marcel, you might hurt them!"

"No, I will not hurt them." Marcel nodded his head. "Just as I thought—they're all alike. They might as well not have any brain at all."

Lavond could keep quiet no longer. He spoke with impatience. "What is this? Is this the great work you've been dreaming of for so long? Toy dogs?"

"Toy!" Marcel laughed. "Forgive me, Lavond. Have you been locked away so long from life you don't recognise a prisoner of life itself." He handed Lavond a tiny dog.

The banker stroked it, and then gasped out:

"Why it feels warm—almost flesh and bone like the real animal."

"It is. Eight hours ago it was a full-grown St. Bernard." Marcel smiled at the other's look of amazement. "You think I'm mad. The world would think so, too, if it knew what I'm going to do. Lavond, my friend, millions of years ago the creatures that roamed this world were gigantic.

"As they multiplied the earth could no longer produce enough food. What happened then one does not know. Perhaps it was a survival of the fittest or a divine miracle that solved the situation, and all we shall ever know is that the great crisis was overcome. Lavond, the world is facing the same problem to-day. Too many people, creatures, animals, flowers, and all forms of life, and I can solve it."

Lavond wondered if the little man had gone mad.

Marcel pointed to the dog that Lavond still held.

"Every living creature reduced to one-sixth its size—one-sixth its physical need. Food for six times all of us. Lavond, you know that all matter is composed of atoms, and all atoms are made of electrons?"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, I've found a way to reduce all atoms in a body simultaneously to any desired degree and still maintain life—as in that little dog."

Lavond stared at the dog. "Well then, the dog should be alive."

"It is," Marcel took the dog from Lavond. "Only in reducing the brain, all records are wiped out, no memory left, no will of its own—a creature capable of responding only to the force of another will. Watch, and I will show you this dog is alive. Malita, the power. Quick! Quick!"

Lavond looked round from beneath his beetling brows. He felt as if he were in a sorcerer's den. What Malita did he had no idea. An engine woke to life and he guessed it must be a dynamo generating electricity, but the strange coloured liquids that ran along glass tubes and in and out of retorts were beyond him. Finally the woman handed Marcel some dark liquid and he touched the dogs with a few drops. Then the long bench was lit up by electric lights, and a thermometer showed that electric heaters were warming up the glass surface.

But Lavond's eyes opened very wide when one of the toy dogs moved and

opened its mouth. Then all the dogs got to their feet and moved about in a dazed sort of fashion.

"Malita, a piece of bread."
Marcel crumbled the bread and the dogs at once nibbled at the crumbs. Lavond noticed how the little scientist's whole attention seemed to be with the animals as they fed.

"Do not tire yourself," begged the woman.

Marcel nodded and at once the dogs sank down. "I stopped concentrating," he explained almost apologetically. "I broke the beam of thought."

"But no man can do this," Lavond was staring at the dogs.

"But I did," Marcel laughed. "You saw me do it. But to-morrow I'll show you a complete success. A little dog with an active brain. A dog one can still control, but it will think for itself. For instance if you tell the dog to swim a stream and fetch something from the other side it will do it swiftly and cleverly. The dog's brain will think out the best way of answering its master's wishes." He turned to his wife. "Malita, it shall be the big dog."

The excitement proved too much for Marcel and he collapsed, and Lavond had to carry him out to the kitchen. Malita shouted for brandy, and the vacant-eyed Lachna appeared.

Marcel recovered and Lavond noted his interest in the servant. When the girl had gone Marcel nudged his wife.

"Where did you get her?"
"In a Berlin slum. She's an ill-bred peasant half-wit—I wanted no prying wite about me."

"Did anyone know she came with you?"

"No one—no one knows." Malita's eyes opened wide, and she nodded her head.

Lavond was strangely perturbed when Madame conducted him to his room; in spite of her assurance that he was a welcome guest, and that she hoped he would stay for a long time.

"You can stay and help us with the work."

Lavond shook his head. "Thank you very much, madame, but I'm afraid that would be impossible. I have work to attend to myself. You see, when a man saves an ambition in a dirty dungeon for seventeen years it becomes almost an insano obsession. Well, with Marcel it was science, with me it was hate. I may not look it, madame, but I was once a very successful banker. Three men, my partners, lied and tricked me into prison. Well, three lives are going to pay for it. Now you know why I can't accept your hospitality. As soon as I have rested and I know your husband is recovering his strength I intend to set out for Paris."

When the door closed Lavond rubbed his chin. Even though his mind was obsessed with hate and vengeance he could not banish the expression he had seen in Marcel's and Malita's eyes when they had talked about the maid-servant.

The next day Lavond saw a dog that obeyed Marcel's commands in a most amazing manner. He saw them studying Lachna in a speculative manner that alarmed the banker. It was on the fourth night that something wakened him and prompted him to open his door. There were lights in the house and he could hear voices. Curiosity urged him to dress and tiptoe down the stairs.

The laboratory door was open and he could see Malita and Marcel standing by that glass table.

"You've corrected her brain, Marcel," he heard the woman's voice. "She's no longer the stupid half-wit. Oh, she's going to be beautiful."

Lavond found himself drawn as if by a spell, and then his eyes dilated as he saw a minute human form lying on the glass—it was Lachna!

"Why it's—this is wrong," stammered Lavond, scarcely aware in his stupefaction that he spoke.

"Why—she'll be perfect," Marcel said, when he saw his friend's startled look.

"Perfection isn't wrong. Think of it, Lavond. A human being 60 minute and yet with a perfect brain."

At a signal from Marcel the woman began moving switches, and the laboratory seemed to awake. Lavond saw them pack the form of Lachna in cotton wool, then white mist was spurted out of a tube and seemed to settle round the white bundle like a cloud. The test tubes and retorts bubbled and boiled, and liquids of all colours ran through glass pipes. All apparently had some connection with bringing life to this diminutive form. Some of the fumes from the liquid were mingled with the mist.

"In just a few seconds, Lavond, just a few seconds, she'll awaken," Marcel muttered excitedly about an hour later. The cotton wool was removed and then extra heat was applied to the glass table. Lavond's eyes nearly came out of his head when Lachna stirred, yawned and sat up. It was the most beautiful thing that the banker had ever seen. They had made Lachna lovely of face and form, and Lavond found himself thinking of the evil eye when the tiny creature stood up and stretched her arms above her head.

It was a cry from Malita that broke the spell for Lavond. He turned to see Marcel clutching at his side, and leaning against the glass table, his face twisted with pain.

They carried him to his chair, but he never recovered consciousness.

The weakened heart had collapsed under intense excitement and strain—Marcel was dead.

"Poor tortured brain," Lavond stared down sadly. "Perhaps, it's all for the best, Malita."

The woman was down on her knees by the side of the still figure. She was moaning like some creature of the wild robbed of a mate. Suddenly she got to her feet and though her face was like a sheet the eyes were gleaming.



The light from the open door revealed a boat and two men.

"But our work, our work—we must carry on."

Lavond glanced towards the laboratory. "But that is murder."

"No—no—no, she's not dead yet. You must help me." The woman clutched at his arm. "Marcel would want you to. You must stay here. Quick, there is still time. Quick, help me."

Against his will Lavond was drawn back into the laboratory. Lachna lay prone on the glass table and she seemed to be dead. The woman began encasing the tiny figure in cotton wool and as she worked mumbling to herself. What she said the dazed Lavond had no notion. He could not take his eyes from the pile of cotton wool.

The woman touched his arm. "Now you must concentrate," she stated. "I know by your eyes that you have a far stronger will than mine, or even Marcel's." She parted the cotton wool to reveal the still form. "Concentrate—bring her back to life. She will respond to your will!"

Lavond did as he was requested, and Lachna stirred, opened her eyes and smiled at him.

"This is like some horrible nightmare," he murmured.

"We can make the whole world small as Marcel wanted to do," the woman whispered close to his ear. "We can go to Paris. There are many people there. There is where we begin our work."

Paris! Paris! Paris! A startled gleam appeared in his eyes. There were many people in Paris, but there were three in particular with whom Lavond desired to have dealings. For seventeen years he had planned just what he would do to these men if he escaped, or when he was freed, and now all those schemes were banished by the fact that he possessed a power that might give him a fiendish revenge. A nudge from Malita woke him to the fact that Lachna was sagging back against the bed of cotton wool, and now his eyes gleamed baleful as he concentrated all his power on giving Lachna new life.

The Three Bankers

IN a luxurious room were three bankers. The very fat man was Coulvet, the ferrety man with the flickering eyes was Radin, whilst the tall, supercilious man with the mocking smile and hard expression was Matin. It was the latter's office.

"I am very busy," hinted Matin. "Well, this is more important than anything else," mouthed the fat man. "This is terrible."

"Well, what's wrong now?" Matin gave a resigned sigh. "Indigestion? If you continue to crucify your stomach, my dear Coulvet, you'll—"

"Listen to this." It was Radin who interrupted. He held up a newspaper: "In a sensational statement by the Prefect of Police to-day, it was admitted that Paul Lavond, former bank president, convicted of looting his own bank and killing a watchman, escaped from prison four months ago. He had served seventeen years of a life sentence. Police censorship has withheld the news until—"

Matin always complimented himself on his control and calm. His sneering laugh checked the speaker.

"Well, what about it?" "It was a pretty plot, Charles," cried Radin. "But I knew we'd never get away with it."

The fat man glanced round anxiously. "Victor—not so loud!" he cried. "Don't shout it all over the bank."

"I quite agree," Matin laughed. "After all, embezzlement and murder are things we should keep to ourselves."

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"But you didn't have to kill that man, Emile," Radin accused.

"Stop it!" screamed Coulvet at Radin. "Keep your mouth shut, fool!"

But Radin was a picture of fright. "He'll come back to Paris—he'll talk!"

"You cringe and scream like a woman, Victor," sneered Matin, and shook his head. "My friends, our former president may be honest, but he'll never be so stupid as to set foot again in France."

"I'd sleep better if I knew Lavond was back in prison," muttered Coulvet.

"A fifty thousand francs reward would insure that," urged Radin.

"There's a certain amusing irony in offering a man's own money for his capture!" Matin's laugh was mirthless. "Fifty thousand francs, why not?" He looked at Radin. "Get me the Prefect of Police."

A month had passed. France, Europe, and the world had been scoured for Paul Lavond. The police decided that the two escaped prisoners had perished in the swamps, but the three bankers were not so sure.

Coulvet rang up the Prefect of Police. "My partners and I will increase the reward to one hundred thousand francs," he stated.

And Paul Lavond, when he saw the increased reward, laughed. He was going to exact full revenge, but that revenge would be long and lingering.

The Doll Shop

AN old lady was staring up at the poster on the wall. Age had bent her back, though the step seemed firm enough, and the eyes behind the powerful spectacles were full of life. She laughed quietly, and then looked round to see if she were observed. The poster was only loosely fixed, and strong, powerful fingers tore it from the wall. The slightly torn poster was swiftly folded and stowed away in a basket, then drawing a thick shawl closer about her spare frame the strange old lady walked slowly away.

After a while she came to a shop window, which was proving of great interest to a number of children, and no wonder, because the shop was full of dolls, toys, and animals. The dolls were beautifully made and extremely life-like. The old lady watched the children for a few moments, and then opened the shop door.

The counters and shelves were full of toys. They were of all colours and patterns, so the neat interior looked very gay.

"Malita!" the woman called out in a high-pitched voice.

"I'm coming, madame," came the answer.

Down the stairs Malita hobbled with the help of a crutch. The old lady beamed at her, and after a slight motion of the head hobbled towards a curtained doorway.

In the comfortable back parlour, after Malita had closed and locked the door, the dear old lady took off her powerful spectacles and removed her bonnet. She peered into a mirror and smiled as if pleased with the reflection, then the white hair was removed—it was a wig. The old lady was none other than Paul Lavond.

"Look in that basket, Malita!" Lavond cried. "You will find a poster, offering a hundred thousand francs for my capture. Who do you think is offering all this money for me? The same three swine who sent me to prison before. They're frightened to death, Malita. They know that my freedom means their finish. But what they don't know is that the Paul Lavond they're

looking for is Madame Mandilip, a poor, tottering old woman. How is the horse?"

"It looks wonderful!" Malita's eyes seemed to look searchingly at Lavond. "Soon we start Marcel's great work?"

Lavond's eyes were hard, though his mouth was laughing. He nodded.

"Maybe, Malita, we will start tomorrow. I have an appointment with Monsieur Radin."

The next morning Madame Mandilip was shown into Radin's office. The ferrety-faced banker stroked his minute moustache, and said in crisp tones that he understood madame had some venture that she wished to discuss with the bank. He hinted he was busy.

The eyes behind the spectacles were smiling as Madame Mandilip took out a toy horse from her basket and placed it on his desk. She assured him that none made such beautiful life-like toys as herself, and she thought that the bank would be interested in the manufacture of such toys. Perhaps if the bank did not back ventures like that, then monsieur might be interested.

"There are many novelties like this on the market," he stated, grudgingly admitting to himself that it was the most realistic model of a horse he had ever seen.

"But a toy like this has never been made before. It is not mechanical, and yet, if you speak to it, it will obey."

The banker stared at the old lady without any trace of recognition.

"Obey?"

"Yes—ask it to do something."

Radin wondered if the old lady were mad. Perhaps he had better humour her. He looked at the horse.

"Get up on your feet!" he cried. To his amazement the horse stood up. The old lady laughed when Radin stared at her, and her smile seemed to encourage him, so that he turned again to his desk. "Walk around." The horse proceeded to walk gracefully round and round the blotting-pad. "Faster!" He leaned forward and the horse broke into a canter.

Some while later, Madame Mandilip put the horse carefully back in her basket and covered it with cotton wool. Radin was grinning at her foolishly. His crafty face was a study in amazement.

"I have never seen such a toy before. How is it worked, madame?"

Madame smiled.

"That is my little secret, monsieur."

Radin nodded.

"What capital would you require?"

"To start with, just a few thousand francs, but I wish to start manufacturing at once." The old lady's voice seemed to have a gentle purr. "The Christmas holidays are so close. Naturally, monsieur would like to make a few investigations before advancing any money. If monsieur will but come to my little shop he can go into every detail." The eyes behind the glasses were almost hypnotic. "When will monsieur come?"

Now Radin knew that these toys were worth a fortune. He was not too well off at the moment, and here was the chance to invest a few thousand francs and get a colossal interest on his money. He would say nothing to anybody about these toys.

"How, about to-night—about eight o'clock?"

The old lady rubbed her hands together and smiled. Her voice was very gentle.

"Splendid. My little shop is in Montmartre, and it's rather difficult to find. I'll meet you by the Moulin Rouge at eight o'clock. Good-day, monsieur."

At a few minutes past eight Malita opened the shop door to admit madame and Monsieur Radin, who stared round speculatively at the many dolls and toys.

Madame watched him with gleaming eyes.

"Well, I can hardly believe it. I feel like pinching myself to see if I'm awake or dreaming. To think that I really have you here."

"Huh?" Radin stared at her sharply.

Instantly madame became all smiles. "I mean—that you're going to be my partner—and help me."

"That depends," Radin answered.

"But remember, madame, that if I do, it will only be financially. My name must not appear."

"Oh, I wouldn't dream of using your name—you'll just be my silent partner." Madame laughed for some reason that Radin could not understand. She walked slowly across to some stairs.

"My workshop is downstairs—follow me. Be careful—it's very steep." He followed her down the narrow stairs into a small room that smelt of paint and chemicals. He saw many toys in various stages of construction. "This is the room where we keep all our little secrets." Madame pointed to a comfortable chair. "Make yourself at home, monsieur. Malita!"

Malita hobbled down the stairs. "This is Monsieur Radin, the banker I spoke to you about. This is Madame Malita, my assistant."

Radin bowed stiffly, and when offered cognac refused stiffly the hospitality. Madame smiled and showed him a little dog—once it had been a massive St. Bernard. Radin became very interested. Madame took a chair quite close to him, and her smile was mocking.

"This dog feels quite warm," Radin murmured.

"Well, if you think that life-like, you wait till you see Lachna." Madame

smiled at the standing Malita. "Bring me the Apache Doll, please. Oh, and don't forget the little stiletto."

Radin was astounded at the doll.

"All our accessories are carried out, down to the most minute details." Madame held up the stiletto. "This is made of finest steel."

"May I see it?" Radin answered.

"You can feel it," madame answered, and suddenly she dug the stiletto deep into the banker's leg.

A shrill cry of pain came from his lips, and then he seemed to stiffen. The whole body was rigid in a matter of seconds, the mouth gaping open, the hands clenched as if in agony—in fact, one might have said Radin was dead, but for the eyes that moved.

"Don't be too alarmed, Radin." Lavond removed the wig. "You're not dying. I can see that you recognise me. You recognise my voice. That's one of the few things you and Coulyet and Matin didn't steal from me.

Another is my hatred. Look at me, and see what seventeen years in the grave has done to me. Do you know why I've lured you here? Because you're going to help me recover what I can from life. That's why you're not going to die. I wouldn't let you die, Radin, but you'll wish a thousand times that I had before I'm finished with you."

An hour later Lavond again donned the wig and put on the quaint bonnet. Malita looked anxious.

"Where are you going? To your mother's again? Where the police are always watching?"

"No. I'm going to see my daughter," was the answer. "It's the one thrill life has left me. I love to look at her—listen to her talk. It drives me almost crazy not to be able to tell her who I am."

"Why don't you bring the dear girl here?"

A snake of the head.

"I couldn't tell her who I am—why she's grown to hate her father's memory—I'll not be long, Malita."

Madame Mandilip left her shop and beamed at a gendarme that chanced to be passing, then, slightly bent, went slowly along the street to the laundry where Lorraine Lavond worked.

Hatred

A PRETTY but tired girl worked busily at the wash-tub. Her dark hair was dank from the steam and from the fact that she had been busy without a break for the last four hours. In a short while the day would finish and she would meet her beloved Toto.

A bell tinkled as the door opened and Madame Mandilip shuffled up to the counter. The laundry woman beamed at this so regular customer, and nudged Lorraine.

The girl left her work.

"Good-evening, madame."

Lavond stared at his daughter, then remembering the part he had to play became the beaming old lady.

"Good-evening, my dear, you look very tired."

Lorraine laughed.

"Oh, no, I was just rushing to finish my tub in time." She took the small parcel the customer had brought.

"How soon do you want this?"

"The end of the week will be plenty of time."

The door-bell again, and this time a young fellow in a leather coat entered. Lorraine smiled a greeting at him.

"Toto has a new taxi," she whispered to Madame Mandilip.

"Mademoiselle Lavond, I believe?" The young man bowed. "I've come for the honour of driving you home in the Fortuna Taxi Company's third vehicle, of which I have just paid the first instalment. I trust you are very well, Madame Mandilip."



"Is this the great work you've been dreaming of for so long?" sneered Lavond. "Toy dogs!"

"My rheumatism troubles me a little, but otherwise I am very well." Madame glanced at the two young people. "Ah, it is wonderful to be young." A smile at Lorraine. "My dear, I hear your grandmother is not very well. I should so like to pay a call on her."

"She is always so much better after you go to see her," Lorraine replied. "She will be delighted."

A beaming smile for these two lovers, and Madame Mandilip had hobbled out of the little laundry office.

Toto drove Lorraine along the Bois, and eventually took her to the top of the Eiffel Tower. It was a favourite spot with these two young people. They loved to look down on Paris. Once again Toto begged that Lorraine would marry him as soon as he had paid for the taxi, and once again Lorraine shook her head. She was the daughter of a criminal, and she would never drag him down to the same level.

The detective watching the house of Madame Lavond smiled when the bowed figure of Madame Mandilip rang the bell and was admitted. Lavond's make-up and acting were so perfect that everyone was deceived.

Upstairs in a small room was a frail old lady, who smiled tremulously at the visitor, who grinned back and then proceeded to lock the door.

"Paul! Much as I love you, you mustn't come here any more. Ever since that first night I've been terrified that someone would suspect."

"But there's no reason why Madame Mandilip shouldn't come and visit you," Lavond kissed his mother.

"There is no need to worry." "You shouldn't come so late," came the chiding rebuke. "Lorraine will be home any minute."

"That's just why I'm here," rasped Lavond. "As a matter of fact she knows I'm coming. I saw her to-day in that filthy laundry where she works."

"You didn't let her know who you were?"

"No, but I'm going to to-night. I can't stand it any longer."

Madame Lavond gave a dubious shake of the head. "But she's so bitter, so resentful. She blames you for everything. Her mother's death of a broken heart she lays at your doorstep. Any effort I have made has been of no avail. Paul, if you must tell her, let me talk to her first slowly, gradually. It's so dangerous, Paul, and—"

Someone tried the door, and then an anxious voice cried. "Grandmother! Grandmother!"

Lavond smoothed his wig into place and hurriedly opened the door.

"I'm so sorry, my dear," silkily purred Madame Mandilip. "I'm so used to locking the door of my little shop. Your grandmother seems stronger."

Lorraine kissed her grandmother and insisted upon making a pot of tea. It was when the girl came back that Lavond decided to find out how much she hated her father. On the wall was the painting of a beautiful woman, and he asked his daughter who it was.

"That was my mother."

Madame Lavond stared anxiously at her son.

From a tray on a dressing-table Madame Mandilip picked up a rosary, and with a beaming smile announced that it was very pretty.

"That's mine," Lorraine's young face had become hard.

"I gave my little girl one just like that," Madame shook her head. "That was many years ago. She was very proud of it."

"They tell me I was, too, when I got it. That rosary was given to me by

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someone whose name we never mention here."

"You mean your father?"

"I have no father," the girl answered. "Madame Mandilip, I'm sure you know who we are and all about us. You know my father was sent to prison, and that was why my mother killed herself. And that's why his mother spends her old age this way, with barely enough food, and firewood once a week a luxury."

"It is very sad," Lavond watched his daughter anxiously.

Lorraine was worked up to a pitch of fury. Her feelings had been suppressed for so long.

"And do you know how we get all these luxuries?" she demanded. "Not from the laundry, that wouldn't keep us alive. No, all our great wealth comes from the Café Poule down the street, where I have the honour to work at night, where I have the joy of letting a crowd of sewer rats smirk at me, so they can buy more wine—a centime a drink, I get."

"Lorraine," begged her grandmother. "That's what my father's done and I loathe him for it," stormed the girl.

Lavond was wondering what to do when there came a brisk rat-tat-tat on the door. Lorraine opened the door and two men walked in.

"I'm from the Prefect of Police, madame," the detective said to Madame Lavond. "We are still looking for your son. Have you heard from him?"

"I've not heard from him, even by letter."

"If you do, madame, the Prefect will expect you to notify him at once," the detective stated. "In the meantime I'll check with you each day. You understand, of course, harbouring a criminal even though it be your son, is a most serious offence."

"You don't need to remind us of our duty or of the law," Lorraine held open the door. "Good-night, monsieur."

"I know how you feel, my dear," murmured Madame Mandilip, when the police had gone. "But don't be too harsh on the police. It's only natural for them to expect him to come here. He hasn't seen you for so long. You must be prepared though. He may come."

"I hope he doesn't," blazed the girl. "Because if he does I'm going to turn him over to the police. Grandmother says he's innocent. I've heard that all my life, but I don't believe a word of it."

Madame Mandilip adjusted her bonnet. "Well, I think I must be going. I've got a lot of old crates in my yard—lumbering the place up. Make good firewood—I shall send them to you, Madame Lavond." A nod to Lorraine. "Good-night, my dear."

At the bottom of the stairs Lavond glanced back. "So my daughter hates me? The swine shall pay dearly for this."

Lachna Strikes

C OULVET paced his study, whilst Matin stared at the big quivering body with contempt.

"You'd better get out of town," advised Matin. "Take a trip somewhere."

"You know I can't with the holidays." "Then keep your head, or we'll both be taking a trip at the expense of the Government."

Coulvet's face was haggard. "I'll admit I can't sleep. I keep wondering which one of us he's going to look up next."

"He wouldn't dare." Matin stood up. "Radin had many enemies and he owed a lot of money. We know from his

books—he may have chosen an easy way out. Don't you worry, Coulvet."

When Matin had gone the fat banker decided to go and talk to his wife. She would dispel his gloom. Out in the hall he brushed into a quaint old lady.

"What do you want here?"

"Your butler is showing madame one of my dolls, monsieur," said Madame Mandilip.

"Madame will see you." A butler had appeared.

Coulvet followed the quaint old lady into his wife's boudoir, and was furious because his wife wanted to buy a ridiculous doll for their daughter Marguerite. Two hundred and fifty francs—it was absurd. But Madame Coulvet had a persuasive way with her husband, and reluctantly the fat banker handed to the quaint old lady the money.

Madame Mandilip took the money and just for a moment the eyes behind the spectacles stared up at Coulvet. A little bob of the head and a smile and then Madame Mandilip had shuffled towards the door. Coulvet glanced round after the old lady, and when the door had closed began to lecture his wife on economy.

Thus did Madame Coulvet purchase with her husband's money a doll that was Lachna. That night Marguerite went to bed with her new dolly clasped close in her arms.

In the small hours of the morning a figure shuffled through the bushes of Coulvet's extensive mansion and paused beneath the veranda of the child's bedroom. Madame Mandilip's eyes gleamed strangely as she stared upwards.

Lachna stirred in Marguerite's arms. An adroit wriggle and she was free. By means of the ciderdown she climbed down the bed to the floor. The bedroom door was slightly ajar, and she squeezed through and made her way to the bed-room of Monsieur and Madame Coulvet. No sound did Lachna make as she pulled herself up a chair leg to the seat, and from thence on to madame's dressing-table. With strong hands Lachna opened the jewel-box.

A little while later Lachna appeared on the balcony of the child's bedroom. Very neatly Madame Mandilip caught a beautiful pearl necklace. Lachna vanished and returned with a necklace of green sea emeralds. Within an hour Lavond had possession of all the jewels of any value that Madame Coulvet possessed, and then his mind, through the eyes, gave Lachna her final orders.

Lachna climbed on to Monsieur Coulvet's bed, and from her waist drew out the tiny stiletto that had been used to paralyse Radin. The fat man stirred uneasily and Lachna covered down on the silk ciderdown. An arm was flung out close to the doll, and then the dagger was plunged into the flesh.

Coulvet groaned. Lachna slid off the bed as Madame Coulvet awoke.

Madame Coulvet switched on the light, but she did not see the doll that slid round the slightly open door. All that madame saw was the distorted face of her husband.

Outside the window waited Lavond, and he clucked as madame's screams came to his ears. Revengo was sweet. He held out his voluminous skirts and Lachna dropped lightly down.

The next day the papers had startling news. A banker had been robbed and mysteriously paralysed. The police were baffled by what they considered a look of constant terror in Monsieur Coulvet's expression. Was this the work of Paul Lavond, who was still at large and thought to be in Paris?

Confession Through Fear

TWO days later Madame Mandilip had a visit from a police sergeant. Madame Coulvet, in talking about everything that had happened on the day previous to the robbery, had mentioned the visit of the old toy seller. Curiously enough, the doll that had been purchased was missing.

Now Lavond had been quite prepared for a visit from the police. The necklace had been broken up, stones taken from the rings, bracelets melted down and all the gems safely hidden away. If the police did search the shop of Madame Mandilip they would find nothing.

By adopting a tone of injury and demanding to be taken to the police-station Lavond succeeded in dispelling all suspicion from the sergeant's mind. He assured madame that he had not come there to arrest her, but to ask a few simple questions. These madame was able to answer satisfactorily, and it ended by the sergeant accepting a present of a little clown for his son.

Madame conducted the sergeant to the door.

"I'm sorry I haven't been able to help you any more, but if you want me at any time my shop is here, and you always know where to find me."

Some time later with a basket under her arm Madame Mandilip left her shop and made her way to the flower markets. The next destination was a popular restaurant, where Matin came most days to take drinks and often lunch.

Matin was accompanied by a doctor—they had just been to the hospital to gaze with horror at the awful expression on Coulvet's face.

"Doctor, what do you think frightened poor Emile so much?" asked Matin. "What could he have seen?" "He'll never be able to tell us." The doctor shrugged his shoulders in a hopeless gesture. "He'll be paralysed for the rest of his life—a brilliant mind imprisoned in a useless body."

It was permitted for flower-sellers and newsboys to enter cafés and restaurants. It was Madame Mandilip who stood close to the table occupied by the two men. She shuffled forward. "Holly, messieurs, mistletoe—fresh from the markets." The voice was wheezy and nasal.

"No—no! Go away!" rasped Matin, and began to discuss the possibilities of electric treatment to cure his partner. The doctor said nothing could effect a cure, and Matin was about to send for the bill when he saw a note addressed to himself. He opened it, frowned, and then stuffed it hurriedly into a pocket.

"What's the matter, Charles?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, nothing—nothing," murmured Matin, and making excuses about work hastened to the bank.

After locking the door of his room he took out the crumpled note and then from a glass bookcase found a large Bible. He glanced again at the message.

"READ YOUR BIBLE.

EXODUS	12-3	15th word
EXODUS	12-30	7th
JOHN	1-39	26-27th
DEUT.	15-17	30-31-33rd
JUDGES	18-9	35th
JOB	3-5	4-5-6-7th
LEVITICUS	5-5	18th
ACTS	16-31	10-13-14th."

It took Matin some while to decipher this message, and then with scared eyes he looked down at what Lavond had written:

This
night
tenth hour
thou shalt likewise
enter
the shadow of death.
Confess
and be saved.

For a long while Matin looked at the warning and then a gleam of hope appeared in his eyes. He took a pair of scissors and neatly cut off the part about "Confess and be saved."

He went to the telephone. "Operator," he cried, "get me the Prefect of Police."

The message enabled Matin to secure police protection, and though the prefect packed his house with detectives and gendarmes the banker was in a pitiful state of fright.

Up till nine o'clock Matin managed by alcoholic stimulants to keep fairly cheerful, but as it drew nearer to ten fear began to get him in its grip. He jumped if a door slammed and cursed at the detectives because they would lounge about in chairs and not stand guard by the doors. They told him he could go to bed, but he was not in the mood for retiring.

Lavond had always given a party for children of employees of the bank at Christmas, and Matin, considering it a good way of keeping on the right side of his staff, had kept up the practice. It only wanted a few days to Christmas and the big lounge of the banker's house was festooned with coloured



Madame Mandilip took the money and just for a moment the eyes behind the spectacles stared up at Coulvet. October 24th, 1936.

papers, holly and a large tree. The latter was hung with dolls, presents, tapers and candles. The dolls had been supplied by Madame Mandilip, and one was a queer little Apache.

Matin might have had a queer shock if he had looked closely at that Apache, because he would instantly have recognised Radin.

At nine-forty-five Lavond, disguised as Madame Mandilip, paused by the railings outside Matin's mansion. Radin at once awoke and struggled to free himself from the ribbon binding him to a branch. He dropped to the floor, but in so doing an ornament fell from the tree.

"What was that?" Matin demanded. The perspiration was pouring down his cheeks.

"See what that was?" a detective said to one of his men.

The gendarme looked in the lounge and saw nothing unusual. If he had glanced under one of the chairs he would have seen a crouching figure. He did not, and returned to report that everything was all right.

One of the detectives began to whistle softly.

"Stop it!" yelled Matin.

"You mustn't let your nerves get the better of you, M'sieur Matin," advised the chief detective.

None saw the door move ever so slightly and the minute figure that crept cautiously into the room. Radin darted underneath a chair and from his belt took out a small stiletto.

"I wouldn't get too upset about that note, M'sieur Matin," added the detective. "Probably not for you at all. Just some religious fanatic. The city's full of 'em around Christmas."

"That's very consoling," sneered Matin. "That's why the prefect sent all you men to guard the house."

Matin sat down on a settee, and Radin on hands and knees crept over the carpet. Matin stood up and then went to sit in a chair. Radin had to dodge round the room.

"There's something in this house!" Matin jumped up again and stared wildly at the clock, which was now at ten minutes to ten.

"Nothing can get by our men." The chief detective looked contemptuously at this coward of a man. "Why don't you sit down, m'sieur?"

An ominous silence fell on the room. The clock hands moved to nine-fifty-five, and now Radin was underneath Matin's chair. The stiletto was drawn back so it could be stuck into the ankle that was so close.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" muttered Matin, his eyes on the clock.

It was 9.59 and Matin was shaking as if he had the ague—the stiletto was now within a few inches of his ankle. At ten Radin would strike.

As the clock began to strike ten Matin jumped to his feet.

"Monsieur Lavond," he screamed hoarsely. "Wherever you are—in heaven's name listen and have mercy." The detectives stared in amazement. "I'll confess—you're innocent—we were the guilty ones." He dropped to the floor and began to sob.

Radin waited till the detectives were bending over the wretched man before darting for the door.

A Mad Woman

IT was two o'clock in the morning, and already there were newspapers on the streets of Paris. One was brought to the shop of Madame Mandilip.

CHARLES MATIN CONFESSES.
PAUL LAVOND INNOCENT.
October 24th, 1936.

It was splashed right across the front page.

"I've waited a long time to read this, Malita," chuckled Lavond. "So Paul Lavond is vindicated? Think of it—after seventeen years of shadows, I'm innocent. Thanks to you, Malita. And thanks to you, Madame Mandilip."

Lavond threw his wig into the fire and rubbed his hands.

"This is wonderful, Lavond," Malita was grinning strangely. "Now that you are free we can go on with our work without being bothered by the police."

Lavond shook his head. "No, Malita, my work is over but I am not free. Why, if they ever found out who I was the police would want a lot of questions answered. What happened to Radin? Who paralysed Couvet? No, Malita, when I proved my innocence, I condemned myself for ever. We must get out of here. But before we go, we must destroy everything in our workshop."

"No, no!" Malita's voice was a scream. "The ghost of Marcel will curse you for ever if you do. We've got to go on, Lavond. We've got to carry out his plan."

"Now listen to me, Malita, and try to understand," Lavond said as if humouring a child. "I never had any plans beyond the vindication of my name and I only wanted that because of my family. Through Marcel's wild schemes I was able to do it, but we can't go on. Why, our work is hideous; we're cruel and it's got to come to an end to-night."

"No, Lavond! You can't do this. I won't let you betray Marcel. If you go away I will carry out his work alone. Do you understand that—alone?"

"You fool!" Lavond cried harshly.

"Do you want to go to prison? As Madame Mandilip, I mailed a full confession to the police. There's nothing left for me to do. The name of Lavond is cleared. My mother and daughter will have nothing to be ashamed of." He smiled at the woman appeasingly.

"I'm sorry, Malita, I didn't mean to speak harshly to you. I have plans for you. You will be well taken care of. Now please hurry, for every minute counts. Put Lachna there in the basket with Radin. Their lives are ruined but we can't destroy them. We'll send them to the Prefect of Police."

The woman made no answer, but she went over to the basket. Lavond had gone into his room to take off his old woman's attire.

"We've served his purpose, Radin," Malita looked at the Apache. "Now he'll serve ours. Reduced to your size. I'll control him as easily as I control you."

Malita took out a bottle of deadly poison, dipped the stiletto into it, and placed it in Radin's hand. Then she awoke the Apache and set the basket on the floor. Radin darted across the room to Lavond's bed-room.

Paul Lavond stood before the mirror and decided that it was fine to be able to don once more a frock coat and pin-stripe trousers. They were of the same pattern he had worn when he had been president of the bank. The smile vanished from his face when he noticed that his bed-room door was open. Curious, he had shut it, so who could have opened it? He was puzzling over this when the door began to open wider, and he saw reflected in the mirror the face of Malita. The expression on her face was terrible and in a flash Lavond sensed danger. He jumped away from the mirror, as if sensing the direction of the attack.

Two feet from where he had been standing was Radin with the stiletto in his hand.

Lavond guessed at once the woman's purport.

"Why, you poor, insane wretch," he cried. "I should destroy you with all the rest of this horror. Get out of here!"

Radin deprived of the influence dropped limply to the floor. Lavond gave him one glance before striding to the door, and pushing Malita fiercely to one side.

"What are you going to do?" Malita screamed.

"Do what you won't do—destroy everything," he shouted back at her.

Lavond strode into the laboratory and had just smashed a whole lot of apparatus when a queer, snarling sound made him turn. It was Malita, and in her hands was a bottle of liquid.

If that bottle were to burst the place would be blown to atoms.

"Put that down, Malita, you'll blow yourself to pieces."

"And you, too, Lavond," Malita shouted. "You've had your vengeance. Now Marcel will have his."

"Malita, listen to me," Lavond tried to soothe the mad woman. "Death doesn't frighten me. Why, it's been part of my plan. But not yet, Malita. I still have something to do for my child. When that's done I'll die gladly."

As Lavond spoke he edged towards Malita, who faced him with the bottle held above her head.

"You must die now."

"Malita, you must calm yourself." He had edged nearer. "You don't want to die, Malita. Think of your work—think of Marcel. Give that bottle to me."

Malita screamed horribly, and then tried to fling the bottle at him. In the nick of time he jumped back. The bottle crashed to the ground and there was a terrific explosion. Lavond was hurled flat on his back, and as he struggled up he knew that any second other bottles would be exploding. As he dragged himself up the stairs there was another violent explosion and fumes of choking gas surged round him.

He gained the street. A minute later the whole of the front of the shop was blown out by a tremendous explosion. Then the walls sagged in, and angry red flames appeared.

People came dashing out into the street. Someone gave the alarm. The police and the fire-engines arrived on the scene about the same time. No one took any notice of Lavond, who watched the gutting of the toy shop of Madame Mandilip, and knew that perhaps it was as well this had happened.

The chemicals kept on exploding, and it was a good hour before the water got control of the flames.

Detectives explored the ruins and found nothing.

"Guess she planned to blow this place up before she mailed her confession," Lavond had crept into the crowd and overheard one of the detectives speaking to a sergeant. "Just the sort of thing a crazy woman would do."

Lavond slid quietly away, and planned out, by the banks of the Seine, what he should do next.

The early morning special editions had much to say about Madame Mandilip. A mad woman, who had at one time been robbed or cheated by the bankers, and who had chosen the time when there was a scare about Lavond being in Paris to carry out a crazy revenge. In his confession Lavond had not stated how he had committed his crimes, and so they were very vague about how the mad woman had got at her enemies. What pleased Lavond most was the fact that the confession of Matin had been

(Continued on page 29)

The concluding chapters of the mighty serial drama of action and romance



Starring

Phantom RIDER BUCK JONES

EPISODE 12—

“The Last Chance”

A Lucky Encounter

WITH the branch of the tree snapping under his weight, Buck plunged headlong into the path of the oncoming horsemen, and for an instant it looked as if the Ranger was to end his career under the iron-shod hoofs of his enemies' broncs.

Yet the fall of that bough had the effect of throwing the troop of riders into the wildest disorder, for the leading ponies reared up on their hind legs as the branch dropped in front of them, and next second they were cavorting in a fashion that defied control.

Three of the animals actually came tumbling to the ground and lay kicking madly in the throes of their panic. The others, though managing to keep their feet, continued to prance like creatures demented, and the terror that actuated them was transmitted to the hindmost broncs as these reached the spot.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the fallen tree-bough, Buck Grant was huddled upon the trail in a dazed and shaken condition. But presently he roused himself with an effort, and as he struggled up through the mass of twigs and leafage that enveloped him his bewildered eyes focused themselves upon a scene of indescribable confusion.

Men were sprawled in the dust beside their ponies and doing their best to shield themselves from lashing hoofs. Other men were perched in their saddles and striving might and main to pacify mounts which had become crazed with fear and which were behaving like unbroken mustangs at a rodeo. Never had a body of individuals who were skilled riders found themselves in so abject a plight.

It certainly seemed as if the disaster that had occurred to Buck had turned out well, after all, and, bemused as he was, the Ranger was nevertheless quick to realise his good fortune and to take full advantage of it.

Only one horse had leaped the broken log that had come hurtling to the woodland track from above, and this horse had pitched its master clean off its back in the process. It was now standing a few paces from Buck, trembling visibly, yet in far better shape than its fellows who were mixed up so inextricably beyond the fallen bough which it had cleared.

Seeing it, Buck stumbled towards the bronc and pulled himself into the saddle, and at the touch of a firm hand the animal seemed to recover itself completely. A moment later it was carrying the Ranger down the trail at a fine, swinging gallop, and with its long legs moving like pistons underneath him, Buck felt that he surely had the pick of the outlaws' ponies.

He was right, for the bronc in question belonged to Dirk—Dirk, who was at present endeavouring to escape from the tangle of horseflesh amidst which he had been flung—Dirk, who bellowed with fury as he suddenly saw Buck making off at top pace astride his mount.

“The dirty crook!” the gangster roared. “He’s grabbed my hoss! Hey, he’s gettin’ away on my hoss!”

No one paid the slightest heed to Dirk, every man being too concerned with his own welfare, and with a final angry yell, the lieutenant of the outlaw band wrenched out a six-gun and tried to take a shot at Buck Grant’s disappearing figure.

The shot was never fired, for a glancing kick from an upflung hoof paralysed Dirk’s arm from wrist to shoulder, and with a yelp of pain he staggered aside—to trip over a confederate who was grovelling in the dust.

Panic continued to reign amongst men and beasts, and by the time that the crooks had recovered themselves and quietened their steeds, the forest had swallowed Buck utterly. Then, his face

livid with chagrin, Dirk again raised his voice.

“That doggoned nester has got clear away,” he snarled. “Yeah, and on my bronc, too.”

“On your bronc, Dirk?” exclaimed Keeler. “Then we don’t stand a chance of catchin’ up with him. Your pony could give any of ours five yards in every hundred.”

“We’d better try an’ run him to earth, all the same,” struck in Roscoe. “The chief said we was to knock Grant off.”

Dirk made an impatient gesture. “No, we can’t afford to go after him,” he retorted. “We’ve something more important to do. The chief wanted us to get Grant all right, but he’s keener still to lay his hands on that pay-ore at the Hudson ranch. Come on, the gold comes first. Gabe, I’ll ride with you.”

He climbed up behind the man whom he had named, and ere long the party of outlaws were turning to gallop back in the direction of the Hudson outfit, confident that they had plenty of time to raid the ranch and make off with their spoil before ever Buck Grant showed up with help.

But little did they know how luck was destined to run against them, for, spurring southward through the forest, Buck Grant cleared the belt of timber about fifteen minutes later, to espy a group of horsemen cantering across a strip of plain; and an exclamation escaped him as he recognised the familiar figure of Judge Holmes at the head of those riders.

Pounding over the moonlit patch of open prairie, Buck drew rein in front of the oncoming band and addressed his friend in terse accents.

“Hallo, there, judge!” he greeted. “What are you doin’ up this way?”

“Just being neighbourly, Buck. I guess,” Holmes answered. “I happened to drop in the Hidden Valley

ranch to-day, and the housekeeper there told me that Mary had left for the north."

The younger man nodded.

"That's right, judge," he said. "And right now she's up at old man Hudson's place. Delaney and two of his men are with her, and so are the Hidden Valley boys and her elum Helen Moore."

"Aw, then that's okay," declared Holmes. "I kind of got the idea she might be alone, and I rounded up my own hands in order to come and look for her. I figured it was pretty dangerous for her to be gallivanting around with so many outlaws and renegade Indians on the rampage, and seeing she's the daughter of a man who was one of my greatest friends—"

Buck interrupted him grimly.

"Judge," he stated, "it's a good thing you took the trail. Mary Grayson's far from being alone, but nevertheless, she's in danger. You see, we located her father's mine and took a shipment of gold out of it—under the eyes of a bunch of rustlers who'll stop at nothing to get their clutches on it!"

As briefly as possible he related all that had occurred, and when he had heard the Ranger's story, the expression on Holmes' face was stern.

"And you think the outlaws will have enough nerve to attack Hudson's place?" he asked.

"Yes," Buck rejoined, "because there's one or two fellers in Mary's crowd that I'm not altogether sure about. But if it comes to a fight, judge, you and your men can swing the odds in our favour."

Holmes gave a hitch to the gun-belt that he was wearing under his jacket.

"You can depend on us, Buck," he said. "Come on, men, let's go!"

The Missing Gold

ALL was quiet at the Hudson ranch, and the men detailed to act as sentinels and give warning of any

attack were, for the most part, beginning to imagine that there was little likelihood of the enemy risking an engagement.

Two of the cowboys who had been posted as look-outs held a very different view, however. They were Tex and Mulford, the 'punchers' in Harvey Delaney's employ, and as they squatted in the shadow of a mesquite clump on the north side of the outfit, they talked of their arrangement with Dirk's gang in low and guarded tones.

"I wonder when they'll show up," breathed Mulford.

"Pretty soon now," Tex opined. "They musta settled with Grant by this time, and they was to come back here directly afterwards. When they do, our job is to sit tight and let 'em past."

Mulford uttered a grunt.

"Even then they're liable to run into a good deal o' trouble," he said. "Hudson's three cow-hands and them Hidden Valley hombres will put up a good fight, you can depend on that, Tex."

"Maybe they will," the other rejoined. "But if Dirk and the gang play their cards right and make the most of the element o' surprise, they oughta wipe out all opposition."

There was a silence, and then Mulford spoke again.

"Y'know, Tex," he mentioned, "I've been thinkin' things over, and I've got a hunch that might turn out to be some helpful to Dirk. Supposin' we was to slip back and stampede all the horses outa the corral behind the ranch-house? That would give everybody here something to take their minds off a night-attack, and while they was tryin' to round up the animals Dirk and the boys could bear down on 'em."

Tex was listening to him interestedly, and it was clear that he was impressed by the scheme.

"Mulford," he declared, "that's a smart idea, and it's worth tryin'." We'll

put it up to Dirk and the gang when they arrive."

Huddled in the shadow of the mesquite clump, they spent the next ten or fifteen minutes in scanning the ground in front of them, and presently they fancied they detected movements in a thicket some little distance away. A few seconds later they knew that they had not been mistaken, for all at once they saw a file of men sneak from the brushwood and crawl into an arroyo that led towards the ranch.

Those men were the outlaws whom Tex and Mulford were expecting, and without a word the treacherous cowboys crept across to the dry, ragged hollow in order to intercept them.

They came face to face with Dirk and the rustlers, and Tex spoke in a whisper.

"Did you get Grant?" he demanded.

"No," growled Dirk. "He gave us the slip, and we couldn't afford to lose time chasin' him. So we back-tracked and then made a wide circle to approach the Hudson outfit from the north, accordin' to plan. Is everythin' set?"

Tex laid a hand on his arm.

"Just a minute, pardner," he said. "Mulford here has got a hunch, and I think it's a good one. Listen while I tell yuh."

He outlined the other cowboy's scheme, and Dirk nodded appreciatively when it had been explained to him.

"Sounds okay," he murmured. "Does the chief know about it?"

"No. But I reckon he'll thank Mulford when he hears of it. Now, you fellers stay here until we've turned them horses loose. Then come a-runnin', see?"

Dirk and his associates answered in chorus, and Delaney's two employees then shunk out of the arroyo and made for a fenced-in enclosure at the rear of the Hudson ranch-house. Here the ponies of the old cattleman's visitors had been corralled, and, on reaching the



Buck and his comrade forced the gangsters back against the wall.

pen, Mulford and Tex made haste to unfasten the gate of it.

In less than half a minute the treacherous cow-hands were driving the broncs out into the open, and as the herd began to scatter to right and left the two men set up a loud outcry, running round to the front of the ranch-house while they did so.

It was an outcry that brought men hurrying from all directions—some from a bunk house near by, others from various points where they had been on the watch for any sign of a raid—and as these men appeared, Tex and Mulford shouted to them in accents of feigned dismay.

"The horses have bust outa the corral!"

Hudson's employees and the Hidden Valley boys swarmed past Mulford and Tex in a body, and soon they were heard yelling to their ponies by name in the hope that the broncs would turn back. As for the two rogues who had been responsible for releasing the animals, they lingered close to the veranda of the ranch-house, and were exchanging sly grins when the voice of Delaney reached their ears.

They turned to see him framed in the doorway of the house, and they also noted that the Hudsons were with him, together with Spooky, Mary Grayson and Helen Moore.

"What's wrong?" Harvey Delaney was inquiring. "What's all the trouble about?"

And then, even as he uttered the words, there came a sudden blatter of gun-play from the north side of the outfit—a sharp volley which rang out startlingly through the night, and which was followed immediately afterwards by a dead silence.

The occupants of the ranch-house looked at one another blankly, as if dumbfounded by the outburst of revolver-fire. An instant later they were crowding to the windows at the back of the dwelling, and as they peered out they beheld a spectacle that caused them to become tense.

The ponies from the coral were fleeing over the range, but it was not upon those fugitive broncs that the watchers riveted their attention. Their gaze was concentrated on the men who had en-

deavoured to check the stampede, and who had thereby laid themselves open to a surprise onset by Dirk and his cronies.

The desperados were now scrambling out of the arroyo and closing in on the defenders of the Hudson ranch, and these had no opportunity of showing their mettle as fighters. Already four of them were lying on the ground, cut down by the fusillade that had been directed at them from the hollow, and the outlaws had the drop on the others. One move on the part of any of the cowboys would have meant instant death at the hands of the approaching rustlers.

From the windows of the house, Mary Grayson and her companions saw Dirk and his gang surround the 'punchers and proceed to disarm them. Then old man Hudson gave vent to a smothered oath. "Those rats can't get away with this!" he blazed. "Spooky, turn out that lamp on the table there. We'll open fire from the windows and give our men a chance to come to grips—"

"You'll stay where you are if you know what's good for you."

The voice cut in on Hudson's words incisively, and the group at the window-panes swung round to find themselves covered by the six-shooters of Tex and Mulford.

There was a silence, tense and electric, and it was only broken when Harvey Delaney addressed his two employees. His tone was harsh, though Spooky, for one, could not help wondering if the anger in it were genuine.

"What's the meaning of this?" the wealthy cattle-baron demanded.

"You'll find out," Mulford told him complacently. "Meantime, you'd better take things easy, and that goes for all of you—the womenfolk included."

He launched an ominous glance at Mary, Helen and Mrs. Hudson, and then turned his attention on Harvey Delaney again as the latter took a step forward.

"Get back!" Mulford jerked.

The warning was echoed by Tex, and Delaney appeared to quiver with indignation.

"See here!" he cried. "You can't get away with this!"

"Can't we?" Mulford retorted with a leer. "What odds will you give me that we can't?"

Before Delaney could offer any response to this sally there were heavy

footfalls on the doorstep of the ranch-house, and immediately afterwards Dirk came into the living-room with Gabo and Roscoe at his heels.

"Nice work, boys," Dirk said to Tex and Mulford. "We've got the rest of 'em, and we're lockin' them up in the barn."

"I'll have the law on you coyotes for this!" old man Hudson blurted all at once.

"Shut up!" snapped Dirk. "Hey, Mulford, do you know where that gold is?"

Mulford answered him promptly. "Sure," he said. "It's in the store-room—in an out-house back of the barn. Tex and me helped to dump it there."

"Then you an' Tex can help me take it outa there," Dirk rejoined. "Gabo—Roscoe—you look after these folks here, and if any of 'em try to get fresh, let 'em have it."

Followed by Delaney's treacherous 'punchers, he marched out of the dwelling again, and the three of them made their way in the direction of the barn, into which Mary Grayson's cowboys and Hudson's men were being herded.

Dirk, Tex and Mulford passed the barn and halted before the out-house that was their objective. It was padlocked, but a bullet from a six-gun made short work of the fastening, and, kicking the door open, the three crooks stepped inside.

But even as they advanced over the threshold there was a commotion in the neighbourhood of the barn, and as the three of them stumbled to the out-house door they saw their cronies running towards them in an obvious state of panic.

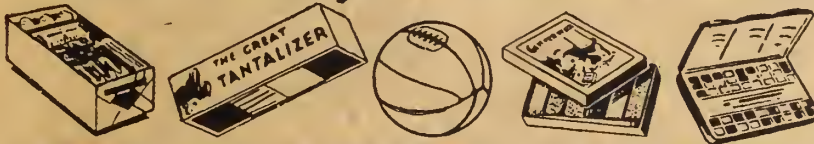
"What's up?" Dirk ejaculated, hurrying forth to plant himself in the path of his men.

It was the ruffian known as Keeler who answered him.

"A crowd o' horsemen comin' over the ridge to the south!" he gasped. "They outnumber us by two to one. We'd better pull out, Dirk—and plenty pronto. Grant must have brung back that posse!"

Dirk realised that flight was the only course. Gold or no gold, they would be in danger of capture and conviction if they remained here another minute, and, therefore, he and his confederates

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were soon sprinting for the thickets where they had left their horses.

Tex and Mulford ran with the rest of them, for it was impossible for them to stay on in the vicinity of the Hudson ranch now that they had shown themselves in their true colours. But there were two members of the gang who did not figure in that precipitate retreat—Gabe and Roscoe—who had been detailed to stand guard over the people in the house.

It was not until they heard the drumming of hoofs that these rogues became aware of their danger, and by that time it was too late. Even as they made a rush for the porch they saw a band of riders drawing rein outside, and next second the stalwart figure of Buck Grant had leaped from the saddle to close with them.

Bounding through the doorway, the big Ranger knocked Roscoe's six-gun from his fist and gripped him by the throat, and almost simultaneously Spooky came up behind Gabe and disarmed that lank scoundrel after a brief tussle.

Buck and his comrade forced the gangsters back against the wall, and were pinning them there when Holmes and his men swarmed into the house. Then, three or four of the judge's cowboys having taken charge of the discomfited outlaws, Buck turned to Mary Grayson.

"Looks like we didn't arrive any too soon," he commented.

Mary clutched him by the arm.

"Tex and Mulford were in with the gang," she panted. "My own men and Mr. Hudson's were rounded up and taken to the barn—"

"Tex and Mulford, eh?" Buck interrupted, shooting a glance at Harvey Delaney.

Delaney was mopping his somewhat swarthy face. He was, to all appearances, considerably upset.

"I wouldn't have believed it of those men," he said thickly. "They never gave me any reason to suspect that they were in cahoots with this blackguard Dirk and his scum. Listen, Grant, that gang can't have got far. Let's get after them."

"And take a chance on them giving us the slip?" Buck countered. "Yep, giving us the slip and circling back to make another raid on the ranch. No, siree, right now that gold from the Grayson Mine is our chief concern. We've got to get it to Maverick for safety, and if we start to-night we can be in town when the bank opens its doors to-morrow."

No one had any argument to offer against that proposal, and a little while later, when the men imprisoned in the barn had been released, a cavalcade of riders might have been seen wending its way southwards through the moonlight.

The pay-ore from the Grayson Mine travelled with that cavalcade. So did the four cowboys who had been wounded when Dirk's gang had borne down on the Hudson ranch. And so did the luckless Gabe and Roscoe, a sorry pair of bandits who sat their saddles with hands tied securely behind their backs.

End of the Trail

TWO days later Buck Grant and Spooky were riding at a canter along the trail that led from the town of Maverick to Mary Grayson's ranch in Hidden Valley, and as they rode they talked of a visit which they had paid to the sheriff's office that morning.

"It's no use, Spooky," Buck said. "Gabe and Roscoe are faced with the October 24th, 1936.

prospect of a neck-tie party, but they won't squeal. Sheriff Mark and his deputies have tried their hardest to make 'em come clean, yet neither one of 'em will tell where the gang's hide-out is or what the name of their real leader is."

Spooky nodded sourly. "Honour among thieves, huh?" he grunted.

A silence fell between them, and several minutes elapsed before it was broken. By that time their broncs were carrying them towards the summit of a ridge that overlooked the plain known as Dry Creek.

"Gettin' close to that homestead where you hang out, Buck," Spooky said then. "When will I see you again?"

"We're not separating yet, pardner," he informed the little fellow. "I understand Mary was goin' riding this mornin', and I've got a sort of a half-arrangement to meet her somewhere between Dry Creek and Hidden Valley."

Spooky shot a quick glance at him and smirked broadly.

"Kinda sweet on Mary Grayson, ain't you?" he said. "Well, she's a mighty fine girl. Reckon I might be tempted to cut you out with her if I wasn't such a pal."

Buck laughed heartily, but his mirth was of short duration, for even as he and Spooky reached the crown of the ridge that they were ascending they saw something that caused them to draw rein.

There below them lay Dry Creek, and on the level plain three figures were visible, one of them that of a girl who was riding at top speed, the others being two men who were obviously in pursuit of her.

They were a considerable distance from the ridge and were galloping away from it, and an instant after Buck and Spooky had caught sight of them the fugitive's horse stumbled and threw her over its head. A few seconds later the two pursuers were abreast of her, and one of them dismounting, the girl was picked up and lifted on to his saddle.

Meanwhile Buck had gripped Spooky by the arm, and as he flashed a question at him his voice seemed to rasp in his throat.

"Spooky, that's Mary, isn't it?"

The other Ranger's face had hardened. "I can't tell from this distance, Buck," he jerked. "But the horse that threw her looks mighty like the pinto she allus rides. Anyway, whether it's Miss Mary or not, them hombres ain't up to no good."

"There they go!" he added abruptly. "They're ridin' off with her—and ridin' fast. Do you suppose they've seen us?"

"No," Buck answered. "They never looked in this direction. Spooky, it must be two of those outlaws that have got hold of her, and I'm goin' after them. I may not be able to catch up with 'em, but I reckon I can trail 'em."

Spooky eyed him grimly.

"What do you mean—you're goin' after 'em?" he demanded. "We're goin' after 'em."

"No, pardner. Those fellows are going to lead me to the gang's hide-away, and I'll need more than one man beside me when things begin to break. You've got to get back to Maverick and bring on the sheriff and a posse. Wherever I happen to finish up, I'll send my bronc Silver to meet you with a message statin' the location of the outlaws. Understand?"

"I get you, Buck," said Spooky. "Go to it, but watch out for yourself. When I reach Dry Creek with the posse

I'll hold up at your shack and wait for Silver."

They parted, Spooky wheeling to make tracks for Maverick, Buck riding down the ridge in a smother of dust and setting out in the direction which the outlaws had taken with their captive.

Half-way across the plain Buck came up with the pony that had thrown the girl. It had been left to its own devices and was limping towards a belt of forest into which the gangsters and their prisoner had already disappeared, and at close quarters Buck recognised it beyond all doubt as Mary Grayson's favourite horse.

Teeth clenched, the Ranger galloped onward into the woods, picking up a track that had swallowed the outlaws and the girl. It was a track covered with leaf-mould which showed distinctly the imprints of two sets of hoofs, and he had no difficulty in following these until he pushed clear of the timber and descried his quarry away ahead of him.

They were still setting a hot pace, but Buck managed to keep them in sight even when they penetrated the rolling hill-country to the south-west. Then at last they vanished into a canyon that was choked with chaparral thickets, and, pushing through these in pursuit of them, the shadower suddenly found himself on the edge of a big clearing in which a lonely cabin stood.

The crooks had halted outside this, and were in the act of dismounting. From the shelter of the thickets Buck saw them tether their horses to a hitch-rail at which a number of other broncs were standing. Then they lifted Mary down and carried her into the dwelling, the girl apparently being in an unconscious condition.

Slowly Buck swung himself out of the saddle and lowered himself to the ground, and presently he had torn a leaf from a diary and was scribbling a message that described the situation of the remote cabin whither Mary's captors had led him.

Having written this note, he fastened it to his pony's saddle, and was about to send the horse on its way when he paused as if on an afterthought. Then from under that same saddle he produced the rig that he had worn in his rôle of Phantom Rider, and when he had donned the white cloak and tied the silken kerchief about his features, he slapped Silver smartly across the flank.

"Home, boy!" he ordered. "Go on, get outa here! Home, boy—home!"

The bronc trotted a few yards and came to a pause, seemingly reluctant to leave its master, but an imperative wave of the hand and a repeated command sent it on its way, and when it had disappeared from view Buck again turned his attention to the cabin in the clearing.

He knew that his wisest and safest plan was to wait until Spooky showed up with the posse. Yet his concern for Mary urged him to draw nearer to that shack and learn the reason for her capture. He wanted to make certain that she came to no harm, and, if it became necessary, he was prepared to walk into that lion's den and protect her, hoping that the outlaws' fear of the mysterious Phantom Rider would prove a strong point in his favour.

From his covert amid the thickets he could see that there were no windows in the east wall of the cabin, and it was from this quarter that he approached the dwelling, moving stealthily towards it with a six-gun in each hand and drawing nearer and nearer to it without incident until he was only two or three paces from it.

And then, even as he was stepping

into the very shadow of its wall, he heard a curt voice behind him.

"Don't turn around, Phantom, till you've dropped that hardware!"

Buck stiffened, and his first impulse was to wheel face to face with the owner of that voice. But a further harsh warning restrained him, and, as the order to drop his forty-five was repeated, he had no option but to obey.

"All right, Phantom," the voice informed him then. "You can look around now."

Buck turned slowly to find himself confronted by Keeler. In one hand the crook was gripping a revolver that was trained steadily on the Ranger's body—in the other he was carrying a bucket which was brimful of water, and which he had apparently fetched from some nearby spring.

"Too bad, Phantom," said Keeler, "that I happened to be on the outside of the shack. Too bad for you, I mean. Come on—start walkin'. Round to the front door, and keep your hands up."

Without a word Buck made his way to the porch, and, setting down the bucket, the gangster followed at his heels.

"All right, step inside," Keeler snapped as his prisoner paused in front of the door.

Buck thrust the door open, and, though it was broad daylight, he found himself looking into a semi-darkened room whose windows were closely shuttered. It was a room in which a group of men were standing, and, recognising them as the outlaws against whom he had been operating so long, he noticed at the same time that Dirk and Mulford were holding Mary Grayson.

She had recovered her senses, and was staring at a tall, well-built individual who was seated at his ease in a chair. There was an expression of mingled horror and amazement on her lovely features, and Buck soon realised why. For the man in that chair—the leader of the gang of scoundrels which had launched its campaign of terror in Benson County—was none other than Harvey Delaney.

At the moment Delaney's attitude was tense, for he had transferred his gaze from Mary Grayson to the cloaked form which had appeared in the doorway, and there was a look in his eyes that was reflected in those of the men about him, who had also become aware of the Phantom's presence.

Then Keeler followed Buck into the room and spoke in a triumphant voice.

"Look what I found, chief," he said to Delaney. "I caught him sneakin' up on the shack when I came back from the spring."

Delaney rose from his chair, and his lip seemed to curl evilly.

"The Phantom, eh?" he breathed. "The hombre that's spoiled our play at every turn. Blackie, take off his mask!"

One of the gang crossed towards the prisoner and with an ugly gesture pulled down the kerchief that hid his identity, and, as those well-known features were revealed, a cry escaped Mary Grayson.

"Buck!"

"Yeah, Buck Grant," put in Delaney. "I always figured he and the Phantom were linked up in some way—and that guy Spooky, too."

"Just as I always figured you were in tow with this gang of cut-throats, Delaney," Buck rejoined steadily. "You were too anxious to offer mortgages on other folks' property for my likin'."

There was an exclamation from Blackie just then. He had been searching Buck, and had suddenly discovered a tell-tale badge and identification card that proved the captive was a Ranger.

"A representative of the law, huh?" said Delaney, as these articles were handed to him. "Well, Grant, I'm afraid you're outside of the law right now."

"You can do your worst so far as I'm concerned," Buck grated. "But if Mary Grayson—"

"Mary Grayson has nothing to fear so long as she shows good sense," Harvey Delaney interrupted craftily. "In fact, I deeply regret that she received so severe a shaking when she fell from her horse."

Buck eyed him grimly.

"You knew that she was going riding this morning," he said. "You apparently detailed two of your men to intercept her and bring her here. Why?"

"So that I could persuade her to sign a deed," Delaney answered in a cool tone. "A deed, Grant, which will make over her property and her share in the gold-mine to me. After she has done that, and after I have made a quick deal with the railroad and slipped across the border, she'll be set free again. A simple enough arrangement, isn't it?"

He turned all at once to Mary.

"And perhaps," he added, "perhaps the presence of Buck Grant might help you to make up your mind. It

(Continued on page 28)

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October 24th, 1936.

"THE DEVIL DOLL"

(Continued from page 20)

accepted, and had been proved to be correct. The theory was expressed that Paul Lavond had died in the swamps.

As all the apparatus, Laehna, Radin and the animals had all perished in the flames Lavond knew they would never get at the truth. It was well that they thought him dead—it would make the rest of his task all the simpler.

Lavond thought of Martin and Coulvét. As long as those two lived they would know that Paul Lavond had not died out in the swamps.

The Eiffel Tower

IT was late afternoon of the same day when an elderly gentleman hailed Toto's taxi.

The young man drove into the kerb, jumped out and opened the door. Toto was feeling pleased. Not only was business good, but the news that Lorraine's father was innocent would put a stop to all this nonsense about her not being able to marry him because she was the daughter of a criminal. Her father's name was cleared.

"Where to, monsieur?"

"Drive anywhere you like."

"That's a very dangerous order to give a taxi-driver, monsieur."

"Yes, but you're not an ordinary taxi-driver, are you—Toto?"

Toto was staggered, and looked round at the smiling, kindly-looking, elderly gentleman. "We were better off once, monsieur, but I am only a taxi-driver now. But one day soon I hope to have my own business. How did you know my name was Toto?"

"Because my name is Paul Lavond," came the startling reply. "Be careful, Toto, don't drive into that lamp-stand. Drive somewhere where we can be alone."

Toto soon recovered his wits. "I've promised to meet Lorraine this evening."

"How is she? Have you seen her since the papers—"

"No, monsieur, I didn't like to talk to her at the laundry in front of all the others. You don't know what your innocence means to me, M'sieur Lavond."

"Yes I do, Toto," Lavond gave a quiet chuckle. "That's why I've got to talk to you, but alone."

"When I want to be alone, monsieur, I always go to the Tower," replied the young man. "It's so far above everything and everybody."

"The Eiffel Tower, then, Toto," directed Lavond.

Some while later the father and future husband of Lorraine leaned on the rail and stared down at Paris. Lavond gave the young man a brief account of his escape from prison, his meeting with Marcel, and his return to Paris.

"Now that I have my so-called freedom—my exile must commence over again. You see that, don't you?"

"I'm trying to."

"Well, at least you can understand why I can't rejoin my family."

Toto nodded.

"Yes, yes, I can see that, but it seems so unjust and unfair—all you've done, you've done for them. I'm so sorry."

"I wouldn't be," Lavond laid his hand on the youngster's shoulder. "I'm rather happy about it. You can marry Lorraine—my fortune will be restored to her. And you can live contentedly together ever after. That's a proper ending to a story, isn't it?"

Suddenly the young man clutched at Lavond's arm. "Lorraine! I forgot that this is where she is going to meet me at sundown. I didn't mean to trick you, monsieur. I merely thought it would please her—I still do—whatever may happen afterwards."

"Toto, it was kind of you, but it can't be. Why, even when I was innocent her hatred of me hurt a good deal, and now that I'm guilty, her belief in me would hurt even more. And if the police should ever—" He moved away. "No, no, I must be going."

"But where?" Toto was in despair. "At least you can tell me that, I could send you your money, and—"

The elevator door opened and out stepped Lorraine. Paul Lavond moved hurriedly away, but over his shoulder he watched them.

"Toto, have you seen the papers?" was the girl's first question.

"Yes, dear."

"Then you've heard about father."

"Yes."

"Aren't you ashamed of me?"

"Of course not."

"Well, I am terribly." The girl gave a choked sob. "I'll never forgive myself—never."

The girl sank on to the rail seating and bowed her head on her hands. Toto looked across at Paul Lavond, who gave an understanding gesture with his hand.

Lorraine was startled on feeling a touch on her shoulder to look up and see an elderly man smiling down at her. "Are you Lorraine Lavond?—the daughter of Paul Lavond?"

"Yes. He's my father."

"May I speak freely?"

"Yes, of course, monsieur." Lorraine saw the boy move away. "Where are you going, Toto?"

"I'll be over here," was his answer.

"I have been

waiting for you, mademoiselle."

Lavond pointed to Toto. "Because our friend here was good enough to tell me he was going to meet you."

"Why?" She eyed him curiously.

"Whilst searching for you to-day I was fortunate enough to be directed to him. You see, I'm a friend of your father's."

"Is he in Paris?" she demanded eagerly.

Lavond avoided the question. "I

served many years with him in prison."

"Where is he now?"

"Matter of fact, we escaped together." Lavond avoided those bright young eyes.

"Oh, please tell me where he is," Lorraine cried. "I'll search for him—anywhere. You see, I've hated my father all my life, and now I've got to find him and beg his forgiveness. Ask him to come home with me."

"I don't think he ever really thought you hated him."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, but he can never come home to you." Lavond paused, and his voice became a whisper. "My dear child, your father is dead."

Lorraine swayed back against the railings, and closed her eyes.

Paul Lavond longed to take his daughter in his arms and comfort her, but he knew he must control such emotions.

"Yes, he's passed away." His voice was very gentle. "He died out there in the swamp during our escape from prison. The last thing he did was to write a letter to his mother which I will give to Toto. He sent me with a message to you. He told me that if I ever saw you to take your hand, and tell you that he loved you very dearly—that all these years in prison he had known you were growing into a charming young woman. He sent you a kiss."

Lorraine leaned forward and Lavond kissed his daughter.

"Then he said—this is the most important thing of all—he told me to tell you"—Lavond paused—"to forget him. To find happiness and to keep it. He hopes you will marry."

"It's very kind of you to bring me this message." Lorraine found her voice at last.

Lavond gave a funny little laugh. "Yes, a little bit foolish, for the police are still after me. Good-bye."

"And good luck!" cried Lorraine.

Paul Lavond went across to Toto. "My boy," he whispered. "Take great care of her and my mother." He handed over a letter. "Give this to my mother. I go contented in the knowledge that you will be a good husband for my girl."

In a paternal gesture he laid both hands on the lad's shoulders. "May every happiness be yours."

The elevator doors opened and Paul Lavond without a backward glance entered, and the doors swung shut.

"Toto, I have the strangest feeling I've seen him somewhere before," Lorraine murmured with a bewildered frown, after Toto had come to sit beside her.

"You have."

"Where?"

"He was in the laundry looking for you." Toto prided himself on his answer. "There were so many people around—he got afraid—on account of the police, I mean. That's how he came to find me."

"Perhaps that's it. I don't remember."

"Remember me?" mocked Toto, and next moment the girl was in his arms.

The elevator descended swiftly. The attendant noticed that his only passenger was smiling and chuckling quietly to himself.

"It's a nice evening, monsieur."

Paul Lavond looked up and nodded.

"Yes, probably the nicest evening of my life."

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October 24th, 1936.

"HARD ROCK HARRIGAN"

(Continued from page 12)

"Make the ring as small as yuh like, fellers," he called out. "I don't wanna chaso that guy Harrigan."

This sally was greeted by loud applause from his partisans, while an undertone of scorn rose from Hard Rock's supporters. Then all at once McClintock showed up.

"Hey, where's that foreman o' yours?" Riley demanded. "Ho's keepin' me wain'."

"I'm told he stepped in at the hospital to see Doc Wagner again," Mac replied.

"Yeah?" said Black Jack. "Well, he could've saved hisself the trip, because I'm gonna knock him back there in a coupla minutes."

He started to swing his mighty fists as if he were shadow boxing, and had been indulging in this pantomimic display for some little while when a man joined the mob of onlookers and forced his way through to the ring that had been made.

The man was Bellamy, and he was the bearer of startling news.

"Hey, Black Jack!" he panted. "Harrigan's run out on yuh! I just seen him goin' into Anderson's."

Riley seemed thunderstruck for the moment, but speedily hit upon a possible explanation of Hard Rock's behaviour.

"That guy wouldn't run out on any fight," he announced. "I know him too well. Ho's just stallin' to try an' shake my nerve."

"Shake your nerve, Black Jack?" scoffed one of his admirers. "Can yuh imagine that?"

"Yeah, that's a good one, that is," someone else laughed. "Come on, let's go down to Andy's bungalow and drag him out!"

The suggestion met with approval, and soon the miners were moving through the camp like a swarm of eager hornets, with Black Jack Riley well to the fore. Nearer and nearer they came to Ann Anderson's bungalow, and then, halting before the lighted windows of it, they raised a hubbub that advertised their presence.

The uproar was audible to two people who were standing in the neat parlour of the one-story dwelling. They were Andy and Hard Rock Harrigan, and, as the babel grew louder, the girl looked up at her companion in a bewildered fashion.

"Tim, I can't understand what's come over you," she said. "That's all."

"What is there to understand?" Hard Rock countered dully. "You never liked the idea of me fightin' Riley, did you?"

Andy gazed at him searchingly.

"Is that the only reason why you're backing out of this scrap?" she asked.

"Sure it is," he told her. "What else could there be?"

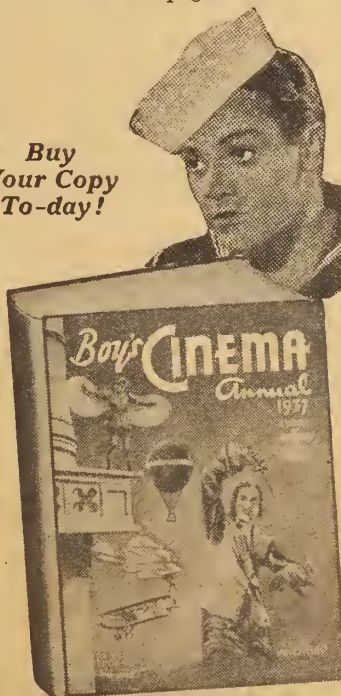
He was longing to reveal the truth to her, knowing that he could at least depend on her commiserating with him. But he did not dare to divulge the secret that had been given to him in confidence by Wagner, for it was just possible that Andy would lose her head when the men began to hound him, and would blurt out the whole story to shield him from their taunts.

Therefore Hard Rock Harrigan held his peace, and he was standing there with clenched hands when Riley came up to the front door and hammered on



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it—a Riley whose patience was now exhausted.

It was Andy who answered the summons, and Black Jack addressed her thickly.

"Where's Harrigan?" he wanted to know.

"Why?" the girl queried. "Can I give him any message?"

Black Jack's massive head was shifting from side to side as he tried to peer into the sitting-room.

"Yeah," he said, "tell him to come out here an' take his lickin'."

He had scarcely spoken the words when Tim appeared, moving past Andy into full view of the assembled miners.

"Hey, what's the idea?" Black Jack rumbled at sight of him. "I thought you an' me had a date for to-night."

Hard Rock eyed him steadfastly.

"The date's off, Riley," he said with an effort, "and so is the fight."

Black Jack's beetling brows lowered in a frown that was half-puzzled, half-angry. Then he shot a quick glance at the girl behind Tim.

"Oh!" he declared. "So Andy's got you buffaloeed, eh? Well, you're goin' through with the fight, anyway!"

He stepped back and put up his fists, but Hard Rock made never a movement, and for a spell there was a silence—a silence broken at length by McClintock.

"Don't listen to Andy, Hard Rock. Pile into him."

"Come on, Harrigan. We're bettin' on yuh!"

"Give him the old one-two, Harrigan."

The cries rose from all sides, and Oscar and some of the boys struck up the chorus of the "Harrigan" song. But still Tim remained motionless, and when he spoke it was in a voice that shook slightly.

"I said—the fight is off!" he repeated.

Once more a silence descended upon the crowd, and this time it was Black Jack Riley who terminated it.

"Listen, Harrigan," he ground out, "I told you I was gonna pin back your ears, and I'm a man of my word."

He struck Hard Rock across the face with the back of his hand, and the colour that surged into the ace-driller's features was not caused directly by the blow, but by a grim desire to retaliate. Yet he took the insult without attempting to hit in return, and even Andy was shocked and astonished by his attitude—to the extent of forgetting the distaste that she had for bloodshed.

"Fight him, Tim!" she cried indignantly.

Hard Rock betrayed no sign of having heard her, and now Riley and the assembled miners could only come to one conclusion, a conclusion that it was impossible to doubt when the tunnel boss again struck his rival across the cheek without obtaining any answer in kind.

"So you are yellow!" Black Jack breathed, his eyes narrowing. "Gosh, I never would have believed it!"

Then, turning, he shouted to the throng of spectators in a tone of savage mockery.

"Look at him, boys! Hard Rock Harrigan! Huh, the only thing that's tough about him is his name!"

A storm of jeers was let loose, and the very miners who belonged to Tim's crew added their voices to that derisive tumult as soon as they had recovered from their amazement.

"You'd better pack your lingerie and beat it, Harrigan!"

"There's a 'bus leavin' in twenty minutes!"

The howling continued resounding in Tim's ears till he felt he could bear it no more. Then two of his tormentors

made the mistake of trying to welt him across the face as Riley had done.

There was nothing wrong with the pulse-beats of these two men, and so Hard Rock let them have it. A right and a left, and the fellows were stretched senseless in the dust—and Black Jack, who had been in the very act of walking contemptuously away, was brought up short in his tracks.

"Well, can yuh beat that?" he said, gaping. "He wouldn't fight me, but he slaps down two of my best—"

And then Black Jack stopped, giving vent to a sharp cry as a stab of pain went through him. There had been no scrap, so far as he was concerned, but the excitement and anticipation of the whole affair, had been sufficient in themselves to affect his shaky heart, and suddenly he was pitching to the ground in a dead faint.

Weeks had passed. The tunnel had been pushed through steadily, and Black Jack had also progressed—though at a slower pace. The time had come, however, when it had been possible to break the news of his illness to him without fear of the shock-bringing on a fatal relapse, and he had learned then the reason for Hard Rock's apparent cowardice on the night which had been scheduled for the fight.

The rest of the camp was made aware of the circumstances as well, and one night, at the mess-hall, a slap-up dinner was given in honour of two men who were no longer sworn foes.

Riley had been prevailed upon to speak. It was his farewell speech as tunnel boss, too, for he had resigned in favour of Hard Rock Harrigan and had taken over a post that was less exacting. "Well, boys," he said in the course of his oration, "I've never been noted for keepin' my mouth shut, but this time I find it kinda hard to express myself."

"Yeah? That's somethin' new for you, Black Jack," someone called boisterously.

Riley fixed a sombre eye on the interrupter, and then ran his glance over the assembled audience.

"What I do want to say, however," he went on, "is that you mugs have got a new tunnel boss who's the finest guy that ever walked on two feet. And after what Doc Wagner has told me, I want to go on record as statin' that there's one Harrigan who's better than a Riley!"

There was a roar of cheering as Black Jack sat down, and it was succeeded by demands for a speech from Tim, who was sitting at the far side of the room with Andy by his side.

Hard Rock Harrigan stood up awkwardly, and gave an embarrassed cough.

"Well, fellers," he began, "I—er—I—well, I don't know just what to say— Except—"

He paused, and slipped an arm around Andy's shoulders.

"Except I'd like to introduce you," he went on, "to the little lady who's consented to be Mrs. Harrigan."

The statement was greeted with shouts of approval and congratulation, and these changed to a yell of mirth as Tim rounded off his address with the following words.

"And I'd like it to go on record," he announced, glancing across at Black Jack, "that I've promised from now on to do all my fightin' at home with the missus."

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"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

(Continued from page 25)

seemed to me that you've shown a special interest in him ever since the two of you met, and I don't think you'd like anything to happen to him, would you?"

Buck saw the girl turn deathly pale, and he promptly called out to her to take no notice of the man's threat. Yet it was clear that she was powerfully affected by it, and there was a distracted look in her eyes when Delaney informed her that he would give her half an hour in which to make up her mind.

Long before the time was up, Mary Grayson was ready to surrender her title to every square foot of land that she owned. Indeed, she had made that decision the moment Delaney had inferred that Buck's life would be forfeit in the event of her proving stubborn, and it was a decision from which she had not wavered.

But before Mary Grayson could sign the deed which Harvey Delaney produced there was a sudden thunder of hoofs in the canyon, and, rushing to the door with his men, the chief of the outlaws saw a formidable posse of horsemen bursting out of the chaparral.

It was unfortunate for the gang-leader that he chose to go for his gun, for in the instant that he plucked it from its holster a volley was discharged by the oncoming riders, and as the echoes of that fusillade were dying away Harvey Delaney sank lifeless to the ground.

Three of his accomplices fell with him. The others threw up their hands, and a minute or two later, as they were being taken into custody, Spooky bent down to examine the body of the scoundrel who had commanded them.

"So Buck and me was right, eh?" he said. "Delaney was our man. Well, it's a pity he didn't live—to swing."

Some weeks later, when Delaney's surviving confederates had been tried and sentenced, Buck Grant dropped in at the Hidden Valley ranch to see Mary Grayson.

"Mary," he told her, "I'm returning to my headquarters at Laredo to-morrow."

"Then you haven't thought over my proposition?" she asked in a tone of regret. "Oh, Buck, I need a manager to look after my investments now that I've sold my land and my interest in the mine. I never was much of a business woman."

Buck drew nearer to her, and his arm encircled her waist.

"Mary," he said, "I've got a counter-proposition to make. How would you like to be the wife of a State Ranger?"

Her answer was spoken in a whisper, but it was the answer that Buck had hoped to hear, and when he left for Laredo the following day his bride-to-be went with him.

THE END.

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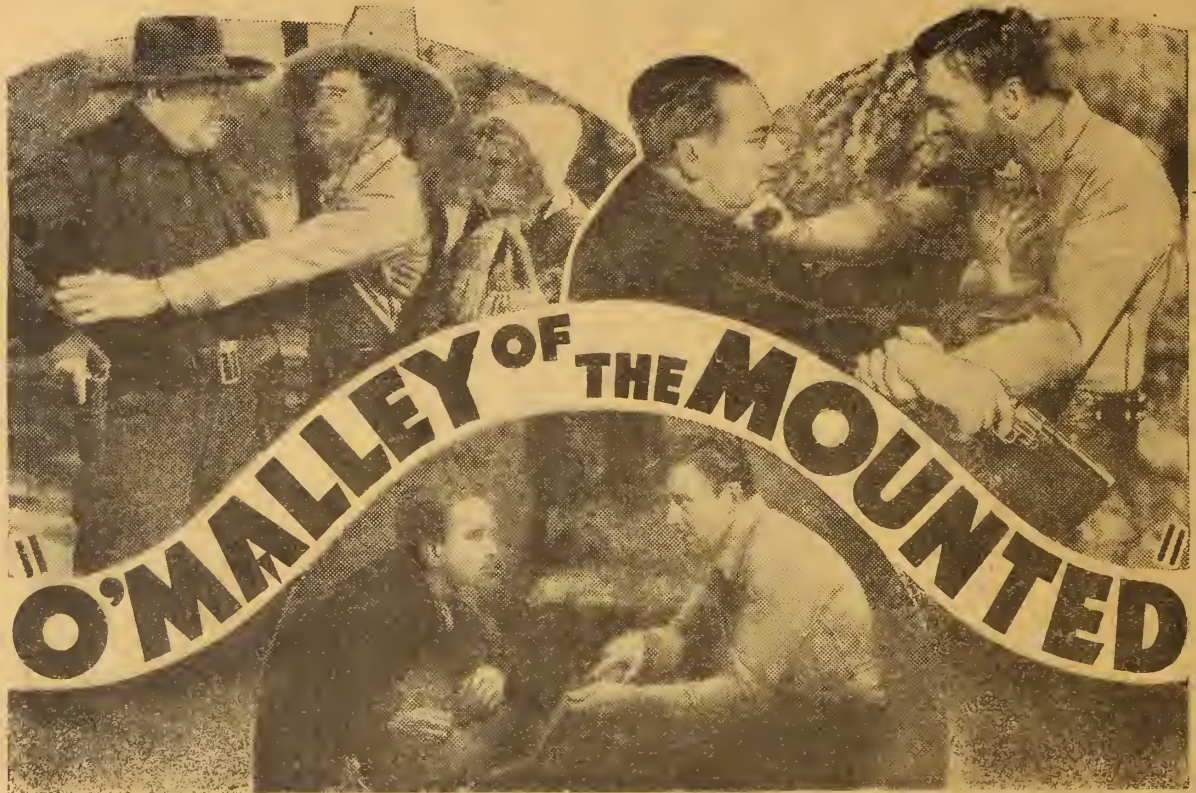
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"O'MALLEY OF THE MOUNTED"

A constable in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is assigned the task of capturing a dangerous gang of smugglers. He assumes the rôle of a criminal and is thrown into prison with a youngster who is known to be in league with the gang. They make a gaol break, which leads to many exciting adventures. Starring George O'Brien



Recalled to Duty

CONSTABLE O'MALLEY was in high spirits as he donned his cleanest and smartest uniform. All the other men in this lonely detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police gazed curiously at him.

"You guys have got no reason to be sore," he shouted at them as he brushed his hair. "Two years ago I had a fortnight's leave, and what happened? I got as far as Montreal, went to bed, as I was worn out with travelling, and was woken next morning with a message that I was to return at once. I went straight off on a man-hunt that took me up into the frozen wastes, and when I got back three months later, hoping to get my leave, I found a lot of you mugs had gone sick and I couldn't be spared."

"You don't have such a bad time, O'Malley," laughed a friend.

The big, happy man grinned. "Maybe I do make the best of life, but there comes a time when you get kinda tired of seeing so much of nature, when you want to busy yourself in the gaiety of a city, so you can come back and say 'How beautiful! Why did I ever want to go on leave?' Well, that's how I am at the moment."

"If your theory's correct you won't want all your leave. A week of the city and you'll be yelling to get back to the great open spaces."

O'Malley grinned at the speaker.

"No, it'll take me a good month to get to that condition." He winked. "In fact, I wouldn't say 'No' to two months so as to make the crew complete. I hope you boys have nice weather and a lot to do while I'm away—maybe I'll send you a wire telling you how I'm hating the city."

January 9th, 1937.

O'Malley straightened his belt, pushed the lanyard to his revolver to a correct line, patted his tunic, and tilted his Stetson to an angle.

"How do I look?"

"Beautiful," simpered one of the men. "You big cissy."

"Don't lose your heart to any of the girls!" cried another constable.

"Heart whole." O'Malley touched his chest. "Nothing like that about me."

O'Malley saluted his companions and laughed boisterously. "So-long, pals!" he cried.

Outside the lonely post was the buggy that was taking him and his kit to the nearest railhead. He noticed another buggy with a constable standing by the horses' heads.

"The Commissioner's here." A sergeant noticed O'Malley's glance. "The old boy seemed pretty gruff. Take my tip, O'Malley, and go while the going's good."

"What d'you mean by that, sergeant?"

"If the Commissioner drives out at this time of the morning a matter of twenty miles, you can bet it ain't only for a joy-ride," was the sergeant's sarcastic answer. "I bet it's trouble with a capital T, and you get going before all leave is cancelled."

"Thanks, sergeant, for the tip." O'Malley leaped into the buggy seat. "So-long, boys!"

The young constable had picked up the reins and was about to crack the whip when an orderly pushed through the small group.

"O'Malley!" he shouted. "The captain wants to speak to you."

"I said good-bye to him last night," was the answer.

"He wants to see you," the orderly answered. "I was told to stop you."

"What did I say?" said the sergeant, as O'Malley jumped down from the buggy.

"For two years I haven't had a leave, and the last leave wasn't a leave at all, in fact. It's three years since I had a vacation," O'Malley snapped. "I'm not being done out of this trip, believe me!"

O'Malley strode along to Captain Herbert's office, knocked, and was summoned to enter. As he saluted he noted the rather drawn expression on his captain's face and the hard lines on that of the Commissioner's. Captain Herbert had been going through it.

"Stand at ease, O'Malley," said the Commissioner. "I understand from Captain Herbert you were about to go on leave?"

"I had nearly gone, sir."

"Sorry as I am to say it, O'Malley, I'm afraid it must be postponed."

"But I haven't had leave for two years, sir," cried the constable in alarm. "And last time I got as far as Montreal and was recalled. It's three years since—"

"O'Malley, I understand," the Commissioner snapped. "And only exceptional circumstances cause Captain Herbert and myself to take this step."

"I've done my best, O'Malley," interposed Captain Herbert, "as you deserve leave more than any man under my command."

"O'Malley, Captain Herbert reckons you're one of the smartest men that has served the force, and it's because of that reputation that I'm asking you to forgo your leave," the Commissioner stated, and coughed as if that disposed of the question. "I understand, O'Malley,

that you have been away on a case in the Blue Mountains, and that you solved the matter thoroughly. That has kept you away for nearly three months, and in that time your commanding officer has been endeavouring to round up a gang of smugglers. So far, he has been unsuccessful.

"I've got Marshall on the case, and I'm expecting results any moment."

Captain Herbert had flushed. For nearly an hour the Commissioner had been making life unbearable by demanding why this gang had not been rounded up. Now came the reason.

"Something has got to be done, and sharp," the Commissioner announced. "Not only are the papers commenting on the inability of the Mounted to capture this gang, but the Government have been kicking up trouble. Unless something is done, Captain Herbert, I can see the Mounted being in disgrace and a number of sweeping changes."

O'Malley felt sorry for his captain. He drew himself stilly to attention. "What is it that you require, sir?"

"That's the spirit." The Commissioner permitted himself a slight smile. "Duty first—pleasure afterwards. This gang are concerned in a number of enterprises; they work in America and then escape across the border into Canada. You can now realise why there is so much fuss at Government headquarters. This gang lie low on this side of the border, so that they cannot come under the law without definite proof. We know that they have a hide-out, and that it must be within fifty miles of the border. That hide-out must be found."

"The American police must be pretty slow to let them slip through their fingers every time," said Captain Herbert.

"They never know when they're going to cross the line. This gang has plenty of well-paid spies. That is why the case needs very clever handling."

"I do see the papers occasionally, and read them." O'Malley turned to the Commissioner. "I think I know the mob you mean. They sweep down on the lonely houses, isolated villages, railway stations, roads, etcetera, carry out a daring raid, and then ride hard for the border."

"Those are the people, O'Malley," the Commissioner nodded. "I want you to link up with Constable Marshall and see what you can do." He strode towards the door. "And I want results!"

"Very good, sir."

"I understand that you have been recommended for promotion," were the big man's parting remarks. "Round up this gang, and I'll promise you your sergeant's stripes. Good-day!"

The door closed, and Captain Herbert gave a sigh of relief.

"You can imagine, O'Malley, that I have not been having a very nice time from

the Commissioner," said Captain Herbert, who always treated his men as friends. "Frankly, this is one of the most difficult cases with which I have had to deal. In the three months that you have been away I have followed endless trails without result. This gang are a slick, dangerous lot of outlaws. They are wanted for robbery and for a number of killings, but so far they have been wise in sticking to the law on this side of the border. My last communication from Marshall seems to indicate that he is on to something at last, and I suggest that you leave to-day for Silver Creek, which is about a day's ride from here."

"Very good, sir."

"And I can definitely assure you that if you succeed I will see that the Commissioner sticks to his promise." Captain Herbert shrugged. "If you fail, I see sweeping changes that may not affect you, O'Malley, but will cause the resignation of the person recommending your promotion. I don't think I need say any more."

"I should be at Silver Creek by morning."

O'Malley clicked his heels and saluted.

"I will write you a note for Sergeant Wilson," stated Captain Herbert. "He will put you in touch with Marshall." He held out his hand. "Good luck, O'Malley. Remember the Mounties always get their man."

"It looks like men in this case, sir," grinned O'Malley. "And I trust that if I succeed I get that leave to Montreal."

"Succeed and nothing shall stop you taking leave at once," Captain Herbert assured him. "I will write instructions at once. Be ready to leave in half an hour."

"Very good, sir," O'Malley answered.

Marshall Murdered

O'MALLEY had to put up with a good lot of chaff from his comrades over the cancelled leave, but

he took it all very well. He had got over his disappointment; it was rather nice to know that the Commissioner and one's own captain thought so much of one's services. Well, he must get this gang, and then, heigho for a spot of leave! What a sensation he would be as a sergeant.

He camped out that night under the pines close to a large lake. At dawn he rose and cut down a branch from a young pine, and swiftly turned it into a fishing-rod of a somewhat amateur pattern. He always carried some line, traces, and flies. The fish were rising, and within a few minutes he had secured two beauties, which he grilled over his fire.

The sun was just coming over the hills as O'Malley cantered towards the desolate hill post of Silver Creek. He came to big lumber mills, and then the village; on the northern outskirts was the station of the Mounted.

After hitching his horse to the rail O'Malley went inside to find Sergeant Wilson.

"Hallo, what brings you up here?" said a constable, who had worked with O'Malley in his early days.

"The Commissioner is a bit riled over a bunch that seemed to be causing a lot of trouble over the border and then coming back here to roost."

"Then you'd best see Sergeant Wilson," answered the constable. "He made an arrest yesterday."

Sergeant Wilson gave O'Malley a sharp glance as the constable swung into his room.

"Got a code message you were on the way up," he remarked. "Sit down, O'Malley." He took the letter Captain Herbert had written and perused it. "Well, I think you've had a fruitless journey. Sorry."

"Doesn't worry me," chuckled O'Malley. "Maybe I can get back to that leave I should have had. Have you got the gang?"



"Dirty redcoats!" growled the captive. "I'd like to bash your heads in!"

"No, not exactly," answered Sergeant Wilson. "But we've made an arrest, and I think it should lead us to the whereabouts of the gang. The prisoner won't talk, but with the rope dangling near his nose I guess he'll spill it."

"How about telling me the whole yarn?"

The sergeant frowned. "It's brief and not too pleasant," was the answer. "You know Marshall was sent up here to make certain investigations. Marshall had a hunch that several of the gang frequented the Eldorado, Silver Creek's saloon. We got a call there last night, and found there had been a shooting affray upstairs in one of the private rooms. We found Marshall there. He'd been shot, and—"

"Is Marshall alive?" O'Malley snapped out.

The sergeant shook his head.

O'Malley's face set in grim lines.

"A grand fellow was Marshall," he muttered. "We were pretty good friends." He jerked up his head. "Well, sergeant, what else happened?"

"Lying unconscious on the floor was another man, and in his hand was a revolver. Two shells were spent, and the lead we found in Marshall's body. Before Marshall died he tried to say something, pointed at the other figure, and fell back. We arrested Bud Hyland on a charge of murder."

"Has he pleaded guilty?"

"Seems sorta dazed. He was pretty drunk. We figure it out that some of the gang were up in that room and that Marshall horned in and was shot by Hyland. The proprietor of the dump heard the sound of high words. I might add Marshall had been acting the part of a drunken lumberman."

"What do you know of Bud Hyland?"

"Came here about six months ago, and tried to start some sort of ranch with a few head of cattle." The sergeant turned up a dossier and tossed it across his desk. "That's as much as we know."

"Twenty-one," O'Malley exclaimed. "Doesn't seem much against him bar this shooting. He says he's innocent?"

"Pretends he was very drunk and doesn't know a thing about it till we broke in and found him stretched out beside Marshall. If he don't talk it will be just too bad."

"Without seeing him, I've a hunch he won't squeal. If he's tried and a verdict is brought in against him it means that gang is still at large."

"Maybe you can make him talk?" suggested the sergeant.

"Maybe I can," O'Malley retorted. "Just think out a real bad man's name for me and a real desperate crime, and I'll do the rest."

"What are you aiming to do, O'Malley?"

"Have myself arrested and chucked into the same cell," was the answer. "Twice I've tried the scheme, and it's worked both times. Here's what I want you to do."

Some while later the prisoner in cell No. 8 heard a sound of struggling and cursing. He saw a door swing open and a big man, dressed as a trapper, come staggering in with two Mounties on either side. He saw the prisoner break free and fell one constable, saw them fight and finally overpower him. The prisoner shouted taunts and threats in harsh tones.

Cell No. 10 was opened, and roughly the prisoner was pushed inside and the cell door slammed.

"Dirty redcoats!" growled the big

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man. "I'd like to bash your heads in! Pah, you make me sick!"

"Cool your heels, Dan Rawlings!" mocked one of the Mounties. "It's taken us two years to get you, and you'll be growing a beard before you're a free man again."

"Don't be so sure." Dan Rawlings otherwise Trooper O'Malley, gripped the bars of the cell. "You seem can't scare me!"

The Mounties left and locked the outer door. Dan Rawlings sank on to the hard bunk, while Bud Hyland stared at his cell-mate curiously.

Gaol-break

AFTER a moment or two the newcomer became aware of the young man's gaze, and grinned.

"Swell, so I got company," he chuckled. "Usually I get solitary confinement. Gee, this is a break!"

The white-faced, hollow-eyed youngster stared at him.

"What are you in for, mister?"

"Oh, everything!" O'Malley beat his broad chest and clenched his fists so that the rippling muscles in his arms stood out boldly. "Dan Rawlings a sucker. For two years those flat feet Mounties have been after me, and I've laughed at 'em, then this happens. Fell down some cursed trap set by some Injuns. Some Mounties chanced that way and saw me lying there. Next thing I know the handcuffs were on my wrists—one of the mugs had recognised me. Gee, it makes me mad!"

"What's the charge against you?" the young fellow asked.

"Well—most everything," O'Malley answered with a hoarse laugh. "You should see the things they've tried to pin on me, even a couple of killings."

"You've killed someone?"

"Son, if you've lived up in these wilds all the years I've been here with every man's hand agin you maybe you'd have had a few killings agin you," the big man answered. "But don't get me wrong—they was fair show-downs. Gee, how I remember that double-crossing, two-timing saloon-keeper! He chiselled me out of my gold-dust like he did all the rest, but he went too far when he had my buddy shot in the back and robbed. I got proof, and I offered him the chance of shooting it out or letting the law take its course. He fancied himself with a gun. The guns were placed on a table, and at the count of six we was to grab 'em and shoot. Of course, the skunk jumped for his gun at five." He pulled open his shirt. "See that scar mark—the hullet grazed me, but though spilling blood I got my gun and he got what he deserved. And these cursed Mounties would try to run me for ridding the world of that pesky crook." He grinned at the younger man. "Say, son, what have these coyotes pinned on you?"

"They accuse me of killing a man," Bud said in hollow tones.

"You don't say!" O'Malley's eyes gleamed admiringly. "Gee, that's grand. I thought maybe you was just some sneak thief."

"But I didn't do it!" cried Bud.

"Yeah, we all say that!" O'Malley shrugged his shoulders. "But it don't get you far. Once behind these bars on a killing charge and you ain't got much hope. Who did you kill, son?"

"I didn't kill him, I say."

"Okay, son, it's your story. Who was the guy?"

"Marshall—he was a trooper in disguise."

"A Mountie!" O'Malley gasped out. "Gosh, that's tough! A life for a life—you've heard that said. Well, if a Mountie croaks they gotta have someone

for it, even if it ain't the guy what done it."

"My lawyer'll get me out of this."

"None of those birds are any good, except to take your dough. How did it happen?"

"I got drinking one night, and when I recovered my senses I was under arrest." Bud looked away. "Marshall was found dead near me in one of the private rooms. They said I shot him. I reckon I must have staggered upstairs to sleep it off and collapsed."

"Where did this happen?"

"At the Eldorado."

"Gee, I know that dump. Been in some pretty hot joints in my time and got out of 'em, but never had no liking for the Eldorado." He gazed speculatively at the bowed head. "How you come to get mixed up in that place?"

Bud gave his companion a somewhat suspicious glance.

"That's my business," he muttered.

"Okay, pal!" O'Malley stretched himself on his bunk. "It ain't no concern of mine, but if you don't wanna swing just let me know."

"What can you do?"

O'Malley, who had shut his eyes, opened one and grinned.

"I ain't aiming to stay in this place over long."

It was obvious to the trooper that he would not get anything more out of the prisoner for the moment, and as he pretended to sleep he was trying to think of some way to break down the barriers. He was helped by the arrival of Bud's sister. O'Malley opened one eye as the gaoler led the boy out to talk with the girl, and, lying on his back, was able to watch the two talking. The news that the girl, who was young and quite pretty, brought seemed to disturb the boy immensely.

When the cell door clanged O'Malley opened his eyes and yawned. Seeing the despondent figure, he sat up.

"More bad news, son?"

"My lawyer's chucked up the case. Says everything is dead against me and I haven't a chance. My sister just told me."

"What did I say?" shouted O'Malley in his hearty manner. "Them birds ain't no good. Son, things look pretty bad. When is the trial?"

"Two days' time. Guess I'm a goner."

"You don't wanna talk that way. What's yer monnieker?"

"Bud Hyland."

"Well, Bud, I reckon I can help you." O'Malley had lowered his voice. "When is your sister coming to see you again?"

"To-morrow. She's going to see McPherson again. Why do you ask?"

"Because your sister can play her part in saving your neck if she does as I say. Come closer," O'Malley said hoarsely. "Look!"

From his leather top-boots he produced a file, and then glanced towards the cell bars in a significant manner.

"You mean an escape?" gasped Bud.

"No prison was ever made that could hold me for long," derided O'Malley. "The mugs only frisked me for a gun. If we start filing to-night we can do a lot on those bars, and when your sister comes to-morrow we can get everything fixed for a getaway about midnight."

"How?"

"Get your sister to meet us some place with a couple of good horses. Near that bear-trap I saw three long pines on high ground, and I should say their position

—"

"I know those pines, and so does my sister!" excitedly exclaimed Bud.

"Good! Get her to be there at midnight and to bring three days' supplies. We gotta trek north." O'Malley rubbed

his chin. "There's only one thing that worries me."

"What's that?"

"These Mounties will be hot on our trail, and I wish I knew a good hide-out, where we could rest up till these red-coats kinda lose heart or think we're across the border."

Bud walked right into the trap.

"I know the very place. I vowed I would hold my tongue. I'm not a squealer. These buddies of mine hired McPherson, but now he's turned down the case they'll not know what to do. If we can link up with them we're safe."

"Are they on the level?" O'Malley asked. "There'll be a reward for our capture, and I don't trust many folk in these parts."

"I swear they're on the level," Bud replied eagerly.

O'Malley wisely asked no more questions, and that night they set to work on the bars. By morning two more were almost filed through. In the afternoon Edith Hyland came to see her brother. She reported that she had failed with McPherson. O'Malley, lying in his bunk, could see the two arguing in whispers—the Mounties most obligingly keeping well out of earshot—and grinned when the girl got up to leave. The brother had persuaded his sister.

Edie's going to get the horses and be at the three pines at midnight with supplies," hoarsely whispered Bud. "She was all against a goof-break, and wanted me to stand trial, but I told her I hadn't a chance."

"You sure haven't. Best get some rest, Bud."

After dark they set to work again on the bars, and at last the way to freedom lay open. After waiting to see there were no Mounties on the watch, O'Malley crawled through and dropped to the ground. In a whisper he hissed back that Bud Hyland could make the jump. The two men sped silently away from the prison and ran for about half a mile before O'Malley called a halt. He placed his ear to the ground.

"We're not being followed," he chuckled. "Those Mounties won't find

we've flown till daybreak. The poor saps."

Half an hour later, after various detours, they reached the three lone pines. Sure enough, there was the girl with three good horses.

O'Malley watched the happy reunion of the two young people, and it confirmed his opinion that Bud Hyland had nothing to do with the murder of Marshall. The girl was even prettier than O'Malley expected, and he liked the fearless way she stared at him. Obvious that she was not very certain of him.

"Edie, the Mounties will soon be after us, and we've got to lie low for a while," Bud told her. "You get back to the ranch and I'll get word to you."

"I've got old Hodges and his wife to carry on," the girl stated. "I'm coming with you."

"But you can't do that," argued the boy.

"I can ride as well as any man, and I'm not trusting you out of my sight."

"You'll be up against every sort of hardship," O'Malley told her. "We'll have to ride for hour after hour, mile after mile, and over a bad trail."

"I have made up my mind." The blue eyes flashed, and the small chin was full of determination. "I am going with my brother, no matter how bad the trail."

She turned to her brother.

"You are going to the headquarters of 'Red' Jagger, aren't you?"

"Yes, he's my friend."

"And all he could do for you was to get a sneaking lawyer like McPherson to take up your case. That man is a bad influence, and directly the hue-and-cry abates you're leaving that bunch and we're getting over the border back to civilisation." Edith Hyland gave her orders: "Don't waste time arguing, Bud."

"Your sister's right, Bud," O'Malley interposed. "Every moment is valuable. We gotta be many miles away from here before the Mounties find we're gone."

Without further discussion, Bud Hyland headed to the north-west, Edith followed close behind, whilst O'Malley brought up the rear.

Red Jagger

EXCEPT for brief halts they rode all that night and part of the morning. Bud Hyland explained that he had travelled out of their course because he wished to throw off any chances of pursuit.

O'Malley admired the way the girl kept up and showed no sign of flagging, though it was his strong hands that helped her from the saddle when they made late breakfast beside a lake.

"There is a good bit of open country before us," Bud stated, as they drank steaming hot coffee. "It would be best if we rest in some thicket, and start about an hour before sunset."

"Why can't we make for the border?" the girl wanted to know.

"Lady, that would be asking for trouble," grinned O'Malley. "They will be watching the border for miles and miles. You can bet every station, every small town and all settlements will be warned, and they'll have an accurate description of us. North of us lies country that seldom sees a white man. It would be very unwise, Miss Hyland, to travel south. We could lie hidden here for months until the winter breaks, but we ain't got any need to worry with Red Jagger's hide-out close at hand. Bud, who is this Red Jagger?"

"Horse and cattle dealer—big shot."

"He's been a bad influence on my brother!" flamed the girl.

"Red's a swell guy!" protested Bud.

"How you come to link up with him?"

O'Malley asked casually.

"Oh, I chanced on him one day!" the boy answered. "I was doing swell till this happened."

"Buying horses and cattle?"

"I hadn't been with Red long. I helped herd the cattle and handle the horses, act as a watch-out, and—"

"Watch-out!" O'Malley rubbed his hands. "Sounds mighty like Red is a cattle rustler. Guess I might do worse than link up with Red."

"My brother is not linking up with a band of crooks if I can help it!" the girl cried, giving O'Malley an indignant glance. "Why can't we stay in the forests?"



Everyone backed away from a faro table as Dan menaced them with his forty-five.



"You cowardly cur!" hissed the girl. "And I thought you were his friend."

"And starve to death?" O'Malley asked quietly. "I helped save your brother's neck, but I ain't got any desire to wander about these pesky forests. We gotta have some dough, and if we throw in our lot with Red we can make it."

"And become outlaws. Up till now the Hylands have always kept on the right side of the law."

"Why argue, Edie?" said her brother. "All that's changed, and we've gotta live. Maybe Red does rustle a few cattle. I could do with some easy money."

"Maybe you're used to making your money by dishonest means, but we're not," Edith told O'Malley. "And I'll thank you not to try to persuade my brother into your villainous ways."

"Keep quiet, Edie!" Bud cried angrily. "You ought to be thanking Dan, not carrying on this way."

"Don't you mind me!" O'Malley chuckled. "I get a kick out of tweaking the nose of the law. If you two wanna hit the trail to the border you can count on me to help you, but for the moment it ain't worth arguing about. Safety lies with Red Jagger till the Mounties have cased up on us. I may link up with Red, but I'll help you get across the border." He rose. "Guess we've argued long enough. We should be making tracks for the forest, and, believe me, I'm going to sleep with one eye open. Danger lurks where you least expect it."

Some hours later they once more hit the trail and soon came to open country. O'Malley, riding as usual in the rear, secretly examined a map, and made his bearings. Soon they should come to a river.

They reached the river, and found the water not very deep. It was dark when they reached a wide valley, and Bud advised staying there the night as the undergrowth was dense.

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"It ain't wise to go prowling about Red's hide-out at night," the boy gave a shaky laugh. "He has men posted, and we might get shot."

It was O'Malley who fixed up a rude shelter for the girl. Often he knew the girl was watching him as if she could not understand him.

At dawn the journey was continued, and they had not proceeded far when from some dense foliage a man sprang out and covered them with a rifle.

"What you want here?"

"I'm seeking Red Jagger," answered Bud. "I'm Bud Hyland."

The man came closer.

"Bud Hyland's in gaol."

"I broke out with the help of Dan Rawlings. My sister had horses waiting for us."

"If you're lying the worse it'll be for you," muttered the man. "Raise yer hands above yer heads, and if you try any finny stuff I'll shoot. Take the trail ahead and don't forget I'm close behind."

The trail became wider, and they had gone half a mile or so when it opened out on to a small plateau. Here and there were trees, a number of shacks and a considerable amount of cattle. Bud whispered that at one time the place had been a ranch. Outside the biggest shack they were ordered to dismount. A yell brought out an ugly, unshaven rascal, who seemed amazed at the sight of three visitors. They were ordered to enter the shack.

Round a table sat a number of men drinking and playing cards. O'Malley took particular note of the huge man with the coarse features, small, beady eyes and immense hands. He was sure that this was Red Jagger, and that this was the gang that had committed the outrages across the border.

"Well, if it ain't Bud Hyland," cried the big man, lurching to his feet and

nearly upsetting the rough table. "Who sprung you outa that gaol?"

"My friend here—Dan Rawlings," announced Bud.

"Dan Rawlings." Red Jagger fingered his chin and drooped his heavy eyelids. "Can't say I mind that name." The eyes opened wide and studied O'Malley closely. "What's yer game, mister?"

With hands on hips, and an insolent smile on his lips, O'Malley stared boldly at the big ruffian. He shrugged his shoulders.

"All depends on what sorta game there is to play. I met up with Bud here in Silver Creek gaol, and he looked like taking the rap for the killing of a Mountie." O'Malley again shrugged his shoulders. "Not that I have any time for them coyotes, but it seemed kinda tough that Bud should be handing in his cheeks for a killing that he don't seem to know much about. I've been in gaols before, and they don't hold me long."

"So you broke out?" Red nodded his head. "What was you in for?"

"For striking a Mountie and resisting arrest," O'Malley chuckled. "That don't sound much, but it was plenty. I was recognised. Kinda queer that tucked away in the wilds they should have pictures of guys what was wanted—guys not heard of for a couple of years. That's me—I fooled 'em all that while."

"They could have pinned something else on you?" questioned Red.

"They were having a danged good try," O'Malley smiled round at the group. "Swell hide-out you got round here."

"Why did you come here?" Red turned on Bud almost threateningly.

"I knew the Mounties would soon learn of our escape and that we would have little chance," frankly answered Bud. "My sister had got horses, but we would have to rest them, whilst the troopers could get changes of mounts, and we wanted a place where we could lie low till they got tired of looking for us. Where else should we come but here?"

"Yeah, where else would you come?" Red grunted. "Sure you weren't trailed?"

"I ain't been in these wilds for twenty years or so without knowing something," sneered O'Malley.

"We're kinda suspicious of new faces," Red stuck out his jaw. "You've kinda spoilt our plans. Word came to us that —" He glanced round at Bud. "The lawyer guy had gone back on us, and we had it all fixed to raid that gaol tonight."

"You'd have had to ride pretty hard to make it." O'Malley calmly sat down in a chair. "Well, we seem to have saved you and your boys a lot of trouble. What's the next move?"

"Have you any suggestions, mister?"

"Yeah!" O'Malley yawned. "I reckon I've had about six hours' sleep in the last three days, and I know Edie and Bud are almost ready to drop. Have you a spare shack where we could doss?"

"Sure I have." Red held out his hand. "Maybe in the morning, Rawlings, we can have a talk." Red grinned, and then raised his voice. "Gabby!" he yelled.

From the back regions shuffled a hang-dog fellow. Long, dank iron-grey hair, unshaven for days, bloodshot eyes and with a filthy apron over his dirty clothes.

"What d'you want, Red?"

"Take these people to that empty shack—give 'em blankets," the leader ordered. "Take 'em over some food."

"Uh!" Gabby shuffled forward and peered. "Bud Hyland! Why, how the

heck did you get here? I sure thought we'd seen the last—" He saw the red gleams in his chief's eyes.

"Cut out the talk and get busy."

Gabby half-turned, and then his eyes peered at O'Malley.

"What's he doing here?"

"Will you get going?" thundered Red.

"I've seen him some place!" shrilled Gabby defiantly.

"I can't say the same for you!" laughed O'Malley. "Though I've been in and out of a few prisons in my life."

"Yeah, maybe it was in one o' them I saw you," Gabby shuffled back to the door. "I'll go hot up the stew."

"Gabby is a grand cook—he's stewed like everything he handles!" shouted Red, in his hearty manner. He beamed at the girl. "Very pleased to have you here with us, Miss Hyland. You'll find us a bit rough and ready, but appearances are sometimes kinda deceptive."

Edith Hyland hoped so in her heart, because never had she seen such a bunch of desperadoes. It was a relief to be out of the evil-smelling room and following the cook across dewy grass towards a distant shack.

From a window Red Jagger and some of his men watched them.

"How d'you figure this out?"

"Well, Butch, it ain't so easy!" Red leered at the bearded rogue who was his lieutenant.

"What was the idea o' sayin' we was going to attack the gaol?" asked a man, with a heavily lined face.

"Lefty, you're okay with a gun, but brains ain't your strong point." Red touched his forehead. "D'you think I was gonna tell the kid we had framed him and we never thought he'd escape hanging. I never thought this rube would horn in and spoil our game."

"What d'you aim to do with 'em, Red?" asked Butch.

"Dan Rawlings ain't dumb like the kid." The big fellow went back to the table.

"Why not fix him to-night and the other two?" cried Lefty.

"Bud's here, and he'll do as we tell him," said Red Jagger. "And his kid sister is a swell looker. I'm kinda tired of Gabby's cooking, so we don't wanna be too hasty. If this Rawlings guy is all he says he is, then he's one of us." He glanced round. "That guy has nerve, and I'm getting tired of guys with yeller streaks."

The six men stared at their leader and moistened dry lips. They knew what Red was getting at, and squirmed. In a recent raid they had turned tail and fled when a number of deputies had appeared.

Dangerous Days

THE shack that had been allotted to them was in a filthy condition, but the girl with the aid of a broom worked wonders. There was one bedroom, a kitchen and one main room. Naturally the girl had the bedroom, and the men slept on the floor of the main room.

During the night, which was stormy, O'Malley awoke to hear Bud muttering in his sleep. From a few odd remarks he gathered that the boy had foolishly become linked up with the gang through losing money at cards. A chance of paying his debts had been offered by Red Jagger if he helped them to smuggle goods over the border. That was an offence, but Bud had not known that the goods were not always smuggled, and in most cases were stolen with violence. Once involved with the gang there was no escape. Marshall had found out about the gang's activities and

had been murdered, and Jagger, not wanting his men to be suspected, had framed Bud Hyland. The leader, realising by now that the boy was far too straight to be of much use—in fact, might be forced into talking—Marshall's death was one way of shutting his mouth. O'Malley clenched his fists at the thought of Jagger's treachery. He had promised to help Bud in return for a still tongue, hoping that Bud would realise too late that there was no escaping the dread penalty of death. Poor Bud had swallowed the story about attacking the prison cells at Silver Creek. Edie was much more far-seeing than her brother.

The storm was so bad that night that the bed-room windows collapsed and rain poured into the room. Edie brought her blankets into the main room and lay down close to the fire. Somehow the presence of O'Malley gave her a feeling of security.

In the early hours the storm lifted, and soon after dawn there was scarce a cloud in the sky.

O'Malley had a talk with Red Jagger, and, having an inventive brain, was able to concoct a fine tale of his adventurous life. Red Jagger felt sure that Dan Rawlings was just the sort of new recruit required for their rides across the border, but the rest of the bunch, who had been listening to the mumbling statements of Gabby, were not so sure, and protested strongly when later that day Red stated that Dan was chucking in his lot with them.

"You mugs make me sick," Red told them, when he had listened to their protests. "If Dan ain't all he seems we'll know soon enough."

"How?" they asked.

"It ain't kinda wise to cross the border, so we're going to ride into Silver Creek," Red told them. "They gamble for pretty heavy stakes at the Eldorado, and—"

"You ain't planning to stick up the Eldorado!" cried Butch. "We've kept clear of Silver Creek, and—"

"You bunch of scared coyotes!" jeered their leader.

"The Mounties will know we're in the district," persisted Butch.

"We're riding into Silver Creek, but we won't stick up the Eldorado," Red Jagger told them, and roared to see their looks of surprise. "You guys ain't got any more sense than a mule. Dan Rawlings is going to stick up the Eldorado and we'll watch. That'll show whether he's got nerve. Brody." This to a gaunt man with a scared face. "Go fetch Rawlings."

O'Malley listened to Red Jagger's scheme and was quite aware that the men were watching him closely. One false move and he'd be full of lead. If he refused to carry out this hold-up anything might happen to him, and he would not be able to help Bud and his sister, but if he did carry it through he would be made one of the gang.

"Holding up a gambling joint ain't much in my line," drawled O'Malley. "And—"

"You're scared!" leered Butch.

"I'll take any one of you mugs outside and knock the hide off 'em!" rasped O'Malley, his eyes gleaming. He bunched those mighty muscles. "Any of you sour-faced cissies care to take me on?"

"That's the talk, Dan," approved Red, and glanced round. "I'll stake ten buxks on Dan."

The men muttered, but did not take up the challenge.

"Having settled that matter we will now return to the hold up," O'Malley leaned forward. "When I said hold-ups of gambling joints were not in my line I meant it, not because I was yeller, but because they're small thunder. But as you mugs ain't keen to fight, maybe you'd like to wager me I won't stick up the Eldorado single-handed."

Again there was no response. Red Jagger grinned his approval, but his heavy face hardened when O'Malley said:



"I'm sorry I misjudged you," Edith whispered.

"I do this on one condition."

"Condition?"

"Red, you reckon I'm on the level, but your bunch of cutthroats think I'm some sort of a double-crossing rat," said O'Malley. "If it weren't for you, Red, I wouldn't dream of working with such a bunch. I gotta do this hold-up just to show these monkeys I got nerve. Okay, I'll do it, but the condition is what I collect I keep."

"We share everything!" shouted Butch.

"When it's a joint affair you may do," retorted O'Malley. "But I'm doing all the dirty work, and it ain't any of my choice. You wished this on me—okay, then I take the swag. In that dirty little cheap saloon they may play for stakes that you boys call high, but I doubt if I collected every coin and note it would be much more than five hundred smackers. I'll do this hold-up just to show you how it should be done, and after that I stand in with the gang. What d'you say, Red?"

"I guess you're right," said Red, who was impressed by O'Malley's colossal impudence in dictating terms. "What ye take ye keeps." He held out his hand. "It's a deal."

"I guessed you'd come round to my way of thinking," grinned O'Malley. "The conditions indicate a storm to-night, but I reckon Saturday should be a grand night. The poor rubes at the saloon will have more money at the end of the week. If we start from here at midday we should be on the outskirts of Silver Creek shortly before dusk."

When Edith Hyland heard from her brother that Red Jagger, Dan Rawlings and a number of the men were planning a hold-up she was bitterly disappointed. Though she knew Dan was a bad man she had foolishly imagined that he was going to lead a new life at her wish. She had begged him to do this and to help her brother to keep straight. He must have been laughing at her, and she decided that she hated Dan Rawlings.

Red Jagger left instructions with three of his men to keep watch on the Hylands and that on no account were they to leave their shack. Red had tried to make friends with the girl, and knew that she despised and disliked him. That had enraged the man, and his evil brain knew that the girl would try to escape with her brother if a chance arose.

From her shack window Edith saw nine horsemen galloping towards an opening in the pines. How marvellously Dan rode. Tears smartened her eyes—how could a man with such a kindly smile be so wicked? She hoped he would be caught, and that made her heart miss a beat. Surely she was not falling in love with an outlaw.

On the outskirts of Silver Creek Red Jagger halted his men and they split up into three parties, so they would not excite suspicion. They were ordered to converge on the Eldorado, but to take no part in the affair unless the order came from Red. It was to be Dan Rawlings' show.

And Dan did the job in a manner that made Red Jagger blink. Dan walked into the crowded saloon, where men were drinking, singing and losing their money at the tables. Red Jagger and Butch were lolling at the bar when Dan made his appearance.

Everyone backed away from a faro table as Dan flashed out his gun. There was the roar of his gun, as he shot out the lamps hanging from the roof in a manner so swift that it was like lightning. Someone fired at Dan, and in the gun flash Red Jagger saw a bag full of notes grabbed by his new man.

A moment later came the clutter of hoofs.

"Well, I must say that was the swiftest January 9th, 1937.

hold-up I've ever seen," whispered Red. "Come on, Butch, we'd better get outa here."

O'Malley rode hard and got clear away from the posse sent in pursuit, and, making a detour, rode under cover of the woods till he was close to the Mountie outpost. The troopers had been aroused, and the station was almost deserted when O'Malley walked in. The sergeant grabbed for his gun, mistaking him for an outlaw, and then laughed as he recognised the daring Irishman.

"I'll wager all I've got that you know something about this hold-up at the Eldorado."

"You're right." O'Malley tossed the bag of money on to the table. "I lifted that to-night."

"You stole it—whatever for?"

"So that Red Jagger and his gang of ruffians will think I'm a real bad lad," chuckled O'Malley. "Listen, sergeant, whilst I spill my story and don't ask too many questions as I've gotta get to the hide-out before Red Jagger gets back."

Swiftly O'Malley told his story and all that had happened.

"I'm pretty sure that Red Jagger and his men shot Marshall, but I don't know which one," he concluded. "So I got to carry on with my rôle of Dan Rawlings. If a message is brought to you bearing that name I want you to act on it. I'm going to try to urge Red to do something this side of the border." He grinned. "I'm aiming at the bank at Silver Creek, and if Red could be lured into trying it, then we can pinch him on this side of the border. Guess I'll have to be moving."

"How about this money?"

"Sergeant, you're awful good at telling stories," grinned O'Malley from the doorway. "You were out riding and saw a man going like the wind, and not liking the looks of him you gave chase. He dropped the bag of gold and got right away. Ain't that a swell story?"

"It'll do, O'Malley, but don't let those thugs get wise to you," warned the sergeant.

On leaving the outpost O'Malley went at a fast gallop and at last came in sight of the hide-out in the hills. As he dismounted outside his shack he heard the distant clatter of hoofs, and knew he had got back before Red Jagger.

O'Malley was comfortably ensconced in a chair in the mess-room at the main shack when Jagger and his men entered.

"Hallo, Dan, thought we mighta seen you outside Silver Creek!" cried Red Jagger.

"Too risky," drawled the trooper. "Not good for that posse to get wise that it was anything else but a lone-man show."

"Guess you're right," nodded Red. "It was smart work, Dan."

"How much did you collect?" demanded Butch, his ugly face avid with greed.

"Not so bad."

Butch looked at the others.

"We reckon you should cache in," he cried. "We want our share."

"I carried out this hold-up on the understanding that what I got was mine," came the answer. "I might have known you mongoses would want your cut."

"It's always been the rule, Dan," stated Red.

"Did I carry out this job on those conditions, or didn't I?" The bogus Dan Rawlings stuck out his lower lip. "I said what I collected was mine, and no one else's property. Next job we all cut in, but nix on the Eldorado. If you had been in my place, Red, would you hand over the dough you risked your life to get to this bunch of hornets?"

"No!" shouted Red. "But next time we all get our share."

"Okay by me," O'Malley answered truculently. "And I suppose we sit around this dump for weeks before we do a thing."

"It ain't safe across the border."

"Why go across the border, when there are fat pickings close at hand."

"What do you mean?" asked Red.

"Ain't Silver Creek got a bank, and I always did hear it was stuff full of money. What I took to-night was chicken feed, and if divided wouldn't amount to much, but that bank would give us enough to be rich for life—and dead easy."

Simply, the trooper explained how the bank at Silver Creek could be held up and robbed of its wealth. Red Jagger and his men listened in silence.

"Sounds easy enough," Red had to admit. "But Canada is a refuge, and that's why we've never done any hold-up this side of the border."

"Then you might as well take a good rest," came the sneering retort of the schemer. "You brought in a bunch of papers, and they're still howling about your daring raids, and by all accounts the other side of the border lies a reception party waiting to fill you mugs with lead. No one expects you to carry out a raid in Canada. We carry out the raid and make for the hide-out, where we lie low for a spell, then go West and slip over the border or into British Columbia. But maybe it's too tough a job for you guys to tackle."

"Nothing's too big for us," Red thrust his big head forward. "In two days' time the bank gets a big consignment of gold. Joe at the Eldorado told me, and he ain't ever wrong. On that night we stick up Silver Creek Bank."

O'Malley had hard work to hide a triumphant grin.

What Edith Overheard

O'MALLEY wanted to slip out that night and ride down to warn the sergeant, but he found there was a guard on the horses. Apparently, Butch and one or two of the others were not too sure of Dan Rawlings. Then to make matters worse Red suggested—it was the same as an order—that he come and sleep in the main shack. It was partly old Gabby's fault, because the cook was always scowling at O'Malley and trying to remember where he had seen the big fellow before. Besides, Red thought it a good idea so they could complete their plans.

Edith informed O'Malley that she was pleased he was going as she had no time for people who held up saloons at the point of a gun.

After a somewhat unpleasant night listening to Red snoring, the trooper got up early and came out of the shack in time to see Bud and his sister mounting their horses. It would spoil everything if these two left now before Bud's innocence was proved.

Edith gave O'Malley a frigid stare as he came rushing up to them.

"Where you two going?"

"We're quitting," mumbled Bud. "Edie reckons you've kinda gone back on us."

"If only you two young idiots would —" He turned to see Red Jagger appear. "Come down off those broncs!" he shouted. "You ain't walking out on us!"

Red heard, and came lumbering across. The girl tried to spur her horse, but O'Malley was too quick and grabbed the bride. Forcibly he pulled the girl out of the saddle, and down climbed Bud.

"You leave my sister alone!" he

(Continued on page 25)

It was a very strange case that was forced upon Perry Mason on his wedding night by a woman with a loaded automatic—and Perry Mason himself was to be accused of murder before its many complications were at an end. A baffling mystery, starring Warren William, with Claire Dodd and Winifred Shaw

The CASE OF THE VELVET CLAWS



"For Better or For Worse"

THE judge on the bench of the night court was a woman, and quite a good-looking woman, too, in spite of a certain middle-aged plumpness. Her name was Mary Florence O'Daugherty, and she sat in judgment upon all manner of minor cases with quite as much efficiency as any male. "So you got hot-headed and struck the man with the crowbar, eh?" she said severely to an offender who had been brought before her. "Well, young man, maybe you can cool off in about ninety days. Next case!"

The door at the back of the court swung wide, and in at it streamed quite a small crowd of people, headed by Perry Mason, attorney-at-law, a tall man and a handsome one, quiet of manner in the ordinary way, but fierce enough when occasion demanded.

A wisp of a moustache adorned his upper lip; his brown hair was brushed well back from a particularly high brow, and a pair of very quick blue eyes could express everything, or nothing, as their owner willed.

Close behind him was Della Street, who had been his private secretary for quite a number of years, but who was young, beautiful, and, at the moment, flushed with excitement. Her green eyes were very bright, and she was carrying in her left hand a bouquet of white roses.

Beside Della towered Wilbur Strong, the city coroner—a long-nosed, clean-shaven and elderly man, who was so hardened to his gruesome duties that he was prone to indulge a grim sense of humour—and close behind were other men, some of them friends, some newspaper reporters and Press photographers.

Perry Mason strode straight towards

the bench, the hand with which he had removed his soft felt hat upraised.

"If the court please!" he cried. "Life or death matter, judge!"

The bench was reached and he said confidentially over the top of it:

"Listen, Mary F., you've got to marry me!"

"Perry," returned the judge with all the gravity in the world, but with a distinct twinkle in her brown eyes behind a pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez. "I've known you since you were peddling papers in this town twenty years ago, but I've no desire to become your wife."

Perry laughed as heartily as Della Street and the rest of the invaders.

"Of course not, you old heart-breaker," he said, and turned to pull Della forward. "This is the lucky lady. Judge, meet Miss Della Street, my ex-secretary. For sentimental reasons I'd like you to tie the knot."

Judge Mary Florence O'Daugherty smiled and nodded. She was quite as good at marrying people as at sending them to gaol, and in the United States of America all judges possess both prerogatives.

"Court's adjourned for a ten-minute recess," she announced, and left the bench to open a door in the wall at the back of it. "Right this way, Perry. Come along, you poor child!"

Into the judge's room passed Perry and his bride and his friends and the newspaper representatives; but the wedding ceremony had only just begun when the bailiff of the court, who looked exactly like a policeman because he was dressed as one, put his head in at the door.

The person who happened to be nearest was a broad-shouldered fellow of about thirty-five, full of face and

weak of mouth, but with a pair of particularly bright brown eyes.

"Say, are you with Mr. Mason's party?" inquired the bailiff.

"Am I with his party?" The brown eyes expressed indignation. "My dear boy, I am Mr. Mason's chief legal adviser. Drake's the name—'Spudsy' Drake."

"That don't impress me, son," returned the bailiff. "You're wanted on the 'phone."

Spudsy, whose real front name was Paul, slipped out into the comparatively empty court-room and was handed a telephone from the bench by the bailiff.

"Hallo!" he said into it. "Who's that? Mrs. Stewart? No, no, Mrs. Stewart, Mr. Mason can't deal with any new cases. He's gone to Pinelhurst Lodge."

Down went the instrument, and Spudsy returned to the room at the back of the court just in time to hear the judge say:

"I now pronounce you man and wife. Kiss her, Perry. Go on—it's legal now."

"Thank you, judge," said Perry, amid laughter, and he took the blushing Della in his arms and kissed her with every appearance of ecstasy.

Tiny Brewster, of the "Examiner," who was not tiny at all, sang out on behalf of his tribe:

"Can we have a picture of Mrs. Mason?"

Perry perched Della on the desk beside which Mary Florence O'Daugherty had functioned and stood by her. Flash-lamps blazed, the shutters of several cameras clicked, and then Wilbur Strong pounced.

"As best man it's my privilege to kiss the bride," he proclaimed, and pro-

ceeded to do so. "Help yourselves, boys! Perry's buying!"

Della submitted to more kisses than she could count, and while she was laughingly enduring the ordeal, Wilbur Strong said to Perry Mason:

"What are you gonna do, Perry, if a case comes up while you're away?"

"My son," returned the attorney, who was many years the coroner's junior, "if it's a criminal case I don't want it. I have retired from the practice of criminal law."

"Sez you!" scoffed Tiny Brewster.

"I mean it," Perry declared. "I've promised Della to become a sober filer of briefs. No more excitement or danger."

"Can't you just see him with his spectacles and brief-case?" laughed Della.

Spudsy, deeming it time the party broke up, announced loudly that the car was ready; whereupon Perry shook hands with Miss O'Daugherty.

"So-long, judge," he said. "You're a great guy! I'll never forget your kindness, Mary F."

Mary F. laughed and shook hands with the bride.

"D'you know, my dear," said she, "I still owe your husband for the last newspaper he delivered when he was just so high?"

"Don't worry," chuckled Perry. "I haven't forgotten that nickel you owe me, and I'm going to collect some day!"

Out from the room and out from the court streamed the whole party. In the street, by the kerb, stood a streamlined and black saloon capable of exceeding all the speed limits of the State of California, and Spudsy opened one of its doors.

Della was helped into the back seat by Perry, who climbed in beside her; Spudsy took the wheel.

"Well, Perry," boomed Tiny Webster from the pavement, "even if we don't approve, good luck!"

Perry leaned forward.

"All right, Spudsy," he said in a voice unnecessarily loud, "Pinchurst Lodge."

"Send me a post card!" shouted Wilbur Strong, over and above cries of "Good luck!"—and Della leaned out of the window as the car began to move.

"The bride's bouquet!" she said. "You know—whichever catches it!"

The bouquet was thrown, and the coroner caught it.

"Take your shoes off and throw 'em!" he vociferated.

The car gathered speed and the crowd on the pavement was left behind. But several members of it had ideas, notably Detective-Sergeant Hoffman, who was fifty-one, grey-haired, and quite old enough to know better.

"I'll tell you what we do for the bride and groom and their honeymoon at Pinchurst," he gurgled.

"We telephone Pinchurst," said Tiny Webster.

"And we send the fire department at midnight," said Hoffman.

"And the village constable at two in the morning!" added Wilbur Strong.

"You betcha, coroner," approved the sergeant of detectives. "And at four I swear it's a phoney marriage!"

But Perry Mason had not established a reputation for himself without brains, and just beyond some traffic lights he called out to his self-styled "chief legal adviser":

"Spudsy, make a left turn at the next corner. We're going back to the apartment."

Della was quite dismayed.
January 9th, 1937.

"But what about Pinchurst?" she exclaimed.

"Yeah, what about Pinchurst?" echoed Spudsy, over his shoulder.

"Unfortunately," Perry replied to both of them, "they have telephones at Pinchurst, and we have friends in San Francisco."

"Oh, you mean those guys back there?" said Spudsy. "What could they do?"

"Plenty!" Perry gave a little chuckle and squeezed the waist of his bride. "I pity the poor residents of Pinchurst this night!"

A Case for Perry Mason

PERRY rented a luxurious flat on the second floor of an imposing apartment-house in Jefferson Square. The three emerged from a lift into a carpeted corridor, Spudsy encumbered with suitcases, and a slant-eyed Chinese servant named Ping opened the front door of the flat without exhibiting the slightest surprise, although he had believed his master to be on the way to the picturesquely situated village of Pinchurst.

Spudsy entered first and dumped the suitcases on the floor of a little square hallway. Della was about to follow when she found herself whisked up into her brand-new husband's very strong arms.

"Oh!" she gasped.

"As my secretary you walked into my parlour," said Perry, "but as my bride I carry you! Remember what the judge said—'It's legal now!'"

He carried her into an elegant sitting-room and deposited her on a chesterfield with a kiss, then took off his hat and overcoat.

"Say, don't I get a drink on my wedding night?" she inquired.

"Right away, darling," he promised, and sailed off to the dining-room to mix cocktails.

Spudsy conveyed the suitcases into a spacious bed-room, and was turning to depart when a girl stepped from behind the open door, causing him to start violently. Except for a hard expression about her eyes and mouth, she was quite beautiful. Her hair was raven black, and a little black hat was perched on her head. She was dressed in a black costume, with a white blouse. But Spudsy had never seen her before in his life, and the automatic in her right hand caused his jaw to drop.

"Are you Perry Mason?" she asked in a voice almost as steady as the gun.

"Well, no—no—ma'am!" stammered Spudsy.

Della walked into the room, gave one glance at the intruder, and exclaimed:

"Well, the other woman!"

"Stay right where you are!" snapped the girl with the gun.

"Haven't you heard?" said Della, quite calmly. "Mr. Mason isn't taking criminal cases any longer."

Without another word the girl went out across the hallway into the sitting-room. Della followed, quite indignantly, and Spudsy followed Della, still wearing his hat and a particularly noisy-patterned overcoat.

The door into the dining-room was half open and the girl was standing behind it when Perry walked in with two little glasses on a tray.

"Bitters for the bride?" he inquired.

"No bitters, thank you," said Della.

The girl with the gun stepped forward.

"Which is the one without the bitters, Mr. Mason?" she asked.

Perry swung round and his brows went up.

"Oh, hallo!" he said. "This one on the right."

She took the little glass with her left hand, drained it, and returned it to the tray.

"I'm sorry, Della," said Perry.

Della promptly drank the cocktail which contained bitters, and Perry, admiring her spirit, put down the tray and took her in his arms. He was about to kiss her when the barrel of the automatic was jabbed against his spine, and the girl who held it said imperiously:

"My name is Mrs. Eva Stewart. I've tried to reach you all day. I need legal advice."

"Well," said Perry, with a laugh that was by no means mirthful, "this is hardly the time for legal matters, Mrs. Stewart. However, I should rather like to suggest a disarmament conference."

Mrs. Eva Stewart, as she called herself, opened a handbag and took from it several notes.

"Here are five thousand dollars, Mr. Mason," she said. "You'll get more. Now you're coming with me!"

"Well, if it's a criminal case," said Perry, "you see, I—er—"

"We'll discuss that later!" she interrupted sharply. "Now you're coming with me!"

Perry Mason took a fountain-pen from a waistcoat pocket with admirable sang-froid, considering the circumstances.

"Della," he said, "do you mind writing out a receipt for Mrs. Stewart?"

"Well, there's nothing like the peace and happiness of married life," said Della dryly, and she took the pen from Perry's hand and a white handkerchief from his breast pocket, and at a little table she wrote out a receipt on the starched linen.

"Sign on the dotted line, Mr. Mason."

Perry signed his name and Della offered the handkerchief to the armed client.

"Well, now that you have an attorney bought and paid for," said Perry mildly, "would you consider putting away the—er—the artillery?"

"Not until I get you in a cab!" was the immediate retort. "Get your hat!"

Perry picked up his hat and overcoat.

"Good-bye," said Della plaintively.

"Don't mind me. I'm only the bride!"

"Oh, angel!" Perry embraced her.

"I'll be back in an hour. Good-bye."

"Give my love to all the folk down Mrs. Stewart's way!" she called after him as he went out from the room with the girl with the gun.

She flung the notes on the floor as the front door slammed, and she knelt on the chesterfield and peered down into the street between the slats of a venetian blind till she had seen Perry and the stranger get into a taxicab which Perry hailed.

The address given to the driver of the cab informed him of his immediate destination. He leaned back against the cushions and crossed his long legs.

"We're on the way to 'Spicy Bits'?" he said. "Then the reason is a case of blackmail?"

"Yes," replied the girl. "Last night a candidate for the Legislature was seen at the Beechwood Inn with a certain woman—"

"There was a raid," interjected Perry. "I read about it."

"There was. The candidate's name is Peter Milnor. 'Spicy Bits' is the only paper that knows he was there—and they go to press day after to-morrow."

"Peter Milnor?" Perry repeated the name. "And you want to keep his name out of print, is that it?"

"I'm looking out for myself," she stated.

"Then you were the 'certain woman' who was with him?"

"The paper must never know that!" she cried. "Understand? Never!"

"Who are you, anyway?"

"I've told you who I am—Mrs. Eva Stewart."

"Well," he said sceptically, "that name will do for the present."

Della remained at the window, on the chesterfield, long after the taxicab had disappeared from sight. Spudsy, partly for something to do and partly because the night had turned chilly, set light to the fire already laid in the grate.

"I was happy as a secretary," said Della dismally, "and now I'm deserted as a wife!"

"Don't you worry, Della," urged the fire-lighter. "You just trust old Spudsy. I'll take care of you!"

She turned to smile at him rather wanly, and saw that absent-mindedly he was tossing the notes into the fire.

"Look!" she cried, bouncing off the chesterfield. "The money! You're burning his fee!"

"Ooooh!"
Frantically Spudsy grabbed at a poker and tried to retrieve the notes, but though he got them out on to the hearth they were in flames.

Della took a cigarette from a box on the little table, went down on her knees beside him, picked up one of the flaring notes—and nearly burned her fingers.

"Oh, well, Spudsy," she said, "I've always wanted to light a cigarette with a thousand-dollar bill."

In less than twenty minutes the telephone bell rang. Della answered the call, and the voice of Perry sounded in her left ear.

"Hallo, darling!" it said. "I ditched the lunatic, and I'll be home in five minutes. The five thousand goes back as soon as she calls again."

"You think it does?" Della laughed hysterically. "Listen, angel, you've got to take the case—Spudsy's burned up the money! Every teeny-weeny bit of it!"

"What?" howled the voice of Perry. "Wait till I— Oh, well, never mind, precious! I'll take the case and wash it up in an hour. See you later."

She heard the sound of a kiss, and then the line was dead.

On the Trail

PERRY went out from a telephone-box in Market Street, walked fifty yards or so along that busy thoroughfare, and entered a tall office building. On the fourth floor he stepped into the general office of "Spicy Bits," a scurrilous publication issued weekly.

Beyond a brass rail, with a little gate in it, there were several desks at which men were busy, and a switchboard at which a girl was seated. Beyond the desks was a door with a frosted panel, upon which was painted, "Frank Locke, Editor."

Perry opened the little gate and went striding towards the door, but an unpleasant-looking fellow sprang up from one of the desks and barred his way.

"It says 'Private' on that gate!" he rasped. "Can't you read?"

"If I couldn't," retorted Perry, "I'd be working on 'Spicy Bits.' I want to see Frank Locke. I'm—er—"

"I know who you are, rat!" snarled the fellow, whose own name was Crandal. "Wait here!"

Perry waited, quite close to the switchboard, and he smiled at the girl who was dealing with calls, while Crandal went into the editor's room.

Locke was at his desk, a long-faced

man whose brown hair was becoming thin on top, giving him a more intellectual appearance than he merited, and whose brown eyes were anything but honest.

With him was a blonde girl, by no means lacking in looks, who sprang up from a chair as Crandal entered.

"Perry Mason's outside," said Crandal. "He wants to see you."

"Perry Mason, eh?" Locke rubbed his chin, very pronounced chin. "Send him in."

"Shall I go, Frank?" inquired the girl.

"I think you'd better, dear."

She went out with Crandal, and a few moments later Perry Mason stood looking down at Frank Locke, who seemed to be studying the point of a pencil he was holding.

"I'm Perry Mason," said Perry briskly. "I've only got five minutes to talk turkey, Mr. Locke."

"I know who you are," was the curt rejoinder. "What is it?"

"You go to press day after tomorrow. You're going to feature a certain story. I want to keep that story out of print. How much'll it cost me?"

Frank Locke smiled at the pencil rather than at his visitor.

**NEXT WEEK'S
BIG THRILLERS!**



CHESTER MORRIS

in

"COUNTERFEIT"

By kidnapping one of the best engravers at the U.S. Treasury printing works, Capper Stevens and his gang are able to produce counterfeit notes that look perfectly genuine; but John Joseph Madden, a daring and resourceful T-man, takes his life in his hands to track down the master crook. A high-powered drama, packed with action and thrills.

"CRIME OVER LONDON"

Finding the United States too hot for them, a band of gunmen, led by a cool, cunning and unscrupulous scoundrel, come to England, where they make elaborate plans to rob a big store of a large sum of money, but Scotland Yard is on the watch. A grand yarn, starring Paul Cavanagh.

ALSO

The concluding chapters of:

"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

Starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.

"'Spicy Bits' is not a blackmailing sheet," he said. "However, we do sell space to advertisers. What's on your mind?"

"Peter Milnor," replied Perry. "Oh! Just a minute!"

Locke rose from his desk, departed into the general office, and closed the door behind him.

"He's gonna talk," he said to Crandal. "Get it down!"

But Perry Mason had not lost any time. He felt quite sure that there was a microphone hidden somewhere in Locke's room, and he was looking for it almost before the door was closed. His quick eyes detected a plug in the floor near the base of a long-stemmed "smoker's companion." He picked up the ash-tray in the top of the contrivance, and there was the microphone.

It took him less than a second to snare the wires attached to the microphone and to restore the ash-tray to its place, and he was helping himself to a red rose from a tall vase on the desk when Locke returned.

"Are you representing Peter Milnor, or the woman who was with him?" Locke inquired, reseating himself in his chair.

"What woman?" countered Perry. "If you know her name, Mason, and are willing to talk, 'Spicy Bits' will go on the paying end."

Perry waved the red rose. "Tell me," he said, "who's the real owner of this—er—blackmailing rag, and maybe we can make a trade."

"Do you smoke, or take it in the arm? I'm the owner."

Perry ignored the suggestion that he was under the influence of dope.

"Listen, Locke," he said crisply, "you fellows have been running a blackmailing sheet long enough, and I just want you to know that I'm after you right now."

"Very well," said Locke, and pointed to the door. "In the meantime, would you mind going?"

"Not at all," Perry walked out with the rose, but paused beside the switchboard to present it to the girl. "A rose," he said with a gesture. "Not as lovely as you are, my dear, but still a rose."

"For me?" The girl looked amused. "Oh, excuse me, please!"

Frank Locke was on the line, asking for a number. She obtained it for him, then looked up at Perry. "What was it you said about roses?" she inquired.

"Just skip it," said Perry, and he put down the rose and walked out.

The head office of the National Telephone Company was not very far away. He made straight for it, and in the name of O'Flaherty he interviewed a venerable official named O'Toole, adopting an Irish accent for the occasion.

"You're sure you're from the District Attorney's office, Mr. O'Flaherty?" asked the real Irishman.

"If you doubt me, Mr. O'Toole," returned Perry, with a grin, "you've surely got a 'phone."

That was quite convincing, and Mr. O'Toole conducted him into a room that was full of filing-cabinets and led the way to one of them.

"Well, here are all the Freyburg numbers, Mr. O'Flaherty," he said. "All right, Mr. O'Toole," said Perry. "Check up on number six-two-nine-eight."

The specified number was found on its appropriate card in its appropriate drawer. "Mr. George C. Belter," O'Toole read

out, "five-fifty-six, Elmwood Drive. Say, Mr. O'Flaherty, ain't he the millionaire stockbroker?"

"Yes," confirmed Perry, "but it seems he has other interests. Good-bye, Mr. O'Toole."

Elmwood Drive, to which a taxicab conveyed him, proved to be a residential thoroughfare of superior class. Most of the houses in it were large and surrounded by well-kept grounds, and No. 556 was no exception to the general rule, but possessed the added advantage of being situated on a rise and screened from the road by a belt of trees.

Its front porch was wide and broad, and it provided plenty of room for Perry's body after he had been flung out from the hall by a particularly pugnacious-looking butler.

"Mr. Belter is occupied, sir," said the butler. "Did I make myself clear, sir?"

Perry lifted up his head.

"Quite clear, thank you," he replied. The front door was slammed, and Perry picked up his fallen hat and restored it to his head, rose to his feet, and descended the steps from the porch, fastening his coat as he went.

In the drive he looked up at the house; and then swiftly he made his way round to the back of it. A door there was on the latch, and quite boldly he walked into a well-appointed kitchen where two women were washing and wiping plates and dishes.

One of them was middle-aged and plain; the other was young, golden-haired, and rather pretty. The elder woman gaped at the intruder, the younger one emitted a gasp and nearly dropped a cup.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" demanded Perry, who was a firm believer in the axiom that attack is the best form of defence.

"Why, I—I—I'm Mrs. Veite, Mr. Belter's housekeeper!" stammered the middle-aged woman.

"Who's she?"

Perry flung out a hand at the girl.

"That's my daughter Norma," was the reply.

"Good," said Perry; and with that he walked straight out from the kitchen into a passage, and from the passage into the hall.

On the left of the hall a door was half-open, and he pushed it wider and stepped into a drawing-room comfortably furnished, but not in the best of style.

A red-headed young man was in there, helping himself to a drink at a tantalus on a table—a young man taller than himself and probably a little heavier.

"Hallo!" said Perry blandly. "My name's Perry Mason. What's yours?"

"Carl Griffin," replied the young man, and evidently assumed that the questioner had been admitted by the butler. "I have a drink?"

"Thanks," Perry accepted a whisky-and-soda. "You're not George Belter, then?"

"No," Carl Griffin laughed. "Belter's my uncle. He's upstairs in his study. I have a gun?"

"No," said Perry, and drank. "Why?"

"Well, most people who call on my uncle brandish weapons."

"He must be delightful!" Perry contemplated the hat upon the red head. "Going out?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Know your way upstairs?"

"No."

"Up the front stairs and the first door on your left."

"Thanks," said Perry, and he put
January 9th, 1937.

down the glass and went out into the hall.

A curved staircase led up from it to the floor above, but before he could reach the foot of the stairs he heard a scuffling sound upon them and ducked hurriedly between a table and a cupboard.

The pugnacious butler was seemingly at work again, for an angry voice rang out:

"You don't have to hold my arm! I can find the way out!"

"Sorry, Mr. Garwood," returned the voice of the man who had ejected Perry, "but Mr. Belter gave me his orders."

Perry heard heavy footsteps, and then the broad back of the butler came into view, holding the arm of a man whom he propelled towards the front door.

"You may tell Mr. Belter," raged the prisoner, "that he will regret this treatment of me this evening!"

"Very well, Mr. Garwood," said the butler, and with his free hand proceeded to open the door.

Perry immediately streaked up the stairs, with no more noise than a cat would make, and reached the first door on the left.

The Sound of a Shot

THE room beyond the door was a large one; the furniture in it was of a massive type. The walls were half-panelled, and the principal feature of the room consisted of an elaborately carved desk, behind which a full-faced man of considerable bulk was standing as Perry burst into the room and closed the door.

"Good-evening, Mr. Belter!" he said. "Who are you?" snapped the man behind the desk, his grey eyes coldly malignant.

"I'm an attorney," replied Perry, "representing Peter Milnor."

George C. Belter repeated the name as though astounded.

"Yes," said Perry, "and, in case you don't know it, your weekly, 'Spicy Bits,' is trying to blackmail him."

"You're either drunk or crazy, or both!" roared Belter. "Now get out!"

"I'll get out when I've said what I have to say," retorted Perry quite quietly. "No one in this town knows you own 'Spicy Bits.' You're respected as a millionaire stockbroker. Well, if your paper publishes anything about my client, I'll rip off your mask and expose you."

The door was opened and the butler stepped into the room.

"Digley," said Belter, who had pressed a bell-button on the desk, "isn't this the man who you threw out not ten minutes ago?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man, blinking a pair of beady eyes.

"Well, throw him out again!"

The butler advanced towards Perry, but before he could reach him the girl of the automatic ran in from the stairs, bareheaded, but still wearing her black costume and white blouse. She stared at Perry, but did not appear to recognise him.

"Oh, I didn't know you were busy, George!" she exclaimed. "I'm sorry!" "Don't mind this person!" snarled Belter. "He's just a shyster lawyer who's leaving in a hurry!"

"Listen, Mr. Belter—" began Perry.

"This way, sir!"

The butler caught at his arm, but was instantly smitten on the point of the jaw by a well-directed fist and went floundering backwards against the wall.

"That's for catching me off balance the last time," said Perry.

The butler sank to the floor and sat there dazed.

"Now listen, Belter," said Perry. "I had decided to give you a break, but I've changed my mind. You print one word about my client in your sheet, and you'll go to gaol for twenty years!"

"The trouble with you, Mason," retorted Belter heatedly, "is that you keep on singing the same song. Now, for the last time, get out!"

"All right, I've said all I've got to say," Perry moved towards the door.

"Good-night, Mr. Belter." He bowed ironically to the butler, who had risen from the floor. "Good-night, Digley!"

"Good-night!" murmured the alleged Eva Stewart.

"Good-night, Mrs. Belter!" he returned pleasantly, and went out to the stairs.

The butler followed him, none too steadily, and Eva Belter turned as though to follow him, too. But her husband called to her, and she closed the door and faced him inquiringly across the desk.

"Where's the five thousand that was in the safe?" he demanded harshly.

"The five thousand?" she echoed wonderingly.

"I suppose you're going to tell me that a little bird took it?"

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"The five thousand dollars that you stole!" he rapped at her. "Also this curious receipt on Perry Mason's handkerchief!"

She looked down at the handkerchief he took from a drawer and flung before her, and she bit her lip.

"Yes, I went through your bag!" he blared. "You've messed things beautifully. You went to Perry Mason and gave him a fictitious name and a false lead. He came out here pretending to represent Peter Milnor, but he didn't know I had Milnor here this evening. As a matter of fact they must have passed each other on the stairs!"

"You had Peter Milnor here?" gasped his wife.

"He came in the name of Garwood. I had him here trying to prove what I suspected—that you were with him last evening at the Beechwood Inn. He wouldn't tell me, but you've answered the question yourself!"

There was a telephone on the desk. Belter dialed a number.

"'Spicy Bits'?" he asked. "Mr. Locke—Mr. B. calling. Oh, is that you, Frank? Mason was just here. Tracked me down in jig time, didn't he? Sure, she was with Milnor all right. Go ahead—all over the front page of Thursday's issue. 'Candidate for Legislature a Home-wrecker.' Sure, use her name! She'll get used to the publicity when I get her in the divorce courts."

"Tell him not to print a word of that!" shrielled Eva Belter, and in her gloved hand was the automatic with which she had threatened Perry Mason. But George C. Belter did not turn a hair.

"Go ahead and shoot," he said, putting down the telephone. "It won't do you any good. I changed my will to-day."

"You think you're clever, don't you?" she cried fiercely. "You've got away with murder for years. But you're not the only one who can get away with it!"

The sound of a shot reached the ears of Mrs. Veite and her daughter, in the kitchen downstairs, and Mrs. Veite started to her feet.

"Norma, what was that?" she exclaimed.

She ran out through the rear passage into the hall, but Eva Belter was down the stairs and out at the front door



The barrel of the automatic was jabbed against Perry's spine, and the girl who held it said imperiously: "I need legal advice!"

before she had turned the corner from the passage.

Perry returned to his flat in Jefferson Square with a bottle of champagne in each hand and one in his coat-pocket. Flourishing the bottles in his hands, he kissed his bride—and sneezed.

"Good health!" said Della.

"Thanks!" said he. "Spudsy, some glasses. The honeymoon has officially begun!"

Spudsy fetched glasses from the dining-room; Perry seated himself beside Della on the chesterfield.

"You're home early, darling," said she with sarcasm. "Did you have a hard day at the office?"

"Yes, dear," sighed Perry, and then the telephone-bell rang.

Spudsy went over to the instrument.

"Mr. Mason is at Pinchurst Lodge with his bride," prompted Della; and that is what Spudsy stated. But it did not satisfy the caller, for almost immediately he said:

"Who? Mrs. Belter?"

"That's the young woman of the five thousand dollars," remarked Perry, and held out his hand for the telephone.

"I thought you said her name was Stewart!" said Della.

"Hallo, Mrs. Belter!" said Perry into the telephone. "What's the matter? Do you want to donate another five thousand?"

"Perry Mason," accused Della, "you're lying!"

Perry chuckled.

"Mrs. Belter," he said, "what was the name you gave when you called on me earlier this evening?"

He held the receiver to Della's ear, and Della heard, distinctly enough:

"Eva Stewart."

The receiver was transferred to Perry's ear.

"What's that, again?" he asked.

"I must see you at once!" was the sharp reply.

"You can't," said he. "I'm at Pinchurst Lodge with my bride." He sat suddenly upright. "What's that?"

"I said I think someone shot my husband. Yes, shot him!"

"Oh, very well—I'll be right there. Where are you calling from? All right!"

He rose and put the telephone back in its place.

"Spudsy," he said, "my boots and saddle. Darling, I'm terribly sorry. I'll be back in an hour—I swear I will!"

"It's all right, my sweet," returned Della wryly. "I haven't touched my mending, and Junior's socks must be darned before school opens. Yes, and you can be darned, too, you big clump!"

"Aw, Della!" he protested; and then Spudsy reappeared with the hat and the overcoat.

A Shock for Perry

EVA BELTER had rung up from a public telephone-box in Jefferson Square, and she was standing in the doorway of the apartment-house when Perry reached it. Without a word for her, he went round to the garages at the side of the building and backed out from one of them in his own streamlined saloon.

She got into it beside him, and in an agitated voice she said:

"Perry, please turn out that light!"

Instead of obeying, he grinned at her.

"I went to see if you lie, my dear. Talk, and talk fast."

"Well, just after you left our house to-night, I went back to my room. Suddenly I heard voices—angry voices. Coming from my husband's study. I crept along the upper hall to listen. There was a shot, and the sound of a falling body!"

"What time was that?" asked Perry, his keen blue eyes boring into her brown ones.

"A little before nine," she replied, after a moment's thought. "Then I heard a man running down the stairs. Oh, Perry, I'm so frightened!"

She clung to him, and he switched off the light in haste.

"Come, come, Mrs. Belter!" he reproved. "You forget I'm a married man!"

He set off for Elmwood Drive, and the house was reached without further incident. Eva Belter opened the front door with a key of her own, but it was with marked reluctance that she followed him up the stairs, and when he opened the door of the study she shrank back.

"Come on in!" he said. "You didn't like him, did you?"

She shook her head, and but for the artificial colour on her lips he felt sure they would have been nearly white.

"All right, you'd better stay outside and watch the stairs," he decided. "Let me know if anybody comes up."

He went into the room, carrying his overcoat. The body of George C. Belter was lying on the carpet at one end of the desk, and for a while he stooped over it. Then he took a scribbling-pad from the desk, a pencil from his pocket, and, almost sitting on one heel, proceeded to make notes as he gazed about the floor.

An automatic lay near, and not far from it an empty cartridge-case engaged his attention. A few minutes later, he was on his feet and ringing up his own flat on the telephone.

Spudsy answered the call, suspending weight-lifting exercises in a room fitted up as a gymnasium to do so. Della had retired to her husband's bed-room, if not to bed.

"Oh, Spudsy," said Perry, "got a pencil?"

Spudsy swept over to a discarded coat and returned to the instrument armed with pencil and paper.

"Get this down," directed Perry. "Thirty-two calibre Colt automatic, January 9th, 1937."

number A. Two-five-four-two-three-four. Search the police records right away. There's a chance it might be listed."

"Say, boss," protested Spudsy, "d'you know it's ten o'clock at night, and I've only lifted the hundred twenty-five times?"

"You lift yourself down to police headquarters right away," commanded Perry. "I'll call you in an hour. Yes, and tell Mrs. Mason I'll be there before long."

He put down the telephone, and then he knelt on the floor again. He found a second empty cartridge which had rolled under the desk, and with his pencil he raked it out till it was lying beside the one he had already discovered.

The two used cartridges matched in every detail, and having satisfied himself as to this he put one of them in his coat-pocket, left the other near the gun, and went to the door.

"Oh—er—Mrs. Belter," he called in a guarded voice, "come in a minute, will you?"

She entered the room without demur, this time, and he motioned to her to close the door.

"You heard but one shot?" he questioned.

"That's right," she replied, looking anywhere but in the direction of the body. "Do you think it could possibly be suicide?"

"Sure," said he dryly.

There were casement windows at the end of the room, and one of them was wide open. He walked across to it and leaned out over its sill.

"Have you any idea who was here arguing with your husband?" he turned to ask.

"Well, the other man spoke quite clearly," she said.

"Have you ever heard the other man's voice before?"

"I think so."

"Do you know who it was?"

"Yes."

He strode towards her.

"Well, don't be so mysterious—I'm your lawyer. Who was it?"

She looked at him strangely, and she said:

"You know who it was."

"How should I know who it was?"

"Because it was you, Perry."

He stared at her for a full second, compressing his lips; but she did not flinch.

"So that's the kind of a playmate you are?" he said.

"I won't tell anyone—ever."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"All right," he gritted, "how did I kill him, and why?"

"I don't want to be cruel, Perry," she said, spreading out her hands, "but after you had the argument with my husband you returned up the back stairs. You killed him, Perry. That's why I went all the way over to your end of the town to telephone. I wanted to give you time to get home, so you would have an alibi."

His lips, beneath his wisp of a moustache, curled scornfully.

"You're a liar, Mrs. Belter!" he said. "Now I'll tell you what to do. First of all, you're going to forget permanently that pipe-dream of yours about having heard me in this room—"

"But what are we going to do?" she broke in feverishly. "If Locke prints that Beechwood Inn story, suspicion may even shift to me!"

"Will you let me handle Frank Locke?"

She nodded emphatically.

"Oh, I do trust you, Perry," she declared.

"Well, that's fine!" said he. "Now listen; I want forty-five minutes for in-January 9th, 1937.

investigation. You go to your room and keep quiet. Don't say a word to a soul, and don't call the police until you hear from me. I'll be back as soon as I can."

He went out from the room to the stairs, saw from the top of them that the hall below was deserted, and descended swiftly to the front door.

In his car he travelled straight to the home of Peter Milnor, candidate for the Legislature, who lived on Telegraph Hill. A black-haired Japanese servant opened the door, clad in pyjamas and a dressing-gown, and he assured Perry that his master had gone away. But Perry swept him aside and strode into the hall because he had caught sight of the politician on the stairs.

"Good-evening, Mr. Milnor!" he said loudly at the foot of them. "Have you heard? You're in quite a jam!"

Milnor descended in anger. He was a man of about forty, with a strong, clean-shaven face, and he was carrying a suitcase.

"I don't care who you are," he snapped, "and you'll have to excuse me. I'm just leaving."

"Where's your 'phone?" asked Perry. A pair of dark blue eyes blazed at him.

"Would you mind telling me who you are?"

"I'm Perry Mason, and I'm your attorney in the trial for your life for the murder of George C. Belter," was the amazing reply, and with that Perry dived through an open doorway into a well-appointed sitting-room, found a telephone on a desk in there, and proceeded to ring up his flat.

Peter Milnor followed him; the Japanese servant stood gaping in the doorway, holding his master's hat and overcoat.

Spudsy, by this time, had returned from police headquarters, and he answered the call.

"Oh, hallo, Mr. Mason!" he said. "Yeah, they had a record of that automatic. It belongs to some guy named Peter Mitchell."

"Peter Milnor, eh?" said Perry, his eyes on his unintentional host. "Well, he did have a motive for killing Belter. Good work, Spudsy. Tell Mrs. Mason I'll be home in an hour."

He sat down at the desk, and he looked up at the startled politician.

"Well, Mr. Milnor," he said, "about two hours ago George C. Belter was murdered with a thirty-two Colt automatic. A man's voice was heard in his study, and your gun was used."

"My gun?" howled Milnor. "Not my gun!"

"You're a liar!" returned Perry calmly. "It's registered in your name!"

"That gun's registered under the name of Peter Mitchell!" blurted the horrified politician, and Perry laughed.

"Who's Peter Mitchell?" he challenged.

"Well—well, Peter Mitchell doesn't exist. B—but they can't trace that gun to me!"

"That's where you're mistaken, Mr. Milnor," said Perry. "I saw you at the Belters' house early in the evening, and I heard you talking to the butler." He fished out his fountain-pen and offered it. "Now the first thing I want is a campaign contribution."

Milnor, who seemed to have gone to pieces, stammered that all he had in the way of money consisted of two thousand dollars' worth of travellers' cheques.

"I can cash them," said Perry cheerfully, and reached out a hand to the telephone while the cheques were being endorsed in his name. He dialed a number, and presently was speaking to

a doctor with whom he had had many professional dealings.

"Is that the Fairview Sanatorium?" he inquired. "Oh, hallo, doc—I didn't recognise your voice. Listen, send an ambulance right away to two-four-five Telegraph Hill. Yes, just around the corner, that's right. Algernon P. Fortescue is the patient. Nothing serious. Nervous breakdown. Want you to take care of him for me."

Down went the telephone, and he received the travellers' cheques and pocketed them.

"Now—er—why did you kill him?" he asked.

Milnor, who had sent the Japanese servant away, was certainly exhibiting several signs of a nervous breakdown.

"Oh, I didn't!" he almost screamed. "I swear I didn't! I was there earlier—you're right about that. He tried to pump me about his wife, just because she'd been with me to a dinner and dance at the Beechwood Inn, but I didn't go back."

"If Frank Locke prints that Beechwood Inn story," said Perry, "the police will get you pronto. There's the motive—fight over Belter's wife! Digley, the butler, saw you there!"

"I was there in the name of Garwood," stammered Milnor. "That was Belter's idea."

"Well, if they get you on the carpet," retorted Perry, "you'll be Milnor, not Garwood!"

"You've got to keep that story out of print!"

"Are you telling me? How well do you know Frank Locke? We've got to get something on that bird!"

Milnor dropped on to a chesterfield and mopped his face with a handkerchief.

"Belter had something on him," he said. "Mrs. Belter told me about it. He was in some trouble down south—Georgia. There was a woman mixed up in it."

"Hm!" mused Perry. "Well, that's fine. Georgia is only a few thousand miles away as the crow flies—but I'm no crow."

The Japanese servant appeared wonderingly with two white-robed internes from the Fairview Sanatorium, and Milnor started up in dismay as the internes deposited a stretcher on the floor.

"Mr. Algernon P. Fortescue," said Perry, taking the wretched man's arm, "may I assist you? Your litter awaits! Come, come, my dear fellow, you're a sick man!"

Milnor was led to the stretcher and made to lie down upon it.

"Oh, but listen!" he began. "I—er—I—"

"Take it quietly till all your troubles blow over," urged Perry, and he draped the politician's overcoat upon the prostrate body and dumped the politician's soft-felt hat on top of the coat, then pointed to the door beside which the Japanese servant was scratching his head in bewilderment. "Out, my men!"

Milnor was borne away on the stretcher, and Perry used the telephone again.

"Police headquarters?" he said. "Homicide squad, please." He looked at the staring Jap and told him he could go to bed; but the Jap seemed to have become incapable of movement.

"Hallo! Homicide squad? Perry Mason speaking. I want to report a murder at five-fifty-six, Elmwood Drive, George C. Belter."

"Oh, the Belter murder, Mr. Mason?" said the voice of a desk sergeant at the other end of the line.

"That was reported not thirty minutes ago by Mrs. Belter herself."

"Oh!" Perry drew a long breath. "Thank you very much."

He put down the telephone, and he turned to the yellow-faced servant.

"Well, it looks like protecting Mrs. Belter is going to prove difficult," he remarked. "On second thoughts, my lad, I'll have that drink of Scotch you offered."

"Heh?" The Jap seemed to become suddenly alive. "Scotch?"

"Scotch," repeated Perry firmly.

"Oh, yes!" nodded the Jap. "Me, too, sir!"

Carl Griffin Talks

IT had been Perry Mason's intention to go home to his bride after visiting Peter Milnor, but the words of the desk sergeant at police headquarters caused him to change his plans, and from Milnor's house he drove back to the house in Elmwood Drive.

Detective-Sergeant William Hoffman was already there, and so was the coroner, and the place was swarming with plain-clothes men and uniformed officers. Long before Perry arrived the automatic and the empty cartridge had been sent off to headquarters, and the body had been examined by Wilbur Strong, after an official photographer had taken pictures in the study.

A detective who had been on the telephone reported to Hoffman that there were no finger-prints on the gun, and that the ballistic expert was of the opinion that the gun had been fired twice.

"Aw, he's crazy!" scoffed Hoffman.

Perry entered the hall just as the body was being carried out on a stretcher by two police officers.

"Good-morning, Riley," he said. "Good-morning, Officer Blair. And Mr. Belter, as I live and die!"

He passed on up the stairs and into the study, where several pairs of eyes regarded him with blank astonishment.

"I thought you were at Pinehurst!" exclaimed Hoffman.

"Haven't you heard?" returned Perry blandly. "I'm representing Mrs. Belter—Mrs. George C. Belter."

Hoffman stalked over to him. "Now, look here, Perry, what have you been up to?" he demanded.

"Up to Pinehurst." Perry sneezed violently. "Excuse me, I seem to have caught a cold. But it's lovely up there, boys. The verdant vales, running brooks, and whip-poor-wills—Wilbur, you'd love the whip-poor-wills!"

A sudden crash down in the hall sent them all out to the stairs. Carl Griffin had fallen flat on his face just inside the front door, and had knocked over a fern-pot and the stand upon which it had stood.

He raised his red head as they went down to him, and he said tipsily:

"Darned slippery floors!"

"You'll find," said Perry, "that this is Carl Griffin, nephew of the late Mr. Belter."

Griffin was lifted to his feet by a couple of policemen and half-carried into the drawing-room where Perry had made his acquaintance. There he was deposited in an easy-chair, and Hoffman jerked at the lapels of his coat.

"Hi, Griffin, come on, snap out of it!" he roared. "Griffin, your uncle's been murdered! Hi, Griffin!"

Bleary blue eyes blinked at him, and their owner said thickly:

"You're drunk!"

"No, Griffin," snapped Hoffman, "you're the one that's drunk!"

"Murdered," muttered the young man, "Did you shay murdered?"

"Yes, murdered!"

"Oh, then mushta been that woman who did it—his wife."

Perry, who was leaning over the side of the chair, said stonily:

"That was a very thoughtless remark, Mr. Griffin."

"Shut up, Perry, and beat it!" barked Hoffman.

Perry moved towards the door.

"I'll just look around a bit," he said with a flip of his hand. "You may proceed with your usual questioning."

Hoffman shook the intoxicated young man again.

"Griffin, come on, wake up!" he commanded harshly. "What makes you think Mrs. Belter killed her husband?"

"I don't think any such thing," was the numbed rejoinder.

"That's what you said!"

"I didn't say any such thing! I repeat, you're drunk!"

In the hall, Perry encountered a particularly trim and attractive nurse, who evidently had been summoned to look after Eva Belter by somebody, and who evidently took him to be one of the men from headquarters.

"It's time for Mrs. Belter's hot milk," she informed him.

"Right away," he assured her.

"Yes, ma'am, delighted."

She reascended the stairs; he went on to the kitchen. Mrs. Veite and her daughter were seated at the table in the kitchen, the housekeeper fully dressed, the girl in a wrap, and an ugly detective was standing by the table—with one foot on a chair—asking them questions. In the background a policeman was devouring a banana.

Perry went straight to an ice-box and took a bottle of milk from one of its shelves. He then went to the stove and poured some of the milk into a saucepan. Nobody seemed to have noticed him, and before he put the

saucepan back on the stove he took a little packet from his waistcoat pocket and emptied nearly all its contents into the milk. They were sleeping tablets which his doctor had given him for his own use.

"You stop badgering my daughter!" Mrs. Veite cried fiercely.

"You heard the shot, you know you did!" the ugly detective rapped at the girl Norma. "You're lying!"

"No, sir," she declared. "The first thing I knew when I woke up, there was a man standing by the bed looking down at me—a detective!"

"Aw, come on, sister!" growled the ugly questioner. "You must have some idea about the murder!"

"She hasn't any ideas that would bear repeating," snapped Mrs. Veite.

"I'll get to you in a minute, sour puss!" the detective blazed.

"Well, it won't do you any good," was the instant retort. "I'm a servant, and I see nothing and I hear nothing."

"Atta, girl!" approved Perry loudly. "Hold 'em, Yale!"

The detective swung round and saw him with the glass of milk in his hand.

"Say, who are you?" he exploded.

"I'm the sand-man," Perry replied with calm, and he walked off to the butler's pantry to get a silver tray on which to stand the glass.

The butler was in the pantry and was being bullied by two plain-clothes men. He looked the worse for wear.

"No, the only other caller was a Mr. Garwood," Perry heard him declare, "who left in quite a huff. Of course, I told you about Mr. Mason."

"Are you sure you didn't hear a shot?"

"No, sir. I retired just after Mr. Mason left—a few minutes before nine."

Perry had selected a suitable tray, and was about to retreat with the glass



Almost sitting on one heel, Perry proceeded to make notes. An automatic lay near, and not far from it an empty cartridge-case engaged his attention.

upon it, when one of the detectives caught sight of him.

"Say, who are you?" he bellowed.

Perry winked at the staring butler. "Just working my way through college," he said pleasantly, and he went out to the stairs, met the nurse in the upper hall, and handed her the tray.

A few minutes later he re-entered the drawing-room. Carl Griffin had been transferred to a chesterfield, and Wilbur Strong was sitting beside him. It seemed to Perry more than likely that the coroner had given the young man something to counteract the effects of the drink he had consumed, for his voice was clearer and his eyes were brighter.

"Yes," he was saying, "Uncle George liked me, and he didn't like his wife."

"Now, look here, Griffin," said Hoffman gruffly, "this is a murder case, and you seem to be playing 'button, button who's got the button.' How about that comment you made to the effect that Mrs. Belter—"

"I don't remember that comment, sergeant," Carl Griffin interrupted. "and I certainly didn't mean it."

"Well, maybe you didn't mean it, my alcoholic friend," said Perry, stepping forward, "but you certainly managed to drive home a thought."

Hoffman was furious.

"That'll do for you, Perry!" he said in a most unfriendly fashion. "You can keep quiet, or get out!"

"Okay, sergeant," returned Perry meekly, "but remember you can't convict a woman until she's proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt."

"You can get out!" fumed Hoffman. "In going, sergeant," said Perry with a sneeze. "You forget this is my wedding night. I'll be at Pinehurst if you want to reach me."

Wanted for Questioning:

PERRY had not long driven away from the house when newspaper reporters and Press photographers invaded it. Eva Belter was summoned from her room and descended with the nurse clad in a very elaborate negligée, and in the drawing-room she was conducted to a comfortable chair in which she reclined languidly.

"Are you sure you feel all right, Mrs. Belter?" inquired Hoffman as the reporters and photographers gathered round the chair.

"Quite all right, thank you," she replied in a dracany voice.

Flash-lamps blazed, and then Hoffman waved the photographers aside while the reporters took out notebooks and pencils.

"Now about that voice you heard," said the sergeant.

"I told you I thought I recognised another man's voice when my husband was having the argument," returned Eva Belter slowly and in a fashion that suggested she was finding it difficult to marshal her thoughts. "Just before the shot."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Hoffman. "Well, perhaps I—shouldn't, but—but it was Perry Mason's—"

"Perry Mason's?" Hoffman repeated in astonishment.

She nodded, and her head drooped.

"You see, I— Oh, I—I feel so sleepy, I—"

Her eyes closed and she slumped in the chair. The drugged milk had done its work.

Hoffman tried to rouse her, but in vain, and he turned to one of his assistants.

"Jones" he said tersely, "go and get Perry Mason!"

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"You bet!" The detective addressed beckoned to an undersized but powerfully built colleague. "Come on, Shorty!"

"You know, I don't think Perry went to Pinehurst at all," intervened Wilbur Strong. "Better try his flat first."

The two detectives went out.

"What do you suppose happened to her?" Hoffman said blankly to the coroner. "Nurse, what's wrong with her?"

"I don't know," the nurse replied. "She was all right when I gave her the hot milk."

Perry reached Jefferson Square in almost record time, the streets of San Francisco being deserted at that early hour in the morning. He put the saloon away in its garage and climbed the stairs to his flat.

The flat was in darkness, and Della was in bed. He crept into the room, switched on a shaded light, and sat down on the edge of the bed; whereupon she sat bolt upright in it and eyed him almost as though he were a stranger.

"I know, I know, my darling—my wonderful darling," he said, putting an arm round her and sealing her pouting lips with a kiss. "But I'm here now, and I'm not going to leave you again."

There arose a noisy banging at the front door, and a voice that demanded it should be opened. Ping, apparently, was dead asleep, but Spudsy was in the act of retiring and had not yet removed his underclothes. He went to the front door in them, and he yelled at the key-hole:

"Say, who do you think you are?"

"Herbert B. Jones of the homicide squad," was the shouted reply. "We want Perry Mason!"

Perry kissed his disconsolate bride and made for a window, which he opened.

"So the brilliant attorney retired from the practice of criminal law!" said she with bitterness as he climbed out on to a fire-escape.

The voice of Jones was heard, threatening to break down the front door.

"Wait till I get my trousers on, will you?" bellowed Spudsy.

Perry put his head in at the bed-room window, and Della slipped out from the bed and ran over to him.

"Darling," he said, "I'll be at the Ripley Hotel, registered under the name of Fred P. Crosby of Detroit."

"I like Detroit, don't you, Fred?" she mocked.

"Yes, Mrs. Crosby," he laughed—and began to descend the iron ladderway.

A few noisy minutes elapsed, and then Jones, who had brought a number of policemen with him as well as Shorty, lost all patience and burst open the front door with the aid of his companions. Spudsy tried to bar the way, but was sent sprawling.

"Mike, take a look round," directed Jones. "Joe, stay with the door. The rest of you men come with me."

Della scrambled back into bed and pulled the sheets and blankets up to her chin a moment before the detective entered the room with Shorty and three policemen.

"Where's Perry Mason?" he demanded harshly. "Answer my question! Where's Perry Mason?"

Della pretended to weep.

"Oh—oh, I—I wish you hadn't asked me about my husband, officer," she whimpered. "When first we were married he was so thoughtful—so kind—so attentive—so devoted. But—but—now he leaves me for long periods at a time. He's tired of me, officer!"

Herbert B. Jones became tired of her,

too, and after he had made sure that Perry Mason was nowhere in the flat, departed with his horde.

The rest of the night passed, and in all the morning papers it was stated that the police were searching for Perry Mason, crime specialist, who was wanted for questioning in connection with the murder of George C. Belter.

The Ripley Hotel was a middle-class establishment in Stanford Street, and Perry had slept none too well in one of its numerous rooms because he was in the throes of a fierce cold as well as wanted by the police.

At ten o'clock in the morning he rang up his flat, and Della answered.

"Where's Spudsy?" he sneezed. "Tell him I want two dozen handkerchiefs."

"What a cold you have, Mr. Crosby," said Della. "No, I don't know where you'll find Mr. Mason. Frank Locke is anxious to see him, too."

"Frank Locke?" Perry sneezed twice. "Well, that's news! Get in touch with Frank Locke. Tell him to meet me in fifteen minutes at—er—" He glanced out through the panes of a window near which he was standing and perceived a quaintly fronted bookshop across the street. "At the Shakespeare Shoppe, in Stanford Street. Got it? Okay. I love you!"

About twenty minutes later Frank Locke walked into the Shakespeare Shoppe and found Perry apparently absorbed in a volume he had taken from a shelf.

"Oh, so there you are, slyster!" he snapped.

Perry returned "Two Thousand Years in Sing-Sing" to the shelf on which it belonged.

"I'd advise you to lower your voice," he said with a jerk of his thumb in the direction of the bookseller, who was hovering behind a counter. "Well, have you decided to kill that Belter-Milnor story?"

"Yeah, chiseller," snarled Locke, "I've built up a whole new front page. That's only a sub-feature now. I'm devoting my leading story to you. Mrs. Belter talked, see?"

"This—er—story you mention," drawled Perry. "Will it be—er—an interview, or what I think of the New Deal?"

"'Spicy Bits,' " retorted Locke, "is going to accuse you of the murder of George C. Belter—and, what's more, we're gonna make it stick!"

"Fortunately," said Perry, "this State has libel laws, my friend."

"You found out that Belter owned this paper," jeered Locke. "Sue him—he won't mind! And then you'd better hire yourself a smart lawyer—you'll need one!"

He went off, highly pleased with himself, and Perry drifted over to the counter.

"Have you a 'phone I could use?" he asked.

The bookseller immediately invited him to use his own instrument, and escorted him into a book-littered room behind the shop.

At a desk in the room Perry put through a long-distance call to Atlanta, the capital of Georgia.

The "Framing" of Frank Locke

BACK in his room at the Ripley Hotel, Perry had to wait a long while for the two dozen handkerchiefs for which he had asked, but when Spudsy brought them to him he brought also a telegram and a photograph.

The photograph was undoubtedly of Frank Locke, although it was labelled

"Cecil Dawson," and had been dug up from the files of the "Examiner" by Tiny Brewster. The telegram ran:

"Cecil Dawson, alias Frank Locke, tried for murder here, nineteen thirty-four. Not hanged due changed testimony Esther Liuton.—HALE DETECTIVE AGENCY."

Having studied the photograph and this telegram, Perry recalled the blonde girl who had emerged from Locke's room after he had invaded the office of "Spicy Bits" the night before. He described her to Spudsy, and he said:

"Put a tail on her, Spud—give her a smooth shadowing, you understand? If you watch Locke he'll lead you to her. Follow her wherever she goes. I want to know where she lives and everything about her."

Spudsy, who was a really excellent detective as well as an ex-champion in the ring, set off upon his task; and as the blonde girl lunched with Frank Locke that day it did not prove a very difficult one.

At three o'clock in the afternoon he called on Perry, quite effectively disguised as a woman of considerable proportions.

"I got her, boss!" he said excitedly. "Esther Liuton, three-fifty, Wheelwright Apartments, in Chester Street. The bellboy says she gets regular sugar from 'Spicy Bits'—changes the cheques with the secretary of the place. And with that accent, is she from Georgia?"

"Has Frank Locke been out with her recently?" asked Perry.

"She was out with him from about eight o'clock till eleven-thirty last night," stated Spudsy.

"Eleven-thirty?" Perry seemed disappointed. "Well, he didn't kill Belter, then!"

"Why, boss, you never thought he did, did you?"

"Of course not, you chump! But if I could make it look that way, I could control 'Spicy Bits'—and that's what I want to do right now!"

A taxicab conveyed Spudsy and himself to the Wheelwright Apartments, and they climbed the stairs together instead of using the lift, Perry with his handkerchief to his face—a handkerchief which was justified by his frequent sneezings.

Spudsy lurked in a wide corridor while Perry rapped at a door numbered 350.

"Who is it?" asked a feminine voice with a decided accent.

"Telegram," Perry replied, after the manner of a messenger.

The door was opened, and he strode past the blonde girl into a sitting-room.

"W-w-what's the idea?" she asked blankly, staring at him.

He slammed the door.

"I'm sorry," he said, tossing his hat into the air and catching it, "but you're in a jam."

"What are you?" she gasped. "A detective?"

"No, a lawyer." He seated himself calmly on a sofa and crossed his long legs. "I want to talk to you about Frank Locke."

"Frank Locke?" Her face became expressionless. "I never heard of him."

"Now don't tell me you've forgotten good old Cecil Dawson," said Perry with a little laugh. "Surely you remember the Georgia business? The

time you saved his neck by changing your testimony?"

She bit her lip, frowning at him.

"Oh, all right!" she said. "What do you want?"

"That's better," he nodded. "Come and sit down."

She sat beside him, obviously upset. "You were with him till eleven-thirty last night," he said; and then, as she inclined her golden head: "Well, unless you want to be sent back to Georgia for compounding a felony, I'm telling you what you did last night."

Three-quarters of an hour later Frank Locke once more joined Perry in the Shakespeare Shoppe, and was promptly marched out on to the pavement.

"I know where you'd like to send me," said Perry pleasantly, "but unless you want to be on the same ferry-boat, you'd better come with me!"

"I'll give you fifteen minutes," snapped Locke, "and this time you'd better talk turkey!"

"I'll talk turkey," promised Perry, and led the way round several corners to a gun-shop. "We're going in here."

"Hi, what sort of a racket is this?" howled Locke.

"Who's getting suspicious now?" laughed Perry. "Come on!"

They entered the shop, in which all manner of lethal weapons were displayed in glass-fronted cases, and Perry greeted its Greek proprietor, a full-bodied man named Kickopolos, who said almost in one breath:

"Hallo, Mist' Mason. Dat's der man!"

"Now, just a minute, Kieky," said Perry, "we've got to be sure about this."

"You put me on der witness stand,"



Perry pointed to the door beside which the Japanese servant was scratching his head in bewilderment. "Out, my men!"

proclaimed the Greek volubly, "you bring me one thousand lawyers, I still tell you der same t'ing. Dat's der man!"

Frank Locke, with a pointing finger nearly in his face, stepped back in a fury.

"Say, what's the idea?" he raged.

"What sorta flim-flam is this?"

"Just a part of my case," returned Perry quietly. "It checks up, that's all. You're the man who bought the gun!"

"Are you crazy?" cried Locke. "I never bought a gun in my life!"

Perry asked the Greek for his gun register, which was instantly produced. Locke was not to know that the two were old friends.

"Now beat it, Kicky," said Perry. "I want to talk."

The gun-vender vanished; the register was opened on a glass-topped counter, and Perry pointed to an entry.

"I suppose you'll deny that you wrote that?" he purred.

"Certainly I deny it!" raged Locke. "I never was in this joint before, and that's not my signature."

"The police don't know it yet," said Perry, "but that gun entered there killed George Belter last night."

"I'm through with you!" Locke snorted. "I'm not gonna say another word! I'm going back to my office, and I—"

"Just a minute, Locke. I've not only got this gun on you, I've got your motive. You've been embezzling funds, and George Belter knew too much about that Georgia affair!"

"Georgia affair?" Locke changed his mind about striding forth into the street, and began to look alarmed.

"I know what I'm talking about," said Perry. "You went out there about nine o'clock and killed him!"

"I—I can prove where I was at nine o'clock last night," stammered his victim, and went on desperately: "I've got an ironclad alibi, and just to show you where you stand, I'm gonna spring it now! Come on!"

Perry permitted himself to be swept off to the Wheelwright Apartments, and Locke opened the door of Esther Linton's flat with a key he took from his pocket. There was no one in the sitting-room, but there was a box of chocolates on a table, and Perry helped himself to one of them.

"Sit down," said Locke gruffly. "I'll call her. Esther!"

The blonde girl appeared from an inner room, but Perry had not sat down: he was eating a second chocolate.

"Yes, honey?" she said, and stared at Perry as though she had never seen him before. "Say, what is this?"

"I can't explain everything now," said Locke, "but I want you to tell this fellow where I was about nine o'clock last night."

"Why, of course, Frank. We went out to dinner, and after that we came here."

Perry sneezed.

"What time was that?" he asked.

"About eight-thirty, I guess."

"Well, go on," said Locke. "What happened then? What time did I leave here? Didn't I sit in this room reading, and didn't I wake you up to kiss you good-bye about eleven-thirty?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Frank," tied Esther Linton. "I woke up this morning with an awful headache, and all I know is you were here when I went to sleep, but I don't know what time you went."

"That's not true, and you know it!" Locke shouted.

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"I'm in a hurry," said Perry, and he went over to a wall telephone, near the door, and dialed a number at random.

"Hallo!" he said. "Police headquarters?"

"No police," responded a voice.

"This Canton Laundry."

Locke, who had been glaring at the girl, stepped forward.

"Put up that 'phone, Mason," he said hoarsely. "You win, and you know it."

Perry put the telephone back on its prongs, but raised it again to dial another number, sneezing as he did so.

"Hallo, 'Spicy Bits'?" he asked.

"Let me talk to Crandal."

He handed the instrument to Locke, who presently said into it:

"That you, Crandal? Locke. Kill that Beechwood Inn story and the Mason feature. Yes, kill it!"

"And don't dig it up again," said Perry, "or back you go to Georgia!"

He opened the door, but turned to bow to Esther Linton. "Thank you, peaches!"

The Lie Detector

A FEW minutes before five that afternoon a squad car drew up by the kerb in Jefferson Square, nearly opposite the apartment-house in which Perry's flat was situated, and Eva Belter got out from it, with Detective-Sergeant Hoffman and Herbert B. Jones.

"Phoned you to meet him at his own flat?" said Hoffman dubiously.

"Last place I should have thought he— Oh, well, we can try!"

"Wait here until I wave a handkerchief," urged Eva Belter. "I don't want him to know I brought you."

"Okay!" said Hoffman, and she crossed the road and entered the building. But she stared in consternation at the man who opened the front door of the flat to her after she had rung the bell, for it was Wilbur Strong.

"Welcome, Mrs. Belter," he said genially. "Won't you come in?"

"Why," she stammered, "I—I thought this was Mr. Mason's suite— Mr. Perry Mason. Who are you? I—saw you last night."

"I'm the coroner," Wilbur Strong replied. "We're expecting Perry Mason's death momentarily. Come in, and I'll see if he can see you."

He conducted her into the sitting-room, left her on the chesterfield, and went off to Perry's bed-room.

"She's here, Perry," he said, "but listen. Take the advice of an old friend. You're sick; this case has got you licked, and you'd better get out of town."

Perry was on the bed, under an eider-down quilt. He rose up in his pyjamas and dressing-gown, and he put on some slippers.

"This is certainly a swell honey-moon!" he complained with a sneeze.

"Murder! Influenza! Disbarment looming!" He marched Wilbur out to the door.

"Well, good-bye, pal. You've been fine, and I appreciate it."

"That's all right, Perry; what's a friend for?" The coroner opened the door. "See you at the morgue!"

Perry closed the door and went into the sitting-room, where he stood shivering by the fire, and Eva Belter sprang up and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Why, Perry, you're ill!" she exclaimed. "You poor boy!"

Della was in the room which Perry and Spudsy used jointly as a gymnasium, and Spudsy was exercising.

"You poor boy!" said Della

savagely, listening at the door to what was going on in the sitting-room.

Perry had poured himself a stiff whisky-and-soda.

"I never felt so rotten about anything in my life," Eva Belter declared almost tearfully, "but they shrieked questions at me, and I—I—"

"What questions?" thundered Perry. "What have you done? Where have you been?"

"Down at the police station," she confessed. "I told them I heard your voice. Oh, Perry, forgive me!"

"It's curtains for you, baby, unless you stop double-crossing me for at least five minutes!"

"I don't know what you're talking about," she faltered.

"You do!" he retorted. "Identifying my voice to distract attention from yourself was a good idea, but it wasn't good enough."

"But, my dear, I—"

"Don't 'my dear' me!" he rapped, and produced two envelopes from a pocket of his dressing-gown. "These will send you to the gallows unless you talk, and talk fast!"

"What do you want me to say?" she gasped.

"The truth—that you killed your husband."

"But I didn't! That's not true!"

"Oh, yes it is—and I can prove it! You might as well confess, if you want to save your neck. In this envelope is Mrs. Veite's sworn statement that she saw you running out of the room two seconds after the shot was fired, and in this one is the statement of her daughter Norma. She was in the upper hall when you fired the shot, and she saw you shoot him. Now, if you want me to save your life you'd better spill it all!"

"But I didn't kill him!" she sobbed.

"I swear I didn't! I didn't!"

He flipped the two envelopes against his left hand and went to the door.

"Spudsy!" he shouted. "Bring me that lie detector!"

Spudsy appeared, in jersey and trousers, carrying a heavy box-like contrivance from which two handles projected in front and two dials projected above.

"Bring it here and put it on the table," directed Perry.

There was a small table near the chesterfield. Spudsy put the lie detector on it, and Perry pushed Eva Belter down on to the chesterfield and caught hold of her arms.

"Now we'll see whether or not you're lying!" he said grimly. "Take hold of those handles and squeeze! Squeeze! Squeeze!"

Tremblingly, protestingly, Eva Belter obeyed, and Spudsy watched the pointers on the dials.

"Look, boss!" he cried. "She's squeezed thirty-five!"

What that implied Eva did not know, but her nerves gave way.

"All right, I did it!" she shrieked. "I did it! Take it away! I killed him!"

"Will you sign a statement to that effect?" asked Perry.

"Anything, Perry!" she sobbed. "Anything you say!" And she let go of the handles as he released her arms, and she flung her arms round his neck.

"Don't mind me," said Della, entering the room with a typewritten sheet of paper and a pen. "I just work here!"

The lie detector was removed, the sheet of paper took its place on the table, and Della held out the pen.

"Sign right on the dotted line, Mrs. Belter," she said, "and no extra charge for lugs or kisses!"

Perry turned away to the window to sneeze, and he took a handkerchief from

a neatly folded pile on the window-sill and shook it out.

"Get away from that window!" cried Eva Belter wildly.

"What's the matter now?" asked Perry.

"Now I won't sign. I won't sign!"

"You'll sign that confession, or I'll start all over again!"

"How do I know you won't use it against me?"

"Because I'm your attorney, Mrs. Belter, and I have—er—a code of honour, to say nothing of a code in the head!"

The confession was signed, and its signatory sank back on the chesterfield.

"Della, darling," said Perry, taking his neglected bride in his arms, "I'm so sorry about our honeymoon."

"Oh, I think it's lovely up here at Pinchurst," returned Della derisively. "Such air! And I've never been given so much of it!"

She sneezed, and Perry became very much afraid that she had caught his cold. But before he could utter a word of commiseration Detective-Sergeant Hoffman burst into the room with Jones, and Hoffman said in a loud and official voice:

"Perry Mason, you're under arrest!"

Perry laughed, let go of Della, and picked up the confession.

"Here's a break for you, sergeant," he said. "You're going to make a real arrest. Here's Mrs. Belter's confession to the murder of her husband, signed, sealed, and delivered!"

The sergeant took the sheet of paper and scanned the typewritten words on it.

"It's a lucky break for you, big boy," he boomed, "inasmuch as I've got a murder warrant in my pocket all made out in your name. Come on, Mrs. Belter!"

Eva was jerked to her feet, but she turned a blazing face upon Perry.

"You double-crossing back-stabber, you!" she screamed.

Hoffman tugged her towards the door.

"Tell the District Attorney I'll be down and straighten up matters in the morning," said Perry.

Herbert B. Jones folded the confession and pocketed it, and he and the sergeant disappeared with their prisoner. Perry tossed the two envelopes on to the fire, but they fell off the coals into the grate.

"Oh, what are you doing?" cried Della, and the envelopes were retrieved. "Alind if I read the incriminating evidence, Perry?"

"Not at all," he replied.

She opened the envelopes in turn, but all they contained was blank paper.

"Photographs of the bride and groom at Pinchurst," she said whimsically. "My, but it's awfully good of you, Perry!"

Perry laughed, sneezed, and informed Spudsy that there was work for him to do.

"This case is hardly begun," he said. "Get out and get going on Norma Veite and her

mother. I want to know everything about them, from the year one till the present day.

Spudsy went out, and Perry explained to Della that Eva Belter had not killed her husband, although she thought she had.

"Well, what about her signed confession you made me get ready?" asked Della.

"Just throwing a bone to the District Attorney," Perry poured himself another drink. "Well, I've got to get busy."

"And I've got to get a lawyer," said Della. "I'm through—understand? I never should have married you in the first place. All I've got is a cold in the head!"

She sneezed violently and made for the door.

"Della," said Perry sternly, "if you leave this flat you'll never see me again." He sneezed and held his hand to his heart. "Oh, the pain's here again! Good-bye, darling! Remember that I loved you!"

Della flounced away to the bed-room, and a few minutes later Spudsy rushed into the sitting-room waving an evening paper.

"Look, boss!" he cried. "They're gettin' married! Carl Griffin and Norma Veite!"

Perry took the paper, and there on the front page was a headline: "Murdered Man's Nephew to Wed House-keeper's Daughter," and under the headline were pictures of the red-headed young man and the golden-haired servant.

Perry shook hands with Spudsy.

"Too late to interest me, old boy," he said mournfully. "Good-bye. You've been faithful!"

Spudsy went out in a state of bewilderment, and in the room fitted up as a gymnasium he found Della, who had not even put on a hat.

"H-has he gone, Spudsy?" she asked apprehensively.

"Yeah, daffy," said Spudsy, "in the other room!"

She ran into the sitting-room, but Perry was not there. She ran into the bed-room, calling his name, but he was not there. The window, however, was open. She leaned out over its sill—and there was Perry on the fire-escape, apparently about to fling himself from it into the darkness.

"Perry Mason," she hissed, "you come back in this room this minute!"

Perry stretched out his arms to the night, declaiming:

"And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!"

"Perry! Perry, you fool!" she cried. He sneezed three times in rapid succession and scrambled back into the room.

"Sweetheart!" he said, and clasped her in his arms.

In Chinatown

PERRY and Della were sitting by the fire in the other room when a commotion arose in the hallway, and Spudsy rushed in to them.

"Say, boss, the cops are here!" he blurted. "Sergeant Hoffman, Jones—hundreds of them!"

"Tell 'em to go away," said Perry.

"I did, but they won't!"

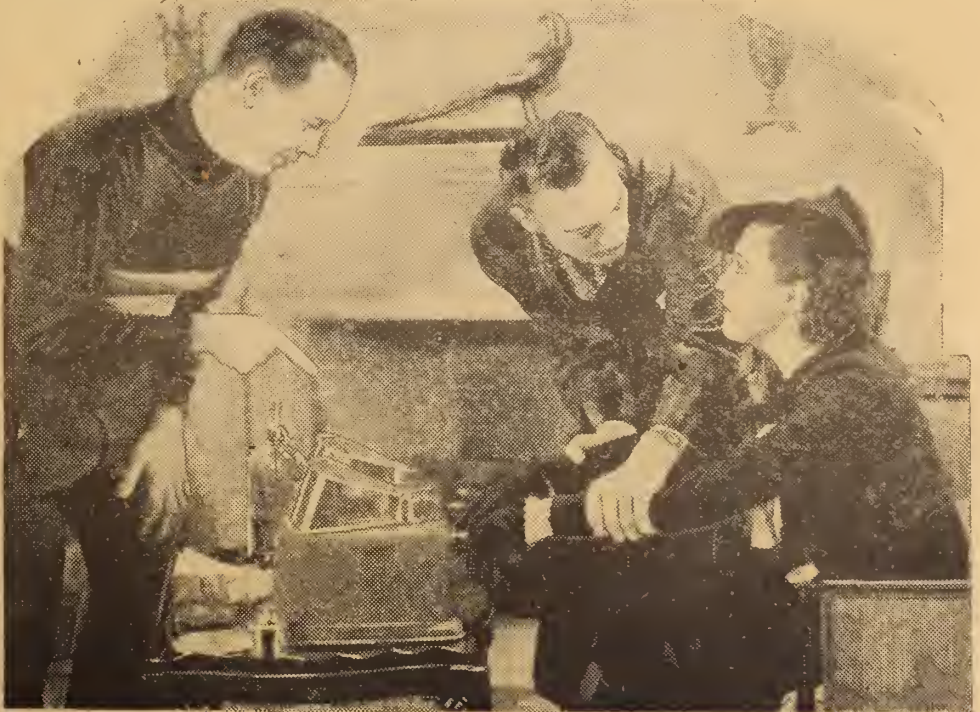
Hoffman strode into the room, and there followed several plain-clothes men and some reporters. Perry rose and sneezed at them.

"Haven't I solved a murder case for you idiots?" he demanded. "Why don't you go away and leave me alone? This is my home, my castle!"

"The District Attorney wants to see you, Perry," said Hoffman. "He thinks that Belter confession has a slight odour of fish!"

"What are you driving at, my low-browed friend?" retorted Perry. "Do I understand that on the word of that incredible woman I'm being accused of murder?"

"You've got it right the very first guess!"



"Now we'll see whether or not you're lying," said Perry grimly. "Take hold of those handles and squeeze! Squeeze! Squeeze!"

"The idea fascinates me, sergeant. Never, in my entire career, have I been suspected of murder. But—er—do you think the District Attorney will receive me in my robes de nuit? Don't you think something a little more formal in the way of dress?"

"All right," said Hoffman, "change your clothes. But hurry it up!"

Perry crooked a finger at Spudsy.

"Give me a hand, will you?"

Spudsy went out with him to the bedroom. Della urged the assembled detectives and reporters to be seated, and Jones dumped himself on the chesterfield beside her.

"I'll tell you a little story, boys," she said. "Once upon a time there was an attorney who was under the delusion that he loved his secretary. Now the secretary knew—"

"I think we can do without that," Hoffman interrupted.

"But that's just the point," said Della plaintively. "The attorney said he couldn't do without the secretary."

Herbert B. Jones sneezed.

"Aha!" mocked Della.

"Lot o' flu around here," growled Jones. "Say, chief, you don't suppose he's—"

"Come on, boys!" said Hoffman.

The bedroom was invaded, but Perry was not in it. Other rooms were searched, but Ping was out and only Spudsy was discovered—exercising in the room fitted up as a gymnasium.

"Where's Mason?" Hoffman blared at him.

"I dunno," replied the weight-lifter innocently. "Twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty—"

"Come on, boys!" snapped the sergeant.

Della ran out from the sitting-room as the front door was opened.

"Would you like to hear the rest of the story?" she inquired.

"B-r-r-r!" snorted Hoffman, and he and the rest departed and the door was slammed.

Della went into the room where Spudsy was busy with the weight-lifting machine. She had caught Perry's cold, and her eyes were watering.

"Herman Strongbone," Spudsy informed her, "got his leopard skin after only sixteen lessons. Why, what are you cryin' for? He'll be back!"

"I'm not crying, and I don't want him back!" she said with a pronounced catch in her voice. "I hate him!"

"Sounds like crying to me," said Spudsy.

"No, it isn't!" she declared. "I—I'm laughing at the—at the thought of you in a leopard skin."

Perry had got away once more by means of the fire-escape, but this time he was in pyjamas, dressing-gown, and slippers. At the top of Jefferson Square he hailed a taxicab, the driver of which was too experienced to be surprised at anything, and in it he was conveyed to the establishment of Kickopopolos.

The Greek, who had proved a friend in need on many occasions, took him into his own living-room and provided him with a bowl of hot soup. Two hours passed, and then Spudsy hammered on the side door, which was in an alley-way, and was admitted.

Perry, by this time, was dozing comfortably on a sofa, but Spudsy had news that justified the rousing of his employer. Spudsy had been extremely energetic in the course of the two hours.

"Hi, boss, a break!" he cried triumphantly. "A regular crime conference. Yeah—in a room down in Chinatown. A whole den of conspirators. Boy, am I good at solving crime cases?"

Perry became all attention, for Spudsy was an excellent sleuth.

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"How do we get in to gain an earful?" he inquired.

"What'd you think I've been developing my strength for?" Spudsy countered reproachfully. "I've jimmied the lock on the door."

Perry looked down at his pyjamas and his slipped feet, whereupon Kickopopolos rubbed his hands and beamed.

"If it's a suit you want," he said, "I have der very t'ing. A genuine first-class number, and just your size, too! Yeah, and, what's more, der hat dat goes wit' it also!"

"Bring it out, Kicky," said Perry.

The suit which was produced consisted of a moth-eaten morning coat and waist-coat and striped trousers. The coat was tight for Perry and very short in the sleeves, the trousers were far too ample round the waist and reached only to Perry's ankles. The hat was a silk one which had seen many better days.

Perry donned these garments over a shirt that belonged to the Greek, and though he detested butterfly-bows he had to wear one with a wing-collar intended for a larger neck. He then proceeded with Spudsy to Chinatown, a remarkable district of narrow ways and queer little shops, which was reached by way of Kearny Street.

To Kearny Street they travelled by taxicab, but they completed the journey on foot. In a dark alleyway Spudsy pushed open the door he had forced nearly an hour earlier, and he and Perry crept up uncarpeted stairs and a ladder into a sort of loft.

There Spudsy opened a double trapdoor which he found with the aid of an electric torch, and Perry moved over to him with one of Kickopopolos' heaviest six-shooters in his hand. Through the opening they both looked down into a typical Chinese room, lit by lanterns and furnished mainly with wickerwork chairs and bamboo tables.

But it was the people in the room and the nature of their conversation that interested Perry.

Carl Griffin was down there, with Mrs. Veite and her daughter Norma, and beside Carl Griffin stood a sharp-featured and grey-haired man whom Perry immediately recognised as a crooked attorney named Atwood.

"What's one murder more or less?" Carl Griffin asked with acrimony.

"If you persist in your demands," the attorney supplemented, addressing Veite, "there's apt to be another. You must be mad to consider such a thing at a time like this. As Mr. Griffin's attorney I demand that you give us a temporary delay."

Norma Veite was leaning back against a wall as though merely amused at what was going on; but her mother looked furious.

"I don't care what any of you say," declared Carl Griffin. "I won't do it, and that's final!"

"Yes?" Mrs. Veite glared at him. "Well, I'm running this show, Mr. Griffin," she said menacingly.

"Eva Belter killed her husband!" snapped Griffin. "Why not let it go at that?"

Perry had heard quite enough. Without troubling to lower the trapdoor he motioned to Spudsy, and they descended from the loft. The gun was in his pocket when he pushed open a door and stepped into the room with Spudsy close behind him.

"Ah, rice-cakes!" he said, pointing to an adjacent table. "Have one?"

Four startled people swung round and stared at the intruders, and Atwood bounded forward as Perry helped himself to a cake.

"What are you doing here, Mason?" he rasped.

"Come, come, Atwood!" returned Perry reprovingly. "You shouldn't use harsh tones to a fellow attorney. Mrs. Veite, it looks like you're going to take a trip across the bay. I trust you're prepared for a long absence."

"Are you crazy, young man?" flamed the housekeeper.

"Stupid is the adjective, Mrs. Veite," said Perry, munching the rice cake. "Stupid for not solving this case in five minutes."

Through an open doorway from an adjoining room the Belters' butler appeared with clenched fists and struck out at Perry. But the blows were parried, and the butler went down with a crash.

"Well, that's two falls for you, Digley," said Perry.

From a handbag on her arm Mrs. Veite produced a formidable six-gun which she held with a perfectly steady hand.

"That's right, Mrs. Veite," said Atwood. "You keep these two covered while we talk this over."

"I don't see there's anything to talk over," said Perry. "I know the murderer and the motive, and as soon as I get to a telephone—"

"What ever makes you think you'll get to a telephone?" demanded Mrs. Veite, taking a step nearer.

"So that's the way it is?" said Perry.

"That's just the way it is!" she returned grimly; and he knew that she was quite capable of shooting him then and there.

"Well, get it over," he drawled. "Suspense bores me."

He had heard the shouting of Chinese in the street, and so had the others, but he had been able to interpret the shouting, whereas they had no idea that it was the Cantonese equivalent for "Cops!"

Two doors flew wide, and in at one of them strode Hoffman, Jones, and Riley, while in at the other streamed policemen with guns in their hands. Mrs. Veite's six-shooter was hastily and covertly restored to her handbag.

"Grab him, boys!" cried Hoffman, and a policeman caught hold of Perry from behind, while Jones advanced upon him with a pair of handcuffs and a Colt forty-five.

"Spudsy," said Perry, "get the District Attorney on the 'phone at once. Good-evening, sergeant, I was just solving a little murder case."

"Oh, yeah, wise guy?" jeered Jones, clicking the handcuffs round his wrists.

"I thought," said Hoffman triumphantly, "if we let this gang start gathering it would attract the eminent Mr. Mason. They've all been tailed all the time. Perry, you're under arrest for murder—and try to get away this time!"

"This arrest is because of Mrs. Belter's testimony?" asked Perry.

"Yeah," was the reply, "and the fact that you were thrown out once, but broke your way back in!"

The butler had got dizzily to his feet. Spudsy looked round from a telephone at the far end of the room.


"The D.A.'s on the 'phone, Mr. Mason," he announced.

Perry, with manacled hands, went over and took the telephone from him.

"I'm going to have the D.A. defend me," he said. "Hallo, Burns! Listen, if you want to settle the Belter case, have Mrs. Belter at her house in fifteen minutes. What? Oh, I'll have Sergeant Hoffman with me! No, I won't let him get away!" He sneezed twice. "And put on your hat so you won't catch a cold," he added.

(Continued on page 27)

Never was there a more enduring comradeship than that which was formed between the king of wild horses and the outcast wonder dog. Together they braved a thousand perils, unswerving in their loyalty to each other. Follow their amazing adventures in this gripping serial drama, starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty



EPISODE 11—

"New Gods
For Old"

The Adventures OF REX AND RINTY

READ THIS FIRST

Rex, a black Arabian stallion, is worshipped by a strange race of people on the remote tropical island of Sujan.

To Sujan come three white men who are agents of a Californian rancher named Crawford. They steal Rex, realising the fortune he can make for their employer, but one of them is captured by the Sujanese. This man, Wheeler, only earns his life and liberty by promising to recover the god horse, and travels to America in company with a native known as Pasha.

Meanwhile, Rex is delivered to Crawford, but breaks free and takes to the hills. Later that day the rancher plays in a polo game at the Bruce Riding Academy, but his team loses to a side led by Frank Bradley, a popular young sportsman, and after the game Crawford vents some of his spite on a stray police dog that has roamed into the district.

It is this dog, Rinty, which later comes across Rex and which brings the god horse into contact with Frank Bradley and Dorothy Bruce, daughter of the owner of the academy.

Frank and Dorothy take charge of Rex, and then make the acquaintance of Pasha, who has fallen out with Wheeler. Meanwhile, Crawford has shot one of his own men during a quarrel, and takes to the hills to avoid justice, but later three of his agents capture Pasha and the stallion.

Pasha and the god horse are rescued by Frank and are escorted to San Francisco, where a ship is leaving for Sujan. But Crawford and his men arrive at the docks as Pasha is bidding good-bye to those who have befriended

him, and on a savage impulse Crawford draws a gun and takes aim at Frank.

(Now read on)

A Dying Man's Plea

IN the very instant that the smash of the shot punctuated the blare of the steamer's siren Pasha lunged forward to thrust Frank aside, and in doing so placed himself in the line of fire.

The bullet from Crawford's gun pierced the native's body, and with a sob of pain he slumped down at the foot of the gangway. At the same moment a hoarse outcry arose from those who had been gathered around him to wish him "bon voyage"—an outcry which held a note of mingled alarm and bewilderment.

None but Pasha knew whence the shot had come; none but he had seen the band of crooks assembled at the corner of the warehouse some distance away; and it was only when the fallen islander lifted a trembling hand and pointed towards the building that his sympathisers discerned the figures of Crawford, Wheeler, and the other members of the unscrupulous rancher's gang.

Next second the rogues were turning tail, but they had scarcely vanished when a rush was made for the warehouse by Dorothy's father and those of his employees who had escorted Pasha and Rex to San Francisco.

Dorothy did not join in that pursuit, and neither did Frank. Instead, they dropped to their knees beside Pasha, and as they examined him and saw the blood that was staining his shirt just above the sash that he wore they ex-

changed a glance that was fraught with anxiety.

They were joined presently by an officer of the s.s. Oriental, who had been superintending the loading of the ship. Immediately afterwards a couple of dock policemen appeared on the scene, and these at once stooped over the crumpled form of Pasha.

"How did this happen?" one of them demanded tersely.

Frank and Dorothy had straightened up at the approach of the representatives of the law, and now the girl was clinging nervously to her admirer, almost distracted by the tragedy that had occurred. As for Frank, his countenance was working with emotion, and when he spoke it was in a voice that was grim and strained.

"A rat by the name of Crawford is responsible for this!" he jerked. "He and his gang showed up just as we were saying good-bye to our friend here."

The two police-officers looked at each other in a significant fashion.

"Crawford!" one of them rapped out. "We've had instructions to look out for a guy of that name—a rancher from up-State—wanted in connection with the disappearance of a man called Mitchell."

"That's right," Dorothy cut in. "Crawford shot Mitchell—"

"Yeah? Well, which way did he go?"

The question was fired at the girl abruptly, but it was Pasha who answered it, rousing himself with an effort and stretching out his hand once again to indicate the direction that the rancher, and his men had taken.

"Down that street which leads off the

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pier," he moaned. "Don't let him get away!"

The two dock policemen turned their heads to follow the gesture he had made, and at the same time Frank told them of the hue and cry which had been raised by Dorothy's father and his employees, who were now out of sight. Then, as the men in blue set off across the pier, the wealthy young sportsman knelt down beside Pasha once more.

"You saved my life," he told the native huskily. "If you hadn't shoved me to one side, that bullet would have plugged me. But why did you do it? Why did you shield me at such risk to yourself?"

Pasha laid his fingers on the American's sleeve, and though his face was distorted with agony and a deathly pallor had sapped the swarthy complexion from his cheeks, he managed to conjure up a brave smile.

"You are my friend," he whispered feebly. "Besides, did you not risk your life for me—only yesterday?"

There was a brief silence, and then Frank looked up at the third officer of the s.s. Oriental, behind whom a number of the ship's crew had by this time assembled.

"We've got to get a doctor for Pasha," the young polo player said. "Do you know where there's one to be found?"

"No, no," Pasha interrupted in faltering accents. "I—I am beyond the aid of doctors. For me—this is the end."

Gazing at his drawn features and at the patch of blood that marked the spot where the bullet had entered his body, Frank could not help feeling that the Sujanese was right. Yet he insisted upon a doctor being fetched, and at a sign from him the Oriental's third officer sent a deck-hand in quest of one.

The sailor returned shortly afterwards with a medical man at his heels, and it did not take the physician long to ascertain that there was nothing he could do for Pasha. Nor did he hide his verdict from the bystanders, for although he spoke no word, his expression told them clearly that the native was doomed.

It was as the onlookers were reading the fatal diagnosis from his glance that a commotion diverted their attention to the street leading from the pier, and as they swung round they saw Dorothy's father and his men approaching in company with the two dock policemen.

They were quick to perceive that the oncoming group of men were hustling several prisoners along with them, and on these being marched to the gangway, Frank ran his eyes over them sternly.

He recognised every one of the captives, scanning the face of each sullen rogue in turn. Foster, Anderson, McDouald, Watt Mason, Jones, Martin—all these were present. But Crawford and Wheeler were not among them, and Frank was conscious of a sense of disappointment as he noted that they were missing.

"You didn't get them all, then," he said to Dorothy's father.

"No, Crawford got away—with another of the gang. They gave us the slip among the back streets, and though we hunted high and low for them, we couldn't find a trace of them."

"Don't worry about Crawford," one of the policemen interposed. "He'll be picked up all right. Meantime we'll see that these birds are put safely under lock and key at headquarters."

The crooks were led from the pier, and Bruce's men lent the two police-officers a hand with them. The owner

of the riding academy remained at the Oriental's gangway, however, and moved close to his daughter's side as she and Frank bent over the figure of Pasha.

It was all too clear that the native was sinking fast, but as he looked up at the faces of his friends he spoke to them bravely.

"I am a stranger in a strange land," he murmured, "but it is good to know that there is someone here whom I can trust—someone to whom I can appeal for aid."

His glazing eyes moved from one to another of the three people who were kneeling beside him, and finally came to rest on Frank.

"I am grateful to all of you," Pasha went on, "but it is to you especially that I turn now. To you, Frank Bradley."

"If there's anything I can do to help you," Frank answered in a fervent tone, "you have only to make the request."

With a struggle Pasha raised himself on his elbow, and the young white man slipped a supporting arm about him.

"I shall never see Sujan again," the native said brokenly. "But the god horse Rex, he must return, and I beg of you—I beg of you—to go with him—to take him safely to Tanaga, the high priest of my people—to deliver him to Tanaga, as I would do if my life were not running out."

"You mean—you want me to take your place aboard the Oriental and travel to Sujan?" Frank breathed.

"I—I know it is asking a great deal," Pasha whispered, "but I should die happy—if you promised to carry out this mission in my stead."

Frank gripped him by the hand impulsively, an expression of resolution on his handsome Anglo-Saxon features.

"You have the right to ask this of me, Pasha," he said. "And how can I refuse you—the man who has saved me from a murderer's bullet?"

"You will be well rewarded," Pasha told him. "The high priest Tanaga will load you with precious gifts—"

"Gifts? Rewards? I want none of them, Pasha. I'm ready to accomplish this mission as a tribute to you, and as a sign of my friendship for you. For I know what the safe return of the god horse means to you."

Dorothy turned towards Frank.

"I'd like to go with you," she said earnestly.

"No, dear—"

"But I insist," the girl broke in, "Frank, you'll be away for weeks, and I'd miss you cruelly if I were left behind. After all, we're engaged, and I have the right to ask you to take me with you."

Frank hesitated, glanced at her father dubiously, and then gave vent to a sudden exclamation.

"Supposing the three of us go!" he suggested.

"Impossible!" the owner of the riding academy began, but the younger man interrupted him swiftly.

"You need a vacation, Mr. Bruce," he said, "and you told Jensen that you wouldn't mind undertaking a trip to Sujan."

"Why, I was only fooling—"

"I know, but why not think it over seriously?" Frank retorted. "Jensen's capable enough to be left in charge of the academy while you're away."

He succeeded in persuading Dorothy's father to agree to his proposal, and then once again he stooped to address Pasha.

"We'll see that the god horse reaches his destination," he assured the native. "There are three of us to make certain

of that, and we won't fail you. Depend on it, Pasha, we won't fail you."

Upon the lips of the dying Sujanese there appeared a smile that was almost placid in its character.

"There is gratitude in my heart," he said faintly. "You will go into the jungle, then, as soon as you touch the island. Among papers in my possession you will find a chart on which the trails leading to the main settlement are plainly marked. There you will seek out Tanaga, and tell him all—"

He paused, as if it were becoming increasingly difficult for him to speak.

"Do not take Rex with you when you make your way to the settlement," he went on in an urgent tone. "for the god horse has enemies even in Sujan. See Tanaga first, and he will provide a strong escort for him—"

Again his voice died away, and this time he could not muster the strength to proceed. One last effort he made to utter a few more words—perhaps of farewell—but no sound escaped him beyond a hollow groan, and with an almost imperceptible shudder he fell back lifelessly against Frank's arm.

Outward Bound!

IT was broad daylight, but a lamp was burning in one of the upper rooms of a certain lodging-house on the waterfront.

A dwelling of mean and shabby appearance, that lodging-house was situated in the locality known as the Barbary Coast, and from its grimy windows it was possible to command a view of San Francisco Bay, across which a trim vessel could be seen heading for the open sea.

The vessel was the Oriental, and three men were watching her from the lamp-lit room in the lodging-house aforementioned, three men who were peering cautiously from behind a ragged blind which had been drawn over the filthy panes.

They were Crawford, Wheeler, and a drink-sodden individual who answered to the name of Captain Sanderson, master and owner of a craft known as the Vulcan.

"There she goes," rumbled Sanderson in a thick, deep-toned voice. "Outward bound for far Sujan with this god horse that you've been tellin' me about."

"And, according to you," said Crawford, "with Frank Bradley, Dorothy Bruce and her father aboard."

"That's right," Sanderson rejoined. "I heard that from one of the Oriental's crew myself. They delayed sailin' until Bradley and his friends had made all arrangements for the journey."

Crawford bit his lip.

"And we can't sail till to-night," he muttered. "They'll have a fifteen-hour start on us."

"Don't worry," the captain of the Vulcan answered. "The Oriental will be callin' at a good many ports on her way to Sujan, and I guarantee we'll touch the island a day or two ahead of her."

He moved back from the window and crossed to a rickety table on which a half-empty whisky bottle and three glasses were standing. Then, having poured himself a stiff measure, he turned to Crawford and Wheeler again.

"Here's to a profitable journey," he declared, taking the drain at one gulp.

"You won't lose by it, anyway," Crawford observed ironically. "You've got a thousand dollars of mine on account. That's in your pocket, whatever happens. Not bad pay for takin' along a couple of passengers with you on your travels."

"But not an exorbitant price, my friend, when you consider that you and Wheeler might be in gaol now with the rest of your gang—if it hadn't been for me."

Wheeler nodded emphatically.

"That's right, skipper," he said. "It was lucky for us that I knew where to find you, for if you hadn't smuggled us into this dump we'd probably have been picked up by the cops in no time."

"Oh, I'm not grumbling," Crawford made haste to announce. "I appreciate what you've done, Captain Sanderson. But tell me, how were the rest of my party caught?"

"They tried to beat it in the car and trailer that you'd left back of the waterfront," was the reply, "and it seems that this man Bruce and his bunch caught up with 'em before they could drive away. That's what I heard, anyhow—and I reckon you owe a vote of thanks to Wheeler for pullin' you down a side-street and leadin' you straight to the dive where I usually hang out."

Crawford had to agree that he was indebted to Wheeler, but at the same time reflected that the man had been acting in his own interests. Crawford had money—money with which to buy passages out to Sujan. That was why Wheeler had not abandoned him to the fate which had overtaken the remainder of the gang.

"And talkin' of that thousand dollars on account," Sanderson continued, "don't forget that I collect another two thousand bucks when I set you down where you eventually decide to land—after you leave Sujan, I mean."

"That depends on the way things break for us, captain," said Crawford. "When we reach Sujan, we've still got to grab that god horse, and it's possible that we'll fail."

Wheeler tapped him familiarly on the shoulder.

"Not if we play our cards right," he drawled. "Let me tell you something, Crawford—something I found out while I was a prisoner in the hands of the natives there. You know, some of them Sujanese wasn't so mad at the black Arabian havin' been stolen."

"What do you mean?" Crawford demanded.

"I mean that there's a faction on the island that's up against Tanaga, the high priest," Wheeler replied. "This faction is led by two guys called Debor and Kinso. They've got a certain following, and they seemed to think that with the god horse out of the way, Tanaga would lose favour."

Wheeler leaned towards the bigger man and eyed him cunningly.

"Now, if we got in touch with Debor and Kinso as soon as we landed," he went on, "and if we told 'em Rex was comin' back, they might do all they could to help us to stop the god horse from ever reachin' Tanaga's sacred stables."

Crawford was silent for a moment, and then he drew in a long breath and squared his powerful shoulders.

"That's worth knowing, Wheeler," he said. "If we can win over these men that you've named, I reckon our chances will be improved a hundred per cent."

"Meantime your chief difficulty lies in getting aboard the Vulcan without the cops seein' you," Sanderson interposed. "But I'll fix that all right. I'll pick you up here after dark, and smuggle you to your cabins. So long as you stay where you are until I show up, you've got nothin' to fear."

Three weeks had elapsed, and in a remote, moonlit clearing of the jungle

that clothed the tropical isle of Sujan a number of men had assembled.

With two exceptions they were natives of the warrior breed. The two exceptions were Crawford and Wheeler, who had arrived in Sujan forty-eight hours before, and who had succeeded in making contact with Kinso and Debor, leaders of the rebellions faction which was opposed to the high priest Tanaga.

Debor was not present, but Kinso was there, a tall, lean personage of domineering character, with a pair of cruel, malevolent eyes and a trident mouth.

"According to your calculations," he was saying, in stilted but otherwise faultless English, "the ship bearing the god horse ought to be here by now. Therefore we may expect to hear from Debor soon."

He had addressed himself to Crawford and Wheeler, and these had listened to him earnestly, as if hanging on his every word. Then Crawford spoke.

"Suppose Bradley takes the god horse straight to the high priest Tanaga," he muttered.

"If the stallion leaves the ship, Debor will see that a message reaches us."

"How?" Crawford demanded.

"By signal-drum—what you people call 'jungle telegraph.' We shall know then that we must ride and intercept this man Bradley."

There was a pause, and then Kinso went on talking in a low and sinister voice.

"Whatever happens, Tanaga will never see the god horse again. The faction led by Debor and me is a small one as yet. But if we can remove the stallion for ever, a blow will be struck at Tanaga's prestige. The very keystone of his rule will be swept aside, and we can strike swiftly and seize the reins of power—substituting gods of our own choosing for this animal worship which has sufficed in the past."

An expression of uneasiness had

dawned on the faces of Crawford and Wheeler, an expression which had been inspired by one particular phrase that the native had used.

"Say," Crawford muttered, "let me get this straight. You talk of 'removing the stallion for ever.' Just what do you mean by that?"

Before Kinso could volunteer any explanation the drumming of hoofs interrupted the conversation, and a few seconds later three horsemen galloped into the clearing. They were Debor and two other conspirators belonging to the party which was scheming for Tanaga's downfall, and, drawing rein abruptly, they saluted Kinso and the remainder of the band with upraised hands.

"What news, Debor?" Kinso asked in terse accents.

Debor swung himself from the saddle of his pony. He was a small, shifty individual of yellowish complexion, clean-shaven except for a thin moustache that grew on his upper lip.

"Wheeler and his friend here were right," he said. "The ship known as the Oriental cast anchor at the mouth of the Palang River. Three people came ashore—a young man, an older man and a girl. They had a dog with them."

"The wolfhound," put in Wheeler. "That would be Bradley and the Bruces all right."

"They set out for the interior," Debor continued, "and they reached the Sacred Temple, where they had an audience of Tanaga."

Kinso laid a hand on his sleeve.

"But the god horse," he said urgently. "The god horse—what of him?"

"The god horse was not with them," came the reply. "Or I would have summoned you by the signal-drum and you would have known that you must intercept them. As it was, I followed the



"Down that street which leads off the pier," Pasha moaned. "Don't let him get away!"

two men and the girl, and when they presented themselves at the temple I overheard part of their interview with Tanaga."

"And what did you learn?" Kinso demanded. "What are the high priest's plans?"

Debor smiled complacently.

"He has sent a party of ten warriors to the coast," he answered. "They bear a signed order from the young man who is called Bradley, authorising the captain of the Oriental to surrender the god horse to them. A party of ten warriors, Kinso—that is the escort which has been provided for the stallion—and we are double that number."

"Yes," his accomplice breathed, "we are double that number, and we must act decisively. The escort will never reach the temple, Debor. We shall ambush them as they return from the coast. We shall lie in wait for them at the point where the main trail breaks into three forks."

The other frowned at that, and fingered his chin doubtfully.

"The spot which you name is perilously close to the settlement," he observed.

"But not so close as to be within earshot," Kinso retorted, "and you cannot name me one which is better suited to an ambush. Come, let us ride, so that we may be well prepared for action when the escort returns from the ship."

There was a troop of horses in the background, and two of these animals having been placed at the disposal of Crawford and Wheeler, the whole party soon mounted. Then, at a sign from Kinso, the plotters spurred from the clearing, picking up a narrow track that led in an easterly direction.

Half an hour later they gained their destination, and here, at the junction of the three routes that Kinso had mentioned, the armed band took up a position amid the dense thickets which grew in profusion amongst the tree-stems of the jungle.

There now ensued a period of inactivity that seemed never-ending to Crawford and Wheeler, and as they waited in the underbrush with their native allies the brooding silence of the night served to accentuate the tension which both of them experienced.

It was a silence broken only by the occasional piping of a bird nearby, and once by a distant snarling roar that caused the swarthy islanders of the party to turn their heads.

"What's that?" jerked Crawford.

"A tiger," Debor informed him. "The jungle abounds in them. Brutes—they even raid the outlying huts of the settlement when they are driven desperate with hunger. From time to time we set traps for them all over the island. Only this morning one was dug—on that fork-trail over there which leads off to the north-west. The imprints of several of the beasts had been seen in the loam of that trail."

Crawford fidgeted uncomfortably, and pursed his lips as that far-off, savage roar echoed through the tropical forest once more. Then all was quiet again, and not another sound was audible until at last the pounding of horses' hoofs reached the ears of the waiting men.

"The escort," Kinso said in a terse voice, "returning from the coast with the god horse Rex!"

Debor nodded, and glanced round at the warriors upon whom he and his confederate were depending.

"Draw your swords," he commanded, "and when the word is given to attack, see that you strike hard and true. Remember, every man of the escort is a trusted partisan of Tanaga, and therefore a sworn enemy of our cause!"

January 9th, 1937.

There was a rasping of steel as the supporters of Debor and Kinso whipped their gleaming blades from their scabbards, and less than a minute afterwards the escort of temple guards hove into sight, clearly revealed to the waiting assassins by the moonlight that flooded the main trail.

In the midst of the escort was a riderless stallion of magnificent bearing. It was the god horse Rex, and on perceiving it the eyes of Crawford and Wheeler kindled with greed—greed that became expectation as a sharp, imperious cry was suddenly raised.

The Americans were never quite certain whether it was Debor or Kinso who uttered that shout, but on the instant it was taken up by a score of voices as their adherents dashed from cover to assail Tanaga's men, and all at once the night was made hideous by the din of battle.

It was a fight in which Crawford and Wheeler played no part, and neither did Kinso and Debor. These four kept out of harm's way, and contented themselves with watching the action from the shelter of the thickets, looking on with satisfaction and approval while the one-sided and bloodthirsty combat ran its course.

Taken utterly by surprise, the temple guards had been thrown into disorder by the ambush, and those who were nearest to Rex were cut down before they could raise a hand to defend themselves. Indeed, the first few seconds of the onslaught were marked by the fall of three of Tanaga's devotees and the capture of the god horse, who was quickly led to one side.

The remainder of the guards contrived to put up a resistance, but they were outnumbered, and went down in swift succession under the murderous strokes rained upon them by their foes, agonising death-cries mingling with the ugly clangour of steel.

Only one member of the ill-fated escort escaped the pitiless slaughter, a man of gigantic proportions who hacked his way through his foes and galloped onward down the trail that led to the settlement, with the blood streaming from a dozen wounds that he had sustained.

And now, their purpose fulfilled, the followers of Debor and Kinso turned towards the spot whence those two arch-schemers and their American allies had watched the massacre.

Accompanied by Wheeler and Crawford, Debor and Kinso moved out of the thickets to join the victorious warriors, and in another moment Kinso was grasping the end of a rope bridle that was attached to Rex's head.

"So!" he declared in a ringing tone. "The god horse is ours. It is well, and now he shall be taken to the altar of sacrifice deep in the heart of the jungle!"

He had spoken in English, and as they heard his words Crawford and Wheeler looked at each other in blank dismay. Then the rancher attempted to utter an exclamation of protest, but ere he could give vent to his angry thoughts Debor clapped a hand upon his wrist and flashed him a glance that warned him to be silent.

Crawford held his peace, but there was an ugly expression on his features when Kinso proceeded to lead Rex along the track by which the party had galloped to the forks.

The warriors who had slain the temple guards rode after Debor's accomplice-in-chief. Debor himself remained at the scene of the massacre, however, together with Crawford and Wheeler, and as the rest of the band vanished down the side-track he turned to address the Americans in an undertone.

"The time has come for strategy," he said. "Kinso must take the god

horse to the altar of sacrifice, but have no fear. He and I have no intention of breaking our promise to you."

Crawford lowered his hand to his hip-pocket.

"Debor," he ground out, "if you do break that promise—"

"No, no, I tell you we shall keep faith with you," the Sujanese interrupted. "But listen, if our men had known that we were to let you take the god horse they would never have obeyed our commands. It is necessary that we should convince them that the god horse will be destroyed—yes, and it is necessary to our cause that the news of his death should be accepted by all the people of Sujun."

He paused, and leaned closer to the two Americans.

"For that reason," he added, "the stallion will actually be placed on the altar of sacrifice, and his funeral pyre actually lit. But I have arranged with Kinso to create a diversion which will leave you free to release the god horse, and it will then be your task to convey him secretly to the coast—and to the anchorage where your ship awaits you."

Pursuit

THROUGH the fastnesses of the jungle a lone rider galloped, his horse covering the ground at speed which was inspired by its own terror rather than by the touch of its master's heels.

Indeed, the man in the saddle was scarcely capable of exercising any influence over the animal, for it was as much as he could do to keep his seat, weakened as he was by loss of blood.

He was the sole survivor of the escort that had been ambushed by the followers of Kinso and Debor, and he was in a pitiable condition when at length his pony carried him in sight of the village where the main bulk of Sujun's population was concentrated. But as the horse proceeded to make for its stable the wounded guard managed to rouse himself with an effort and turn its head towards a building which stood on the western edge of the settlement.

The building in question was the temple dedicated to the strange religion practised by the Sujanese, and, reaching the entrance of it, the guard slid from his pony's back and tottered across the threshold into the presence of three men and a girl.

The group was composed of Tanaga, Frank Bradley, Dorothy Bruce and her father, and with that courtesy which was so characteristic of him, the high priest had been assuring his visitors that comfortable quarters would be found for them in the settlement if they cared to stay in Sujun for any length of time. But at the sudden appearance of the wounded guard all conversation between them was brought to an end, and with an expression of anxiety on his face Tanaga started forward to meet the newcomer.

"Sibu, what has happened?" he ejaculated in the native tongue. "Speak, man! What has happened?"

In faltering accents the survivor of the ambush told his story, and, when he had learned all, Tanaga swung round upon his guests and translated the dramatic news to them. Then he hastened to a great gong that hung in the temple, and with loud, resounding blows he gave an alarm that was calculated to summon all men who were faithful to his rule.

Before the reverberations of the gong had died away, however, Frank Bradley had turned to Dorothy Bruce and her father.

"I'm going to find out what's happened to Rex," he announced. "You two wait here."

His friends attempted to restrain him, but he shook free and dashed from the temple, and as he saw the horse that belonged to the guard known as Sibn he vaulted into the saddle. Next instant he was spurring in the direction of the jungle, and he had travelled some fifty or sixty yards when he heard a dog barking behind him.

He looked round to descry the figure of Rinty, who had been wandering aimlessly in the vicinity of the temple when Frank had emerged from the building so precipitately, and now the wolfhound was racing in pursuit of him. Nor did the sleek, grey creature pause in his stride when the young American attempted to order him back.

Frank hesitated only for a second, and then he galloped onward into the jungle with Rinty a little way in the rear, and, though the dog could not overtake the pony, it nevertheless managed to keep track of horse and rider as they swept along the forest trail which led to the scene of the ambushade.

Frank did not know it, but three of the men who had been responsible for that ambushade without taking an active part in it were still lingering at the spot. They were Debor, Crawford, and Wheeler, and, on the advice of the first-named, the two Americans had agreed to wait awhile before setting out for the altar of sacrifice.

When at last Debor considered that they had delayed long enough, the three of them turned towards the track by which Kinso and the rest of the band had departed—and it was as they were on the point of cantering across to it that they heard the thudding of hoofs on the village trail.

Immediately afterwards they saw Frank Bradley sweep into view round a bend, and Crawford gave vent to a hoarse exclamation.

"Bradley!" he jerked. "And there may be a whole crowd of Tanaga's followers behind him!"

"Yes," Debor rapped out, "and we must not lead them to the altar of sacrifice! Quick, we'll strike off down that track to the north-west!"

"But you said a tiger-pit had been dug there!" Wheeler gasped.

Debor was already urging his horse on to the north-west trail.

"We'll turn aside before we reach the pit," he called fiercely. "We can force our way through the thickets and pick up the other track. Come, there's no time to lose!"

The three of them galloped along the route Debor had indicated, but had not gone far when the Sujanese sworved into the underbrush, whereupon Wheeler and Crawford promptly imitated his example, and there was no sign of them when Frank gained the forks where the massacro of the temple guards had been carried out.

The youngster had seen the rogues turn on to the north-west trail, and had recognised Crawford and Wheeler with a shock of amazement that had rapidly given place to a feeling of mingled determination and anger. And now he charged down the side-track, drawing a revolver as he did so.

With Rinty following him he rode along that forest trail at breakneck speed, and in thirty seconds he was abreast of the point where Debor, Crawford, and Wheeler had veered off into the thickets. But under the impression that the fugitives were still in front of him he dashed straight ahead with clouds of earth flying from his horse's feet, and he was fully a hundred yards past the spot where his enemies had left the track when suddenly the ground seemed to give way beneath his mount.

Down came man and beast, hurtling

through a screen of twigs and foliage, plunging into the gloomy depths of a pit, and, catapulted out of the saddle, Frank landed on the bed of that dark and musty cavity with an impact that knocked him senseless.

When he recovered consciousness it was to discover himself lying beside the unfortunate animal that he had been riding, and as he realised that the creature had broken its neck he stretched out a hand towards it in a gesture of pity. Then he struggled up and raised his eyes to the tangled matting of brushwood through which he and the pony had fallen.

The greater part of that treacherous screen was still intact, but a shaft of moonlight slanted into the pit through the rent that had been caused when horse and rider had fouled it, and up on the edge of the trap Frank saw the head of the wolfhound Rinty.

The dog was barking loudly, and had no doubt been raising the echoes of the jungle ever since it had reached the brink of the pitfall into which it had seen Frank tumble; and its excited tones continued to resound far and wide as it watched the young American stagger to the wall of the trap and attempt to clamber back to the trail.

It was a vain effort on Frank's part. The wall of the pit was sheer, and the rim of it high above his head. Unaided, it was impossible for him to escape from the murky depths into which he had been flung. He soon saw clearly that he must accept the situation, and hope that the baying of Rinty would attract the attention of friends from the village—for he felt sure that Tanaga would dispatch a force of warriors to hunt down the man who had butchered Rex's escort.

Even as that comforting reflection was passing through Frank's mind he heard a sound that froze the blood in his veins, a snarling roar from somewhere close at hand. It was the roar of a tiger that had been drawn to the neighbourhood of the pit by Rinty's barking, and, if the scope of his view had not been restricted by the walls of his deep prison, the young American would have seen the brute padding round a bend in the trail above.

Rinty drew back, his hair bristling. The denizen of the jungle came on, scenting the dog as prey for its cruel fangs. Between the two animals was the pitfall, only partially disclosed by the gap in the network of twigs and foliage.

Roaring again, the tiger bounded forward, intending to pounce on the wolfhound when it was close enough to make the leap—and confident, no doubt, of clearing that gap which it could see between itself and the dog.

But in another instant the great, striped brute had set foot on that

portion of the matting which was still undisturbed, and suddenly the monster was plunging through the river foliage, plunging into the trap where Frank Bradley was already a captive!

(To be concluded next week. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor, and Rex and Rinty.)

"O'MALLEY OF THE MOUNTED"

(Continued from page 8)

shouted. "If we want to leave we'll leave, and—"

"You won't!" snarled Red Jagger, and crashed his fist into Bud's face.

Bud reeled back, then recklessly rushed at the big man. Crash! A brutal punch caught the youngster in the jaw, and he went prone on his back.

O'Malley had to stand by and watch. He itched to leap at Red, especially as he knew what the girl must be thinking.

Butch, Lefty, Brody, and Andy—the four worst of the gang—heard the noise and hurried to the scene.

"It's all over, boys," chuckled Red. "Thanks to Dan and myself, it's all settled. Brody, you and Andy keep guard over this shack and see Bud and his sister don't leave."

O'Malley knelt over the prone figure of the boy.

"You cowardly cur!" hissed the girl. "And I thought you were his friend." He looked up.

"It's a pity you don't trust me more," he whispered. "Best help me get Bud into the shack."

It was O'Malley who bathed the bruised forehead and fixed the bandages. Nothing was said by Edie because she found this man so much of a bewildering puzzle, and, besides, Brody and Andy were within hearing.

Red Jagger appeared and grunted when he saw the youngster was conscious.

"That'll teach you who's boss around here," he drawled, and his beady eyes turned towards the girl. "Guess you can make yourself useful. Get over to the shack and lend Gabby a hand, and see if you can't fix something else than stew."

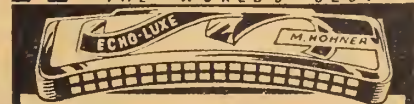
It was on the afternoon before the contemplated raid that O'Malley at last saw a way of getting a message to the sergeant. Red Jagger and most of his men had gone off to round up some of their cattle and water the horses. The trooper had gone over to talk with Gabby on the chance that that individual might give him a line on Marshall's murder.

Old Gabby was busy trying to make flapjacks, and was in a talkative mood. Having decided that he must have made a mistake over the new man, he was inclined to be friendly.

"When I made that stick-up I had to pass near the Mountie post at Silver Creek," O'Malley said casually. "Red would have had a tough task getting Bud outa that place. It looked like a small fortress."

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HARMONICAS

January 9th, 1937.

"They never did aim to get him out," Gabby muttered, and turned to reveal a blackened eye. "That double-crossing skunk would have let the kid swing."

"You don't seem too fond of Red this morning."

"I've cooked and sweated for him for months, and I got soaked because there was a hornet in his tea," snarled Gabby.

O'Malley glanced round quickly at a slight sound and saw Edith enter the shack carrying some clothes she had washed. Her back was towards him, and with his foot he kicked the door so that it almost closed. Gabby, bending over a steaming pot, was too engrossed in the stew and in his own troubles to notice.

"Then Bud Hyland didn't kill that Mountie?" he asked sharply.

"No, Red or Butch plugged him," scoffed Gabby. "That Mountie was always hanging round the Eldorado, and one night Joe musta told Red who he was, so they shot him, filled the kid full of doped liquor, and framed him. Gosh, didn't Red get a shock when you and the kid walked in. Reckon he must have thought it were a ghost."

"Wonder what Red aims to do about young Bud?"

"Why wonder?" Gabby gave a raucous laugh. "It ain't hard to guess what happens to mugs what stand in Red's path. But I ain't scared of the big palooka. I mind the time when there weren't a man quicker to the draw than Gabby Jones, and if my fingers weren't crippled with rheumatics I wouldn't be doing any pesky cooking."

"Red is leaving some of the boys here to-night," O'Malley spoke loudly.

"Are you going on this raid, Gabby?"

"Not likely," scoffed the cook. "But if I don't get my share of the dough, then I'll stir up trouble for Red. I'm gettin' just about sick of this life."

"Reckon you'd still be pretty useful in a bank hold-up," remarked the trooper. "You may have rheumatics, Gabby, but you got a lotta nerve. And it wants nerve to stick up the Silver Creek bank."

"And I could do it," Gabby glared round. "If any Mounties show up them yell skunks will be scared stiff." He narrowed his eyes. "Guess I'm talking too much."

"I ain't telling Red or Butch," was the answer. "I'll see you get your rake-off, Gabby, and maybe I'll be leaving this bunch, and if you wanna come along we can ride together. Guess I'd better turn in for a spell; a tired man ain't no good on a stick-up, and we ride at four. Guess most of the folk in Silver Creek will be asleep when we loot their old bank at midnight. Bet those fool Mounties will be all sleeping like hogs. They'd never think anyone would have the nerve to try anything in Silver Creek."

A slight sound made O'Malley edge to the door, and he peered through the slight crack in time to see Edith slipping out of the shack. He knew she had overheard everything.

"Guess I'd like to ride with you, Dan," Gabby muttered. "I'm kinda sorry I caused a bit of trouble for you, but I sure did think I'd seen your face some place."

"Maybe you'll remember one of these days," chuckled O'Malley. "See you later, pal."

At four Red Jagger assembled his men and gave out his instructions. There was a slight delay outside the Hylands' shack, where Red had the two prisoners brought out and threatened Bud with dire vengeance if he dared to try to escape.

"And you get a swell meal ready for January 9th, 1937.

us," Red shouted at the girl. "If it's stew, I'll make you marry old Gabby!"

The outlaws laughed uproariously as they rode away. O'Malley glanced back and saw the girl standing there, with small fists clenched to her side and her eyes gleaming. He felt that he was going to win on his gamble.

The Tables Turned

IT wanted a half-hour to midnight when the band arrived on the outskirts of Silver Creek. Red Jagger divided his men into three parties. Butch, Dan, and himself each to take two men and work their way towards the bank. Then they would break into the bank whilst some remained on guard outside; it would be Dan's job to dynamite the safe.

"Best not ride your horses down the main street," O'Malley suggested. "Hitch 'em to some place that's close and handy. We wanna get into that bank before the night watchman can raise a hue and cry."

"Good notion," agreed Red. "Got the dynamite, Dan?"

"Sure—enough to blow up the whole town."

At a church some two hundred yards from the bank O'Malley cautioned his two men to move quietly. By some railings he gave the signal to dismount, and the men hitched their horses to the railings. O'Malley clenched his fists and waited.

"What's the next move, Dan?" one asked.

"This!" retorted O'Malley, and lashed out with a right that sent the man reeling back into his companion's arms.

The other, realising they had been tricked, tried to whip out a gun, but a huge body came hurtling through the air to smash him to the ground. The gun was wrenched away and tossed over the railings. The other rasal staggered to his feet, and steel-like fingers gripped him by the throat. O'Malley freed one hand and rammed home a hard punch. A moment later he grinned down at two still figures.

O'Malley decided that they would not cause him any further trouble, and that they were out for a lengthy count. Drawing his gun he hastened towards the main street. What a relief when he heard gun-fire. He had feared he might have to tackle Red Jagger and his band on his own, but the firing seemed to indicate that there were others on the scene.

It was a rude shock for Red Jagger when from behind shacks and buildings a number of troopers appeared. Butch opened fire and dropped a moment later with a groan of pain. Some of the gang tried to get to cover, but the Mounties seemed everywhere.

Trapped! Red Jagger turned and darted off into the darkness. That cursed Bud Hyland had got away and betrayed them. A bullet whined over his head, and, turning, Red fired, and saw a Mountie drop. Panting and blowing, he reached his horse, flung himself into the saddle, and galloped recklessly down the street.

Red Jagger was the only one to escape. O'Malley easily arrested Brody and Andy, who threw up their arms when he covered them with a gun. Out of the bank poured the sheriff and a number of armed townsfolk. The moon came out of the clouds and threw its light on the scene. How those bandits scowled when they saw Dan Rawlings and heard the Mounties congratulating him.

"What's yer name?" Brody asked.

"Trooper O'Malley of the Mounted," laughed the bogus Dan Rawlings. His face, hardened. "I swore to get you

crooks when you murdered Trooper Marshall."

"We didn't shoot Marshall!" whined Brody. "It was Red and Butch."

"Yeah, I know," O'Malley glanced round. "Where are those two?"

"I think we've got Butch," stated the sergeant, as several of the armed townsfolk appeared carrying a limp form.

"Yeah, that's Butch, and he seems hit pretty bad," O'Malley glanced round. "But where's Red?"

"He got away," said a voice, and the wounded trooper reeled forward. "He plugged me, and the last I heard of him he was heading north."

"Sergeant, I got to go after him," shouted O'Malley. "Near the church you'll find two more of the bunch. Let two of the boys come with me."

"Where do you reckon Jagger's heading for?" the sergeant asked as one of the troopers brought forward a fresh horse.

"His hide-out," O'Malley leaped into the saddle. "Did Edith Hyland warn you about this bank hold-up?"

The sergeant nodded.

"And then she rode away before you could stop her."

"Right again."

"Well, she's gone back to her brother," rasped O'Malley. "And I reckon Red will reckon that one of these two betrayed him, so I gotta ride fast."

O'Malley was off like the wind. Two troopers galloped hard at his heels, but before they had gone far O'Malley drew away.

A Fighting Demon

RED JAGGER flung himself from his horse and dashed into the main shack. Gabby blinked his eyes at the breathless figure.

"What's wrong, Red?" he quavered.

"Everything. We were tricked!" snarled Red. "Get everything packed up that two horses can carry—we gotta be away from here in an hour. Why ain't that girl here?"

"I ain't seen her all the evening. Guess they're both over in their shack. Where are all the boys?"

"The Mounties got 'em!" shouted Red. "And now I'm going to get the rat that squealed. Get busy!"

The big man flung himself out of the shack and raced over the grass to the other shack. There was a light burning. Out of the shadows jumped two men—it was the guards.

"Why, Red—" one cried.

"Have you two been on guard all the while?" Red snarled at them.

"Sure we have," they answered.

"Neither of them have been outa this shack?"

"The girl did because you told her to help Gabby."

"Well, she squealed on us!" Red said through clenched teeth. "You two get down and help Gabby whilst I settle this dame and her snivelling brother."

Edith Hyland was bandaging her brother's forehead when the door was kicked open. She gave a cry of alarm and the bandage slid from her hand. Red Jagger kicked the door shut.

"You two can well look scared!" he shouted hoarsely. "Which of you two told the Mounties?"

They remained silent, eyeing him fearfully.

"I'll make you talk if I have to twist the necks off your bodies!" There was murder in those blazing eyes. "Bud Hyland, you got your white-faced sister to take a message to the Mounties, and you fooled my men by kidding 'em that she was helping Gabby. That's the truth, ain't it?"

"Not quite," Edith answered fearlessly. "My brother didn't want me to

go. I found out about the hold-up on the bank at Silver Creek by you and Dan Rawlings. I went out pretending to help Gabby and rode down to Silver Creek. So you got a warm reception."

"Nothing to what you're to get!" Red Jagger screamed. "I'm going to break every bone in both your measly bodies, and—"

"Before that you deal with me," drawled a voice from the door.

Red spun round, and saw it was Dan Rawlings.

"I told the girl what you were planning," O'Malley went on. "Or, rather, what I had planned to trap you, Red."

"Who are you?"

"Trooper O'Malley," was the answer. "And I vowed that I'd get the skunk that killed Marshall."

"If you hadn't that gun I'd kill you!" taunted Red.

"Take out your gun and toss it on the floor!" the trooper rapped out. "Jump, to it!" Red obeyed, whereupon O'Malley chucked away his own gun.

"Well, now's your chance."

Red Jagger hurled himself forward. He had been a boxer in his time, and often boasted that he had no match among outlaws and renegades. He met his match at the hands of O'Malley, who used the big man as a punching-bag.

That fight was short but very sweet. Every time O'Malley landed a punch Edith clapped her hands. Bud grinned as he watched his sister's flushed face. Never had he seen his quiet, matter-of-fact, practical sister so excited.

Red Jagger made one last rush, and was almost lifted off his feet with an uppercut. He just went flat on his back and lay there, completely knocked out.

The Hylands had backed away to give the fighters plenty of room; now they came forward. Edith looked shyly over the prone figure of Red Jagger at O'Malley.

"I'm sorry I misjudged you," she whispered, lowering her gaze.

"I'm sorry I couldn't let you into the secret," was his answer. "I had to play the part to find out Jagger's hide-out. At any rate, everything is okay now, and as it was either Butch or Red that killed Marshall you haven't got a thing to worry about." He spun round. "Before we start cheering I guess I'll go get the rest of the bunch."

But O'Malley was spared the trouble. The two troopers appeared on the scene, and the three outlaws surrendered without a fight.

On the promise of a very light sentence Gabby told the whole tale, and Red Jagger and his bunch of smuggling outlaws got lengthy sentences. Butch and Jagger got life sentences, because it was not quite certain which of them had killed Marshall.

The day after the trial a buggy was drawn up outside an outpost station of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A very pretty, blushing girl sat holding the reins, whilst a number of grinning troopers smiled at her.

Through the group burst a figure resplendent in clean uniform. It was Sergeant O'Malley. He leaped into the buggy.

"The Commissioner's on his way here, and we're going like the wind before he has the chance to stop us." O'Malley waved his hand. "Don't you wish you were going with me on a honeymoon in Montreal?"

A crack of the whip and the buggy was cantering down the road that led to happiness.

(By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring George O'Brien as Trooper O'Malley.)

"THE CASE OF THE VELVET CLAWS"

(Continued from page 20)

Spudsy took the telephone from him, and he grinned at Hoffman.

"Sergeant," he said, "my flat is on the way, more or less. Mind if we stop there while I change into more appropriate garments?"

"You'll have to change 'em in my presence!" snarled the sergeant.

"Oh, sure! Mind you bring all these people, too—you'll need 'em! And, Spudsy, go to Mrs. Mason. Tell her to pack her bags—we're leaving for Pinehurst in an hour."

Spudsy's mouth opened wide, in company with his brown eyes, but he went off quite obediently. Mrs. Veite sneezed, and, in spite of the handcuffs, Perry contrived to offer her a handkerchief.

The Second Cartridge

THE District Attorney was waiting, with Eva Belter and two police officers, in the drawing-room of the house in Elmwood Drive when Perry—no longer handcuffed—arrived with Hoffman, Jones, and all the rest of the people who had visited his flat on the way from Chinatown. Perry was once more arrayed in his own clothes.

At his request everybody ascended to the study on the floor above. Most of them were sneezing and coughing as they sat, or stood, in the big room.

"Mrs. Belter," said Perry, "let me remind you that even though I surrendered you to the police, I'm still your attorney, and I intend to see you freed from a charge of murder within fifteen minutes. Your confession is true, in that when I left this room just before nine o'clock last night you had an argument with your husband. He threatened you and the reputation of another party."

Norma Veite sneezed, and Herbert B. Jones coughed.

"Another party," Perry went on, "who is now residing in a sanatorium, suffering the tortures of a nervous breakdown—" He grinned reminiscently and turned to Riley. "Oh, would you mind telephoning the Fair-

view Sanatorium?" he asked. "Tell Dr. Lane that he may now release Algernon P. Fortescue. He's well now."

Riley repeated the name, which meant nothing to anybody present except Eva Belter, who guessed that it covered the identity of Peter Milnor.

"Yes," said Perry, and turned again to his very troublesome client. "You admit that you drew a pistol and pointed it at your husband, don't you, Mrs. Belter? You shot him, threw the gun on the floor, and ran out of the house. Then you ran all across town and telephoned me."

The District Attorney became impatient.

"We read your phoney confession, Mason," he said sharply.

"Yes," said Perry smilingly, "but do you know that two shots were fired at George Belter? That one of them went out through the open window right behind your head there?"

The District Attorney whirled round to gape at the open window; several of the plain-clothes men ran over to it, and a buzz of excited voices ensued. But the buzz was interrupted by the abrupt appearance of Spudsy, who rushed into the room without a hat.

"I think I've caught a cold!" he exclaimed as he stopped to sneeze.

"Beat it!" commanded Perry.

"Oh, but that ain't all, boss," said Spudsy. "It's Della! She—she's on her way to the night court! She said she was gonna get the judge to annul the marriage!"

Perry looked at the District Attorney.

"Mr. Burns," he said in dismay, "you'll have to wait—"

"No, Mason," the District Attorney broke in sternly. "You can't get away with any more tricks! You've got to wind this up now, or never!"

"All right," surrendered Perry. "Well, Mrs. Veite just couldn't wait till the publicity had died down before forcing Carl Griffin to marry her daughter—and that gave the whole show away."

"You're out of your head!" shouted the housekeeper.

"No, it's just a cold," said Perry. "You see, I saw Carl Griffin at this house last night. He was going out, it appeared, but he went no farther than the drive when he heard a shot. That was after I'd gone."

Carl Griffin's blue eyes widened, but he did not say anything.

"He went back into the house," Perry continued, "mounted the stairs, and entered this room. He found George C. Belter, his uncle, laughing to himself, and he asked what had happened. Belter informed him that his wife thought she had killed him, pointed to the spot on which she had stood when she had pulled the trigger, and stated that the bullet had gone out of the window instead of through his heart."

Eva Belter started up from the chair in which she had seated herself, but Perry waved her to silence.

"Carl Griffin," he went on, "was interested. 'Eva tried to kill you?' he exclaimed, and his uncle replied that she had, and that he had let her think that she had hit him. 'But why should she want to kill you?' asked Griffin; and Belter, as I imagine it, replied: 'Principally because I changed my will to-day in your favour. She couldn't stand the thought of seeing you get all my money.'

"Carl Griffin had seen Eva Belter running away from the house, and now he saw what he thought was a wonderful opportunity. He picked up the automatic, which she had flung on the

January 21th, 1937.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"O'MALLEY OF THE MOUNTED":
Trooper O'Malley, George O'Brien; Edith Hyland, Irene Ware; Red Jagger, Stanley Fields; Bud Hyland, James Bush; Gabby, Victor Potel; Commissioner, Reginald Barlow; Butch, Dick Cramer; Lefty, Tom London; Brody, Charles King; Andy, Olin Francis.

"THE CASE OF THE VELVET CLAWS": Perry Mason, Warren William; Della Street, Claire Dodd; Eva Belter, Winifred Shaw; George C. Belter, Joseph King; Carl Griffin, Dick Foran; Frank Locke, Addison Richards; Spudsy Drake, Eddie Acliff; Mrs. Veite, Ruth Robinson; Norma Veite, Paula Stone; Digley, Stuart Holmes; Peter Milnor, Kenneth Harlan; Crandal, Dick Purcell; Esther Linton, Carol Hughes; Wilbur Strong, Olin Howland; Detective-Sergeant Hoffman, Robert Middlemass; Tiny Brewster, Carlyle Morre jun.; Detective Herbert B. Jones, Eddie Shubert; Judge Mary F. O'Daugherty, Clara Blandieck.

carpet, and he asked his uncle where he had been standing.

"Belter, quite unsuspectingly, went over to the spot where he had been when his wife had fired—and thereupon Carl Griffin fired! But this time the bullet did not go out of the window!

"Out from this room, in which he had committed cold-blooded murder, Griffin went to the stairs. But Mrs. Veite was standing at the top of them, and Mrs. Veite is a clever, calculating woman. At the price of marrying her daughter she agreed to cover up his crime, even suggested that he should go out and get very drunk to establish an alibi, and then went down to her duties as though nothing had happened, while Griffin acted upon her sug—"

Carl Griffin had made a rush for the door, and Spudsy had caught hold of him, yelling:

"Don't try to move! I got you in a vice-like grip!"

But Spudsy was sent sprawling, and it was Jones and a couple of policemen who overpowered the murderer and handcuffed him.

Mrs. Veite sank into a chair, almost in a state of collapse, while her golden-haired daughter went off into hysterics and was led away.

"You see, Hoffman," said Perry, when quiet had been restored, "if Mrs. Veite hadn't tried to blackmail Griffin quite so soon they might have got away with it."

"But what about the proof?" challenged Hoffman. "There's still the—"

"The matter of an empty cartridge," Perry completed for him, and thrust a hand into a pocket and held out the missing cartridge. "Here it is. I took the liberty of appropriating it last night. Your ballistic expert will identify it."

"Thank you, Perry!" cried Eva Belter tremulously.

"Much obliged, Perry," said Hoffman; and then Perry dashed from the room with Spudsy at his heels.

In the night court where Perry and Della had been made man and wife the night before, Della was standing before the bench, a pitiful figure, listening to what Mary Florence O'Daugherty had to say concerning the matrimonial troubles which had been described to her.

"Young lady," said the judge, "you're still Mrs. Mason, and there's not a thing I can do about it!"

The door at the back of the court swung wide, and in rushed Perry, with Spudsy.

"If the court please—" he began.

"And what kind of a performance do you call this, Perry Mason?" rapped the judge.

"Your honour!" Perry reached the

bench, and over the top of it he said: "Oh, gee, Mary F., you remember you said you owed me a nickel for a paper I delivered twenty years ago? Well, I'll forget all about it if you'll be a pal."

Mary F. smiled and nodded.

"Court's adjourned for a ten-minute recess," she announced, and left the bench to open the door in the wall at the back of it. "Come with me, you two children!"

Perry walked beside Della into the room, and the door was closed just as Spudsy reached it.

"Say, are you with Mr. Mason's party?" inquired the bailiff who had put that self-same question the evening before.

"Am I with Mr. Mason's party?" cried Spudsy indignantly. "Am't you ever seen my picture in the paper? I'm the guy that solves all his cases!"

"Then," said the bailiff, holding out a telephone, "see if you can solve what this dame's talkin' about!"

Spudsy took the telephone. A woman was on the other end of the line, and she stuttered; but it became evident that she desired to engage the services of Perry Mason.

"Not a chance!" Spudsy put her short. "Mr. Mason's been sent up for life—er—out of town. Pinchurst Lodge!"

In the room behind the bench, Mary Florence O'Daugherty experienced no difficulty whatever in effecting a reconciliation, since Della had gone to the court only to teach her errant husband a lesson; and half an hour afterwards Perry and Della were seated side by side in the streamlined saloon, and Spudsy was at the wheel.

"Oh, darling, you'll love it up there!" declared Perry. "And please believe me, I'll never take another criminal case."

"Promise?" pouted Della.

Perry not only promised, but sealed the promise with a kiss.

He had no idea that a woman who stuttered, and a man who had a gun in his pocket were following the saloon in a taxicab, the driver of which had been instructed to take them to Pinchurst Lodge!

(By permission of Warner Brothers Pictures, Ltd., starring Warren William, with Claire Dodd and Winifred Shaw.)

DON'T FORGET "UNDERSEA KINGDOM"

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THE SMELL OF FEAR

The art of training a wildcat to eat meat out of your hand without eating the hand as well is simplicity itself.

Reunio Renfro, a real-life Tarzan by trade, says that it is all in how you eye the animal. An unflinching stare, combined with a set of knockless knees, and teeth that don't chatter except in conversation, are all that is required.

"You really control an animal with your eyes," says Renfro, potentate of what is probably Hollywood's most peculiar profession. "That establishes your dominance."

Renfro makes a big business of supplying trained domestic and wild animals to Hollywood studios. His California ranch teems with assorted beasts, all properly pacified for use in pictures.

Renfro had just completed the most difficult assignment of his career for "A Day at the Races," Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture starring the mad Marx Brothers. Oddly enough, it consisted not of taming a wild animal, but of training two otherwise peaceful English bulldogs to declare war on Chico Marx at sight.

One of the scenes in the Marx movie requires that Chico be chased by two ferocious canines. Wearing Chico's familiar costume, Renfro spent two weeks teaching the two dogs to pursue him madly the moment he appeared in Chico's clothes.

He succeeded too well. Chico himself happened to wander by while the dogs were out being aired. He had to get himself a new pair of trousers.

"It's a lot easier to train a wild animal to act tame than to train a tame animal to act wild," commented Renfro.

"The main thing about taming wild animals is never to be scared. When you are frightened, your body gives off a certain odour that only a wild animal can recognise. From then on it's got you licked."

"If I am training a lion, for instance, and he jumps towards me, I jump towards him. He'll always stop short."

The first animal Renfro ever trained was an African lion. He put the lion through its paces for six months, then sold it.

"He killed the next two fellows he worked with," Renfro adds casually.

Renfro makes a hobby as well as a business of taking a wild animal and turning it into a pet. Currently, his favourite is a wildcat that rides around with him in his car and eats meat out of his hand.

Training dogs to do tricks isn't too difficult a task, Renfro advises. Patience, kindness and understanding are the basic requirements.

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MAD HOLIDAY

To Blazes with Everybody

YOU dirty liar! I'll kill you for that!"

A gun roared in the darkness. The killer's exultation was wiped out as the lights flashed up and before him stood the man he thought he had shot. Before he could fire again strong arms gripped him—two police officers had pinioned him.

"If this cigar"—the man who had escaped unscathed held up his cigar—"had been in my mouth, as you thought it was, you would have got me about here." He pointed to his forehead, and then took out a long holder. "The cigar was in this and held quite a long way from my body."

"It's a lie," screamed the prisoner. "First he accused me of murdering my wife, then he suddenly turned off all the lights."

"And you fell right into my trap," was the answer. "Tried to drill me with the very gun you used to kill your wife. Check it, boys, and you'll find I'm right. I— He clutched suddenly at his side as a beautiful girl rushed into the room. "Guess I did stop a ricochet after all."

The girl screamed as he collapsed in a heap, and flung herself down beside him, to pillow his head on her breast.

"Darling! Darling, you can't die! I won't let you! I love you!"

The wounded man suddenly held the girl close. "That's all I wanted to know," he shouted, and kissed her.

"Hold that clinch!" yelled a stenographer voice. "We're trucking in for the close-up."

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The man and the girl clung to each other.

"Okay! Cut!" came the shout.

The man and girl separated with alacrity.

"Great work." A big man appeared from behind the camera. He was Kelyin, the famous Metro director. "It's dynamite. Best thing you ever done, Phil. Sure box office. That cigar gag of mine was swell."

"Yeah," cried Philip Trent, the film star. "My grandmother used to love it." He got up from the floor. "Thank heaven that's over."

A big, clumsy, grinning fellow pounced out from behind one of the many arc-lamps and seized the star by the arm.

"Wait a minute," cried Mert Morgan, the publicity man. "I gotta get some stills. Sit down there. I want her arms around you—a nice little love-scene."

"What again?" complained Trent, allowing himself to be pushed back to the floor. With a sigh of resignation he allowed the girl to put her arms round his neck.

"All right—all right—now smile—show your teeth more, Mary. Look as if you're going to bite him—hold it steady." He gave a signal, and the still cameraman took the picture.

Mert Morgan would have kept Philip Trent on the set all the day for still pictures, but Phil, being a star, allowed Trent to take two more and then shouted:

"To blazes with everybody."

In Kelvin's office he waited impatiently for the appearance of the

director. That individual was full of the joy of life—he breezed into the room.

"Grand stuff, Phil. Say, I got a great book for the next Selby James story." He held it out to the star. "It's just out."

The tired, handsome and cynical man of forty took the book and read from the cover:

"Who strangled the bishop's wife? Who buried her body in the mud bath? Who solved the mystery of the Purple Turtle? How did Selby James, the debonaire super-sleuth—"

Philip slapped the book shut with a bang of disgust.

Kelvin was quite oblivious to the danger signals.

"We're going to make an ace production of this. I'm bringing Peter Dean himself out from New York to do the screen version."

Then the irrepensible publicity hound came in, and hearing what Kelvin had said, had to include his piece:

"And I've got a great hook-up with the chain grocery stores. They're going to throw in a bust of you, Phil, as Selby James, with every packet of puffed corn. Here's the contract!"

"Puffed corn!" Philip Trent shot up as if he were a rocket that has just been ignited. "Puffed corn! That finishes it." He pushed the contract aside. "I've reached my limit. I've nothing else to live for. Gather round, folks, I wish to speak to you."

Kelvin exchanged an agitated glance with Morgan—this was an unusual mood for their star. They came nearer.

"Listen to Mrs. Trent's little blue-

eyed boy. Philip," stated the star in terse, angry tones, and then pointed to a mirror in which he was reflected. "See that stuffed shirt in there? That's Selby James, the super-sleuth. I've played that super-sap in six of the world's worst and most successful murder mysteries. Excuse me." With his arms he swept the two men to one side. "Take a good look at him, because that's the last time you're going to see him."

They goggled at him—thinking he had gone mad. When he pulled out a revolver they jumped back in terror. Trent raised the gun and smashed the mirror to pieces. Then the star grinned at the two men and chucked the gun on the floor.

"There's a story for you, Mert. 'Philip Trent murders Selby James.'"

"You can't mean it?" gasped Kelvin, at last realising what his star was planning to do.

"I do mean it—I'm through."

"But I've got forty thousand tied up in the next Selby James story," wailed Kelvin. "I can't risk another star in the part."

"And besides, the public knows your mug as Selby James," muttered Mert Morgan.

"Then they'll have to get used to another mug," Philip answered, and grinned mockingly at the director. "Have you ever tripped over a corpse?"

"No, but—"

"Well, I have, thirty-seven of 'em. Have you ever seen a man pierced by a poisoned dart, or a death-ray, or suspended by a madman over a crocodile pit? Of course you haven't. Those things don't happen in real life. But I've seen nothing else for the last three years. I've picked up a bale of incriminating blonde hairs, a ton of false teeth, a pack of stolen diamonds. I've got so jittery that a man can't come into my room without my reaching for a gun. That's what Selby

James has done to me. I'm sorry, B. K., but I've tripped over my last corpse."

"But you can't walk out on your contract!"

"I'm going on my vacation. I'm going where nobody knows me." He expanded his chest as if scuttling freedom. "No movie star—no Selby James—just me, Philip—the kid himself." He stepped smartly to the door and beamed at them. "Three months at least I shall be gone. Three months of perfect peace. Gentlemen, I thank you and bid you a very good riddance!"

A Girl in Distress

BUT if the star thought it was going to be simple to escape from either Selby James or Philip Trent he was mistaken. He had an idea he could slip on board a pleasure liner and that nobody would know him. All film stars arrived in huge cars with fanfares of trumpets and plenty of excitement, and an ordinary sort of man in a thick overcoat and cloth cap wouldn't be noticed. Well, Philip could not have been an ordinary sort of man, because he had no sooner started to walk up the gangway when somebody pointed and cried:

"That's Philip Trent, who plays the part of Selby James."

And after that it was chaos. Philip found himself besieged on all sides by women and children clamouring for autographs, and he had no guards to save him. The police and officials finally rescued him and got him to a cabin. Some hours later, Philip, wearing a dinner jacket, went into the bar for a drink, and a weary, rather mournful creature who introduced herself as Mrs. Kinney asked him if he would autograph her copy of "Murder in the Mud Bath." With a resigned shrug he signed the book and retired into a corner with his drink. Noticing the bar beginning to fill and that he was getting considerable attention, he

decided to go to his cabin and stay there for the rest of the voyage. B, now the liner was well out to sea and there was no going back.

Philip entered his cabin and switched on the lights, then he sniffed the air. Perfume. Perhaps it was his imagination. Slowly he filled his pipe and lit up. Ah, that was better. It was then that he saw some white gloves on a settee. He was staring at them when a sound made him turn.

From the bed-room of his suite had appeared a girl with ash-blonde hair. It accentuated the deathly paleness of her face. She wore a simple but attractive white evening gown. She was pretty, but Philip was too angry to notice.

"Young lady, this is a bit too much," he rasped out. "I'm not signing any more autographs or anything."

"Wait!" The girl had a deep, husky, attractive voice. She darted past him and drew the blinds over the window. "Someone on the promenade deck might see me."

"Now, it's no use trying that sort of gag on me—they're old," Philip cried. "I'll be obliged if you'll get out, madame, and leave me in peace."

"They're watching." The girl peered round the curtain. "Have you a gun?"

"No, I haven't a gun. I don't want a gun! I came here to get away from guns!"

"I'm frightened." The girl gazed at him appealingly. "They are desperate men. If you helped me they might get you, too, and I wouldn't want that. Guess it's no good fighting, I must face—" The girl swayed, put her hand to her forehead and crashed in a heap to the floor.

"Oh, lady, have a heart," moaned Philip, lifting the still figure to a couch. "Why did you do this to me? I'm on a vacation." He shook her and became convinced that it was a real faint. He hastened into his bed-room for a flask of brandy.



"That finishes it!" cried Philip Trent and pushed the contract aside. "I've reached my limit!"

Directly Philip had gone the beautiful blonde returned to life, and after looking round to see if she were observed, smiled mischievously. Noiselessly she slipped from the couch, and from a small desk picked up a steel paper-cutter that was not unlike a dagger. Several papers she scattered on the floor.

When Philip came back into the room the girl had gone.

"Darn the girl," he muttered, and not knowing what to do with the brandy, decided it would cheer him up to drink it. It was then that he noticed the papers by his desk. He went across. No, nothing seemed to be missing. He tried to visualise the desk before he had placed some of his papers there—how about the paper-knife that the studio staff had given him at Christmas? Gone!

Exasperated, Philip rubbed his chin in perplexity. He supposed the woman was some souvenir-hunter. He glanced up and saw a shadow on his curtains. It was a woman's shadow, and she seemed to be holding a knife in her hand. He jumped for the cabin door and dragged it open.

Sure enough there was the girl, darting along the deck. The moon was shining and he saw her clearly. Most of the passengers were dining, so there was no one promenading. Philip went after her and saw her open a state-room door. He was wondering what he ought to do when there came from within the cabin a hoarse scream, and a moment later the door was flung open. The girl appeared, and in her hand was the knife; she ran to the rail and threw it overboard. He watched her run along the deck and vanish from sight.

What should he do? He decided that he would look into State-room 41. He entered and stumbled over some object. His groping hand found a switch and snapped on the light.

On the floor was stretched the body of an ugly, wizened little man. His coat was open and the white shirt had an ugly red patch in the region of the heart.

Philip backed away from that still figure. He locked the state-room door and hastened to find the captain. An officer informed him that the captain was probably at dinner. Philip hastened to the dining-saloon.

Murder

IN the cocktail bar three men were enjoying a drink. The tall, upright man with the weather-tanned face and pleasant smile was Captain Bromley, the gaunt, lined man with the hard, cynical mouth was Van Mier, the financier and the big, heavy-jowled, coarse specimen in the ill-fitting dinner suit was Sergeant Donovan, detective and bodyguard.

"I'm trying to tell him, captain, that it would be a whole lot better off in the ship's safe," argued Donovan, "than in his pocket."

"Oh, you American detectives." Van Mier's lips curled in the usual sneer. "They're sent to make you feel easy; instead they make you feel nervous."

"But I was hired to guard you, wasn't I?" The detective was quite nasty in his tone. "You should take my advice." "All right—all right," testily answered the millionaire, "I shall do whatever you think best."

"I think Donovan's right," spoke the captain. "I shouldn't care to carry anything worth a fortune in my pocket. I'll call the purser for you."

"Oh, captain, may I speak to you a moment?" Philip met the officer as he was leaving the bar.

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Donovan, leaning against the bar rail, pointed out Philip to Van Mier and explained that it was a famous film star.

The captain listened with amazement to Trent's story, then he turned and beckoned.

"Sergeant, come here a moment, please."

Donovan turned to Van Mier. "Looks like some trouble. You stay right here. Don't go away—they're queer folk on most ships. I want to find you here when I get back."

Sergeant Donovan went across and heard Trent's story, then the three men hastened away.

Van Mier, who was consumed with curiosity, might have followed them if a short, thickset man had not appeared and touched his arm.

"The sergeant asked you to stay here, sir," he murmured in servile tones.

Van Mier glared angrily at his manservant.

"All right, Williams. Listen, the man that went out with the captain is Philip Trent. My little granddaughter would love to have his autograph for her album. Try and get it."

"Very good, sir, certainly, sir, I'll go at once, sir," Williams backed politely. As he hurried away he bumped into Mrs. Kinney and her insignificant husband. He upset her drink:

"Pardon, madam—purely an accident—the ship lurched."

"Don't try to make excuses," sniffed Mrs. Kinney, who had been supporting the bar too long. "You're soused."

The dapper little valet glared, seemed on the point of retorting, remembered his position, and hastened away.

On reaching the door of State-room 41 Philip turned to the captain.

"I locked the door so that no one would slip in and destroy the evidence," he said, and unlocked the door.

The floor of the state-room was normal; in other words the corpse had vanished. Captain Bromley listened with grave displeasure to Philip's frenzied statement that he had seen a bloodstained body on the floor.

"A ship's no place to pull Hollywood jokes," he cried after a quick inspection of the room. "Mr. Trent, take my advice. Go to bed quietly and sleep this off." The officer glanced at the detective. "I'll get the purser—you go back to Van Mier."

When the captain had left Donovan would have followed.

"Wait, sergeant, I haven't been drinking. I know I saw a body."

"Yeah, you're telling me!" sneered Donovan. "Just what you do in all your pictures. Selby James, amateur detective, always kidding the force—making saps out of the police. Why, he's nothing but a swelled-head jackass. And you're a bigger jackass to play him."

"You're completely right," Philip smiled. "But you've got the wrong man. You want Peter Dean."

"Who's he?"

"The nit-wit that writes that junk I've been playing. The blighter that blighted my life. A person I'd like to choke with his own whiskers."

"Sorry to disappoint you," interrupted a cool voice. "But I haven't any whiskers."

Philip gazed round-eyed at the beautiful young woman who entered the state-room. He recognised her at once. Now her hair was brown—she had worn a blonde wig.

"Who are you?" Philip managed to stammer out.

"Peter Dean," was her answer, and the girl laughed merrily.

"Yeah, and how did you like the first chapter in 'Murder in the Mud Bath'?"

came a jeering, triumphant voice, and the voice belonged to Mert Morgan.

Philip went very red.

"I get it," he rapped out. "You two figured you could chisel me into liking it."

"Yeah, listen to this front-page stuff!" shouted Mert. "'Trent true to form—screen star and author solve steamship mystery.'"

Donovan thrust himself forward.

"What is this?" he demanded fiercely. "A publicity stunt?" He saw Mert's grin, and he turned on Trent. "So you're up to your old tricks again, eh? Trying to make fools of the police. Why, I'd like—"

Donovan gaped as a little man appeared from the bath-room.

"Are you through with me, miss?" he asked.

"Pardon me!" laughed Peter Dean. "While I pay off the corpse."

"The captain ought to have all of you chucked off this ship!" Donovan shouted. "And I'd like to carry out the job. Pah!"

"Take Cokey Joe for a drink," hinted Peter Dean to Mert. "We'll see you later."

Philip Trent eyed the beautiful girl with ill-concealed anger. He was just thinking of all the things he could have said if she had been a man.

"Don't look so mad!" She shook with laughter. "You know you're not really mad. You're glad to find I'm a woman, but you just won't admit it."

"You win, Pete." He held out his hand. "And I like you much better with your own hair. Also I like the way your eyes are put in, and that gown you wear. How about taking a drink?"

They strolled along the deck.

"The great mystery to me"—Philip had her arm tucked through his—"is how anyone so delectable could write such tripe?"

"Tripe?"

"Tripe! I've been waiting for three years for this moment to look you in the eye and to tell you that your books are idiotic—your characters so asinine."

"They've made me a lot of money, sir."

"That's just it. You ought to be ashamed to take money for anything so contrived—so grotesque and incredible. You know—" A cabin door had opened, and a little woman darted out, causing them both to start. "Here, I say, what's the matter?"

The little woman, whom they could see was an Oriental and wearing some sort of heavy silken garment, brushed past them. A second later another woman darted out, and caught her near the rail. She was attired in the dress of a servant.

"Let me go—let me go!" they heard the woman say.

Then followed the servant's voice in some tongue they did not understand. The woman capitulated, and the two hastened back into the cabin, the door slammed.

"Well, how's that for mystery?" chuckled the girl. "The woman from the East."

"Stop it, or I'll throw you overboard," warned Philip, as they resumed their walk. "A drink is what we need, and then perhaps we might dine together."

So they wine and dined, and strolled in the moonlight talking of themselves mostly. It grew late.

"I left my bag in your room," Peter said at last.

"Let's go and get it." Arm-in-arm they made their way leisurely towards his state-room. "That's funny," Philip said a few moments later.

"What's funny?"

"I thought I left my lights on. Perhaps I didn't." He took out his key. "Hallo, the door's open."

Philip stepped inside and stumbled over something. He felt for a light. On the floor was stretched a body.

"Listen, public enemy." Philip turned on the girl. "Aren't you getting a bit repetitious?"

The girl stared down at the gaunt man stretched on the floor. She pushed past Trent and knelt. Gingerly she felt the hand, and then started to her feet.

"Philip, he's dead!"
"Madam, your second chapter is getting worse than the first." Philip was indignant. "Here, give him his thirty dollars and tell him to clear out."

"No, no, no!" The girl clutched at his coat. "Can't you see this is no joke? Look at his face—that's blood—real blood—on his shirt-front."

"You mean—this—" Philip gasped, and then knelt beside the still figure. It was then that he saw a terrible wound. He was white and shaken when he got to his feet. "Come on, let's get out of here." He took her arm.

"Who do you suppose it is?"
"Don't know," he answered. "I'll call the captain. Listen, I'm taking no chance with this corpse disappearing, so would you mind waiting here—I'll be right back."

Peter Dean closed her eyes to shut out the sight of that still, dreadful figure.

The Mystery Thickens

PHILIP raced down a companionway and through the glass walls of the cocktail bar saw the bulky figure of the detective.

"Sergeant, come quickly, there's a dead man in my state-room!"

"You don't try that gag, sonny, twice."

"Listen, this is on the level, and it's not the same man!" gasped Trent. "He's got a bald head, gaunt, wispy moustache—the man I saw you talking to with the captain."

"Van Mier? You're crazy. Why, I told him—" Donovan spun round. "He should have stayed here, but—" He broke off to grip Philip's arm. "All right, let's go, but if this is a jape you'll spend the rest of this trip in irons."

Donovan fetched the captain, who protested against being disturbed from a quiet rest. They hastened to the state-room.

The detective knelt by the body. "It's Van Mier," he shouted. "He's dead! He's been stabbed!"

Philip was just in time to put an arm round Peter Dean, who looked like collapsing.

Donovan was fumbling in the dead man's pockets.

"The Dragon!" he yelled out. "It's gone!"

Peter Dean and Philip Trent then heard that Van Mier had been carrying in his pocket a diamond emblem known as the White Dragon, and that it was worth a fortune.

The captain summoned one of his officers. The passengers and crew must be searched at once.

The search for the missing diamond was still going on when Philip suggested that Peter Dean stroll on the deck for some air, as she was still looking pale.

"I've never seen a dead body before," she confessed.

"I wonder why she was in such a hurry, and what he said to her?" was Philip's curious answer.

"Who are you talking about?"

"That Chinese woman we saw." He squared his shoulders. "Here, let's forget it. They've got a dick on board,

"No, no, no!"
cried the girl.
"Can't you see
this is no joke?
Look at his face
—that's blood—
real blood—on
his shirt-front!"



so let him run down clues; besides, I'm on a holiday."

"It's cold—let's go down," Peter murmured after a while.

"We'll have a nightcap," he suggested. "Do us good."

Scarcely had they ordered their drinks when an almond-eyed woman came into the room, and with little steps moved quietly up to the bar. She was dressed in the clothes of a Chinese servant, but the richness of the material denoted the master or mistress to be someone of importance.

"Glass sherry. Hurry, please," she whispered. "Honourable lady feel faint. Ning take it to her." She took the glass. "Charge, please, suite 'R.'"

"That's the servant woman we saw," hissed Philip to his beautiful companion. "Let's follow her."

As a result of what Philip had to report, an investigation was held the next day in the captain's state-room. Those present included Peter Dean, Philip Trent, Donovan, the captain, his first officer, Mert Morgan and the two Chinese women. Li Tai was the name of the mistress, and Ning was her servant.

Donovan was doing the questioning. "So you say, madam, that you've never met Van Mier, eh?" The detective held out a white card. "Then how did this happen to be found in your luggage? I'll read it. 'Mynheer Henrich van Mier invites you to a private showing of the famous diamond, the White Dragon, at Carillon's, Jewellers, 19, Reeves Street, San Francisco, on the 13th of September.' Explain that."

"There is nothing strange about that." The woman faced the questioner fearlessly. Her English was perfect. "My husband had made an offer to Mynheer van Mier for the diamond. He desired to give it to me for a birthday present."

"But Van Mier told me it wasn't for sale," interposed Captain Bromley.

"That I know nothing about."

"What's your husband's business?" demanded Donovan.

"My husband is Mr. Li Yat."

"Li Yat, the actor?" questioned Philip.

"The Oriental star that's playing in San Francisco?"

The woman bowed and watched Philip through half-closed eyes.

"What were you doing at night on the deck when we saw you?" the film star asked. "Why were you so distressed?"

"My bracelet. I had just discovered it was lost."

"But you found it again?"

"By great good fortune a strange gentleman found it for me."

"Would you know him again if you saw him?" shouted the blustering Donovan.

"Could you describe him?" prompted Philip.

"Hey, you stay outa this!" Donovan cried. "What are you doing—playing the cop in one of her trashy novels?"

"That remark is quite uncalled for," blazed Peter Dean.

"Third-degree methods," scoffed Philip.

"Shut up!" raged Donovan. "Aud quit butting in."

"You're right, sergeant." Philip straightened his back. "It's none of my business. Thanks for calling my attention to it. Good-morning!"

As Philip opened the door a short, squat figure stumbled forward—Philip wondered for the moment if the valet of the dead man had been listening.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Williams.

"Don't mention it." Philip stood to one side. "Come right in—the more the merrier!"

The servant woman jumped to her feet and pointed a lean finger.

"That man! He man found my lady's bracelet!"

"You're Van Mier's valet?" Donovan glowered at Williams. "Why didn't you tell me you'd found the bracelet?"

"Excuse me, sir"—Williams shrank

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back—"I'm—I'm very nervous, sir. This murder has unnerved me. Would you please not—not bellow?"

Donovan was opening his mouth to start yelling when there came an urgent rapping on the door. The captain opened it to find Mrs. Kinney in a great state of distress.

"Oh, captain, captain," she wailed, ringing her hands together, "I saw it with my own eyes!"

"What did you see?" The captain was furious at the interruption.

"I passed Mr. Trent's cabin, and the door was open." Mrs. Kinney gave a sickly smile. "I took a little peep. There were two men there, in the bathroom, but I only glimpsed their shadows. I saw a large black hand, and heard a voice say: 'The bloodstained hand!' Then I ran, captain."

"Come on, everybody!" yelled Philip, and led the way.

Donovan and Philip were first into the cabin. The detective had a gun.

"Come outa there!" he thundered.

The bath-room door opened and there was Mert and his cameraman, Hymie.

"Master mind unmask murderer," cried Mert, and looked at the gun.

"Here, put that away."

"What are you raving about?"

"I figured the guy what did the shooting must have hid in here." Mert pointed to the bath-room. "We found his hand-print on the wall. So I got Hymie to take some pictures. Look at it—there's no charge."

"Outa my way!" roared Donovan.

There, on the wall, was a hand-print.

"By gosh, the man who made this had a scar across his palm!" cried Philip.

"Yes, and the man I paid to play dead had a scarred hand just like that," Peter Dean exclaimed.

"Who is he?" Donovan wanted to know.

"I got him for Miss Dean," explained Mert. "He's a small-part player from the studio; his name's Larkin. They use him for dopes and corpses."

"Larkin is one of his many names," sneered Donovan. "That's 'Cokey' Joe Ferris. His racket is playing in a picture until he gets a line on the star's jewellery. All you folk clear outa here. Captain, send Cokey Joe to me, and I'll handle him."

Donovan's methods of getting Cokey Joe to talk were brutal. He slammed a big hand to the little man's face and then shook him till his teeth rattled.

"Now spill it!" he ordered. "Where is the White Dragon diamond?"

"I don't know anything about the diamond," Cokey Joe cowered in a chair. "I took the job playing corpse because it gave me a chance at Trent's belongings."

"Do you expect me to believe that, you rat?"

"It's the truth. I was going through his bags, somebody knocked, so I hid in the bath-room. Then the Dutch guy came in and went across the room and knocked on the bed-room door. Then I heard a sort of groan and then an awful thud like somebody falling. I heard somebody and then there was silence. I couldn't get the bath-room door open, and I cut my hand doing it. I did it in the end. There was the body stretched on the floor. I hopped it."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"And get pinched for doing the man in—not likely."

"Anything else?"

"Yeah, I nearly forgot," Ferris cried. "I hid on the deck to hear what would

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happen. Not long afterwards Trent and that Dean dame came along and found the body."

"They might have searched the body and found the diamond," Donovan pondered the point. "All right, Cokey, you can go; but take my tip and stick around where I can find you."

Donovan was taking a survey of the state-room when he heard excited voices outside. He dragged open the door. Outside was Morgan, Trent, and Peter Dean.

"Donovan, I've got it all figured out. Pete and Trent committed the murder."

"The blithering idiot has gone crazy!" shouted Philip.

"Come in here," ordered Donovan. "We don't want the whole ship listening. Now spill it."

"You know Pete brought Cokey on board. Trent enticed Van Mier to this room. They framed that bloodstain to pin it on Cokey. They found the body, and by the time you got there the diamond was gone." Mert grinned.

"How does that read?"

"Why make me a crook?" complained Philip.

"Grand—grand!" Mert darted to the door. "Hymie, come in and fix your camera."

"Is this another publicity gag?" belted Donovan, the veins in his thick neck standing out like whipcords.

"Nothing else but," chuckled the publicity man. "You get headlines when you get arrested, and you'll get more headlines when you can prove you're innocent." He rubbed his hands. "Donovan, you got some handcuffs? Now I want Hymie to take a picture as you're slipping 'em on the suspected pair."

Donovan strode up to little Hymie and took him by the scruff of the neck. He hurled Hymie and camera out of the room.

"Shut up!" he roared at Mert, as the latter would have spoken. "I've had enough of you people messing things up with your fool publicity stunts. All three of you are in this, and I'm fixing it so you keep quiet for a spell, while I straighten this killing out." He took out the handcuffs. "Stick out your left hand, Trent, and you the right, Dean."

"What are you going to do?" shouted Philip. "You can't—"

"Can't I?" mocked Donovan, and he proceeded to handcuff the left hand of the film star to the right hand of the famous authoress. "That's settled you two. Now"—he leered at Morgan—"I'm going to fix you so you can't try any tricks." He proceeded to lock the publicity man in the bath-room.

"I could have you fired off the force for this!" Philip protested when Donovan prepared to leave.

"It'll be worth it to have a few hours when you weren't in my hair," chuckled Donovan.

"You haven't got any hair!" retorted Philip, gazing at the detective's large bald head.

"One day I'll leave you overboard!" Donovan cried, and went out, locking the door behind him.

The Masked Man

"I'M going to ring for the captain and get out of here," Peter said in a whisper.

"What's the hurry?" chuckled Philip. "So far, this seems the best moment of this mad holiday of mine. I've become attached to you in more ways than one. Don't you feel a strong link between us?"

"Perhaps I shouldn't confess it, but I find it hard to tear myself away,"

laughed Peter Dean. "You know, Philip, this would make a swell story, but it wants a new twist—more menace or something."

"Stay quiet!" came a harsh voice.

They jumped round. Covering them with a nasty-looking gun was a man whose features were concealed by a black hood, with slits for the eyes in it. They gleamed balefully at the two dumbfounded prisoners.

"How did you get in here?"

"Through the bed-room," came the answer. "How I got there doesn't concern you. Come across with that diamond!"

"We haven't got any diamond," answered Philip.

"Don't pull that on me." The masked man came closer. "You came in here just after I bumped him off, didn't you?"

"So you murdered him?" coolly stated Philip.

"Sure, and you got the diamond. Ain't nobody else coulda took it, and you're gonna hand it over to me if I have to kill you!"

"You can kill both of us, but you won't find your diamond." Philip tried to get a good look at those gleaming eyes. "Why didn't you take the diamond when you bumped off Van Mier?"

"No time."

"I see." The star considered this for a moment. "You seem to know more of this crime than anyone else—Why did Van Mier come to see me?"

"Maybe he wanted your picture or autograph or a lock of your hair," sneered the masked gunman. "Now stop asking fool questions and hand over that diamond."

"But I haven't got it."

"I'm going to count three and then I shoot!" The gun shook in a gloved hand. "Hand over the Dragon!"

"You can count a hundred, but I haven't got the diamond." Philip took out a cigar with his free hand from a box. It was Peter Dean who struck a match with her free hand and helped light the cigar. All the while she was watching Philip and trying to read his thoughts.

"One—"

"One moment," interrupted Philip. "I mean I haven't the diamond, but I see no sense in being shot because you think I'm a liar." He stood up, and Peter did the same. "We will raise our arms and you can search for yourself. After which we will take you on a Cook's tour of this apartment, and we will open any boxes or bags for your inspection."

"Okay, but don't try any funny business," the masked man answered. "Seems you've got the diamond hidden in this room. Best show me where."

"Very well, I'll show you." Philip gave the girl a slight wink and managed to move so that he shielded her from view. She managed to pick up a heavy paper-weight. The star then moved towards his desk. Peter saw him look at the light switch.

Philip bent over the desk and tugged at a drawer.

"Sorry, can't get it open with one hand." He stood back. "It's in that drawer."

"Outa my light!" cried the masked man.

It was then that Philip managed to get his hands to the lights and switch them off. The masked man turned with a snarl of rage and, seeing the gleaming cigar, fired. Then Peter threw the paper-weight.

When Donovan, Captain Bromley and some of his officers burst into the room

and switched on the lights they found Peter Dean kneeling beside an unconscious Philip Trent.

"I hit the wrong man," she sobbed. Furious banging on the bath-room door effected the release of Mert Morgan.

"A joke's a joke," raged the publicity man, and stabbed a finger at Donovan. "But that fat slab stuck me in there, so that some other mug could pot at me. A shot missed my ear by inches." "What a pity," retorted Donovan.

Captain Bromley stated, on hearing the story of Philip Trent and Peter Dean, that it all sounded very much like publicity to him, and if he could prove it he would have them sent to prison for years.

After Donovan had taken off the handcuffs and the doctor had patched up the stunned Philip, very little happened for the rest of that day, though Philip much mystified the wireless operator by dispatching a long radiogram.

Some time before midnight, Captain Bromley sent for Donovan and informed him that it would be impossible for anyone to smuggle the diamond ashore, as the San Francisco police had an X-ray machine at the dock, which meant that no one left the ship without a fluoroscope examination.

The White Dragon

IN the morning it was Williams who brought Philip, whose head still ached, a cup of tea.

"I was wondering, sir, if I might be of assistance," murmured the valet. "Unfortunate circumstances have deprived me of a master, and as you seem, sir, to have had rather a harrowing time, I wondered if I might, sir, be of assistance to you?"

"You're hired for the rest of the trip," sleepily murmured Philip.

"Thank you, sir," Williams bowed his thanks. "There's a radiogram for you, sir."

Philip woke up at once, and as a result of the contents of the radiogram, dressed and sought out Madame Li Tai.

"Yes, the Dragon did belong to my family," she admitted on questioning. "It was stolen during the Boxer Rebellion. Years later it turned up, and Mynheer van Mier bought it before we knew it was found."

"And he asked you more money than you could pay? So you tried to get it another way?"

"No! No!" the Chinese woman cried fiercely. "By what right do you question me? It is none of your business. You are not of the police. You are just a picture actor."

Peter Dean had invited Philip and Mert to have breakfast in her state-room, and over the repast Philip told her of his rebuke by Li Tai.

"You got a lot out of that," laughed Peter, and was still chuckling when Donovan appeared.

"I hear you've been at it again—questioning Madame Li Tai," cried the detective. "Why don't you keep quiet?"

"Have a scrambled egg, old boy?" Philip was not upset. "You look a bit thoughtful this morning. Anything on your mind?"

"Maybe," Donovan fingered his thick chin. "It may interest you folk to know that I got a confession out of Cokey Joe last night. He told me where he hid the diamond."

"What!" gasped his audience.

"Yeah! I thought he had it, and here it is," Donovan took a small case from his pocket and clicked it open.

They left their breakfast to gape at the White Dragon—it glittered with diamonds, large and small.

"I'd murder a man myself for that," cried Peter.

"I believe you would," said Philip.

"How would you like to get credit for finding it?" Donovan asked the star pointedly.

Philip was suspicious.

"What's the catch?"

"Mr. Trent, as soon as we arrive, the San Francisco police will take this case

over. The best I can get is a little publicity. I'd rather have two thousand dollars for my family."

"Sorry, no sale."

"Why not?" argued Peter. "There's no harm in it. The police'll get the diamond just the same."

"Phil, it's a million dollars' worth of publicity for two grand," excitedly exclaimed Mert Morgan. "Selby James recovers the White Diamond—unravel's baffling mystery of the seas—risks life to—"

"Shut up!" snapped Philip. "I'm not interested."

As Philip walked over to a sideboard to replenish his plate, Peter Dean had a daring idea. Like Mert, she was a great believer in publicity.

"Bring me that diamond before we go ashore and I'll give you two thousand," she whispered. "You leave this to Mert and myself to handle. Now get out before he gets suspicious."

"You're the first writer I've ever met that had brains," hissed Mert, who had overheard the plot. "I'll bust this in every paper before the boat lands. He'll have to go through with it."

When the boat docked, the first person aboard was Chief Gibbs, of the Department of Investigation.

One of the first persons to greet him was Mert Morgan.

"How are you, chief?"

"Hallo!" Gibbs eyed the publicity man—he had met him before.

"I hear you plan to X-ray everybody," Mert said with a great grin. "Don't waste a lot of time, chief. Trent has got the diamond. I'll take you to the captain's cabin—they're all there."

Naturally Gibbs was accompanied by several other officers and quite a crowd of reporters. Some of them managed to get into the captain's cabin, and Philip was astounded when one of them came up to him.

"Give us an exclusive story, Mr. Trent. Where did you find the diamond?"

"Have you got any line on the murderer?" Another reporter got in a question.



Philip opened the case and took out—a piece of coal!

"Say, where did you fellows get all this drivin' from?" Philip frowned. "I never found any diamond or solved any murder."

"That's just his modesty," spoke Peter Dean, very close to Philip's side and one hand in his jacket pocket. "He doesn't want to take credit for it."

"He hates publicity worse than he hates poison," Mert Morgan was all grins.

"I'll brain you—if that's possible!" angrily cried the star. "I wish you'd all leave me alone."

"Fine work, fine work!" boomed the voice of Chief Gibbs, who had managed at last to get across the room. "I've told the captain to dismiss the passengers as there'll be no X-ray examination. Smart work, Trent."

"What is all this?" Philip demanded, and a startled look came into his eyes as Mert pushed forward Hymie and his camera. "Now what's the gag?"

"I want a picture of you handing over the diamond to the chief," answered Mert. "Take it out of your pocket, Phil, and give it to the chief."

The triumph in the publicity man's eyes made Philip even more suspicious. He put his hands in his pockets and then he felt the diamond. Slowly he took it out, and there was loud handclapping. He would have liked to have murdered Mert there and then—another cursed publicity frame-up. Philip realised that he could not do or say anything; afterwards he promised himself the pleasure of socking Mert Morgan.

Chief Gibbs had no objection to having his picture taken, and some time was wasted before Mert was satisfied with the pictures he had secured.

"One last picture, Phil, of you taking the diamond out of the case," he begged.

Philip opened the case and took out not the White Dragon, but a piece of coal.

What an uproar! Everybody talking and shouting at once. Finally Chief Gibbs obtained order and heard from Peter Dean how she had paid Donovan two thousand dollars only a few minutes before the ship docked, and that she had done it to help Philip Trent. She had put the case in his pocket.

"You've got to find Donovan—he's got the diamond!" she cried.

An officer pushed through the crowd. "Sir, a message from the Los Angeles police—urgent!"

Chief Gibbs read it out:

"Body of Sergeant Donovan found floating in San Pedro Harbour. Believe his murderer impersonating him on board s.s. Brunel.—NOLAN, Chief of Los Angeles Police Department."

He folded the message.

"He murdered Vai Mier."

"I don't think so," said Peter. "But he did get the diamond."

Cokey Joe Talks

PHILIP TRENT sat at a table in the sitting-room of his suite at the Hotel Splendid. He was busy playing patience. Standing behind him was Kelvin, who had flown from Hollywood. Sitting in a chair and looking far from happy was Peter Dean. Leaning against a mantelpiece and scowling was Mert Morgan.

There had been a spot of bother. Kelvin was hoarse from shouting at them. "Trent Fooled by Fake Sleuth!" "Trent Victim of Hoax!" "Movie Star Flops in Real Life Mystery!" How could he start another Selby James picture. March 27th, 1937.

ture when the papers had headlines like these? All the while he shouted and raved Philip played patience.

"Why can't you say something?" Kelvin bellowed.

"I will!" Philip placed a Jack on a Queen, and then looked up at his audience. "You, Kelvin, almost wept when I went on vacation, and, I presume, conspired with Miss Dean and Mert to get me back in your toils. A fake crime of the 'Murder in the Mud Bath' was staged for my benefit, and act one went mostly according to plan. Then a real stiff came into act two, and that upset all your plans. It wouldn't have been so bad if Mert hadn't tried to get a publicity angle on the affair, but he not only tried, but concocted situations to bring me more in the public eye. He succeeded with a vengeance, and then Peter Dean has to try some of this chief publicity racket. I know she is sorry, and I've told her there's nothing to forgive. I'm glad"—Philip jumped up—"and I'll tell you why. This has killed this Selby James business for ever. That it has probably finished me makes no great difference, because I can always go round with a circus on show as the prize mug. You, Kelvin, have told me I'm through, you've insulted Miss Dean, and you've no more business here!" He pointed to the door. "We'll call off our contract and you can get out!"

"That's okay with me!" Kelvin cried.

"Now that everything is settled, go before my patience works out and I leave this patience to sock you! Imshi!" He pointed authoritatively. "That is an Eastern expression meaning to go and quickly."

Ben Kelvin opened the door and fell over a body.

"There's a man here!" cried Kelvin. "He looks dead—he's been struck on the head!"

"It's Cokey Joe!" gasped Philip. "The murderer must have found he was going to spill something, and followed him."

Ben Kelvin, who had no real intention of severing his connection with Trent, pushed the star, Peter and Mert back into the room. He closed the door.

"I'm going to 'phone the police," said Philip.

"No!" Kelvin gripped his arm. "You can't afford to have another body discovered in your room. We've got to get rid of it."

"Are you proposing that we destroy or hide this body?" demanded Philip. "Just so it won't upset my value with the public, so you can go on turning out your cheap thrillers and other slush? Well, there's nothing doing. The police are going to hear about this. If I can't 'phone them, then I'll fetch them."

Philip jerked open the door and reeled back—the body of Cokey Joe had vanished.

The three men went huddling down some stairs to see if there was any sign of the corpse. Peter was about to follow, then there came a tinkle on the 'phone.

"Hallo! Yes?"

"Linen-room—down hall—come quick—nobody else—just you!" croaked a voice—the voice of Cokey Joe.

"No sign of him," panted Philip, when the three men got back. "Did I hear the 'phone?"

"Just a C.O.D. package," answered the girl. "I'll be right back."

In the linen-room she found Cokey Joe. The little crook was white and

shaken and had a terrible bruise on his forehead.

"Didn't see who it was," Joe stammered out in weak tones. "Just crept up behind and hit me on the head."

"Why did you disappear?" "Heard Trent saying he was going to call the cops."

"I'm calling a doctor." "No, stay here." Weakly he put out a hand to detain her. "Stay here—must tell you—Donovan sent for me—afraid to go out—offered to split if I'd help him sell Dragon."

"To Madame Li Tai?" questioned the girl.

"Yes," Cokey Joe answered. "Fraid of Donovan—had egg. So came to you."

"Where is Donovan?"

"Hiding in Chinatown. Wanted me to have Madame Li Tai 'phone him seven o'clock to-night."

"Give me his 'phone number." Peter Dean tore off a strip of sheet and bound up his head. "And I'll see that there's no trouble for you with the police. There's a reward out for the capture of Donovan and the recovery of the Dragon—I'll see you get your share."

Philip got rid of Kelvin and Morgan and finished his game of patience. Against his will he had been persuaded not to 'phone the police. Why wasn't Peter here for him to ask her advice? She had a suite in the hotel, and he decided to go along and see why she had not come back.

Her door was slightly ajar and he was about to knock when he heard her voice, but speaking in broken English.

"Yes, yes; this is Madame Li Tai speaking. Is this Mr. Donovan? Good. I received your message and am most happy of the news."

Philip opened the door a little wider. "Is it true you are willing to sell me the Dragon?"

Brazenly Philip entered the room and Peter Dean gave him a startled glance. He nodded his approval.

"You will sell. Very good." She held the receiver away so that Philip could also hear Donovan's gruff tones.

"Sure, I'm ready to sell. A hundred thousand. You got the money, I know, because that's what your husband offered Van Mier."

"I am most willing to pay the money," lisped Peter Dean. "You will have the man—Mr. Cokey Joe—bring the diamond to me, yes?"

"I don't trust that dope—I'll have to take a chance myself."

"Where is safe place I may meet you?" answered Peter.

"I'll meet you outside the Union Terminal at eleven to-night."

Philip took the 'phone from Peter.

"Hallo! This is Li Yat speaking," he said in silky tones. "The husband of Madame Li Tai. My wife, she has told me everything. Naturally we are anxious to avoid the police, but what you suggest is not safe. Excuse, please. I speak to my wife."

Philip kept his hand over the mouth-piece.

"Terminal's too open—easy for him to make a getaway. We've got to get this diamond back, and no more mistakes."

"Don't keep him waiting too long," she warned.

"Very sorry, Mister Donovan, we keep you waiting," purred Philip.

"Cut out the gab, I'm in a hurry," came back the snarling tones of the crook. "What about the Chinese Theatre? You're playing there to-night, aren't you?"

"Very good, Mr. Donovan. Chinese Theatre, prop. room, ten o'clock. That is most convenient for me."

"Okay for me. Don't forget the dough."

"No, no, me not forget. Good health, Mr. Donovan," Philip cried, and rang off.

"Now we'll get him," enthused Peter. "Come here!" Philip grabbed her. "What do you mean by trying to put this Madame Li Tai stuff over on Donovan? Wanting to play a lone hand?"

"I thought you weren't interested." "I'm interested in two things at the present moment," Philip drew her on to his knee. "One thing is to get back that diamond, and—"

"The other is?"

"To get a most annoying but alluring young woman to marry me. She'd be safer married to me."

"Get me the diamond—prove that you can be a great detective—and I'll consider the question of marriage."

Another Killing

ON the stage of the Chinese theatre a weird dragon was gambolling about and a number of Chinese women and children were backing away in terror. The dragon spurted fire from a large mouth and looked like an ungainly centipede. In the scene carried a number of soldiers wearing a curious assortment of armour and all armed with swords. They tried to kill the dragon, but his fiery breath drove them back. Finally, a tall Chinaman, in armour that gleamed, leapt into the scene, and with a few passes of his very long sword slew the dragon.

Li Yat, having executed a number of motions with the sword, bowed to an enthusiastic audience and retired to his dressing-room to prepare for the next act.

The time was exactly ten o'clock.

Out of the shadows slunk the figure of Donovan. He glanced round to see if he were observed and came to some dirty stone steps that led down to the prop room that ran underneath the stage of the Chinese theatre.

A few minutes later a taxi pulled up in this side street and it unloaded quite a crowd. Peter Dean, Philip, Williams, Mert and Hymie.

"Here we are," Philip marshalled his small army. "If we can't settle this business we are going to look rather foolish, so there must be no mistakes. Williams!"

"Yes, sir?" The valet did not seem to relish his surroundings.

"Go down those steps and find out where the property-room is."

"Oh, no, sir, if you don't mind, sir." Williams looked as if he might bolt. "I'd rather not, sir. The property-room, sir, is below the stairs. A fortune-teller prophesied that I might die underground, sir."

"I can't stand cowards, Williams," snapped Philip. "So if you want to stay with me go and find that room. Mert, pay off the taxi."

Williams went to the top of the stairs, hesitated, and then vanished from sight.

"What's the next move?" questioned Peter Dean.

"Williams should be back any moment," Philip answered. "I told him on the way that he had to find the property-room and report back to me. I thought at the time he looked a bit scared. We'll give him no more than three minutes."

Three minutes passed and then the conspirators crept down the steps and found a wooden door, which opened to Philip's touch. They saw a passage lit

with an old lantern. They tiptoed along and there was no sound down here, though one could hear feet shuffling on the boards upstairs.

"Don't you think we should get some cops around here in case there's something phoney?" Mert said in a hoarse whisper.

"No, they'd only gun things up," retorted Philip.

"And if there's gumming up to be done he wants to do it himself," mocked Peter Dean.

"Help—help!" came a faint cry, very close at hand.

When Li Yat entered his dressing-room his wife was waiting for him. She held out a note.

"Hurry, hurry," she cried in Chinese.

"Here is a paper—see what it says."

"Quiet, please," Li Yat spoke sharply as he took the note. "English is better—too many long ears."

The Chinaman opened the note, and after a slight pause read it out aloud:

"Meet you in prop-room at ten o'clock as agreed. If you want the diamond bring the money and keep your mouth shut.—Donovan." He folded the note slowly. "Who brought you the note?"

"It was handed to Ning."

"There may be much trouble in this," Li Yat stated, as he divested himself of his armour.

"But I must get the Dragon back!" cried his wife.

"You have wished for the Dragon and Van Mier is dead. It is not good."

"I did not want the man to kill him—

only to get the diamonds." Li Yat donned a gorgeous silk kimono, and from a drawer took a curious mask that made his face look like that of a dead man. He looked at his wife in his expressionless way before donning the mask. "From now on you will leave this to me," he stated.

The four in the corridor pulled up at the sound of those faint cries. Seeing a door, Philip did not hesitate to push it open. It was the prop-room. There were weird headdresses, suits of armour, many swords and spears, and a great deal of old scenery.

"Keep cool," Philip advised those behind him. "It sounded like Williams' voice."

"Help—help!" came the call.

They found Williams sitting on the floor of a small cellar. He was nursing his head.

"What's the matter? Are you hurt?"

"He was here," Williams staggered to his feet. "I heard footsteps, and as I turned he struck me. I fell down—he ran—I couldn't see his face."

"What are you talking about?"

"The murderer, sir. I'm sure it was. He had a black handkerchief, sir." Williams pointed to a door out of the cellar. "He went that way, sir." Suddenly he put his hands to his forehead. "Oh, my head—my head."

Philip shot out an arm, because the man looked like falling.

Mert suddenly grabbed at Philip and pointed to another door.

"What's that?"

"What's what?"



There sprawled on the floor was the body of Donovan.

"On the floor!"
"If I were writing this," said the cool voice of Peter Dean, "I'd say it was blood."

"It is blood," Philip flashed a torch on the ground. Then he gripped the handle of the door and jerked it open. He flashed his torch into the darkness. "Good heavens—look!"

There sprawled on the floor was the body of Donovan.

"Is he dead?" whispered Peter.

"Quite!" Philip said, after kneeling beside the body. "And the murderer has got the diamond."

"Let's get out of this place," came the moan of little Hymie.

"We've got to get through with this," Philip stated decidedly. "Williams, you look badly shaken, so you had better go upstairs and mount guard."

"Yes, sir," Williams answered with alacrity.

"Mert—you better go get the police."

"Get the police?" cried Mert. "I reckon it is about time we got the police."

"Pete, you go back to the hotel and wait for me."

"What! And leave you here!" Peter's eyes were indignant. "I'm staying."

"This is no picnic, darling," Philip argued. "The murderer is likely to be back here any minute. The murderer killed Donovan and got the diamond—he'll try to collect from Madame Li Tai."

"Let's save time by pretending you've given me all your arguments and I've said I'm staying here."

Philip smiled at her fondly.

"I admire your nerve. All right, Mert, make tracks."

Mert and Hymie needed no second instructions. They hastened out into the corridor, and were half-way up the steps into the street, when they pulled up with a jerk.

"Help—help—help!"

Mert and Tymic looked back and hesitated.

"Help—help—help!"

"We gotta look into this," Mert said in quaking tones. "You go first, Hymie—I'll see no harm comes to you."

Down the steps they went again, and now they observed an open door they had not seen before. They pushed it open and Mert's torch revealed that it was a coal cellar.

Suddenly the door behind them closed with a crash, and they heard the sound of a key turning in the lock. A mocking, horrible laugh made them shiver with fear, and they sighed their relief as they heard the footsteps fading away.

"We gotta get outa here, and get the cops," whispered Mert, and flashed the torch. "Look, there's a shoot cover. If I stand on your shoulders I can get out that way."

Five minutes later two coal-begrimed figures managed to lever up the cover and drag themselves into the deserted street.

Trapped at Last

PHILIP closed the cellar door and hid the gruesome spectacle. He found a switch and, to his relief, it worked. Three dusty, weak lights appeared on the walls. The prop-room was full of grotesque shadows.

Philip pulled out a gun.

"This murderer may not come back, but if he does he'll have to settle with this!" He held up the gun. "Better keep very quiet, Pete, so we can hear everything."

Very quietly Philip went round the prop-room until he came to another door. He came back to the girl
March 27th, 1937.

"I want to see where that door leads to."

"Don't leave me. I hate to admit it, but—I'm scared."

Philip gave her the gun.

"All right, take this—you'll be all right." The door closed with a slight thud behind him.

The film star flashed his torch round the room, and saw that it was another section of the property-room. Then his light rested on a figure in a gorgeous kimono that wore a death's head mask. He was just thinking how amazingly life-like was the figure, when, to his horror, the figure moved. It was Li Yat.

Peter Dean stared at the closed door with frightened eyes. She longed to call Philip back.

She half-turned her head as if she heard a sound. She clutched the revolver and wondered what would happen if she had the nerve to pull the trigger. Then her heart came into her mouth as the door from the corridor opened slowly.

A squat figure, with the face concealed by a black handkerchief, stood on the threshold.

"Gimme that gun," the masked man snarled, threatening her with the revolver in his hand. "And get away from that door."

NEXT WEEK'S THRILLING FILM DRAMAS!



"LEGION OF TERROR"

When a bomb addressed to a United States senator is found in the sorting-office at Washington by Frank Marshall, a young postal-inspector, he and his colleague, Slim Hewitt, are sent off to the town of Stanfield to track down its sender—and become caught in the toils of a murderous organisation known as "The Hooded Legion." A sensational story, starring Bruce Cabot.

"LADY REPORTER"

There is deadly rivalry between two newspapers and a gangster sees a chance of making easy money and links up with the "Post." Two young men and a brave girl are involved in the crime wave that sweeps the city. Starring Ray Walker, Evelyn Knapp and Regis Toomey.

Also

Another grand episode of the amazing serial:—

"UNDERSEA KINGDOM"

Starring Ray Corrigan and Lois Wilde

Peter Dean let the masked man take the gun from her and she backed slowly away. Suddenly the man reached up and pulled down the black handkerchief. "Williams?" she gasped out.

"If you mugs had had the brains of fleas you'd have spotted my phoney English accent," sneered Williams. "You ought to make me the hero of your next book. I took the job with Van Mier to swipe that chunk of ice for Madame Li Tai."

"You killed Van Mier?"

"Yeah. I popped him. When you butted in I had to beat it, and Donovan got the diamond."

Neither of them noticed that the door had moved slightly.

"I thought Cokey Joe was going to spill something," Williams went on with a fiendish chuckle. "So I shut him up. Then I got Donovan."

"Why are you telling me this?" Peter managed to whisper.

"Because these Chinks have plenty of ways of getting rid of folk what know too much," leered Williams. "This gat's got a silencer. Watch me get Trent when he comes through that door."

"He's not here," cried Peter, desperate fear clutching at her heart.

"I was watching—I saw him go through that door," sneered the killer. "If you should think of shouting I just wouldn't try, or it'll be too bad for you."

The door swung open and into the property-room moved the gorgeous figure in the silken kimono, with the dreadful mask over the features.

"Regret exceedingly to interrupt honourable sir," came the purring voice. "I have come to talk business." The mask turned towards the girl. "Sorry, Miss Lady, but Mr. Trent detained by unavoidable accident."

"Oh!" The girl gave a cry of anguish.

"You will keep mouth closed until I complete business with this gentleman. You come from Donovan?"

"Sure. Got the money?"

"As you say in your most charming idiom—sure." Hands came out of the silken kimono, and one held a great wad of notes, which Williams reached out to seize. "No. First please, the Dragon."

Williams dived into his pocket and brought out a handkerchief, from which he extracted the diamond. The glittering gem he passed over, but all the while he kept his gun pointing at the Oriental.

The money was handed to him. Williams flipped the thick wad of notes.

"Looks okay to me." He pointed his gun at Peter. "This dame, she knows too much. We should fix her so she won't talk."

"Very simple matter," purred the soft voice. "Give me your gun—I fix her."

Without hesitation Williams passed over his gun, and Peter was about to scream in terror as the Chinaman pointed it at her. But when Williams' greedy eyes were fixed on the notes the gun suddenly changed its direction.

"Give me back that money!"

Williams looked up and saw the gun covering him.

"Why, you dirty rat, I'll—"

"Give back the money!" The voice behind the death mask had changed. "Make it snappy, or I'll kill you like you did Van Mier and Donovan."

Thoroughly covered, Williams handed back the money, and then a strong, lean hand went up to the death mask and removed it.

(Continued on page 26)

For years cattle-rustlers had swept through the territory until a Texas Ranger, in the guise of a cowboy, appeared on the scene. He realised what sort of a fight lay ahead of him when he discovered the identity of the hidden leader. A thrilling Western drama, starring Dick Foran



GUNS of the PECOS

"Let Nothing Stand in Your Way!"

THERE was little hope of prosperity in Texas until President Ulysses Grant met again with General Farrell, who had so distinguished himself in the Civil War of 1870. It was on a fine spring afternoon in Washington, when Grant had been lamenting the lack of remounts for the army, that one of his ministers mentioned Farrell and brought him into Grant's private room.

"You want horses, sir?" Farrell asked. "I know the man who'll raise thousands for you."

"Who is this magician?" Grant questioned.

"Major Burton. I've got him inside," came Farrell's prompt reply. "And I have a plan for dealing with all rogues, rustlers and vagabonds."

"Tell me," Grant commanded.

"The Texas Rangers, sir. My State is forming up a fine body of young men. And Major Burton—"

"Bring him in," Grant interrupted. "Let me see him."

Whilst Grant was signing some papers of State, Farrell re-entered with his friend. Burton was an upstanding, clean-faced man of about forty-eight, thickest, downright and a soldier to the last inch of him, despite his civilian clothes. He approached Grant's chair at the table and stood stiffly to attention.

The President glanced up. Out came a large, welcoming hand.

"It's you, is it? Burton—I thought I remembered the name. How are you?"

"Fine, sir! I can help you. I'm going to start a horse farm at Lone

Star, in the Pecos County. Farrell says you need 5,000 army remounts. You can have them by August."

Grant loosened his great grip.

"The contract's yours, Burton. I remember you for a man of your word. But Texas—" His eyes glinted. "Bit of a busy State, what?"

"With your permission, sir, I shall have the new police—the Texas Rangers."

"The only law in Pecos County," said Grant, "so far as I can make out, is the six-shooter! You'll have a lively time, Burton—so will the new police. But good luck to you!"

Burton and his foreman were sitting their horses on a ridge overlooking the valley.

"Sometimes, Jordan, I thought this day would never come," said Burton musingly. "Look below—a couple of thousand of the finest horses in the States."

Jordan, thin and wiry, nodded.

"Finest in the world!"

Burton laughed a little.

"Well—maybe! But I'm sure of one thing—without you and the Rangers, this experiment would have failed."

"I ain't never minded any of the work, major," Jordan replied modestly. "And that goes for the rest of the boys."

Burton tightened the reins of his mount.

"Well, let's get started back. There's plenty else to do this morning besides looking at our horses and bucking ourselves on being mighty clever!"

Down in the Golden Apple Inn, in

Pecos County, a typical Western town, customers were drinking and talking big and doing deals between themselves. A motley gathering of all sorts; good, bad and indifferent. A young man was at the piano, crooning to himself. He seemed unconcerned with anything but his music.

A loud-voiced fellow at the bar, after glancing over and again at the card players and dice throwers at the tables, expressed his thoughts.

"Yes, sir—it's God's own country and the devil's own people!"

Behind the bar, in shirt-sleeves and apron, was a hard-faced, forceful-looking man in his late forties. He was serving beer when the stranger's remark caused him to stop short to listen.

Went on that bragging voice:

"I represent a crowd from the East. They want to invest a lot of mosey out here. I'm going to tell 'em that anybody who'd do that is plumb crazy!"

His friend murmured:

"I wouldn't, buddy. Leastways, not too loud."

"There's a feller up at Lone Star I've talked to—Major Burton—got fifty thousand dollars in hosses out there. I told him he shoulda clucked his mosey down a sewer."

The man behind the bar moved along to where two rough fellows were drinking. He whispered to the nearer one, a whiskered cut-throat:

"Who's that tenderfoot talking thru' his hat?"

"That's Wellman, judge. He wants to invest some dough."

"I guess we can accommodate him,"

said the judge as he went back to his place. He finished serving customers, then picked up a wooden mallet lying on the counter. He banged it down noisily. All talking stopped dead; the card players put down their hands, the young man at the piano lifted his fingers from the keys.

"This court will please come to order!" came the shout. "Deputies, bring the accused before the bar of justice!"

The judge gestured towards the talkative stranger, whereupon his two bullies sidled up to Wellman and seized him by the arms. They dragged him along the bar to where their master stood, mallet in hand.

"Stranger, I'm Judge Blake, lawfully appointed to this section. This is my court. You're accused of allowing as how there's no law in this territory except that of a six-shooter."

"Why, judge," stammered Wellman, "I—I didn't say no such thing."

"By implication you done it," Blake rapped out. "I heard you. Guilty or not guilty?"

"Why, not guilty. I—I mean guilty." There was a murderous threat in Blake's eyes. The mallet was put down.

"As lawfully chosen representative of the people, I, Judge Blake, resent this slur on a law-abiding community. But I will temper justice with mercy." He winked at the bullies, who released Wellman only to promptly unstrap the money-belt about his waist. They flung it on the counter.

Blake shook out the dollars and notes in the belt, counted them up at a glance. He pushed the loose silver towards the trembling Wellman. "You're fined five hundred dollars, stranger!"

"But I've only got five hundred and a bit—"

"Order in court!" Blake hellowed. "You're discharged! Throw him out, Luke. This session of the court is hereby adjourned."

The unfortunate Wellman was hustled to the door and flung into the street gutter. Luke and his comrade shot at him with their guns when he got up, aiming high to scare him—then, when he was in terrified flight, they returned to their places at the bar. Blake came to them presently.

"When are you heading for Burton's ranch?" he whispered.

"Everything's set," answered Luke. "We'll clear him out this time. Not a hoss left for him to ride to church on."

"How much stock has he got?" Blake wanted to know.

"Fifteen hundred head, maybe," spoke Luke.

The other man, a greasy-looking dago, gesticulated.

"More than that, judge! I guess he's got a towssand!"

Blake glanced at him with good-humoured contempt.

"Glad you aren't my bookkeeper, Carlos! You sure can't reckon up your own dirty fingers!" He moved along the bar. "Don't let anything stand in your way, boys."

The young man at the piano softly closed the lid over the keys. He rose up, stretching himself. A tall, well-built youngster, dressed in close-fitting riding kit. He picked up his big felt hat and strolled out of the saloon into the freshness of the little main street of Pecos.

A New Hand

AT the hitching-rail below the porch-way of a biggish frame house situated in a flowery garden, two horses were tethered. Burton and his foreman, Jordan, had just dismounted. March 27th, 1937.

They stopped a moment or so on the porch, turning about to stare towards the rows of stables on the left.

"We'll see developments here, Jordan. Right now in London the Texas Cattle Company is being formed. They're ready to invest on a big scale."

"It sure would be great to get some good people in with us," Jordan agreed. "But what with the shootin' and rustlin' we've had lately, folks'll think law ain't of much account hereabouts."

"We've not lost many," Burton argued.

"Over a hundred head. I'll be glad when we've got the next bunch delivered."

They turned to enter the house, Burton jingling the dollars in his trousers-pocket. He spoke, half to himself:

"I'll be glad, too. I haven't too big a balance at the bank."

A dark-haired, pretty girl was at the well-laid supper-table, putting the finishing touches to it. An older lady was lighting a kerosene-lamp at the side-board. The girl smiled at the men.

"Oh, good! We've been waiting for you, dad," she said. "Everything's ready."

"Lay another place, Alice—I've asked Jordan to eat with us. Hallo, Carrie—how's tricks?"

The older woman brought the lamp to the table.

"I don't know how you can live here, John," she complained. "Such a savage country!"

"You'll like it when you're used to it," Burton told his sister, chuckling. "And it's not so savage. Just a gun goes off now and then. But no one's hurt."

Alice had laid knife and fork and glass for the foreman. "Sit down, please. You going to start early to-morrow?"

"Yes, miss—at daybreak. The hosses are in fine shape. We oughta make railroad without losing a single one."

Supper was nigh finished when a sharp clatter of horses' hoofs was heard on the drive. Burton's hand went to the gun at his hip; Jordan rose quickly from the table to step towards the door. Aunt Carrie checked a little cry of fear as Alice spoke low:

"Somebody calling you, dad."

Jordan jerked open the door. An almost breathless boy ran in.

"Rustlers!" he gasped. "They're running off the herd! They've shot Jake off his boss. They nearly got me!"

Burton shouted to Jordan.

"Come on! Let's go!"

"Don't leave us, John!" cried Aunt Carrie desperately. But her niece ran to her to put a hand over her mouth. The three men dashed out of the house to their broncs at the hitching-rail and leapt into their saddles. They went tearing down the drive at full tilt, the loose gravel flying under the thunder of their horses' feet.

Down in the darkening valley Burton's broncs were being stampeded out of their corral by half a dozen wild fellows led by Luke and Carlos. The men fired their guns into the air, shouted and waved their arms, terrifying the horses. Gradually the herd began to stream off in the direction in which the rustlers were trying to head them—the flight became more and more headlong.

As Burton, with Jordan and the boy, came on the scene, the rustlers had got the whole pack of whinnying animals into a drive outwards towards open country.

Burton, with a furious shout, came charging after the thieves. The rustlers made off in the rear of the stampeding horses, driving them farther into the wilderness. But, ever and again, they turned in their saddles to shoot back at their three pursuers. In an open fight they could easily have beaten off Jordan and his master, but the rascals didn't wish to be identified and were hoping to get the horses safely away, under cover of the night, into the distant valley, where the rest of the gang were waiting with branding-irons all ready to change Burton's brand on the hides of his animals into those of their "boss."

By to-morrow they planned to have all the animals re-marked and sold out, beyond all hope of Burton's being able to claim them as his.

The boy cowhand was suddenly thrown. His mount had put a foot in a rabbit hole. Burton and Jordan charged onward. A shrewd shot from the major brought a squeal from the dago Carlos. His horse reared up, forelegs fighting in the air; then, with a sickening crash, horse and rider came to the ground.

Luke checked his mount. Carlos was struggling free.

"Jump up behind me," Luke called to him, "if you ain't dead. No time to lose foolin' about."

Major Burton had ridden in close to them. He aimed at Luke and missed by an inch. Luke snapped back at him and got the major just above the heart. With a gasping groan Burton tumbled sideways from the saddle. His mount, startled by the gun firing, sheered off at a gallop.

"Serves you right." Luke jumped down to kick his enemy brutally in the ribs. Burton's wallet was showing in his hip-pocket, and the desperado snatched at it. He sprang back into saddle.

"Get up behind me, I tell yer!" he yelled at Carlos.

There was no sign of Jordan, who had gone after the herd. He was firing wildly and had no hope of overtaking them. Luke and Carlos dashed away into the thickening night and were lost to sight.

A bare ten minutes later, Alice, who had chased after her father astride her grey mare, came upon Burton lying on his side—his eyes closed, his face lined with the agony of his passing—a dark, still oozing patch of blood staining the breast of his shirt from deep below it.

Before dawn the rustled horses had been rebranded with a new mark, altering the small circle and bar, which Burton had adopted, into a circle and cross. The animals were unidentifiable.

"Mighty good of the major to choose an easy brand like he did," chuckled the man with the branding-iron as he kicked out the embers of the fire he had used to heat his irons. "There ain't a Circle Bar left in Lone Star Valley!"

Carlos came along to Luke. "We take it easy now, si?"

"There ain't nothin' to worry about," Luke grunted. "Nothin' at all."

"You think heem hurt bad?" Carlos inquired.

"Burton won't talk no more," Luke answered. "There's no one to say a word."

Later on they made camp under the trees. The horses were safely corralled. Some of the men went to sleep, others of the gang played cards to keep awake. The moon got up and the dark valley was lit with a silver brightness. Luke sat smoking a foul pipe and talking with Palmer, the judge's right-hand man at the Golden Apple.

The quiet night was broken into melodiously by the sound of someone singing from afar off.

Suspicion shone in Palmer's long, smooth face. The song grew louder and nearer, the singer came alongside under the trees, mounted on a smoke-coloured horse. He drew rein as Palmer got to his feet to ask in a not-too-friendly voice:

"Where are you heading to, mister?"

"North, generally speaking," came the smiling answer. "Jest moseying along looking for a job. Saw your fire and came over."

Luke joined them.

"We're short-handed. How are you with a shootin' iron?"

"Fair." The youth called to one of the card players: "Toss up one of your cards."

The fellow flipped the ace of spades into the air. Quick as a flash the young man fired, cutting the card edgeways.

Luke nodded his shaggy head.

"You're on. Had any chow?"

"I can last till morning." The smiling eyes studied them both. "Quite a lot of stock you got outside. Who owns 'em?"

"You're hired to ride herd," spoke Palmer. "Not to ask questions. What's your name?"

"Steve Ainslee."

"Get along to supper and tell the cook you're an extra. And, listen—no singing or talking. We're quiet folk, taking a herd to Dodge City."

Next morning, in the little Western town, Ainslee was wandering around, killing time. He had breakfasted and stabled his horse back of a store on which the sign read "Davis Brothers, Cattle Buyers, etc."

It was a post office also, and a prosperous, respectable-looking business. Luke was inside the office—and Ainslee, peering through the window, saw him receive a draft cheque for the eatle. Luke folded the draft and put it in his wallet; then, with a grunted word of thanks to the clerk, came out of the store. He pulled up at sight of Ainslee.

"Hallo, you! Wait-in' for me?"

"Guessed I'd draw my pay for helping along with the hosses."

Luke thrust a dirty hand into his trousers pocket and drew out a two-dollar bill.

"You're leaving us, eh? I ain't so sorry."

"No more am I." Ainslee pocketed the bill with a shrug of his loose shoulders.

Luke eyed him.

"Tough, eh?"

"Tough enough for you."

It was a word and a blow. Luke struck out straight at Ainslee's still-smiling face. Ainslee dodged, then landed the mistler a terrific punch on his stubby chin. Luke went backwards over the sidewalk flat on to

his back. Ainslee stepped up to him and, leaning over the almost unconscious rascal, whipped out of his breast pocket the wallet with the incriminating draft inside. He wasted no more time but skipped round to the stables.

When Luke had regained his senses and his feet, Ainslee was well away down Dodge City main street on his smoke-coloured mount.

"Hi, stop him!" yelled Luke to the passers-by. "Stop thief! He's got my wallet!"

At once there was a big commotion in the street. Shots were fired at random as people ran out of their houses and shops. Everybody was talking at once, yelling orders—some even tried to stop Ainslee lower down the street, but he rode straight at them. A thickset youth leaped to a horse and went pounding after him.

Meantime Luke was spitting out oaths and shouting for Palmer and Carlos, who were in a saloon drinking with the rest of the gang. They came running out—unable to understand what could have happened so suddenly. Luke was so furious that he could scarcely speak.

"It's that extra hand! He sloshed me unawares and got away with the cheque!"

Palmer cut in.

"Don't worry—it can't be cashed without Blake's signature. Get the clerk to stop payment."

The thickset young man in pursuit of Ainslee was chasing him grandly, firing at him every minute. The pair disappeared in a cloud of dust at the bend of the street.

"He'll get him all right," said Palmer

to the still swearing Luke. "Don't fret yourself—come and have a drink."

At Headquarters

UP in the hills a strongly fortified series of huts was labelled with a sign painted on a roadside board in neat letters:

"Texas Rangers, Fourth District H.Q."

Two dusty young men came riding up to the sentry at the gates of the stockade. They swung down off their steaming horses and saluted the officer who stood at the gate with a pair of field-glasses in his hand. He answered the salute, saying:

"I was beginning to worry about you boys. Give me a full account of yourselves."

The thickset young man beside Ainslee grinned all over his round, likeable face.

"That's kind of a tall order, Captain Norris."

"I reckon it is, Carter." The officer gestured with his field-glasses. "Come on inside and let's hear all about it."

The three strode along to the main hut and entered the orderly-room. Norris seated himself at his desk.

"Well?"

"Major Burton's been killed. I'm afraid," Ainslee told him. "Shot at close quarters in a horse rustle."

Norris drew in his breath.

"Gee, that's bad news! Are you sure?"

"We couldn't wait to check up. Jeff went on ahead and I hooked up with a big drive of cattle on the way to Dodge



Advancing gun in hand into the darkness of the room, Steve gave the stealthy shadow behind him an easy target for the butt of a heavy six-gun.

City. I'm dead sure they were Burton's."

"How do you figure out that?"

"Burton's brand is a circle and bar. These horses were newly marked with a circle and cross. Easy enough to change a bar into a cross."

Norris asked:

"Who owns circle cross?"

"It was registered two weeks ago under the name of Judge Blake of Pecos City."

"Judge Blake?" Norris stared. "But he's an appointed judge. A hard sort of fellow, but there's nothing on him here—except that he runs his court at the Golden Apple."

The thickset youth stated:

"Steve's got something else."

Ainslee pulled out Luke's wallet from his pocket and took out the draft.

"A cheque for twenty thousand dollars, captain. Payment for the herd Burton was trying to save. By a little sleight-of-hand I got it from Luke Brady, the fellow in charge of the drive. Then Jeff joined in the hunt—and—and we got away."

"I was waiting for Steve up the street," Jeff grinned. "Shooting kind of frantic at him as he passed. I shot at him all the time—with blank cartridges! It was beautiful to hear them cheering me as I went pounding after him, yelling 'Stop thief—stop thief!'"

Norris nodded approval.

"You're two good boys. But this is a bad business. Blake's in absolute control of the country round Pecos. It would take four times as many men as we've got here to go and get him."

Ainslee put in:

"I've planned out an idea. I'll go in to Pecos and give the judge this draft. I'll think up a story—tell him Brady was out to double-cross him. Then, when Blake goes to cash the draft, I'll accuse him of compounding a felony and throw him on a horse and get him out of Pecos before anything can get started."

"Seems a mighty long chance, Ainslee. What's your opinion, Carter?"

Jeff Carter glanced towards Ainslee, grinned in his sheepish way and shrugged.

"I let Steve do all the thinking," he said.

Captain Norris still had misgivings.

"Suppose this Brady turns up?"

"He won't," Ainslee declared. "He'll be afraid—after losing the cheque."

"I'll go with you, Steve," Carter offered. "You're aiming at being principal guest at a necktie party!"

Alice Runs a Risk

A BUCKBOARD carriage, drawn by a couple of ranch horses and driven by the Burton foreman, pulled up before the sign of the Golden Apple.

"This here's the place, Miss Alice," said Jordan to the nearer of the two ladies with him. "Court-house can't be far away."

A stranger passing by stopped and doffed his hat.

"Can I help you, ladies? This is the court-house—the court-room's right inside the bar."

"Thank you, sir," said Alice. "Put up the horses, Don."

Jordan helped her to alight while the stranger helped down Aunt Carrie. Again thanking him, Alice led the way into the Golden Apple.

"Come on, auntie—nobody'll bite us!" she said.

Inside the noisy bar the women glanced askance at the crowd of drinkers and gamblers, drawing their

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full skirts about them all ready to run out. But Blake spotted them at once and came forward.

"I'm Judge Blake," he stated. "Can I do anything for you?"

"We're looking for the court-house," Alice began. Blake smiled in a fatherly way.

"This is the court, miss. Come into the hotel, where we can talk quietly."

They followed him through the long bar, aware of the many inquisitive eyes watching them. Blake took them to his own room and put chairs for them in a very polite way.

"I came to see about probate of my father's will. He—he was killed about a week ago. I've brought the title deeds of the ranch—Major Burton, perhaps you've heard of him, sir?"

"Oh—yes. Of course." Blake's expressive face showed a deep concern. "You poor child—I knew your father quite well! Who didn't? A fine fellow." He shook his head sadly. "A tragedy—but we'll catch the scoundrels yet."

Ho paused a moment.

"I'm glad you've come to me. You'll stay here a few days as my guests—while I get things settled for you."

"Thank you indeed." Alice gestured towards her aunt. "This is Miss Caroline Burton, my father's sister."

Blake shook hands warmly with the older lady.

"Glad to meet you, Miss Caroline. We'll try to make you happy at the Golden Apple."

Steve and Jeff had been refreshing themselves in the bar. They hadn't failed to notice Alice and her aunt.

"Burton's sister," spoke Jeff. "I've heard of her. And that must be the daughter."

When the judge had returned to the bar, Jeff and Steve moved out. They went to the hotel entrance, where Steve asked to see Miss Burton.

Presently Alice came down to the quiet lounge with Aunt Carrie at her heels, still very alarmed and anxious.

Steve doffed his hat.

"Could I have a word with you, Miss Burton?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir," Alice answered, blushing at his admiring eyes.

"My name is Steven Ainslee. And this is Jeff Carter, my friend."

"You evidently know me." Alice smiled as Jeff grinned widely at her.

"This is my aunt, Miss Caroline Burton."

"I was thinking," said Jeff, "that maybe Miss Caroline would like to see the sights of Pecos City whilst Mister Ainslee and Miss Burton are discussin' things?"

Aunt Carrie simpered.

"I'd sure be charmed, Mr. Carter." Left alone, Steve spoke in a low voice:

"Miss Burton, will you keep what I tell you in strict confidence, please?" They regarded each other steadily. Alice held out her hand at last.

"I will."

"Miss Burton, I'm a Texas Ranger. I'm here investigating a bad business. It's connected with your father's death—I have good reason to believe that Judge Blake is involved in it."

Alice stared all the more, her pretty face registering doubt and a little fear.

"I—I can't believe it!"

"It's only too true," Steve told her. "I have evidence in my pocket. Your horses were rustled, rebranded—then sold in Dodge City by a man acting for Blake. Captain Norris, of the Fourth District, has allowed me to take charge. You know him? Here's his

letter of authority—and here's my badge of office."

He handed her a note taken from his pocket; then turned up the collar of his black coat to show a small silver star stitched underneath.

Alice read the note.

"I know Captain Norris. He was a friend of my father's." She hesitated a little. "It's hard to believe that the judge— But I suppose I must believe it if you're a policeman."

Steve answered her.

"A Texas Ranger, please. A soldier, Miss Burton. I'll have to go—it won't do to raise suspicions in this place. Go very carefully with Blake."

Down below, Luke Brady was closeted with the judge in his private office. Luke wasn't feeling too good—he had just told Blake that he had lost the cheque.

"I couldn't help it, judge," he mumbled, his frightened little eyes watching Blake. "Two guys jumped me as I was coming out of the clerk's office and knocked me flat."

"Where were the rest of the men? Carlos and Palmer?"

"In a saloon. I went alone to keep things looking natural, see? But you can get another cheque—no one would dare forge your name around here."

Blake relaxed a little.

"Maybe that's so. But I still think you're dumb." He glared at his henchman. "What I pay you for, I dunno. But here's a last chance—get this through your thick skull. Burton's daughter is here. Come to me for legal aid and advice. She don't know a thing—and she needn't—unless you showed yourself when Burton was shot?"

"She wasn't there," said Luke positively. "There was no one to see who—who did the accident."

Blake chuckled.

"Accident, that's good! We'll fix it that way with the coroner. Now, listen, the girl's got the ranch deeds with her. In case she lost 'em, that ranch could be declared open to homesteading. Get the idea?"

"I do, judge." Luke's crafty eyes sparkled.

"And you might apply for the place. You or Carlos—well, it's worth going after. But you'll have to act on your own."

Thieves in the Night

THAT night, whilst Steve and Jeff were getting to bed in their room along the balcony of the Golden Apple, Steve heard stealthy footsteps below the window. He was on the balcony before Jeff could guess what his chum was after.

Along the balcony stole a dark figure. Steve, crouching in the shadows, saw the man pause at Alice's window to peer in. He turned with a gasp as Steve's hand was clapped on his shoulder. A straight punch between the eyes sent him reeling over the balcony rail on to the patio below. There he lay quiet for a moment—but Steve spotted that he was trying to draw a gun on him.

Steve leaped the rail straight down on to the fellow and gripped his wrist. Winded, the man collapsed with a grunt, to lie still.

Wasting no more time on him, Steve ran up the steps of the balcony to Alice's apartments. The french window was open and a burglary of some sort had been evidently in progress. Very quietly Steve entered—there might be a pair of the rascals.

Advancing, gun in hand, into the darkness of the room, Steve gave the

stealthily shadow behind him an easy mark for a coward's blow with the butt end of a heavy six-shooter. With a gasp of surprise the Ranger went down—only to turn on the instant on his assailant, who proved slippery as an eel. He wriggled free of Steve's half-numbered grip and slithered out of the room just as a cry from Alice caused Steve to start to his feet.

She came out from an inner room in her dressing-gown; Aunt Carrie, similarly clad, close behind her, clutching at a lighted candle.

"It's all right, ladies," spoke Steve. "There was a fellow in this room up to mischief. I've an idea who it was."

From outside came a murmur of voices. Steve stepped back to the balcony to find Judge Blake, with some of the guests and hotel servants, gathering there. Lanterns and candles gave faint, flickering illumination to the scene.

"What's all this?" Blake demanded, at once covering Ainslee with a revolver.

"Someone broke into Miss Burton's room," Steve answered.

Blake's cold eyes flashed towards Alice. He saw that in her alarm she had clutched up her papers—her father's will and the ranch title deeds.

"You hear this man, Miss Burton," he said. "Is it true?"

"Yes, judge," she answered flutteringly.

Blake turned again to Steve.

"And who are you, anyway?"

"Steve Ainslee—just one of your guests, judge. The bureau clerk let my friend Carter and myself share a room. I'm a representative of Davis Brothers, of Dodge City—I have a draft for you

for those horses you sent us. Your man lost it."

Blake was eyeing him intently, his gun directed at Steve's middle. "Got it on you?"

"Sure I have. I was going to give it you in the morning."

He drew out of his pocket the wallet he had taken from Luke Brady. All eyes were upon them as Blake took it. Alice suddenly gave a little scream.

"That's my father's wallet! Look at the crossed swords marked on the outside! My father put those there." She pointed a trembling finger at the leather cover of the wallet. "You took it from him!" she accused Steve shrilly. "It was you—you who killed him!"

"Why, Miss Burton—" But Blake's gun muzzle, thrust sharply into Steve's stomach, checked his denials. Blake spoke grimly.

"Davis Brothers, huh? You're under arrest, my friend! In the name of the law, I charge you with the theft of that wallet, horse stealing, and the murder of Major Burton! Boys"—he called to the servants—"Take him to gaol!"

Steve had to submit. There was no way out—he couldn't see his course. Better wait—Jeff would be sure to help him. But Jeff seemed to have vanished altogether.

When quiet had been restored, Blake turned to Alice, who was weeping on Aunt Carrie's ample shoulder.

"I'm terribly sorry you had to be dragged through all this, Miss Burton. But I promise you that man will get all the punishment he so thoroughly deserves."

Alice gulped.

"And I trusted him. He—he said he was a Texas Ranger."

Blake's cold eyes lit up.

"Oh, he did, eh? Now that's very interesting."

Alice pulled herself together.

"Forgive me, judge, but when I think of my dear father—" She held out the deeds and the will to him. "I'd like to leave these papers with you. You'll know what's to be done."

"I'll look after you as if you were my own daughter," said Blake.

Aunt Carrie put in:

"And now we'll go, sir. We're too upset to stay here."

"Go, in the middle of the night?" Blake took the deeds. "I'll put these with the wallet in my safe. You'd best stay till the morning."

"I'd like to leave now," Alice declared. "As soon as we're dressed."

Blake shrugged his heavy shoulders. "All right. I'll find your man and get the team brought round."

Downstairs in the bar customers were still drinking and gambling. Blake signalled to Luke Brady to stand by. He rapped on the counter with the mallet for silence.

"Boys, I'm not calling court. I just want to say a few words for law and order." All eyes were turned to him.

"I want you to know I've arrested the feller who killed Major Burton. This outrage is doubly pitiful—because the killing of a gallant gentleman has made an orphan of a little girl who's helpless to fight the world."

Murmurs broke out from all present.

"Now, boys, I know how you feel. I know your ideas as to what is a fitting end for boss thieves, rustlers and killers. The feller is named Steve Ainslee, and he's lying snug in the prison-house waiting trial. I want to warn you, boys, if any of you should feel inclined to deal summarily with him—well, I'd be mighty upset!"



Alice bound up the broken right hand while Jeff fired at the sniper outside who had ventured to show himself.
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He winked as he finished his speech. The murmurs grew loud and louder. Carlos flourished his gun; Luke moved towards the door of the bar—the crowd followed him to a man. Luke called out:

"Listen now, Carlos—didn't you hear what the judge said? We don't want no lynchings in Pecos City."

"Aw, shut your mouth, Brady," came a shout. In less than a minute the bar was empty.

Blake smiled evilly to himself as he went upstairs to his own rooms.

Two guards were on duty at the prison, outside the cell where Steve had been lodged. They were smoking cigarettes and talking.

"He's pretty quiet," said one. "Take a look at him, Bill."

The second gaoler drew back the little grille to peer in. Jeff Carter came creeping into the corridor. He had broken in by a low window. He had a brace of guns, one in either hand. He came quietly upon the guards, jabbing a gun in the back of each.

"Put 'em up!" he said softly.

The guards felt the muzzles of the forty-fives under their ribs. Their hands went up over their heads. Jeff whispered again.

"You're sure good boys. Get over against the wall."

The men obeyed. Jeff, still covering them, came near. He thrust one gun into his belt; then, with his free hand, he frisked the guards' guns from their belts, tossing them aside.

"Which of you's got the key?" asked Jeff. "Drop it on the ground. I'm not foolin'!"

For a moment the first gaoler hesitated. Then seeing the look in Jeff's eyes, he put one hand in his pocket and took out the key. Jeff grabbed it quickly, and, backing a little, thrust the key into the door lock and turned it. Steve stepped out of the cell.

"Now, boys, you nip inside," Jeff ordered. "And—pronto!"

He locked the cell door on them, then Steve and he slid quietly to the corridor window. Next thing they were outside the gaol in the darkness.

"I've got our brones," said Jeff. "They're hitched along here." He took Steve's arm. "Take this gun. Let's go."

"I can't leave Miss Burton," said Steve.

"They're planning a necktie party for you, Steve," Jeff warned him.

"Lynching, eh?" Ainslee thought hard. "Well, I'll have to risk it. See here, Jeff, I'll wait for 'em on Smokey and lead 'em away from the hotel. In all the excitement, you go to the hotel—get Miss Burton's papers and clear out with her and her aunt for the ranch. I'll meet you there."

"Why don't you hang yourself right off and save 'em the trouble?" Jeff snapped at him.

"It'll work all right. I know Smokey and he knows me," said Ainslee. "Listen—horo they come. Get busy!"

As the mob came marching up the street, muttering and mouthing between themselves, Steve suddenly charged forward on his grey horse Smokey. Brady saw him first and gave a yell: "He's broke gaol! Get your hosses—quick!"

Steve charged right into the midst of them, scattering them like sheep. He cleft a way straight through the mob, then galloped like lightning for the hills. The men ran back to get horses; then, led by Luke, a stern chase began.

Ainslee led them into the brush and open country.

Meanwhile Jeff had made his way to March 27th, 1937.

the hotel—in time to see Alice and Miss Burton drive off in the buckboard cart. He watched, unseen, where Blake went after seeing them off.

Jeff came to Blake's office door and rapped secretly on the panel, calling:

"Quick, judge—that guy Ainslee has escaped!"

Blake came at once to the door, opening it cautiously. Jeff stuck his gun under Blake's left ribs.

"Turn around, judge!"

Blake, his eyes alive with rage and surprise, did so. Jeff prodded him with the iron.

"Put your hands behind you," he said softly. "I gotta tie you up. No foolin'—hurry!"

Blake had to submit. With a slip cord in his left hand Jeff deftly slid the loop over Blake's wrists and jerked them tightly together.

"You'll wish you'd never been born!" Blake spat out.

"I'll have to gag you," Jeff decided coolly.

A minute later Blake was trussed up and gagged, his eyes burning with rage. Jeff helped himself to the title deeds of the ranch and the will lying on the table, then frisked Blake for Burton's wallet with the draft inside.

"So long, judge! They'll find you in the morning."

As Jeff was leaving the hotel a man came hurrying across the patio. It was Brady. He peered at Jeff suspiciously.

"Say, what are you doing here?"

Jeff's fist shot out in a straight blow between Luke's little eyes.

"Waiting for you!" he answered.

Besieged!

SOON after daybreak Steve came galloping up on Smokey to the Burton ranch. Leaping from the saddle, he hurried to the porch to rap sharply at the closed door. After a few moments the door was opened by Alice, who recoiled at sight of her visitor.

"I won't talk to you. Go!" she cried. Steve gently pushed his way into the parlour.

"You've got to believe me," he said. "I didn't have anything to do with the major's death."

"How can you talk so—when I saw you with my father's wallet?" she broke in.

"I took it from Brady—one of Blake's gang in Dodge City—hoping to prove what I've been wanting to prove for months past. You see, we Texas Rangers have been trying to get something on Blake—"

A clatter of quick hoofs on the drive caused Steve to whip back to the porch. Up the dusty drive came Jeff at full pelt on his brown mare. He swung himself to the ground and advanced, grinning, towards the half-frightened Alice.

"I got 'em, miss," he told her. "The ranch deeds and your father's will. Steve here told me he thought you'd like 'em back—Blake's too good a lawyer to be trusted."

Alice recovered her self-command.

"I guess I've been wrong about you, Mr. Ainslee. Come in, both of you—and help us get breakfast."

"We ain't got a lot of time for cats," said Jeff. "There's a gang been trailing me all night. But I can throw down a cup of coffee and a couple of boiled eggs, maybe."

After a hasty meal in which Aunt Carrie hovered around Jeff like a mother hen over a prize chick, Steve got Alice to call the ranch-hands together.

"Boys, we're Texas Rangers," he told them. "There's liable to be a little trouble here this morning—we've found out who killed your master. It was Blake's gang—when they were stealing your horses the other night. Blake's at the back of all lawlessness in this territory, but we've got the goods on him—and he knows it."

"I want you to do what Mr. Ainslee says," Alice put in. "The trouble may be bad, but he knows how to meet it."

"Thank you, Miss Burton. Well, boys, will you stand with us for justice and decency?"

"If there's any trouble connected with Miss Alice," spoke Jordan. "Well—we're in it, too. And I know what you say is right, mister. I got a packet the other night from one of them rustlers, and I guess I've seen the feller who did it in Blake's saloon."

A sound of many running horses on the drive brought Steve to the porch. A bunch of horsemen drew up by the garden gate. Luke and Carlos dismounted and came marching up to those assembled on the porch. Luke addressed himself to Ainslee.

"We're legal deputies of Judge Blake. We want you and Carter. You'd best come peaceful."

Jordan stepped forward.

"You get on your way, you two—less you're asking for trouble."

Luke studied the grim faces of the ranchmen.

"All right, tinhorns," he shrugged.

"If that's how it is, Carlos, you go back and fetch Judge Blake and some of the others. They won't like to miss seeing these two murderers dance double buck and wing at the end of a rope!"

Luke sneered off and Steve questioned Jordan:

"They can't be back here under two hours?"

"That's right."

"I've got an idea," Steve told them. "Jeff will take over and I'll make a bee line for H.Q. Got Norris and him—we can collect Blake's bunch very nicely up here, away from his stronghold in Pecos City."

Outside, Luke and Carlos and their men were shuffling away, not in the best of tempers. Suddenly they sighted Steve on his grey cantering up the hill back of the ranch.

"Six of you stay here watching the ranch!" Luke snapped. "Don't let anyone out. Carlos, you ride with me after that bozo. The rest get along to the judge for reinforcements. Scatter—quick as you can!"

He turned his mount in pursuit of Ainslee, with Carlos just behind him. The ranger shouted something lost in the breeze as he galloped up the hillside.

Ainslee led his pursuers into wild country. He brought them to where there was a deep gully. He put Smokey to a downward leap of five yards, and cleared it, Smokey's hind feet crumbling the gully's very edge. Luke and Carlos, thundering after him, came to a dead stop on the brink of the chasm.

"Let's go back," Luke swore heartily. "No use breaking our necks!"

Blake rode up to the porch of the Burton Ranch bold as brass. He hammered on the door—Aunt Carrie called from a side window:

"What do you want? Who is it?"

"You know me, ma'am—I'm Judge Blake. You're harbouring two desperate criminals, and I demand their surrender!"

(Continued on page 25)

Thrill to fast-fighting, hard-hitting John Wayne as he leads the daring coastguards in a terrific battle against Alaskan outlaws to rescue a kidnapped girl and recover millions in smuggled furs



"The SEA SPOILERS"



Murder!

THE radio at the shore base of the United States Coastguard Service spluttered. Message and answer flashed back and forth.

"NRNQ calling NOQ" "NOQ answering NRNQ. Go ahead." "Thirteen—thirteen—thirteen—will dock Saturday two-thirty—breakers ahead—that is all."

Joe, the assistant operator, turned to his superior.

"What's all that thirteen-thirteen bunk?" he asked.

The man at the instrument smiled.

"Oh, that's only Bob Randall's private signal to disregard his message—officially. He means for me to pass the glad word to Connie Dawson up at the Breakers Café that her boy friend will be docking Saturday at half-past two."

And Saturday at half-past two Connie Dawson, entertainer at the Breakers Café, was waiting on the landing-stage, her blonde hair stirring in the breeze, and in her eyes the light of a lover. Bob Randall caught the radiant girl in his arms.

"It's going to be whoopee to-night, darling. But first of all I've got to run up and see the boss. Just radioed for me. Guess you know what that may mean?"

"Oh, Bob! Not that you're going to get the command of the Niobe?"

"That's what I'm hoping, my dear. Then for the bright lights and—"

"I'm afraid not, Bob—not to-night. See that yacht over there?" The girl pointed a slim hand out over the water to where a mile or so off shore lay a white, stream-lined craft riding at anchor. "That's old Winton's boat, the Hermitage. He's throwing a party and little Connie is going aboard to entertain the guests."

"My dear Connie—have a heart!"

"It means fifty dollars, Bob. And don't you forget I'm a poor, working girl. Now run along and see that commander of yours and bring the glad news back to me at the café."

She blew him a kiss and ran off. Bob Randall, whistling gaily, walked along to Commander Mays' office. Half an hour later he was seated glumly in the stern-sheets being rowed back to the Niobe, a sadly disillusioned man.

For Commander Mays happened to have a candidate for the command of the Niobe in his own son, and, blood being thicker than water, Lieutenant Ralph Mays got the job.

But all Bob Randall's pals said that he was a man who could take it. One request he made, and one only, and that was that he could row over to the Hermitage that night to bid good-bye to Miss Dawson before they weighed anchor in the morning.

Millionaire Winton, hail-fellow-well-met with all and sundry, cared very little what visitors he had aboard the Hermitage so long as they were good fellows. So it was only to be expected that his parties were, to say the least, a trifle mixed. He had met Phil Morgan and Nick Austin some weeks before in a waterfront saloon, and since then the two men had been given a free run of the yacht.

Connie Dawson was rather sorry she had come. But the pay was good, and after all there was safety in numbers. So she thought till Phil Morgan forced his way uninvited into the little cabin that Reggie Winton had placed at her disposal. The man's voice was smooth, polite—but his eyes belied his softly spoken words.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Dawson, I didn't know this was your cabin!"

"Mr. Winton said I might use it." The girl made a move towards the door. "I must go back to my work, Mr. Morgan, they'll be looking for me."

"There's no desperate hurry, is there, my dear?"

She drew back, and her grey eyes flashed anger.

"I'm paid by Mr. Morgan to entertain his guests—collectively, not individually."

"But—"

Phil Morgan wheeled round as the door was burst open and Reggie Winton rushed in. The millionaire held in his hand a crumpled sealskin. He was livid with anger.

"Who's the rotter who's been parking smuggled goods in my boat?" he asked. "My men found this in the hold—there are hundreds of 'em. Know anything about this, Morgan?"

And then, reading the truth in Phil Morgan's eyes, Winton saw red. He raised his fist as though to strike his guest, and as he did so he caught sight in the mirror the figure of Nick Austin. And Nick's hand held a gun. His voice came in a whisper of deadly menace.

"Shut your trap—sucker!"

"Sucker—yes, I'm a sucker all right," said Winton. "Sucker to allow two thugs like you on board my boat. Parking smuggled goods on me, eh? Seal poachers' haul, eh? I'm sending a radio right away to the police and—"

Nick Austin's gun spat fire. Hell broke loose in that little cabin aboard the Hermitage.

Connie shrank back, a scream of terror on her earmined lips. Nick Austin threw her across the arm of one of the chairs, a heavy hand was held over her mouth. Steps running out in the corridor—a sigh of relief from Phil Morgan as he saw that the man who opened the door was one of his own thugs.

"Devil to pay, boss. Coastguard boat coming alongside. It's Bob Randall of the Niobe."

Morgan leapt into action. He called to Nick Austin.

"Bring her along, Nick. The boat's ready—we've got to scam—"

Nick Austin's trigger finger itched.

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"Better let me give her the works, boss. It's safer."

A steely note crept into Phil Morgan's voice.

"I said—bring her along."

Failure

THE story was in the papers the next morning, a story that sent a chill of horror all along the Alaskan coast. The depredations of the seal poachers had brought havoc to the legitimate trade, and Commander Mays' office had been besieged by dealers wanting to know what the Government was going to do about it. But this new story was different. There was more at stake.

Kidnapping. Connie Dawson was known and respected all along the coast. Her engagement to Bob Randall was a love story known from Juneau to Unalaska. And reading of how Bob had boarded the Hermitage to find its owner shot to death and his girl kidnapped sent every man's hand to his gun holster. Commander Mays was in despair. A general broadcast was sent out to all patrol boats ordering them to overtake and search all craft.

And so for weeks the Niobe ploughed the grey waters of the northern seas. Not a boat but was held up and boarded. Not a fishing village that was not searched hut to hut. Not an island that was not visited. But all in vain. Connie and her abductors had vanished as completely as though the sea had swallowed them.

Once only a ray of hope shone for a moment. It was as they were passing a small islet that Lieutenant Mays had seen through his binoculars a man signalling to them. He handed the glasses to Bob Randall.

"See anything, Mr. Randall?"

Randall focused the glasses.

"It's Oil," he said. "Oil's the name we give one of the Eskimo settlers over there. We can't pronounce his real name. Gives us good information sometimes."

"Let's go ashore, Mr. Randall. We'll take the long-boat."

And then began for Lieutenant Mays a purgatory. Seated in the stern-sheets he experienced a fear that was known only to himself and his father—the fear of deep water. He had been a boy of six when the boat in which his mother and himself were travelling to Seattle was wrecked. He had spent seven hours in an icy sea clinging to the keel of an upturned boat. He had seen his mother lose her grip and be carried away to her death. He had been lashed to the keel and was safely landed, but those seven hours of horror had implanted a fear that would never leave him. Brave as a lion in all else, Ralph Mays had fought against his fear, battled with it, had even clenched his teeth when his father had suggested his following his own calling—the sea. But it had been hell.

The surf of the Alaskan Islands makes boat handling, except in an Eskimo kayak, a hazardous matter. Ralph Mays watched the combers rolling mountain high, their angry crests hanging threateningly over his head just as the waves had hung over his head and his mother's twenty years before. And the fear gripped him—

He knew later, as he lay panting on the white sand of the islet, that Bob Randall had saved his life—that Bob Randall had been witness of his craven terror. He tried to thank him, but Bob had brushed away the words of thanks. "Forget it, sir," he had said, and had walked away over to where the Eskimo was waiting for them.

Old Oil had news—but not of Connie Dawson. Seal poachers had been in the March 27th, 1937.

neighbourhood, he told them; some twenty seals lay slaughtered on the beach, mute, pathetic witness of the savage raid upon their sanctuary.

But that was all.

Weeks passed, weeks that to Bob Randall were a nightmare of climbing up and down ladders of scows, of prying into filthy, odorous cabins, of interviewing half-breeds and Eskimos. Of sleepless nights and hopeless dawns. Until at last he could only shrug his shoulders and agree when Lieutenant Mays ordered the Niobe back to her base.

It was when they had been in port only three days that Commander Mays sent for Bob Randall.

"You will take command of the Niobe from to-day, Mr. Randall," he said after the two men had exchanged greetings.

Bob looked at his chief.

"But Lieutenant Mays?" he queried.

"My son is transferring to the air arm of the service. I do not think Ralph was very keen on the sea ever since he was a boy." The commander paused and then went on: "I'd like to tell you a story in confidence, Mr. Randall."

"I think I know it, sir. Your son told me, and I quite understand. The doctors call that sort of thing a 'phobia,' don't they? I think your son is a brave man, commander. It takes a brave man to face the thing he fears."

Commander Mays held out his hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Randall, for saying that. There is nothing on land or in the air that Ralph is scared of. But the sea—well, we don't just understand. Well, Mr. Randall, you will go back to the Niobe and take up your regular patrols."

"Begging your pardon, sir, but I'm wondering whether there isn't some better way to get at these seal thieves. They always know our regular patrols."

"That's true. What would you suggest?"

"These devils must have a hide-out somewhere among the islands, and I'd like to go out and find it. Just me and one other."

"Hogan, eh?"

"We've been shipmates for years, sir. Yes, I'd like to take Hogan."

The commander smiled.

"And maybe there is just a chance of finding a certain young lady, eh, Randall?" he said quietly. "Very well. You and Hogan consider yourselves on independent duty—for thirty days. And, by the way, you might come across Ralph. He's on independent duty up there among the islands as well—only you're on the sea and he's in the air."

The Faked Message

LIEUTENANT RALPH MAYS leant over his instrument board and wondered why he was so rapidly losing altitude. One of his cylinders missing, perhaps; a leak maybe in his petrol pipe. He switched on his radio.

"NVMZZ calling. NVMZZ calling—"

Through the ether the message winged its way. It reached the chart-room of a certain dirty-looking fishing craft. The shabby-looking fisherman raised his head from the instrument and disclosed the cheery face of Hogan. He tapped out the answer.

"NOQ answering NVMZZ—" and then looked up at another fisherman equally grimy who was at the chart-house door. "It's the kid, Bob—Lieutenant Mays," he said. "He's in trouble somewhere around here. Engine trouble. Says he's at southern end of Francis Island. Says there's a small boat below him and he's going down for help."

Bob Randall started, looked at a chart on the wall.

"Francis Island. What's a boat doing there? That's seal country. There's no fishing for miles."

"Plenty of seals, though."

"You're right. I don't like this. Get down to the engine-room and beat hell out of those old boilers. We've got to make Francis Island before dark."

Bob took the wheel. The bows of the old fishing-boat swung round and headed nor'-west. Through the grey seas the craft cut her way. The man at the wheel fixed his eyes on the horizon, there was a frown on his forehead. Bob Randall was thinking—and thinking fast.

And on another fishing-boat some seventy miles away two men watched the descent of the hydroplane. They were smiling evilly.

"Coastguard plane—right in our laps, buddy. What d'you know about that? Phil Morgan will be just tickled to death about this."

"Going to help the swine or let him drown, Louie?"

"Drown nothing. We're going to help him—help him to Phil Morgan. Phil will grill him good and hard, and after he's grilled him what he does to the mutt is nobody's business."

The little settlement on the shore of Francis Island was but a huddle of huts, and neither Hogan nor Bob had ever been close in before. Their patrols had taken them usually some degrees south of the locality. They looked at it now through their glasses with interest. They had seen nothing of Ralph, neither had they come across any wreckage of his plane.

Slowly Bob edged the old boat close in shore. Then, taking to the dinghy, they rowed up to the rickety landing stage. A rather dapper, sinister-looking man hailed them.

"Hallo! What's wrong. Any trouble aboard your old hooker?"

"Nope. We want stores. My name's Smith."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Smith. Mine's Nick Austin. Come ashore. We'll see about those stores of yours."

Bob kept his eyes skinned. A curious settlement this of Francis Island. Rough log storehouses—for what? Bob wondered. Skins perhaps. As they walked up to the main row of huts Austin was pumping them.

"Your first trip?" he asked.

Hogan was about to reply when Bob nudged him.

"Yes—our first trip," he said.

Slowly they walked on. Men lounging in the doorways of the huts glanced at them as they passed. Strange, foreign-looking men—thugs by the look of them.

At the door of the principal shack they stopped, and Austin knocked. The door was opened by a handsome man of middle age.

"Morning, Phil. These chaps want stores. Just blown in."

Phil Morgan's lips parted in a smile of welcome.

"Sure! Come in!" He held open the door and the three men entered. Morgan produced bottle and glasses. Then, excusing himself for a moment, he left the room. The look of meaning he gave Nick Austin as he left was not lost on Bob Randall. Things, he told himself, were about to happen.

Phil Morgan went along a corridor to an adjacent hut. Here he tapped on a door and entered. A girl who had been seated by the tiny stove looked up. Phil nodded to the half-breed girl who was standing by the window.

"All right, Marie—beat it. I'm talking private with your mistress."

Then, when they were alone, he asked the girl seated by the stove:

"Aren't you glad to see me? I hoped

by this time you'd be waiting breathlessly for my return."

Connie Dawson smiled bitterly.

"You certainly know a lot about women," she said. "Do you think I could do anything but hate you—kidnapper—thief—"

"I'd have a care, Connie. What I say here goes. Get that, my dear?"

"I understand—that you are despicable!"

"But I didn't come here to quarrel, Connie. I want you to come into my hut and meet a couple of friends of mine."

The girl rose wearily, followed her captor. As she entered Phil Morgan's hut she caught a glimpse of Bob Randall's face in a mirror, and he caught a glimpse of hers. A swift look of warning passed. Connie, as she faced her lover and Hogan, had complete command of herself. Introductions followed.

"This is Mr. Smith—that's the name he's given me. And his buddy is no doubt Mr. Brown. I'd take Mr. Brown for a little walk, Nick, if I were you. Now, Mr. Smith, if you will come with me we'll go into that matter of stores."

Leaving the girl standing by the table, the two men left the hut. Crossing to another across the beach they entered. Phil Morgan played the part of guide.

"Here's the store-room and the vault for the skins. We've got a whole heap of skins up here—couple of million dollars' worth. Perhaps you two chaps might help us with a clean-up."

"Poached, eh?"

"You've said it. Guess you won't be sorry to clean up a thousand bucks or so? Pays better than fishing."

"Sure—we're game for anything."

"Good. Now take a look in here. Here's where we keep our choice stuff—Mr. Bob Randall." As the words were spoken Phil Morgan raised his foot and sent Randall flying down a flight of wooden steps into darkness. The voice

went on: "Don't remember holding up a boat off the Straits last month, do you, Mr. Randall? Miss Dawson was aboard, but you missed her. Lucky for us our captain was out there on the landing-stage when you arrived. Couple of million dollars' worth of prime skins—but I guess you won't be helping us any—Mr. Randall—"

Bob Randall struggled painfully to his feet and peered about him in the darkness. And then from that darkness came a low groan as though someone were in pain.

"Who's there?" he called.

"Me, Randall—Ralph Mays. Thought it was your voice. How come? They got me when I landed my 'plane. Did you get my radio—suppose so, and that's why you're here. Sorry!"

Bob did not reply, for at that moment the door at the head of the steps was thrown open and something was bundled heavily down the wooden stairs. Again the sound of a groan. And this time Bob recognized it at once—Hogan. He took his petrol lighter from his pocket and switched on the button. Poor Hogan's face was a mask of bruises.

"You ought to take a look at that dial of yours, Hogan," he said. "Nick certainly did a good job on you."

"Yeah? Nick and four others, you mean!" replied Hogan. "In a spot, ain't we, Mr. Randall?"

"Spot's right. That's Lieutenant Mays over there. Get up and salute —"

The night passed in silence and part of the next day. Then, at the head of the steps, Nick Austin with his eternal gun. First Hogan was taken and half an hour later returned with signs of a severe man-handling. Then Ralph Mays was taken and returned in no less a bad shape. Then came Nick's voice:

"Your turn, Mr. Randall. And make it snappy."

At the point of the gun Bob was piloted along to Phil Morgan's room. Phil received him smilingly, offered him a chair.

"Good-morning, Randall," he said. "Hope you slept well. Have a drink—no? Well, let's come to business. There's something I want you to do for me. Both of your pals downstairs were obstinate. I hope for your own sake—and Miss Dawson's—that you will be more amenable."

"You mean that you'll hold the girl's safety over me, eh?"

"Precisely." Phil Morgan pointed to a chart spread out on the table before him. "Look here. This is where we are, south end of Francis Island—and here's our market for the skins. In between is the Coastguard Station. We want you to decoy the guard somewhere off here." The podgy finger indicated a spot on the chart. "Say Cape Pierre."

"How do you figure I can do that?"

"By sending a message that you've located us in great strength in the Bay of Cape Pierre."

"Why don't you send the message yourself?"

"Because we don't know the code signals."

"And how do I know that Connie will be returned safe if I do this?"

"Afraid you'll have to take my word for that."

A pause. Then:

"Okay. Where's the wireless?"

"Come with me, I'll show you. Come along, Nick, and better bring that gun of yours in case of monkey tricks. We'll use the radio on the 'plane that your friend Mays came down in. We'll be able then to hear what you say—and the replies you get."

Commander Mays was in the wireless-room when the instrument began to splutter. The operator took up the headphones. Watching him, the commander



Nick Austin threw her across the arm of a chair, a heavy hand over her mouth. . . .

saw his face grow tense. Then taking off the 'phone he turned a white face to his superior.

"Can't make it out, sir. That was Bob Randall. He says the seal stealers are in force at Cape Pierre. But I don't believe it, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because—well, I hate to tell you, sir, as it's against regulations to use the radio for private messages. But we do it sometimes, sir. Bob did it sometimes—but he always opened his message with the number thirteen repeated three times. That meant that we were to disregard what he was saying—officially. I guess he was radioing under threat and that his captors were listening-in to our replies."

"What d'you make of it, then?"

"I reckon this way, sir. Bob gives the code number of your son's 'plane in his message. Just slips it in. We know by Lieutenant Mays' message that he was south of Francis Island. You remember that Randall radioed us that he was making for Francis. He couldn't have got to Cape Pierre in the time—not in that old craft of his with her worn-out boilers. If I might suggest, sir, I'd send the Marpossa to Cape Pierre to be on the safe side. But I'd send all the other boats at our disposal to Francis Island."

The commander stood for a moment without speaking. Then he turned to the operator.

"Get the airport. I'm flying to Dutch Harbour to take command."

Round-up

BOTH Mays and Hogan looked up as Bob Randall returned to the prison house. Unlike the others, he walked down the wooden steps on his own feet. For a moment they looked at him and then horror spread over their faces. They read in the look on Randall's face that he had fallen into the trap they had defied. Lieutenant Mays raised himself on his straw bed. Struggled to his feet and faced Bob Randall.

"You've sent that message?" he bit out.

"Yes—I sent the message."

"I see. You're not afraid of the sea, Randall, but you're scared stiff of a beating-up like we got. There's not a mark on you—but I'm going to put one there. You cur—"

Ralph Mays clenched his fist and sent it to the point of Bob's chin, but the blow was ill-timed and weak, and far too great an effort for the aviator's strength. With a strangled gasp he crumpled and fell fainting at the feet of the man he had attacked. Bob Randall lifted him up and laid him gently on the straw. Then he turned to Hogan.

"I'd have explained if I hadn't seen that swine Nick at the head of the stairs listening. Poor old Ralph—do you know, Hogan, I think Ralph Mays is about the bravest man I know."

It was the next morning that Bob, looking through the small barred window of their prison hut, called Hogan to look.

"Looks pretty lively, don't it?" said Hogan with a wide grin. "Looks like they're breaking camp. Look at that lot of skins being taken down to the landing-stage. And take a look at those guys up there on the rocks with rifles. Look at 'em running—they've seen something, Mr. Randall—like throwing a squib into a nest of ants, isn't it?"

For the lookouts had given some alarm. The men at the barred window saw them running here and there, shouting—words came to their ears—"Coast-

March 27th, 1937.

guard"—"Double cross"—Bob gave a whoop of triumph.

"It's worked, Hogan, it's worked—they understood—"

"They understood all right, Mr. Randall."

The voice came from the head of the wooden steps. Turning, the men found themselves facing Morgan and his sinister lieutenant.

"You double-crossing rat—but I came here to tell you how smart you've been, Randall. There's a dozen patrol boats entering the harbour at this moment and they're doomed, every one of 'em. Mines, my dear Randall, are as good for coastguards as they are for hi-jackers. That's what they're there for. Every explosion you hear will be one of your boats being blown to hell."

Then, seeing the horror on Bob Randall's face, he turned to his lieutenant:

"Keep 'em covered, Nick. I'm off to the mine control board to watch the fun."

Nick took his seat on the corner of a bench and covered the men with his gun. It was then that Bob saw over the man's shoulder the door at the head of the steps gently opened, and in the aperture he saw the figure of Connie's Eskimo maid, little Marie—and Marie had a gun in her hand. Nick Austin must have heard a movement, for he turned his head and in that moment Bob and Hogan took a chance. Tackling low they hurled themselves on Nick Austin.

The fight was short and sharp. Spurred on by desperation, Bob and Hogan fought like men possessed. But it was the sound of a shot that heralded the end of the fight. Austin gave a cry and went down—and stayed down. Looking up, Bob saw Marie with the smoking gun in her hand. She was spitting out words of hate at the man on the floor.

"Me keel heem. He leave Marie and go away and he say he marry me. I hear heem tell Morgan that he leave me behind—"

Hogan looked across to Bob Randall.

"Thought there was something like that the way this dame looked at Nick. Now, Marie, you've got to help us."

"How I help?"

Bob Randall took the scared girl by her little shoulders.

"See here, Marie. You know where the mine control is?"

"Yes, I know. In hut next big totem pole."

"Then get Miss Dawson and bring her here. Stay with her. Come on, Hogan. This is where we get going."

They were making for the steps when a weak voice came to them from the straw bed on the floor.

"Gee, Bob, that was a scrap. I envy you. Listen, I guess I can do my bit. There are bombs in my 'plane—egg plants—get 'em, Bob—and good luck."

In a small hut by the landing stage Phil Morgan was speaking with a little grey-haired, spectacled man. On the wall in front of them were ranges of levers and press-buttons.

"Ready with your mines, doc?" asked Morgan.

"Been ready for months," replied doc. "What is it, Phil, hi-jackers?"

"Worse. United States coastguards!"

"Good! I've been aching to see my little pets at work. Shall I connect, boss?"

Phil Morgan adjusted his binoculars.

"Almost on the mark, doc—" He drew back from the window. "What's that?"

Men were running, firing their rifles

and sawn-off shotguns as they ran. Watching from the window, Morgan saw that Hogan and Bob Randall were loose, they were running, bending low, dodging in and out, but making all the time for the open space where the captured 'plane had been parked. A corner of the hut hid the men from sight. Phil held the doctor by the arm.

"Not yet, doc. They'll be on the mark in about two minutes. Better not waste juice. Wait, say five minutes, and we'll get the lot."

The little doctor nodded. His fingers were itching to get at his beloved controls. Phil Morgan remained at the window. Already shots from the approaching boats were pattering around the huts. A few minutes more—

He wondered what was happening to Randall and Hogan. No doubt they had been caught or were dead by now—no, there they were racing towards the huts, evidently they had been headed off, for they were running away from the parked machine. Dodging, ducking, they raced towards the hut next the totem pole. Phil Morgan bit his lips in disgust. He'd have to fire his mines and take a chance—better than waiting—

"Let 'em have it, doc."

The little doctor bent over his controls, then staggered back as the wall with the switchboard seemed to sway before his eyes. He heard Morgan's voice raised to a scream—then the four walls of the hut crumpled in upon him, in his ears was a deafening explosion. He had a vision of Phil Morgan with blood running down his face, he saw him stagger forward and fall—

The tide of battle had changed. Coastguards in their neat uniforms were herding bunches of men with upraised arms before them into huts.

They found Hogan and Bob Randall wounded, but happy. For the first time in his life Bob all but fainted with pain. But he had enough left in him to point to the hut where Marie was keeping watch over Connie Dawson and the two wounded men, Ralph Mays and Nick Austin, before he completely passed out.

Three days were taken in what Hogan fondly called "mopping up" the Francis Island Settlement. Never in the whole history of seal poaching had there existed so sinister a nest of thugs. Watching the smoking ruins of the huts from the rail of Commander Mays' patrol boat Connie and Bob Randall were silent. But Bob's hand lay on the tiny gloved one on the rail—and that was enough.

Connie Dawson looked along the deck. She smiled up into Bob's face.

"Poor old Hogan," she murmured.

"Oh, Hogan's all right. He's got about a thousand bucks coming to him for his share in this little clean-up. And there's a good job going for him aboard the old Niobe."

She looked at him, a smile curving her pretty lips.

"And who are you to be giving jobs on United States boats?" she asked. Then as he was about to answer her she placed the tips of her fingers on his mouth. "No, don't tell me. Hogan spilled the beans about your promotion. So there's going to be whoopee to-night, anyway, eh?"

"Rather, my dear—but wait till I get hold of that Hogan. I'll just wait a week or two till he's thrown away those crutches he's tooling about with him and then—well, what I'll do to Hogan is nobody's business."

(By permission of General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring John Wayne and Nan Grey.)

An old professor invents a submarine that can withstand tremendous pressure and thus reach the bottom of the deepest ocean. Together with a little band of intrepid adventurers, he sets sail in his invention and they discover the long-lost continent of Atlantis.

A mighty serial drama of amazing thrills, starring Ray Corrigan and Lois Wilde



EPISODE 10—

“Annapolis Destroyed”



UNDERSEA KINGDOM

READ THIS FIRST

Professor Norton, with his son Billy, his friend, Lieutenant Crash Corrigan, and Diana Compton, newspaper girl, are exploring the ocean bed in their submarine, the Rocket. The little vessel is drawn magnetically through an undersea tunnel into what is left of Atlantis, the lost continent. Here they find two great powers at war—Unga Khan with his “Black Robes,” and the Priest Sharad with his “White Robes.”

Norton is hypnotised by Khan into helping him fit a huge, self-contained metal tower with rockets which will propel it upward to the surface of the sea. Khan, with all his terrific inventions, hopes then to dominate the whole world. After many adventures, Corrigan gets Diana and Billy to Annapolis, Sharad’s city. He tries to kidnap Norton and get him out of Khan’s clutches, but Norton, drugged by the spell Khan has put upon him, manages to break away when brought to safety.

Now read on

Hakur Outwitted

CORRIGAN caught at Billy, whispering to him to keep quiet.

They crouched below the brow of the small hill, then turned and ran back towards the ancient temple.

“We can’t leave dad,” Billy panted protestingly.

“We can’t help him,” Corrigan answered. “That’s the trouble. One thing, they won’t hurt him—he’s too useful. They can’t work the rockets.”

They listened, standing very still and dead quiet just by the broken-down creeper-clad walls. Stunted trees and overgrown ivy and dried-up palm trees were all about them, the remains of a pleasant garden that must have been

the pride of those dead and gone folk who had once worshipped in the building.

“They’re coming,” Corrigan muttered. “They’re after us—your dad must have told them.”

“He doesn’t know what he’s doing, Crash.”

“I’m not blaming the old lad. It’s Khan’s dirty work.” Corrigan took the boy’s hand. “We’re pals, Billy—all of us. Never doubt it.”

Comforted, Billy allowed himself to be led back into the ruins. They climbed one of the broken stairways and got on to the walls of what was left of one of the upper storeys. There they had the ability to see without being seen.

Hakur and his patrol, all in the black chariots of Khan, came pounding up to the edge of the old gardens, reining in their horses with sharp cries. Corrigan saw that Norton was standing rather breathlessly in Hakur’s chariot, clutching at the front rail of it, his hat at the back of his head, his face a grey mask of puzzled excitement.

Corrigan saw him pointing a shaking hand—evidently he was telling Hakur where to seek his son and companion. But he was pointing quite wrongly.

Hakur leapt from the chariot. He called to the patrol and all dismounted. Ten Black Robe chariots were left deserted save for the pawing, restless horses harnessed to them, forty great beasts of a strength and stupidity almost equal to Hakur’s, who blundered on into the ruins, dispersing his patrol among the many tortuous passage-ways in an unorganised search for Corrigan and Billy. These remained hidden in a niche in the broken walls, high above Hakur’s men, watching them unseen and unsuspected.

“Do you think you could make the chariot your dad’s in?” Corrigan whispered to the boy. “I’d drop down outside the walls and catch you when you jumped; then, with luck, we might get to him and make another dash for Annapolis.”

“I’m game, Crash.”

“Okay! Let’s wait till these fellows get thoroughly lost in the ruins and separated one from t’other,” Corrigan gave instructions. “Hakur is staying behind, as usual, but I can settle him. Lie flat on the wall, so as to give them no chance of spotting us.”

They stayed there in their crannied perch, listening and watching Hakur, who was just below them, peering into the ruins under a creeper-covered arched entrance. Hakur was so intent on looking straight to the front into the shadows of the piled-up ground floor of the ruins that he offered Corrigan an easy mark.

“He’ll do fine as a cushion to break my fall,” Corrigan breathed. “Get ready, Billy; I’ll drop right on to his shoulders, feet first. Then I’ll fix him with one under the ear.”

“He’s got a spear, Crash. He’s holding it upright.”

“Don’t worry; I’ll miss the spear. And I’ll borrow it from him, maybe, until we meet again.”

Corrigan snaked towards the outer edge of the crumbling wall and slithered his feet over it, half sitting. They could hear the Black Robes below eagerly hunting for them amid the mazy ruins.

But Corrigan had now lost sight of Hakur.

“Tell me where he is?” Corrigan asked Billy. “Take a peep over; I’ll wriggle myself outwards to be exactly above him.”

Billy crept forward and cautiously looked down upon the Black Robe who had now ventured almost into the broken archway. A few loose stones and mortar slipped from under the boy and came pattering down on Hakur's shoulders. At once he sprang back and stared upward. He could see nothing beyond the ivy-clad walls.

For a long minute Hakur stood there in tense silence. Then he moved forward again as if to call the patrol. But he was uncertain and did not wish to bring his men back on a fool's errand. So he waited, listening intently. The patrol could be heard calling to each other in the broken passage-ways.

Billy kept stock still. He wondered whether Hakur had spied Corrigan's feet as they projected into the ivy.

Hakur was acting very suspiciously; he kept on retreating from the arch, then going back to it. Atlantean night was beginning, and he could make out nothing but the overgrown creepers, shadowing now into a darkish green mass, when he stared upward.

Billy suddenly whispered: "Now!" Corrigan slid off the wall, with a rending of the creepers and ancient ivy, fairly on top of the Black Robe. They both came to ground together, and Corrigan's strong fingers instantly gripped Hakur's bull neck from the back. There was a short, violent grunting struggle, then Hakur went limp as a rag doll in Corrigan's hands.

Satisfied that the fellow was knocked out, Corrigan stood up, calling sharply to the boy: "Jump!"

Billy crouched and then jumped, light as a feather, into the big arms stretched up to catch him. Corrigan put him to the ground and the pair raced off to where Norton was sitting in a day-dream in the chariot. They leapt into it; Corrigan snatched up the reins and shook the horses into action. He wheeled them about and, next moment, Hakur's

own team was scurrying away towards the distant city.

Norton made jerking efforts to drag the reins from Corrigan's hands. Above the clatter and racket of their departure his thin voice cried out inarticulate words, loud enough to give an alarm to those within the ruins. They came hurrying out, at first completely at a loss.

Then they saw their fallen leader and, next, his chariot scouring away under the gloom. They sprang to their chariots with fierce shoutings to begin a helter-skelter pursuit, their spears poised, their horses at a mad gallop.

Corrigan headed for the track, trusting to his sense of location, while Billy tried to quieten and comfort his father, who clung with desperation to the front rim of the chariot, his hat jammed on his head, his eyes staring widely.

"What—what are you doing?" he gasped. "Where—where are you taking me?"

"We're taking you back." Corrigan nodded to Billy to grab the reins. Corrigan's hands rested compellingly on Norton's shoulders. "Don't worry; we'll take care of you."

Norton was trembling in an ague more intense than that caused to them all three by the jolting of the chariot.

"Are you taking me to my submarine? I want my charts."

"We're going there," Corrigan answered above the clatter. "You're safe with us. Billy's driving—Billy, your son."

Norton stiffened. "He can't drive four great horses."

Corrigan chuckled. "Can't he? Watch him!"

"He'll have us over." The chariot rose on two wheels over a rut in the road and bumped heavily on its solid wheels. "Give me the reins, Billy—give them to me!"

Corrigan winked at the boy. "He knows you. He's getting better."

The chariot hurtled onward under Billy's guidance. Behind them, falling farther and farther into the darkening background, the Black Robes, with yells and imprecations, kept up the chase.

Khan had been watching the last part of their flight on his reflectograph.

Norton Escapes Again

TWILIGHT had come to Atlantis, but there was light enough to show Unga Khan and Ditmar the misty figures of the professor and Corrigan being driven by young Billy into Annapolis in the Black Robe chariot. Khan's anger was so great that he could not trust himself to speak.

He stood staring at the screen, his brows as black as thunder, his teeth grinding together. Ditmar feared that his master was going to have a fit and moved a little away, so as to be able to reach the door of the throne-room and escape.

Khan turned from the screen. He asked in sizarer calm:

"Did Norton show you how to work the controls of the submarine?"

"I asked him, but—"

"But he didn't tell you? And you hadn't the wits to make him tell you." Khan glared at his shrinking minion. "I am truly surrounded by machines. We must have Norton. See if you can pick up that fool Hakur and his patrol."

Ditmar caused the reflectograph to flash here and there about the country, pictures focusing and fading in rapid succession. At last he got a shot of Hakur and his chariots filing along in a dismal procession on the track, as they slowly headed for home.

"I will send him back with my entire army," said Khan grimly. "Every one—every mechanical device that we have—even the Volkites."

"The Juggernaut has not yet been fully repaired, Imperial High and Mighty," Ditmar ventured. "If you



There was just light enough to show Unga Khan and Ditmar the figures of the professor and Corrigan. March 27th, 1937.

would but sit quietly in this room and concentrate your imperial will upon this old pocket maker, he would return to you."

Khan was pleased and flattered, as Ditmar had hoped. He first pretended to doubt, then agreed.

"I will make an attempt," he finally decided. "It will be an interesting experiment in telepathy. But Hakur must return to Annapolis and lay siege to the city. Sharad and his Whites have come to the end of their tether. Leave me—see to it that I am not disturbed."

In Sharad's palace Norton was seated in a corner of the room which had been courteously allotted to him by the high priest. Corrigan knelt before the old man to bring their eyes on a level. Billy stood anxiously by his father's side.

"Don't you know me?" Corrigan was asking, trying to impress himself upon the professor.

"You're Corrigan," Norton replied at once. "An enemy of my master who, even now, is pressing me to return to him."

"I am your friend. This is Billy."

Norton said testily:

"I know—I know! You're Corrigan and he's Billy. Well, what of it?"

"He's your son."

Norton turned his head towards the boy. They regarded each other in silence. Then Norton asked falteringly: "Who are you? Why are we here?"

"The Rocket brought us, dad. We got caught in a magnetic storm or something and the submarine was dragged into a sea tunnel."

"Sea tunnel? Nonsense! I came here because he wanted me—the great and mighty Unga Khan. I am to be his ambassador when we ascend." He blinked a little. "I can't see you properly, everything is in a fog. I want sleep, I'm tired."

He closed his eyes and kept them so, obstinate lines about his mouth and forehead. Corrigan made a sign to Billy and they left him in his chair.

Norton lay very still, then opened his eyes to make sure. Yes, they had gone, these tiresome people whom he seemed to vaguely remember. He waited, listening.

No one about. He got up, to move quietly to the door and listen still more closely. He nodded his head as if in answer to instructions received within his subconsciousness.

"All right," he muttered. "You're all in such a hurry, every one of you. No peace for anybody. What am I to do? I see, I'll manage it. Just go about as if I'm quite at home? Get down to the courtyard where the gates are open and quietly walk out? The chariots are waiting for me on the pass?"

He opened the door and went out into the corridor. Then ambled to the stairs, preoccupied, day-dreaming, not heeding anyone. He came out into the courtyard, where Martos saluted, turning to study the old fellow with kindly curiosity.

Norton gestured with a flabby hand and passed on. Martos saw him wandering amongst the people who were walking and talking together in the orderly manner which so distinguished the White Robes from the insurgent Blacks.

By the gates stood Darius. He saluted the professor who, hatless, moved forward.

"A fine night," said Norton. "I'll walk a little way."

Darius opened the gates, and the old fellow very leisurely went out, turning his head every now and then to make sure that he was unobserved.

Martos called to Darius, who came away from the gate.

On the instant Norton began to run. He moved with surprising agility for one so tired and old. Night was falling now and he was soon lost to sight. Darius, coming back to the gate, thought that the old fellow had re-entered the city.

He closed the heavy doors.

Hakur had halted in the pass. Norton came trotting up to where the Black Robo commander was standing gloomily beside his chariot.

"You're to take me to our master," Norton ordered in peremptory fashion. "He needs me. He tells me he can do nothing without my help. He is quite right; you are all entirely dependent on me. Get that into your thick head and don't ever forget it."

Hakur stood to attention. This was the sort of talk he understood.

He assisted the professor into a chariot and told the driver to go quickly and carefully to the tower. The patrol followed in high spirits; they had got the man their fierce master wanted and all would be well.

Khan barely waited for Hakur to finish speaking into the receiving plate of the reflectograph in the stables.

"Escort Professor Norton to his rooms," he ordered. "Then mobilise all arms and proceed to Annapolis. The city is to be taken. I will direct an intense bombardment from here and you will make a final assault when the barrage ceases."

He snapped off the reflectograph and turned to the patient, block-headed Ditmar.

"Put the projector into operation. Fire low, so as to avoid danger to the dome above us. Destroy the city—level it to the ground."

Ditmar answered with sour satisfaction:

"At last, Imperial High and Mighty! I will go to the turret and every torpedo

shall be fired at an exact trajectory. I will send fire bombs at first, to give us light and correct direction."

"Shall I be able to see?" Khan wondered. "It is very dark."

"You will see the fires springing up. They will turn night into day. The flames of the White Robes' torments will bring joy and warmth to you, High and Mighty."

Khan rubbed his hands together as if washing them in the blood of his enemies.

Annapolis Destroyed

HAKUR, anxious to reinstate himself and his army in the good graces of Unga Khan, did not wait for the bombardment of the White Robes' city. He planned to take it by assault with his scaling ladders and his catapults and by force of arms. He attacked under the night, trying to batter in the gates with huge banks of timber roped around and carried by gangs of men on either side advancing in a kind of running charge, so that the head of the baulk should smash in the timbers of the gates.

Corrigan at once had the flame-throwers put into action, and many teams of ram carriers were scorched to death as they charged at the gates. But the great round stones flung by the catapults did enormous damage; while the Black Robes, inspired by their leader's ardour, swarmed on the scaling ladders almost before they had been hooked on to the walls, and clambered up to the ramparts in their hundreds. Fighting was absolutely merciless. It was life or death for the Whites, and they felt it to be so in their hearts.

They held their enemies at bay under Corrigan's ceaseless efforts and bold leadership. Hakur fell back, to prepare another assault on the battered gates. He saw, with gloating eyes, that the flame-throwers were failing; no longer did the round openings under the archway belch forth their fires with the fierceness with which they had begun.

Hakur ordered the long-bowmen to speed short volleys of barbed arrows over the ramparts, then prepared fresh teams of "carriers" and again brought the rams into action. He bade the catapult men to aim their monstrous, weighty missiles at the gates themselves. With thudding crashes the immense round stones came hurtling at the splintered timbers, and at last one of the gates fell inwards, smashed off its hinges. Hakur led his best troops on a charge over the wreck and, by sheer and dull tenacity, won a way into the courtyard.

Those of his army already on the ramparts leapt down to add to the furious charges Hakur made to gain the palace steps.

The White Robes were beaten back, but fought with desperation and great

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bravery. Martos and a small company hacked at the rear ranks of Hakur's men, while Darius tried to stem the crowd of Black Robes who, spears and swords upraised, were seeking to follow Hakur over the broken gate.

Despite all efforts to stay them, the Black Robes reached the palace and broke in through the doors. Corrigan held the stairway against the madly shrieking horde and kept Hakur's men from ascending. Swords clashed together; spears were recklessly thrown, men fought with their fists or with any weapon they could seize upon.

The tide of battle suddenly ebbed; Darius and others had contrived partly to re-erect the broken gate. Hakur's company was trapped between Martos and his men, and Corrigan with his stalwarts on the stairs of the palace hallway.

But now came the beginning of the end for the White Robes; Ditmar's first torpedo, charged with highly explosive gas, shrieked through the night. It carried away with it the crown of the archway above the shattered gates, it struck the left wing of the palace and buried itself in a lower storey. Then came a sickening explosion, and the whole front was lifted up, to fall outwards in a vast avalanche of bricks and stones and broken glass, which descended on the struggling masses below. Flames leapt through the ruins, and the first of the immense fires which were to consume Annapolis to ashes was lighted.

The Black Robes made a wild dash to get out of the city. They knew what was to follow. A heaped mass of men gathered together under the smashed archway, all frantic to climb over the wreck of the gates. The White Robes charged after them, and were evening the score when the second torpedo hissed forth from the turret of Khan's tower.

This terrible missile curved as it fell to plunge its pointed firing cap into the centre of the courtyard. A deafening explosion shook the city to its foundations; paving-stones were torn up and shot into the air as if they were wisps of straw. Friends and foes alike were blown into shreds, or torn limb from limb.

Panic filled the city. There was no longer any thought of fighting, all were passionately eager to save themselves. The palace left wing was burning fiercely—flames shooting upwards and turning night into day, as Ditmar had foretold.

Sharad ran out from his apartments to Corrigan, who was clearing the stairway of dead and wounded. The high priest called to him in despair:

"Can *nothing* be done?"

Corrigan shook his head.

"We must fall back on the outskirts of the city. I will tell the people, while you look after Diana and the boy."

"His father is responsible for this."

"We don't know, we can't attempt to alight the blame. Norton may have gone to the inland sea—"

A terrific explosion drowned Corrigan's words. A third torpedo had cut through a bastion of the outer walls and had blown that section into nothingness. Splintered stones and bricks fell everywhere in showers, killing or maiming all those on whom they descended. Screams of agony were mingled with furious shoutings, an incendiary bomb, following almost instantly on the torpedo, struck the barracks on the right of the courtyard, smashed in the front, then poured its flaming gas over the building, causing the death of many hundreds of people who had sought refuge there.

Corrigan shouted above the din:

"We must evacuate the city! I will tell Martos!"

March 27th, 1937

Sharad called back to him:

"I will take your friends to the new temple at the back of the palace grounds."

Corrigan ran down the stairs and out into the inferno of flames and destruction. He yelled to the panic-stricken mob to fly from the city—to collect their families and take to the hills, or whatever cover they could find.

Many of the White Robes, beside themselves with fear, fled out over the smashed-down walls and were mercilessly butchered by Hakur's men, who had now fought their way out.

Darius had been cut down at his post by the gates. The Black Robes prepared to advance behind the barrage of torpedoes and shells directed so unerringly by Ditmar from the tower.

So frightful and intense became the bombardment that Hakur was held up for an hour ere he could push forward over what was left of the walls of the beautiful ages-old city of Annapolis, to commence his fell work of massacre.

The gas fumes rising from the wreck of the city were so intense and persistent that Hakur dared not push in very far. He and his savage horde killed all those who were lying wounded in the courtyard, then tried to release and capture the terrified horses in their stables.

Behind the palace the trading part of the city was burning in a sullen way, dense clouds of smoke rising from the many fires rising where Ditmar's bombs had fallen.

That worthy hoped to content his master by showing him, on the screen of the reflectograph, pictures of the frightful destruction they had brought about.

"It is not enough if Sharad still lives," said Khan venomously.

"Hakur will have entered the city, Imperial High and Mighty," Ditmar ventured to argue. "He has strict orders to finish the White Robes—to kill all, young and old."

"Hakur is not to be relied upon," Khan answered. "Continue the bombardment."

"But if we send torpedoes now our men will be caught also."

"They must look after themselves," snapped Khan. "I am sure Sharad has escaped. Fire the projector until I bid you stop!"

Death of Sharad

KHAN was right. Sharad had sought refuge in the temple beyond the palace, a low-pitched, one-storeyed building of granite of immense strength. With him were Diana and Billy. The high priest had gone to the altar to pray; the other two were watching and whispering together.

"Will Crash know where we are?" Billy wondered. "I don't like being here while he's fighting."

"What else can we do?" Diana asked. "If we go away we shall lose each other. We had better stay."

Corrigan had rallied the remains of Sharad's forces in the palace grounds. The bombardment seemed to have ceased and, although the city burned in many places, the White Robe soldiers could not believe that it was lost beyond all hope. They heard the triumphant Black Robes shouting riotously in the courtyard and itched to sweep away these wretches from the vantage-point they had gained.

Corrigan divided the Whites into two companies, one under his own command, the other under Martos. They were to creep forth from the palace grounds and converge on their enemies on either flank. In the darkness Corrigan hoped to frighten Hakur's men into believing

that the forces against them were much greater than they were.

The plan succeeded by the unexpectedness of the White attack. Hakur's army was partly scattered along the front of the burning palace, the soldiers seeking to loot what they could; the rest, under little Zogg, had gone into the trading centre beyond the palace, and were busily smashing in the shop windows and killing all those who dared to oppose them.

Corrigan's counter attack took Hakur by surprise, and for a time the tables were completely turned.

Martos broke in on the left flank and carried his company right through the square. Corrigan's men engaged with the yelling Blacks as they climbed, panic-stricken, over the ruins of the broker walls.

Moloch now appeared. He had been caught in the barracks when the bomb had struck that building and had been imprisoned by the falling debris. He had managed to scrape a way out, then gas fumes had overpowered him. He had imagined all was lost when he saw, by the light of the dancing flames, the Black Robes in possession of the courtyard.

He now ranged himself beside Corrigan and fought with such bravery and intelligence that Corrigan was presently able to leave him in charge of a half-company whilst he took the other half forward in a clearing up of the courtyard with Martos and his men.

The Black Robes were driven out of the wrecked city and their catapult engines were overturned. The Whites then retired in good order to attempt salvage of their burning homes and to settle with the Blacks under little Zogg.

Corrigan joined his command to that of Martos and went in search of Billy and Diana. He knew that they had gone with Sharad to the new temple, and hoped that all three were sheltering within the solid building.

The gardens of the palace were laid out in terraces, gradually descending to the small lake which cut off the temple from the rest of the grounds. The darkness was fitfully lightened by the fires of the palace and by those in the trading quarter, but Corrigan found difficulty in getting to Sharad's refuge. The lake seemed to be always between him and it.

At length he came upon a narrow stone bridge and ran anxiously across it. He was entering the temple from the far side when Ditmar resumed the bombardment.

The torpedoes followed each other in reckless style. They were being fired without system, or any attempt at sighting or judgment of distance. Many sped right over the city to explode in the hills beyond; others fell short, causing Hakur's men such alarm that they retreated in a disorderly rabble.

But the first missile had been fated to find its mark. It had sped its fatal path through the burning palace and, deflected, had struck the cupola of the temple under which Sharad was at prayer. The explosion was almost lost in the crash of falling masonry—a heavy rafter dropped right across the bowed back of the high priest, and Sharad died of a broken spine with a prayer on his lips.

Corrigan entered the temple just as the torpedo struck the cupola. The deafening confusion of noise and dust and debris flying in the dense darkness rendered him helpless to do anything but shout amid the frightful din for Diana and Billy. He called himself

(Continued on page 26)

"GUNS OF THE PECOS"

(Continued from page 16)

"They're not criminals," shrieked Aunt Carrie. "You're a wicked man. Go away!"

Blake smiled thinly as he answered: "Don't be deceived, Miss Burton—it's no use opposing the law. You're becoming an accessory—you'll have to take most serious consequences if these men are not given up to justice."

Aunt Carrie slammed down the window in his face.

Blake walked back to where his men were gathered.

"Take 'em by storm!" he gritted out.

A fusillade of shots rang out, smashing windows in the front of the ranch. Some of the party ran round to the back of the house to send a second volley in at the windows there. For a long minute there was no reply from the besieged; then a single shot sounded and Blake's hat was whisked off his head.

He caught up his gun and aimed at an upper window where his quick eyes had spied a capped head. The bullet crashed in—then someone hidden below the sill raised the capped head in derision. It was a duster tied round a broom!

No one can stand being made ridiculous—least of all Judge Blake. His men were grinning and he was furious. "Fire the place! Burn 'em out! Shoot 'em down like rats when they run out!"

Luke crept like a snake to cover. He got ready one of the tarred torches which Blake had brought over in his buggy. With this flaming and smoking, Luke shouted for Carlos, and the pair of rascals ran out behind those who were now shooting at the porch door, seeking to smash it in.

The defenders were saving their ammunition. They hadn't too much, nor too many guns. But such as they had were being well handled under Jeff's command. He was crouching low by a smashed window in the parlour, taking shots when he dared from behind a torn curtain. He had quick eyes and ventured to peep out each time before firing. The rustlers were now spreading wide, taking cover where they could; but Jeff picked off a couple of them very neatly with two quick consecutive shots.

Alice, crouching near him, whispered: "I can shoot. If they break in, I'm going to fight."

Jeff answered her gruffly:

"Take care of yourself, miss. I guess Steve's sort of counting on me to look after you."

Alice blushed at this.

"I don't see why," she was saying,

when a random bullet crashed in and caught Jeff's hand. The ranger dropped his rifle.

"Gimme that shooter you got. I can fire left-handed."

Alice bound up the broken right hand with a handkerchief. Jeff setting his teeth together as he endured the pain. He fired the six-gun at the sniper outside who had ventured partly to show himself. A yell of rage was Jeff's reward.

"Got him!" he muttered.

Aunt Carrie called to them. "They've got torches. They're going to fire the house! Stop them, Alice—stop them at once!"

Jeff had to grin again.

"Ain't that like a woman? Who's able to stop 'em?"

Aunt Carrie came running into the parlour.

"I'm going to!" She snatched up a gun and dashed away with it.

"Crazy!" Jeff muttered.

Jordan and the other ranch-hands were posted about the house beside the shattered windows. They were doing good work—Blake was becoming furious at the opposition put up. He had expected to rush the ranch easily in a few minutes.

Meanwhile, Luke was climbing the tarred roof of a shed which abutted on the main buildings. If this could be got well alight, the south wind would blow the flames on to the dry woodwork of the ranch and soon finish off the defence. Aunt Carrie, at a small upper

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(a) Troposphere
(b) Stratosphere
(c) Warm air region

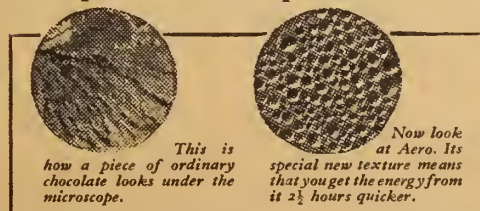
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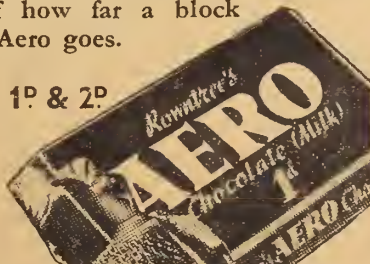
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window, spotted him and the flaming torch. She took a trembling aim with the gun she had snatched up.

She had only the foggiest idea of shooting, but she caught Luke fair and square in the shoulder with her first effort.

He dropped the torch and rolled off the shed roof with screams of agony. The flaming torch had fallen with him and upon him, setting fire to his clothes. Aunt Carrie, squealing, collapsed backwards into the room with the shock of the revolver fire. Jeff dashed upstairs to her.

"Gee, Miss Carrie—have they got you?"

She couldn't speak—she could only point to the window. Jeff took a quick sight and fired at Carlos who had gone to the rescue of Luke. Another wild yell told that the bullet had gone home.

Blake decided on one last desperate gamble. He ordered his men to form up and charge over the porch and smash in the door. He knew that the defenders couldn't have much more ammunition. He led the attack—shouting to his fellows to follow him.

They reached the porch with the loss of one man. They began to beat in the door with the butts of their guns and with kicks from their heavy boots. A splintering crash sounded just as Alice called to Jeff that one of the ranch-hands had been stricken down in the kitchen by a chance shot.

Blake's bull roar could be heard at the falling door.

"Surrender! It ain't no use—"

His shout was cut short. Someone behind him was shrieking:

"Judge—judge—here's the Rangers!"

For the next few minutes all was confusion. The besieged couldn't make head or tail of what was going on; they listened with awe to the crack of rifles, the shouts and yells, the clattering hoofs of horses and quickly snapping reports of six-shooters.

Presently these ended. There was a kind of silence for a moment or two. Then Captain Norris' hearty voice was heard at the broken-in door:

"Anybody at home?"

They came crowding out to where he stood with his Rangers grouped around him. Two of them had Blake between them, neatly roped and looking very dishevelled. Ainslee was there—Alice ran to him, all smiles now.

"I got old Papa Bear himself," Steve told her. "I caught him sneaking off."

Said Jeff, from somewhere in the back-ground:

"Looks more like a hog to me!"

Norris gripped Steve's hand.

"I'm going to hold the whole piggery for the Federal authorities. We've got enough evidence to swing the lot—thanks to you two fellows." He dropped Steve's hand and called to Jeff. "Come out of it, Carter—I see you hidin' there with Miss Carrie. We got to get busy caging these birds."

Aunt Carrie and Jeff came forward. Aunt Carrie was looking very pleased with life as she nursed Jeff's injured hand. He was grinning a little sheepishly.

"Guess we might make a double weddin' of it," he said. "The two Miss Burtons and Steve and me."

Alice caught him up.

"Why, Mr. Carter—how you do talk! Steve hasn't asked me yet."

But Steve's arm was eloquently about her shoulders. Norris winked—the Rangers began to hustle Blake away towards the ring where they had roped their other prisoners.

(By permission of Warner Brothers, Ltd., starring Dick Foran and Anne Nagel.)

March 27th, 1937.

"UNDERSEA KINGDOM"

(Continued from page 24)

hoarse and was about to go when he felt a small cold hand touch his.

A little voice croaked:

"That you, Crash?"

"Billy!"

"I'm all right, Crash. I can't see anything—got dust in my eyes. Where's Diana?"

"Isn't she here?" Corrigan asked shakely.

"She was. She went up to Sharad just before the smash came. Just listen to those torpedoes." The boy shivered. "D'you think they'll get us?"

Corrigan answered:

"We've got to risk it. Get outside and wait for me."

"I'll come, too," the boy told him. "I'd sooner be with you, Crash."

They linked hands and felt their way forward. The dust was settling a little, and a faint, gloomy reflection of the fires raging in the city was eastward from the bronze dome above them through the gasped and gaping roof of the cupola. A horrible smell of burning cloth and resinous wood almost choked them as they dimly perceived the black shadow of a huge splintered beam lying athwart the crushed body of Sharad.

"Is he dead?" whispered Billy, clutching more tightly to Corrigan's hand.

"Killed on the instant." Corrigan moved forward to kneel and touch the body of the high priest. "We will come back for him and try to move the beam. Keep close to me." He called in a sudden lull: "Diana—Diana!"

The scream of the shells flying above them and exploding as they struck was the only answer. Stones slipped and fell scraping from the roof; the cracked rafters still standing creaked and groaned as though warning them to escape from under the smashed masonry and timbers whilst there was yet time.

(To be continued in another fine episode next week. By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan and Lois Wilde.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"MAD HOLIDAY."—*Philip Trent*, Edmund Lowe; *Peter Dean*, Elissa Landi; *Mrs. Kinney*, ZaSu Pitts; *Mert Morgan*, Ted Healy; *Williams*, Edmund Gwenn; *Donovan*, Edgar Kennedy; *Li Tai*, Soo Yong; *Ben Kelvin*, Walter Kingsford; *Captain Bromley*, Herbert Rawlinson; "*Cokey*" *Joe Ferris*, Raymond Hatton; *Ning*, Rafaela Ottiano; *Mr. Kinney*, Harlan Briggs; *Hendrick van Mier*, Gustav von Seyffertitz.

"GUNS OF THE PECOS."—*Steve Ainslee*, Dick Foran; *Alice Burton*, Anne Nagel; *Jeff Carter*, Eddie Acuff; *Judge Blake*, Robert Middlemass; *Aunt Carrie*, Gaby Fay; *Carlos*, Milton Kibbee; *Luke Brady*, Monto Montague.

"SEA SPOILERS."—*Bob Randall*, John Wayne; *Connie Dawson*, Nan Grey; *Lieutenant Mays*, William Bakewell; *Hogan*, Fuzzy Knight; *Phil Morgan*, Russell Hicks; *Commander Mays*, George Irving; *Marie*, Lotus Young; *Nick Austin*, Harry Worth; *Reggie Winton*, Ernie Woodard; *Oil*, Chester Gan.

"MAD HOLIDAY"

(Continued from page 10)

"Trent!" It was Williams' turn to be amazed.

With a snarl of rage, Williams tried to get at the gun he had concealed under his arm-pit. He was sure that Trent would not have the nerve to shoot him in cold blood. He was right, but that did not prevent Trent stepping forward and with his left socking the killer a fearful punch in the jaw. Williams dropped like a pole-axed ox.

"Clever, these Chinese," chuckled Philip, with a grin at the girl.

"Philip," she cried, and flung herself into his arms.

The door opened again, and there stood the smiling Li Yat.

"A most excellent actor, Mr. Trent." He bowed over folded arms. "My congratulations. Your idea much better than mine."

Philip handed back to Li Yat his money.

"We'll have to give the Dragon back to the police, but as it once belonged to your family I guess they'll fix it so you can buy it. Ah!" He turned his head. "By the sound of the heavy feet I imagine the police have arrived."

Chief Gibbs, a number of officers and two coal-begrimed figures burst into the room.

"If this is some sort of gag you're not going to get away this time," Gibbs shouted, staring suspiciously at Trent's kimono.

"No gag this time, chief," chuckled Philip Trent. "We've got a couple of corpses for you." He pointed to the groaning Williams. "Only this one isn't quite dead." He held out his hand, and in it glittered the White Dragon. "And here's what all the fun's been about."

"The Dragon!" exclaimed Gibbs in an awed voice.

"A simple matter of deduction," blandly retorted Philip. "And now, if no one has any objection, I propose continuing my vacation."

"But I've got to know what happened."

"Mert will tell you all the details," answered Philip. "Williams came back as I prophesied he would—to collect from Mr. Li Yat. Well, all that Williams collected was a sock in the jaw."

"There's a reward, Trent, and—"

"Chief, we want a good half to go to Cokey Joe, a quarter to Mert and Hymie, and the rest to the most suitable police orphanage. Lastly, I would like you to do your best, chief, to see that Mr. Li Yat is able to buy the White Dragon, which originally belonged to his family. And tell the Press that if they print a lot of junk about me being a swell detective I may never act again."

Not very long afterwards Peter and Philip drove home alone in a taxi.

"Well, I reckon you've got a grand plot for a new book," Philip said.

"What do you think of the twist I got in at the end?"

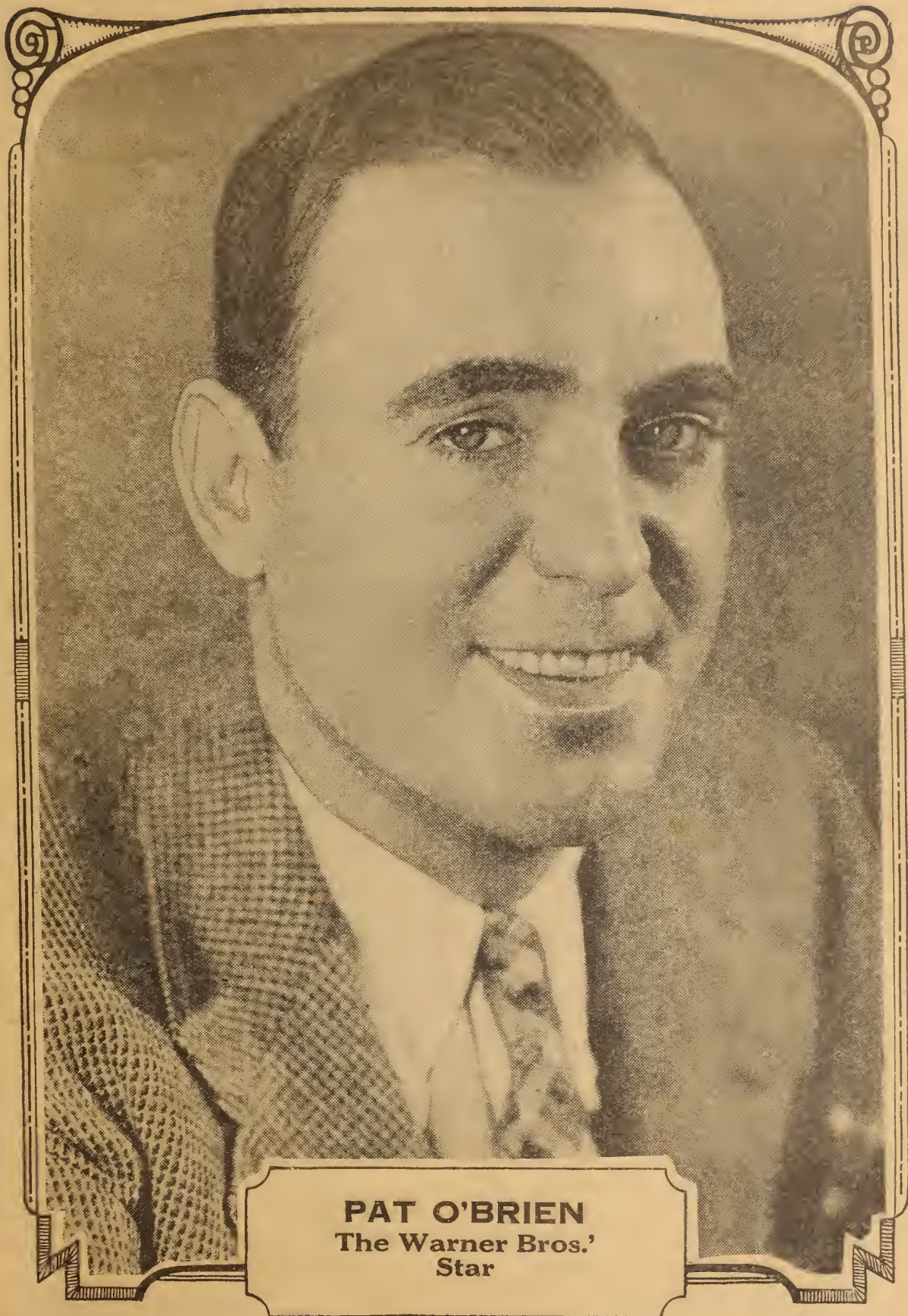
"You're wrong—it isn't the end."

"No?" He looked at her.

"No. I always end them in a clinch," cried Peter, and her arms crept round his neck.

"You win!" cried Philip Trent, and smiled contentedly.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd., starring Edmund Lowe as Philip Trent and Elissa Landi as Peter Dean.)



PAT O'BRIEN
The Warner Bros.'
Star



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 218, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Studio Thrills for "Hurricane"

Samuel Goldwyn's screen version of "Hurricane," the story by the authors of "Mutiny on the Bonnty," promises to be the most spectacular production of his career.

Most of the filming will be done on various South Sea islands. The United States Government are giving full co-operation, and the technicians and actors will be guests at the naval station on Pago Pago during their two or three months' stay. The naval officers and men are erecting buildings to house the troupe, and are preparing a native village on the island of Tutuila for the filming of some of the most important scenes.

The most thrilling part of the picture, however—the hurricane—will be contrived in the studio. To film these scenes, Goldwyn has signed James Basevi, who was responsible for the earthquake in "San Francisco." Under his instructions the model of the island and village to be destroyed by the hurricane has been constructed. It is a replica of the actual island which the location unit will film in the South Seas. The model is 40 feet in length and 20 feet wide, complete with native houses, church, palm forest, docks, ocean front and boats, all fashioned to scale.

Basevi expects to spend several months of hard work in filming the havoc scenes. So far Basevi has assembled the following equipment: 4 steel dump tanks capable of holding 55,000 gallons of water; two 12-in. centrifugal pumps; 5 Liberty motors; 3 specially constructed wave machines; a van-load of 12-in. and 34-in. steel piping; 4 aeroplane engines and propellers, ready to generate the 110 mile-an-hour gale—and that is only the beginning.

Joel McCrae has been selected for the leading rôle of Terangi, the native Lero Margo, of "Crime with Passion" fame, will play opposite him.

Eleanor Powell to Have First Dance Partner

The question of whether or not Eleanor Powell is able to dance with a partner was answered in Hollywood when it was announced that she is to be teamed with George Murphy.

The dancer will also do several of her solo tap routines for which she has become so famous; but Jack Chummings, producer of "Broadway Melody of 1937," decided to include a ball-room tap number for the star with Murphy.

During her Broadway career, Miss Powell did tap steps on the stage with

other dancers, but this will be the first "team dancing" for her.

Miss Powell says she is happy for the opportunity, because so many of her fans have been asking if her style of dancing would allow her to team with other famous dancers.

She is also going to do a novelty dance with Buddy Ebsen, George Tapps and Murphy.

Popular Star Signed for "Jericho"

To complete the star cast of the Capitol picture, "Jericho," Capitol Films announce that they have signed Wallace Ford to join Paul Robeson, Princess Kouka and Henry Wilcoxon in this great picture of desert adventure which is being directed by Thornton Freeland and produced by Walter Futter.

Wallace Ford needs no introduction. His rôles of tough guys, undaunted, hard-driving news reporters, smart getters and all those other "on-your-toes" characters from modern life have made him a firm film favourite.

Born in England, Wallace Ford left home shores for America as a Barnardo boy, and his screen success has come only after hard struggles. His better-known rôles are the American in the British Army in "O.H.M.S.," as Victor MacLaglen's friend in the classic "Infanteria," with Joan Crawford in "Possessed," in "It Happened in Hollywood," "Men in White," "I Hate Women," and a score more films. Wallace was under contract to M.G.M. at one time for seven years. There is hardly a small-town stage that Wallace Ford hasn't walked across. From oil-lamp footlights to automatic coloured spotlights, Wallace has played his part in such stage successes as "Abie's Irish Rose," "Abraham Lincoln," "Broadway" and "Bad Girl."

His rôle in the Capitol picture "Jericho" should fit him perfectly—a much-travelled and "kicked around" doughboy who teams up with Paul Robeson escaping from injustice to sail in a tiny boat to African waters. There is fine, powerful dramatic material here—the loyalty and deep friendship of two men fighting against almost insurmountable difficulties.

Wallace Ford is travelling with all speed to North Africa, where production is already proceeding at efficient speed.

The "Unloaded Gun"

Another "unloaded gun" story with an unusual twist has given Henry Wilcoxon something to think about.

The actor, who was born in the British West Indies, where he spent some time as a pearl and salvage diver, has an important rôle with Gary Cooper and George Raft in Paramount's "Soul at Sea."

Wilcoxon possesses a collection of antique firearms, among which is a duelling pistol said to have belonged to the pirate Blackbeard. Ever since he acquired the weapon seven years ago, Wilcoxon believed it to be unloaded. And thereby hangs a tale.

Recently, as he sat reading in the front room of his San Fernando valley ranch-house, there was a thud and a muffled explosion behind him, and something whizzed past his ear.

The maid, cleaning the room, had lifted the pistol from the mantelpiece to dust it, dropped it accidentally, the fall discharging a quantity of ancient powder. The ball struck the wall in front of Wilcoxon with only slight force and fell to the floor.

But the incident made the Paramount player go over the rest of his old gun collection to make sure nothing else was loaded!

Henry Wilcoxon is next to appear in the Capitol picture "Jericho."

The Missing Speedboat

A speedboat weighing a ton and measuring twenty feet in length vanished recently at 20th Century-Fox Studios during shooting on the thriller, "Midnight Taxi."

It happened this way: the script called for an exciting getaway by gangsters, led by Gilbert Roland, in the speedboat. Frances Drake was carried off with them. All went well, the scene was "in the can," and the company hastily moored the boat and left for lunch.

Although the boat was moored on a lake, and the lake was in the studio guarded by police, when the unit returned, the speedboat was gone.

"We can't finish the picture without the boat," the company wailed.

The bewildered cast and crew searched. Suddenly an assistant director caught a glimpse of something shining vaguely up from the murky depths of the "lake."

"There she is!" he yelled. "Sunk!"

And there she was—sunk! Someone had been in such a hurry to leave the set that he had left the automatic bailer wide open.

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"SECRET PATROL"

*A Gripping Mystery
Drama of the Lumber Camps*

When Gene Barkley fails to return from an assignment to investigate the cause of a strange series of accidents in the logging outpost of St. Johns, his chum and fellow "Mountie," Alan Craig, takes over the case—and posing as a fugitive from justice becomes the apparent tool of a gang of crooks in order to get to the bottom of the mystery. A story packed with action, starring Charles Starrett



The Way of a Friend

SLOWLY and thoughtfully James Barkley, superintendent at Fort Chapelle of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, filled his pipe with tobacco. What his son, Constable Eugene Barkley, had just told him was both pleasing and disturbing.

"Step into my room a moment, Gene," he said. "I want to talk to Ann alone about this."

Gene, a tall and well-knit figure in his uniform and quite a good-looking young man in his dark-featured fashion, crossed the big living-room of his father's cabin into a very much smaller room, fitted as an office, and the elderly superintendent went to the foot of a staircase set against one of the wooden walls and called up to his ward, daughter of the dearest friend he had ever had in his life.

He was back at the mantelpiece, puffing at his pipe and gazing into the heart of a fire of blazing logs, when she came tripping down to him, a slenderly graceful girl in a dark blue frock which recently had arrived at the post from far-away Montreal. Her eyes were blue and perhaps a little troubled; her hair was golden-brown.

"I want to talk to you, my dear," the superintendent said gravely and without looking round at her. "My son tells me that he has proposed to you and that you've agreed to marry him."

"Yes," she confirmed, and added: "that is, if you're willing."

"Willing?" He turned, pipe in hand, to stare at her. "My dear girl, nothing would make me happier! You know that, but—well—"

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"But what?" she inquired. "Are you sure that you're doing this because you want to, or is it just because—well, because you feel that you owe it to me?"

"I don't think I understand," she murmured.

"Five years ago, when your father died, you came to me here. You've been a real daughter to me, and I—P've tried to make you happy."

"And you think I accepted your son rather than hurt you?" she suggested. "Is that it?"

"It would be like you, Ann." Her blue eyes bore the scrutiny of his grey ones well enough.

"I'm marrying Gene because I love him," she declared. "Please believe that."

"I do believe it," he nodded. "But somehow I thought it would be Alan Craig that you would choose."

For a moment only she hesitated, then quite definitely she said:

"I've always thought of Alan more as a big brother."

"I wish it meant no more than that to him," sighed the superintendent. "Gene!"

Gene appeared with an alacrity which suggested that he had been listening in the other room.

"You've made me very happy, you two," said his father. "But what about Alan? Isn't this likely to be a shock for him?"

The smile on Gene's face faded. "I'm afraid it is," he admitted. "In fact, we—er—we hoped that you might break the news to him for us."

The superintendent frowned.

"Have you been trained to run away from unpleasant obligations?" he asked sharply.

"No, sir," Gene began lamely, "but I—"

"It isn't ourselves we're thinking of," Ann hastily cut in. "We thought it might be easier for Alan if you told him."

The superintendent rubbed his chin. "Perhaps you're right," he conceded. "Then you will tell him?" asked Ann.

"We'll see when he gets back to the post."

Not more than a hundred yards from the veranda of the cabin the waters of Lake Clear were sparkling in the spring sunshine. The sound of voices down by the landing-stage drew the superintendent to a window, and he saw several men of the Mounted hailing a colleague in uniform who was propelling a canoe rapidly towards them.

"He seems to have timed his arrival almost to the minute!" remarked the superintendent.

In the front of the canoe which Alan Craig was paddling a ragged and unshaven fellow was huddled, his left arm in an improvised sling. He was Alan's prisoner, and as the landing-stage was reached one of the Mounties helped him out on to his feet.

"Ugly looking blighter, isn't he?" said the Mountie, whose name was Martin.

"Not too handsome," agreed Alan, himself a particularly fine specimen of young manhood, and he stepped ashore and caught hold of the prisoner's sound arm. "Come on, easy now."

"Looks like you had a bit of a go with him," Martin commented.

"Nothing serious," said Alan.

"We didn't expect you back for another two weeks at the best."

"Had a bit of luck, that's all."

Five minutes later the prisoner was in a cell in the guard-room and Alan was facing Sergeant-major Haskins across a desk in the orderly-room of the post.

"Corporal Craig reporting with prisoner Gunner Hardigan," he stated. "Hardigan is now under medical care in the guard-room, sir."

The sergeant-major, a lean-faced and gruff-voiced martinet, looked up with raised brows.

"Under medical care?" he echoed harshly. "Is he wounded?"

"Slightly, sir," replied Alan. "He resisted arrest."

"With arms?"

"Yes, sir," Alan leaned slightly over the desk to exhibit his holster, in the leather of which there was a jagged hole. "Second shot took away part of my holster. Gave me no further choice, sir."

"Pretty close, eh?" The sergeant-major spoke into a telephone on his desk because its bell had rung. "Sergeant-major's office," he said.

Superintendent Barkley was on the other end of the line.

"When you've done with Corporal Craig," he directed, "have him report to me here."

"Very good, sir," Haskins replaced the receiver and looked up at Alan again. "Any further details?"

"None, sir."

"Get those side-arms replaced, get properly dressed, and report to the O.C. right away. Carry on!"

"Very good, sergeant-major."

Alan saluted and went off to his quarters to remove the stains of travel from his uniform and person, visited the armoury, and made his way to the superintendent's cabin.

"Corporal Craig reporting, sir," he said with a salute after he had rapped at the door and entered the big living-room.

"Come right in, corporal, and sit down," said the superintendent genially.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"I said sit down."

"Yes, sir," Alan crossed the room to a long settee in front of the blazing fire because the superintendent had indicated it.

"Take your hat off."

The wide-brimmed service hat was removed, and the superintendent further astonished his visitor by sitting down beside him.

"This isn't exactly an official interview," he said. "In fact, it's a bit wide of regulations. You consider yourself quite a good friend of my son's, don't you, Craig?"

"None better, I hope, sir," replied Alan.

"And your regard for my ward, Ann, is more or less an open secret, I believe."

"I dare say it is, sir."

"Alan, I think you'd better prepare yourself for something of a shock."

"Sir, nothing's happened to Ann, has it?" asked Alan in high concern.

"Oh, no, nothing like that." The superintendent shook his head. "At least, not in the sense you mean it. But she's just consented to marry my son."

Alan stood up and his face was averted for several seconds. Then slowly he turned to the superintendent, who had also risen.

"I think that's fine," he said in a voice fairly under control. "Don't you, sir?"

"Fine?" The superintendent was amazed to find his task so easy. "You think it's fine?"

"Well, they're my best friends, and their happiness means a good deal to me."

"Oh, yes—yes, of course." The superintendent sighed with relief. "Naturally."

"If that's all, sir," said Alan, moving towards the door and restoring his hat to his head, "may I be excused?"

"No, not quite, Craig."

The stalwart young man turned about and stood stiffly to attention, hoping that the pain in his heart did not show in his clear brown eyes.

"I've been watching your record for a long time, corporal," said the superintendent in a more official tone, "and it's good—very good!"

"Thank you, sir."

"To-morrow Sergeant-major Haskins will assign you to a case of more than ordinary importance. Now, this is not official, of course, but that assignment should bring promotion. That's all, corporal."

"Beg pardon, sir," said Alan, "but could this interview remain unofficial another moment?"

"Yes—what's on your mind?"

"May I be relieved of the assignment in favour of Constable Barkley, sir?"

"In favour of my son?" The superintendent seemed a trifle bewildered. "May I ask why?"

"In the circumstances, sir, promotion might mean more to him than to me."

"Oh, I see. A sort of wedding present, is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"I had a friend like you once, Alan," said the superintendent with undisguised emotion. "He was Ann's father."

"Thank you, sir."

"Carry on, corporal."

Alan saluted and went out from the

cabin, and almost immediately Gene and Ann entered the cabin.

"Sir," blurted Gene, on hearing his father's statement, "I can't let him pass up promotion for me like this."

"Friendship of that sort," returned his father emphatically, "can't be refused, son. You ought to be proud to have earned it."

The Broken Link

ON the following morning Gene Barkley was summoned to the Sergeant-major's presence and stood stiffly in front of that officer's desk like any other Mountie.

"Stand at ease!" barked Haskins, and fished a letter from a wire basket. "There's been trouble at a logging camp in St. Johns. You know that district?"

"Yes, sir," Gene replied. "About six days from here. I've been through there before, sir."

"I've a letter here from the owner, and he states that there have been several loggers killed during the past month. They're supposed to be accidents, but it looks suspicious. Before you reach St. Johns I'd suggest that you change into the rough clothes of a logger. Report to the owner and investigate."

"Very good, sir."

The sergeant-major pointed a finger. "Remember, Barkley," he said in his gruffest manner. "It's no bed of roses. You're on your own. Six days' ride from the post, and there's no one in St. Johns that you can trust. That'll be all. Carry on."

Gene's horse was ready saddled outside the building and Alan and Ann were waiting beside it to see him off. He went straight to Alan and gripped him by the hand.

"I don't know how to thank you, old man," he said, "for giving me this chance of promotion."



Alan leaned slightly over the desk to exhibit his holster, in the leather of which there was a jagged hole.

"Oh, forget it!" said Alan. "You'd do as much for me."

Gene embraced Ann, then mounted his horse and rode away into the pinewoods. His father, at a window in the living-room of the cabin, watched him till he had disappeared under the trees.

St. Johns, the settlement for which he was bound, was situated on one of the banks of the Mackenzie river and was just as accessible by water as by land. But there were rapids in the river, and Geno was not expert enough with a canoe to travel the way Alan would have chosen.

The settlement was not large enough to be called a town, but it boasted a main street and several smaller thoroughfares, an hotel which was merely a frame building of very modest proportions, a variety of stores, a lunch-room and a stone gaol.

In the main street facing a blacksmith's shop were the offices of the McCord & Arnold Lumber Company, and it was Claude Joseph McCord, the senior partner of that firm, who had written to Fort Chapelle.

Four days after Gene had set out on his long journey Timothy Arnold, the junior partner, burst into the outer office from the street, an under-sized and middle-aged man with a fat face and dark deep-set eyes.

"Is Mr. McCord in?" he asked hurriedly of a clerk behind a counter.

"Yes, he's in," was the reply, and Arnold swept round the counter into the room he shared with his partner when he himself was not at the camp in the woods a couple of miles away.

McCord, an elderly man, grey-haired and lined of face, rose up from an old-fashioned desk as though alarmed by the tempestuous entrance of his junior partner.

"What's wrong now?" he asked.

Arnold pushed over the back of his head the black hat of soft felt he was wearing and mopped his streaming brow with the back of his hand.

"C. J.," he blurted, "it looks to me as if we're just about licked! We can't go on working the way things are at the camp."

"There's been another accident?" questioned McCord.

"Yes. A carrier chain broke and got three men."

"Badly?"

Arnold nodded.

"I'm afraid they're done for, poor beggars," he said. "They're on their way to the hospital."

McCord drew a long and quivering breath.

"I wonder if we oughtn't to try to find a buyer and sell out," he said.

"Nobody would pay anything for a hoodoo camp like ours," declared Arnold. "We've got to see it through."

"I'm not a young man, Tim."

McCord leaned against the side of his desk. "That's why I took you into the firm. I don't know that I can carry on under this strain much longer."

"It might be best for you to get out, C. J.," conceded Arnold, "but I'm not going to quit. I found out to-day these accidents are planned. Someone's trying to break us. Here!" He took from his coat pocket a heavy link of wrought iron which was broken. "Here's the cause of to-day's crash. This link of a chain cut half-way through with a hacksaw."

McCord took the link and examined it with worried eyes.

"I've half suspected something of the kind for weeks," he said.

"Well, why didn't you tell me?"

"Didn't seem possible. Murdering men that way in cold blood." McCord dropped the broken link on the top of

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his desk. "But I did report it to Fort Chapelle," he went on. "The runner got back this morning, and the law is on its way in."

Arnold pursed his lips and stared.

"Why, that's the best news we've had in weeks!" he exclaimed. "I'll go back and tell the men—they're on the verge of a walk-out."

He went out from the room and out from the wooden building, but instead of remounting the horse on which he had ridden in from the camp he crossed the street to the smithy.

Inside its open doorway Mike Barstow, the blacksmith, was plainly visible, hammering at an almost white-hot iron bar on an anvil and creating a shower of sparks.

Barstow was an enormous fellow, but he looked less tall than he was because of his bulk. He was clad only in vest and trousers, apart from hat and boots, and the muscles of his chest rippled beneath the vest as he swung the hammer. He was as strong as two average men put together; but he was an ugly brute, with a massive face, a wide mouth, and wicked eyes.

Arnold jerked his head significantly at the blacksmith looked up, and the iron bar was tossed on to the earth floor and the two retreated to a corner out of sight from passers-by.

"There's a Mountie on his way in," confided Arnold. "McCord wrote Fort Chapelle."

Barstow was holding the hammer, and for a moment he seemed tempted to strike his informant with it.

"I thought you said you was watching all letters?" he rasped.

"He sent it by runner without telling me," quavered Arnold.

"How's he coming, by horse or canoe?"

"I don't know. We'll have to watch both ways into town."

Barstow flung down the hammer.

"Don't worry," he said with an evil grin, "he'll never reach St. Johns alive!"

Alan Goes to St. Johns

AT Fort Chapelle, about a week later, the men of the Mounted who were not away on detail were exercising their horses over hurdles, in the clearing behind their quarters, when Alan caught sight of an Indian leading out from the woods a roan horse who seemed familiar to him and who bore a pack-saddle of the type used by the troops.

He rode over to the quaintly garbed Redskin, and a colleague followed.

"Where's the rider of this horse?" he demanded.

"I not see rider," the Indian replied. "Who sent you here with him?"

"I find horse in woods. Bring him here."

Alan dismounted.

"Where did you find him?" he asked imperiously.

"This side St. Johns," was the impassive answer. "Five days' run."

Alan stooped and raised the horse's right foreleg. On the front of the hoof was branded the number "28," which became plain enough after he had rubbed away caked mud and dust.

"Constable Barkley's horse all right," he said grimly to several Mounties who had ridden over, and he lowered the leg to examine the pack. "There's blood on the saddle!"

Sergeant-major Haskins came striding up from the direction of his office.

"What is it, corporal?" he snapped.

"Sergeant-major," responded Alan most unhappily, "this Indian has just brought in Constable Barkley's horse.

There are blood-stains on the saddle, sir."

Haskins looked at the saddle, and then he looked at the imperturbable Redskin.

"This is serious," he said. "Fisher, take this horse to the stables. Corporal, bring the Indian along for questioning."

With the Indian beside him, Alan followed the sergeant-major to the orderly-room. There the superintendent was informed by telephone of what had happened, and he arrived with Ann before very many questions had been asked.

Ann's face was white and strained, but her elderly guardian strove not to show the misgivings he felt.

"I suppose," he said, "that there's no doubt the horse was my—was Constable Barkley's, is there?"

"None, sir," replied Alan tonelessly.

"Who is this Indian? Is his word to be trusted?"

"My name Tillicum John," said the Redskin with quiet dignity. And the sergeant-major intervened.

"If he really is Tillicum John, sir," he said, "he's to be trusted. I know him by reputation, sir."

The superintendent bit his lip.

"Sergeant-major, you will detail a man to St. Johns to investigate this case," he instructed.

"Very good, sir. Any further instructions?"

"None."

"Very good, sir." Haskins addressed Alan peremptorily: "Bout turn—quick march!"

Alan turned, but before he had reached the door Ann was in front of him, barring the way.

"Now I understand why you sent Gene to St. Johns in your place, pretending to be his friend!" she cried. "You hated him for what happened! Sent him to his death to get rid of him!"

Alan, forgetting all discipline, swung round to the superintendent.

"You don't believe I did that, do you, sir?" he asked hoarsely.

"As you were, corporal!" thundered the sergeant-major; but the superintendent raised his hand.

"I think we can dispense with formality for the moment, sergeant-major," he said. "No, I don't believe it, Craig. Ann is overwrought!"

"May I volunteer to go to St. Johns to bring in the men guilty of Constable Barkley's death?" asked Alan.

"Request granted. You hear, sergeant-major?"

"Very good, sir." The officious Haskins went out with Alan and the Indian, and Ann burst into tears.

"There, there, my dear," soothed the superintendent, taking her into his arms. "If I can trust Craig, surely you can? After all, it was my son that was killed."

In less than a quarter of an hour Alan and Tillicum John were in a canoe by the landing-stage of the post, and the sergeant-major was there to see them off.

"Well, good-bye, sergeant-major," said Alan, down on his knees in the canoe with a paddle in his hand.

"Good-bye, corporal," returned the sergeant-major, and unbent sufficiently to add. "Good luck to you!"

Out across the placid waters of Lake Clear the canoe moved swiftly towards a reach of the Mackenzie river, and by sundown good progress had been made. Mountie and Indian camped for the night upon a grassy bank, under tall pines, and with daybreak the long journey was resumed.



Barstow held the punch to the spring lock of the handcuff and raised the hammer. "Look out for my wrist!" gritted Alan.

Tillicum John was a queer, taciturn companion, speaking only when he was asked a direct question; but he was expert enough with a canoe, and it was he who piloted the frail craft through the rapids encountered on the second day.

Alan came to like him during the days that followed, and was almost sorry to part company from him a few miles below the settlement for which he himself was bound. But the Indian had a cabin in the woods and wished to return to it.

On the second day out from Fort Chappelle Alan had discarded his uniform in favour of a woollen plaid coat, coarse trousers, laced boots and a battered hat of soft felt; and his uniform was packed in a kitbag when he ran his canoe up on to a shelving bank so that Tillicum John could disembark.

Deliberately he had gone unshaven for five days, so that a stubbly growth of hair was upon his face and he bore little resemblance to the smart and handsome Mountie to whom the sergeant-major had condescended to wave farewell.

Tillicum John picked up the kitbag. "How far is your cabin from St. Johns?" Alan inquired.

"Half-hour this side," was the very brief reply.

"All right. You keep that bag for me until I need it. If you see me in town you don't know me. Understand, John?"

The Indian nodded and deposited the kitbag on the grass to push the canoe back into the water.

"Hi-ow-us!" he shouted, waving a hand.

"Hi-ow-us!" returned Alan, and plied his paddle.

It took more than half an hour, against the current, to reach the pier that jutted out into the river at St.

Johns, and the sun was past its zenith when Alan pulled up to a steep flight of wooden steps beside the pier and tied the canoe to one of the piles there.

Several men were lounging on the pier-head, and they looked down at him with evident amusement as he climbed the steps. He heard their voices, and he turned to hail them.

"Will you take care of my canoe?" he asked. "I'll be back when I'm located. Is the McCord lumber office in town or out at the camp?"

"In town," one of the loungers called back.

"How do I get to it?" "Straight up the street on the right-hand side."

"Thanks." Alan mounted the rest of the steps and found himself in an ill-made roadway. In the distance were the buildings of the main street.

"Hi!" shouted one of the men on the pier, and he turned about. "That's the way you get to it," said the man, with a jerk of his thumb. "This is the way you come back!"

"You do if you're lucky," chimed in another man. "They buried my brother last week, and I quit!"

"Yeah, I heard it's bad," said Alan, "but a job's a job, these days."

Most of the men on the pier were there because they had nothing better to do, having refused to work any longer at the camp; but two of them were in league with Mike Barstow, the blacksmith—the man who had jerked his thumb, and whose name was Yates, and another man named Berg.

Hank Berg, a lantern-jawed ruffian, was there with Yates to see that no Mountie entered the town in secret from the river, and as Alan was about to walk off he shouted:

"Hi! How are things around Fort Chappelle?"

"I don't know," Alan returned over

his shoulder. "I came over the range from Caribou Camp."

He walked on along the road.

The Handcuff

THE offices of the McCord and Arnold Lumber Company were easy enough to find. Alan entered the outer office and spoke to the clerk behind the counter.

"You taking on any loggers?" he inquired with seeming anxiety.

"Yes," the clerk replied, "but we have orders to tell them it's a very dangerous camp."

"So I've heard," said Alan.

"Do you still want to sign on?"

"Sure."

A card was taken from a drawer and placed before him; a pen was presented.

"Just fill in that card, will you?" said the clerk.

Alan dipped the pen in an inkpot, and he was writing on the card when McCord emerged from his room, disturbed by a sudden commotion in the street, and Arnold burst in from the boardwalk with a man hardly any taller than himself.

"C. J.," Arnold cried excitedly, "the camp's closed down! The men have walked out! They're threatening violence—and I don't blame 'em!"

"More—more accidents?" faltered McCord.

"If you can call 'em that! Look at this!" Arnold flung on to the counter a broken loop of iron. "A choker lock snapped and dropped a log. It hit two men square and side-swiped two others!"

Alan stood looking on, pen in hand, while McCord picked up the lock and frowned at it.

"Why, it's been welded!" he exploded, and glared at Arnold's companion, a man named Jordan. "You're a foreman—don't you know

better than to use a lock like that on a choker?"

Jordan, thin of face and scrubby of chin, scratched the back of his head. His deep-set eyes were shifty, but he answered readily enough.

"Yes, sir, but it wasn't on the rigging when I inspected it."

"We do everything possible to protect the men," began Arnold, "but we—"

A roar of voices in the street caused him to break off abruptly, and he and Jordan went out. McCord dropped the choker lock on the counter and followed, and the clerk followed him. Alan, left alone in the outer office, slipped the broken loop into his coat-pocket before he stepped forth on to the boardwalk.

A crowd of excited men and women had gathered round the diminutive hospital and a wagon which had drawn up outside it. From the wagon four men had been removed on stretchers and were being carried into the hospital—at the open doorway of which a white-haired doctor was trying to prevent distracted relatives from entering.

"You'd better stay outside, Mrs. O'Neil," he said to a weeping but persistent woman.

"It's my Danny, and he's hurt!" she shrieked.

"Yes, yes, I know," said the doctor, "but you'd only be in the way."

McCord, ignoring the boeing of several of the men, squeezed through the crowd and tried to pass the doctor.

"Let me go in," he said urgently.

"No," said the doctor, catching hold of his arm. "The same applies to you, Mr. McCord."

The last of the stretchers disappeared into the building.

"But there must be something I can do to help them," protested McCord.

"You might have thought of that sooner!" Mrs. O'Neil blared hysterically at him. "It's too late now to help them—or any of the others that they've brought in from your suicide camp!"

"Yeah!" shouted a number of voices, and then a thickset man named Haywood appointed himself spokesman on behalf of the other workers.

"Where's the protection you promised us, McCord?" he demanded truculently.

"We've done everything we can to protect you," McCord declared.

"You said the law was coming in!" cried Mrs. O'Neil. "Where is it?"

"I don't know," McCord confessed. "It should have been here ten days ago."

"You should have sent for help two months ago!" retorted Haywood; and the attitude of the men became so threatening that the doctor changed his mind about keeping McCord out of the hospital.

"You'd better get inside, Mac," he said uneasily.

"I've done nothing to make me hide!" was the stubborn rejoinder.

"He ought to have some of his own medicine!" yelled Haywood, clenching his fists, and the men in the roadway surged towards the boardwalk.

But Alan, who had been looking on, forced his way to McCord's side and gripped Haywood by the shoulder.

"Wait a minute, men!" he said loudly and in a tone of authority. "You can't take the law into your own hands!"

"Law?" raged Haywood. "Where's the Mounted Police he said was coming in?"

McCord himself dealt with that question.

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"I'm leaving for Fort Chapelle tomorrow," he said, "to find out."

"Well," snarled Haywood, releasing himself from Alan's hold, "you needn't expect any work out of us until you get back with him!"

"I don't," McCord declared, and addressed the crowd at large. "But your pay goes on just the same. It's the least I can do—and I'm not doing it because of your threats!"

The attitude of the men changed completely at that statement. There were murmurs of appreciation and approval, and many of them began to drift away. Alan saw Arnold and Jordan walk up the street with Barstow, whom he assumed to be the blacksmith, and he saw McCord pass into the hospital with the doctor. He sauntered across the roadway and slipped round an empty buckboard into the smithy.

He made straight for an anvil on a bench, and from his hip-pocket he took out a pair of handcuffs. These he placed across the anvil, and with a hammer and a punch he severed the chain that held the two circlets of steel together.

One of these circlets he restored to his pocket, the other he snapped round his left wrist.

Arnold, Jordan, and Barstow walked together as far as the offices of the lumber company; and Arnold said none too happily on the way:

"Looks as if we can't keep the law from coming in this time."

"Let it come!" retorted Barstow. "I'll take care of it after it gets here!"

"There's been too much of that already," complained Arnold nervously. "You'd better count me out."

The blacksmith scowled at him. "This is my deal, Arnold," he said menacingly. "My money made you McCord's partner because I needed you there. I still need you, and you're gonna stick. Is that clear?"

"I'm going to stick all right," was the hasty reply, "but I think you're taking too many chances."

"I'll do the thinking, and you'll do what you're told!"

The offices were reached. Arnold and Jordan entered, and Barstow walked over to his smithy. Alan was standing by the anvil when he crossed the threshold, and he eyed the unshaven young man suspiciously.

"Why, hallo!" he rasped. "What can I do for you?"

"A lot, I hope," Alan coolly replied, "if you can tell me something about welding."

"That's my speciality."

"Yeah, I know," said Alan. "I saw one of your jobs, the cleverest welding I've ever seen!" He took the choker from his pocket and held it out. "Look, who paid you to repair that so it would break under strain?"

Barstow's wide mouth set in an ugly line.

"I don't think I understand," he said almost in a snarl.

"Listen," said Alan. "I need money to get out of town, so I thought maybe you'd like to buy this back. Come on, come on—think fast! There's enough evidence here to hang you!"

"I still don't know what you're driving at."

"No? Well, maybe McCord will!" Alan moved significantly towards the open doorway.

"Hold on a second!" exclaimed the blacksmith. "Pull that door to. You say you want to leave town? Well, I'm willing to help you on your way."

"Thanks," Alan closed the big door and latched it; but no sooner had he done so than Barstow pounced on him,

caught hold of his left arm in a vice-like grip and jerked it backwards and upwards, in a trick of ju-jutsu that caused intense agony.

"Sure I'll help you!" jeered the powerful crook, imprisoning Alan's right arm as well. "But you're going out of here feet first!"

The malevolent expression upon his face changed to one of surprise as his hand came into contact with cold steel, and he swung his victim round to stare at the handcuff on the wrist he held.

"So you're the man who wanted the law to take its course!" he derided. "It looks like I've got some evidence on you now, don't it?"

"You won't turn me in, will you?" pleaded Alan.

"That depends," Barstow let go of him with obvious contempt. "Where's the other half of that thing?"

"I don't know."

"Where is it?"

As though forced against his will to tell the truth Alan replied:

"On a Mountie's wrist, buried back in the woods ten days ago."

"That's better," said Barstow. "Now maybe we can get together. Put that bracelet in here."

He pointed to the narrow end of the anvil.

"What are you going to do?" asked Alan.

"You want money to leave town, don't you? I'm going to give you a job so you can earn it. Go on, put it in there!"

Alan put his wrist against the pointed end of the anvil and managed to force the handcuff over the point to the extent of an inch or so. Barstow picked up a hammer and punch, and he held the punch to the spring lock of the handcuff and raised the hammer.

"Look out for my wrist!" gritted Alan.

The hammer descended upon the head of the punch, the spring was smashed, and the handcuff fell upon a piece of chain that was lying on the bench.

"Here's the Law!"

BARSTOW closed his smithy early that day, and he took Alan home with him to his cabin, situated some little way out of the settlement on the fringe of a wood. Jordan, the foreman, went with them, and the three had a meal together in a big and poorly furnished room.

In one corner of that room stood a roughly constructed double bunk; in another a roll-top desk which was the most elaborate piece of furniture in the whole cabin. There was no cloth on the clumsy deal table, but Barstow cooked quite a passable meal on an iron stove in the room, and he produced some whisky to go with it.

During the meal he chatted pleasantly, but after he and Jordan had cleared away everything save the whisky and three glasses and an oil-lamp, he unfolded his plans concerning his guest.

Those plans suited Alan perfectly, but he was very careful not to betray the fact.

"Let me get this straight," he said thoughtfully. "You're trying to make the lumber company sell out cheap—is that it?"

"Yes," Barstow replied; "and they'll have to do it if they can't get their logs out."

"And they can't get 'em out," supplemented Jordan, "if we keep on having accidents."

"Sounds like a good thing," said Alan. "Who's back of it?"

"What do you care, as long as you get paid?" Barstow rapped at him.

"Oh, a fellow hates to work in the dark, that's all!"

"All you've got to know is how to ride a horse and wear a uniform!"

"But what good will it do you to pass me off as a Mountie?"

"It'll keep McCord from bringing in the real police," Jordan replied.

"The real ones are harder to handle than you'll be," said the blacksmith.

"You did all right with the last one that you—" Jordan began incautiously.

"Shut up!" Barstow roared at him. "Well, what do you say?"

Alan shook his head. "No, it's too risky," he said. "You'd better deal me out."

"I'm dealing you in, one way or the other!" Barstow took the broken handcuff from his pocket and tossed it into the air and caught it. "You make up your mind!"

"Even if I wanted to," said Alan. "Where could I get a uniform?"

"We've already got one."

"Doesn't look as though I've got much choice, does it?" Alan got up from the chair on which he had been sitting.

"All right, give me the outfit."

From under the lower bunk Barstow pulled out a tin trunk, and from the trunk he removed a scarlet tunic, dark-blue riding-breeches with a broad stripe down their sides, a regulation hat, a leather belt complete with holster, and a pair of riding-boots.

These things he handed to Alan, then pointed to a door.

"Go into that room and shave," he said. "Let's see what sort of a Mountie you make."

With the kit in his arms Alan passed into a room as large as the one he had left, but hardly furnished at all. He closed the door with his elbow, and in the light of a bracket-lamp he examined the tunic.

In a sort of pocket in the lining at its left corner there was a card for which he looked, and that card confirmed his worst fears. On it was written: "Gene Barkley, Fort Chapelle."

He dropped the tunic to pick up the holster, and in the holster there was a six-gun. But the gun was not loaded.

He whipped out his own Service revolver and with it in his hand went towards the door, tempted in that moment of fury to shoot down the two men he held responsible for Gene's death.

At the door, however, he heard Jordan say:

"He's just dumb enough to play the part perfectly."

"Yeah," responded Barstow with a note of doubt in his voice. "I hope so."

Alan mastered his rage. After all, he had no definite proof—as yet—concerning the fate of Gene, and he had his duty to perform. He put away the gun and took off his plaid coat.

There was a cracked mirror on one of the board walls, and a bowl of water stood upon a rickety wash-stand. With his own tackle he proceeded to shave the stubby growth of hair from his face, and then he changed into the uniform.

The tunic was a little tight under the arms and across the shoulders, but otherwise was not too bad a fit. The riding breeches were short in the leg, but the boots concealed that deficiency, and they were his own size. The flat-brimmed hat was only a shade too large.

Completely dressed, he opened the door and walked with soldierly erectness into the presence of the blacksmith and the foreman, and the way they started up from their chairs at sight of him caused him not a little satisfaction.

"Why, you mighta been a Mountie!" exclaimed Jordan.

"You'll do," growled Barstow.

"That gun loaded?"

"No," Alan replied.

"I'll give you some cartridges—in the morning. There's a mattress up in the loft in there. You can sleep here to-night."

In the room where he had shaved and dressed Alan had already noticed a kind of open loft, extending across half the room under the rafters, and a clumsy ladder that led up to it. He slept quite soundly upon the mattress after he had dragged a packing-case across the boards

to form a screen between him and the room below.

At ten o'clock on the following morning Jordan entered the offices of the McCord & Arnold Lumber Company and stepped round the counter past the clerk to knock on the door of McCord's room.

McCord was at his desk, and a suitcase was standing on a chair beside it.

"Come in!" he shouted.

The door was opened, and Jordan looked round it.

"Your canoe's ready, Mr. McCord," he said.

"Thanks, Jordan." McCord put on his hat. "Bring my suitcase for me, will you?"

The foreman entered and picked up the suitcase, and he followed his employer across the outer office. At almost the same moment Alan walked out from a yard at the side of the smithy in uniform, and somebody cried exultingly: "Here's the law!"

From all directions men and women came running, and quite a crowd followed Alan across the roadway. Barstow, with a hammer in his hand, watched from the doorway of his smithy. Everything had been timed to the minute, and McCord and his camp foreman stepped down on to the boardwalk just as Alan stepped up on to it.

"Is Mr. McCord in," he asked, "or Mr. Arnold?"

"I'm McCord," said the senior partner of the lumber company with manifest relief at having been saved a long and tedious journey. "This is Mr. Arnold coming along now."

Arnold hurried along the boardwalk with a beaming face.

"I'm Constable McGregor from Fort Chapelle," said Alan.

"No man was ever more welcome," declared McCord fervently, and offered his hand.

Jordan exchanged glances with Arnold and put down the suitcase. The crowd had increased in size till nearly all the men who worked for the firm were present. McCord opened the door his



Sullenly the men shrank back, and Alan stood alone on the edge of the boardwalk. "I have no quarrel with you men," he said sternly, "but get this straight! The law has come to St. Johns and it's come to stay!"

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foreman had closed only a few moments before, but turned to address his employees.

"You can spread the word that it's safe to go back to work now!" he boomed. "The law has come to St. John's!"

Haywood stepped forward.

"How long are you gonna be with us?" he shouted.

"Until we can find out who's behind these accidents you're having," Alan replied.

"Are you gonna stay in camp with us?" demanded another man.

"As long as anyone's working I'll be there," Alan assured him. "Everything the law can do to protect you will be done."

"That's good!" The man was obviously delighted. "That's all I want to know."

"That's right!" chorused a number of voices, and somebody raised a cheer.

But Haywood had been studying Alan closely, and he bellowed for silence, which was none too easy to obtain. Barstow, wondering what was wrong, threw down his hammer and hurried over, and Haywood secured a measure of quiet at last.

"This is some sort of a trick!" he blared.

"What d'you mean, Haywood?" asked McCord in astonishment.

"I mean that man's no Mountie, and you know it!" was the furious retort. "He's just a lumber-jack! I saw him at the hospital yesterday!"

Arnold, who knew nothing of Barstow's plot and had failed to interpret the message Jordan's eyes had tried to convey to him, stared at Alan and burst out:

"Haywood's right, C. J. This is the same man."

"I thought your face looked familiar," said McCord, frowning heavily at the man he was afraid was a mere masquerader. "Well, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"He's right," replied Alan with perfect calm.

"You're not a mounted policeman?"

"Of course I am!" Alan raised his voice so that everyone could hear what he had to say. "I came up here on secret patrol, but after what happened yesterday I decided it best to come out into the open. Any further questions, Mr. Haywood, or does that explain things?"

Haywood, thus openly challenged, became convinced that it was a real Mountie who stood there so sure of himself, so full of authority.

"No," he admitted frankly, "that sounds okay."

Barstow mounted the boardwalk beside Alan and flung out a hand.

"Hi, you're wasting time!" he cried. "You men all want to go back to work, don't you?"

There were shouts of assent, and he turned to Alan.

"Why don't you take 'em back to camp and start those logs rolling?" he suggested.

The men approved of that, too. But McCord said:

"Won't you come inside first and hear what little we know about the case?"

"I think I'd better go along with the men," Alan replied. "I found out quite a lot yesterday. But I came here by canoe. How soon do you think you can get me a horse?"

Arnold took it upon himself to answer that question.

"I'll have one ready for you to-night," he said.

"Do all you can for Constable McGregor," enjoined McCord.

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"Thank you," said Alan. "Come on, men—I'll have to do the best I can on foot to-day."

He went off along the street, and Haywood went with him, and the rest of the lumbermen streamed after them. At the corner, by the hotel, they turned in the direction of the camp, whereupon McCord picked up his suitcase and went into his office.

Jordan, Arnold, and Barstow remained on the boardwalk; and Jordan, rubbing his unshaven chin, remarked:

"He sure acted like a Mountie, didn't he?"

"A little too much like one to suit me," growled Arnold. "What's the big idea?"

Barstow explained, but Arnold was by no means satisfied.

"I wonder if he was telling the truth about being on secret patrol?" he said.

"If I thought he was," snarled Barstow; "I'd watch him like a hawk and never let him see a thing!"

Another "Accident"

A PART from the felling of a few trees, very little work was done in the lumber camp that afternoon; but some of the fallen pines were lopped and sawn into logs and there were no accidents.

After a conference with Barstow and Jordan in the smithy that evening Alan took up his quarters at the St. Johns Hotel—for the sake of appearances, as he put it—and before he retired for the night a horse provided for him was in a stall of the stables at the rear of that rather depressing establishment.

He was at the lumber camp as soon as anyone next morning, and by eight o'clock work was in full swing. Tall pines crashed to earth, saws buzzed, "swampers" blazed trails for those who dragged the logs to cranes that lifted them on to trucks, and a noisy locomotive appeared at intervals with a string of empty trucks and disappeared with loaded ones upon a track laid through the woods to a spur of the great Canadian Pacific Railway.

Alan rode everywhere amongst the men, and confidence was inspired in them by his presence. He took the earliest opportunity of having a word with Jordan, to whom he said:

"Just for the look of things, you'd better lay off accidents for a couple of days."

The foreman screwed up his wicked eyes and nodded slowly.

"Maybe you're right," he agreed.

"And when you do start, give me a chance to get out of sight."

That was not to Jordan's liking, and he said angrily:

"You talk like you figure on running things for us!"

"Oh, nothing like that," returned Alan with a grin, "but I'm in a good spot to do it if I want to, ain't I?"

There was no accident that day, nor was there any on the next, but on the day after that Timothy Arnold appeared in the camp. He watched a caterpillar tractor crushing its way under the trees towards the railway line, laden with timber; he watched a truck being loaded with logs by a crane; and then he walked over to Jordan, who was standing by the truck.

"Jordan," he said, leading the foreman away from the men who were wedging the logs so that they could not roll, "I don't want to hear any more excuses. You're wasting time. Get busy!"

Alan rode across the track from under the trees beyond it, and he heard Jordan reply:

"Everything's all set right now."

"It had better be!" barked Arnold, and turned on his heel.

Jordan, ignoring Alan's presence, beckoned to two of the men who were wedging the logs, and they walked up to him.

"You take the first block, Tom," he said, "and you the second, Jake. When I give the word, let 'em go!"

The men nodded and returned to the truck. Jordan looked up at Alan.

"Stay on your horse and get back in the woods," he directed curtly.

"To-day's the day, is it?" asked Alan.

"I didn't say so! I just said get back out of sight!"

"All right." Alan shrugged his broad shoulders. "I don't think I care to watch it, anyway."

He rode off under the pines, but turned about as soon as he was hidden from sight, and what followed he saw all too clearly. Several men were beside the truck, and logs had become piled high upon it, when Tom, at one end of the truck, and Jake at the other, knocked out two bottom wedges with their crowbars.

The lowest log on that side shifted and began to fall; the logs above it, lacking its support, began to roll, and down came the lot like an avalanche.

Most of the men jumped clear in the nick of time, but one was struck by the first log that fell and became crushed and almost buried by the rest of the logs.

The driver of the locomotive jumped down from his cab, and men dropped their tools and ran towards the fallen logs to help extricate the victim. Alan was on the spot and off his horse before the logs had ceased to move.

"Come on, get 'em out of the way, boys!" he shouted. "Get that man out from underneath!"

The great logs, many of them sixteen feet in length, were lifted one at a time till the crushed limbs of the unfortunate man beneath them were freed, and then he was conveyed to a wagon, mercifully unconscious.

The wagon was driven off towards the hospital, and Arnold went with it. The lumberers deserted the camp to troop after it, voicing their opinions on the way, and they crowded round the hospital after the injured logger had been taken inside.

Storekeepers and women and children added to the crowd, asking questions. Barstow strode over from his smithy.

"It don't look as if the law's gonna give us much protection, does it?" shouted one of the bystanders.

"You can't expect one man to clean up things in a minute!" Barstow shouted back.

"It's a hoodoo camp," raged the proprietor of the funch-room adjoining the hospital, "that's all you can make of it!"

"Look!" someone bellowed; and Alan was seen, riding slowly round the corner past the hotel with Tom and Jake, handcuffed together, walking beside him.

"Well," said McCord, who was standing beside his partner on the boardwalk, "it looks like the law has finally come to St. Johns, Tim!"

"Yeah," gritted Arnold, "it certainly looks like it."

A way was made for Alan and his prisoners outside the gaol, and he swung down from the saddle on to the boardwalk outside its iron door.

"Take my horse, will you, please?" he said to the scowling blacksmith in a tone of authority. "All right, boys!"

The two prisoners leaned against the wall beside the door of the gaol. A padlock fastened the door, and a key was in the padlock; but before Alan could open the door Haywood caught at his arm.

"Are these the men that caused the accident?" he demanded.

"That's a matter for the courts to decide, Haywood," Alan replied sternly. There was a muttering amongst the crowd, and Haywood cried out:

"Do we have to wait for the courts to deal with these killers?"

"No!" roared a score of voices, and there was an ugly rush to get at the two men.

Alan flung Haywood aside, and Barstow dealt with several of the others. Then Alan whipped out his gun.

"Stand back!" he cried. Suddenly the men shrank back with clenched fists, and Alan stood alone on the edge of the boardwalk.

"I have no quarrel with you men," he said sternly, "and I'm going to forget your part in this scene, Haywood, but get this straight! The law has come to St. Johns, and it's come to stay! There'll be no more mob violence! Now, clear out, all of you!"

The crowd wavered and broke up, their departure hastened by Barstow, who pushed and shoved several of the less ruly. Alan opened the door of the gaol, bundled his prisoners into it, and locked them in.

He was putting the key of the padlock in his pouch when Barstow rasped, almost in his ear:

"Come right down to my place. I want to have a talk with you."

"All right," returned Alan grimly.

His horse had been led over to the stables at the back of the hotel by a youth to whom the blacksmith had handed its bridle. In a very few minutes he was mounted on it and riding in a leisurely fashion towards the cabin that was Barstow's home.

Barstow returned to his smithy to put on his coat, then set off along the pine-fringed road that led out of the settlement to the south in company with Jordan.

These two were still some little way from the cabin when a canoe, propelled by Tillicum John, the Indian, reached the foot of the steps beside the pier that jutted out into the Mackenzie river and was made fast to one of the piles.

Ann was in the canoe, dressed in riding clothes, and he helped her out on to the steps and ascended them with her. There were only two loungers on the pier-head that afternoon, but they were Barstow's creatures, Hank Berg and Bill Yates, and they watched Ann narrowly from the moment they caught sight of her out in midstream till she had disappeared with her quaint companion up the ill-made roadway.

"Did you ever see that girl before?" asked Berg.

"Not that I know of," Yates replied. "Why?"

"Well, I have, but I don't know where."

"She ain't no Mountie, anyway," growled Yates, "and that's all that concerns us."

"Mountie?" Berg fastened on the word, and his close-set brown eyes widened. "Say, I know where I've seen her now! You stick here—I'm gonna see what she's up to!"

A Coward in Hiding!

ALAN was sitting in a chair by the table in the cabin, facing the front door and apparently reading a week-old newspaper, when Barstow and Jordan entered with drawn guns.

"So you're a real Mountie, are you?" roared the blacksmith. "Well, I'm goin' to break you just like the one that came in ahead of you!"

Alan let the newspaper fall, and a six-gun in his right hand was revealed.

"I thought you might have some notion like that, Barstow," he said. "Now back up!"

The two crooks had stopped short at sight of the gun. Mounties are notoriously quick on the trigger.

"I said back up!" snapped Alan; and slowly they retreated to the door, their own weapons drooping at their sides.

"If you had any sense," he went on scornfully, "you'd know I'm no Mountie."

"You expect me to believe that after you've arrested two of my men?" raged Barstow.

"They're not arrested! We'll break 'em out of gaol in a couple of days!"

"Break gaol? Why did you arrest them in the first place?"

"So the workmen would believe in me." Alan stood up and put his six-gun back in its holster. "I'm no good to you if they don't, am I?"

"Why didn't you let us know what you were doing?"

"Well, I did tell the two men I brought in. I thought you'd have sense enough to see through it."

Barstow passed a hand across his wide mouth.

"If you're telling the truth," he grunted, "you're smarter than I figured."

"If you think I'm lying," returned Alan, "I'll be glad to bow out. I didn't want this job. You had to push me into it."

"Still trying to run out on me, are you?" challenged Barstow.

"No, I'd rather stay under cover. You know why."

"All right, forget it!" Barstow put away his gun and motioned to Jordan to put his away. "We'll be ready for the finish in a few days, and then you can be on your way."

Alan reseated himself and crossed his long legs, but at that moment the latch of the door was raised and Hank Berg stepped into the room.

"What do you want?" asked Barstow, whirling round on him.

"Where's the picture of the girl you found in that Mountie's pocket?" inquired the look-out.

"What d'you want it for?"

"I think she just got in town. I want to make sure."

Barstow went to the roll-top desk, opened it with a key, and groped in several pigeon-holes. Berg closed the door, and Alan eyed him thoughtfully. At last a postcard-sized photograph was found amongst some letters and handed over, and Berg exclaimed:

"That's her, all right! 'With love to Gene from Ann.'"

Alan knew that the photograph must be a portrait of Ann, but he did not



With his right hand Alan seized hold of the blacksmith's shoulder, and round came his left fist with all the swing of his body behind it.

make any attempt to look at it, even when Barstow snatched it back and glared at it.

"It's a hundred to one she's from Fort Chapelle, and up here looking for him," decided the blacksmith, tossing the card back into the desk. "Where'd she go?"

"Bought some things at Manton's store and headed back for the canoe with the Indian who brought her in," Berg replied.

"What Indian?"

"That one that calls himself Tillicum John and lives in the old trapper's cabin half an hour through the woods."

"Looks bad," growled Barstow. "If she starts asking questions she's liable to start something we can't stop. We can't take any chances—you and Jordan bring her here."

"Pretty risky," objected Berg, "dragging a woman into this, Barstow."

"We're in it too deep to think of that now!"

"Wait a minute!" interposed Alan, rising to his feet. "It'd be smarter, wouldn't it, to find out why she's up here before you start anything?"

"How can you do that?" challenged Barstow.

"She'd be willing to tell her story to a Mountie, wouldn't she?"

Barstow considered the possibility.

"She might, at that," he decided.

"I could say I'm from another post, sent in to relieve him."

"Uhuh." Barstow liked the idea the more he thought about it. "She may have heard he's dead," he mused.

"I'll say she's mistaken," suggested Alan. "He was only wounded, and he's on his way back to—" He broke off abruptly. "Where did you say he was from?"

"Fort Chapelle," Barstow replied. "It's worth trying. Berg, show him the cabin—it's a million to one she's there."

"Come on!" said Berg; but Alan saw a chance further to allay any suspicions that might be in Barstow's mind and turned to him.

"Oh, you forgot to tell me the name of the fellow I'm supposed to relieve," he said.

"Gene something-or-other." Barstow flung out a hand. "It's printed on a card in the left-hand corner of the coat you're wearing."

Alan lifted up the corner of his scarlet tunic, appeared to be surprised to find the little pocket in the lining, and fished out the card he knew to be there.

"Gene Barkley," he read aloud. "Well, that's a very easy name to remember."

He thrust the card back into its place, and he went out from the cabin with Berg and mounted his horse. Berg ran beside him along the road for a hundred yards, or so, then turned into the woods upon a beaten trail which they followed side by side.

Uphill and downhill they proceeded under the whispering pines, and in one place forded a narrow stream. Daylight was fading when they set off upon the journey, and it was nearly dark by the time they reached a clearing, close to the river bank, in the middle of which stood a small log-cabin.

On the edge of the clearing Berg stopped and pointed.

"Well, there it is," he said.

Alan looked at the lighted windows of the cabin, and then he looked down at his ugly guide.

"You'd better get back quick before she suspects anything," he suggested; and Berg was quite prepared to return by himself at a less vigorous pace.

"All right," he agreed, and the darkness of the wood engulfed him.

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Alan waited till the sound of his footsteps and the rustling of underwood had died away in the distance, then rode slowly across the clearing, dismounted outside the door of the cabin, tethered his horse to a post, and knocked on the door with his knuckles.

The door was opened slowly and cautiously by Ann herself, and the light of an oil lamp shone in his face.

"Alan!" she cried; and there was alarm as well as surprise in her voice.

"Careful, Ann!" he warned in a low voice, distrustful of Berg. "We might be watched!"

"I—I'd rather you wouldn't come in, Alan," she stammered.

"I've got to," he declared. "Your life's in danger!"

He brushed past her into a room the windows of which were draped with Indian shawls and the floor of which was covered with Indian matting. A stove was smoking in the middle of the room, and the furniture was of a very rough description. But Alan was not conscious of the shawls, the matting, or the smoking stove—for Gene Barkley was crouching back against the far wall of the room with the staring eyes of a hunted animal.

"Gene!" Alan cried in amazement; and Ann hurriedly closed and bolted the front door.

Gene was wearing a coarse woollen shirt, open at the neck, and a pair of moleskin trousers. He looked a physical wreck, but Alan was tremendously relieved to see him alive.

"This is too good to be true!" he exclaimed, striding across the room with outstretched hand. "Why, we'd given you up for dead!"

"Yes, I know," mumbled Gene, and it seemed almost as though he tried to avoid the clasp of Alan's hand. "Ann told me about my horse coming back, and all that."

"You don't seem glad to see me!"

"Sorry, old man." Gene backed away to a bunk in a corner of the room and dropped down upon it to hold his face between his hands. "My nerves are a bit ragged, I expect. I've had a bad week or so, that's all."

Alan glanced over his shoulder at Ann, who was standing beside a table on which stood a lighted lamp. He saw her biting her lips, then he frowned at the bowed figure on the edge of the bunk.

"Don't you think you'd better tell me about it?" he asked.

"I'd rather not, if you don't mind." Gene fumbled in his trouser pockets, brought out a cigarette paper and some tobacco, and began to roll a cigarette with trembling fingers. "Fact is, I'm trying to forget it."

He licked the gum on the paper several times with a tongue that was none too moist, then put the cigarette between his lips, found a match, and struck it on the woodwork of the bench. The cigarette was lit and he puffed at it in a nervous fashion.

"Don't stare at me like that!" he shouted. "What right have you to come prying into my affairs like this?"

"Gene, dear, please!" protested Ann.

"Well, why should I tell him the whole miserable story?" Gene flung down the cigarette he had only just begun to smoke and stood up and stamped on it. "So he can go back and report it all to the post?"

"I think you can trust Alan."

"All right, then!" He sank on to a chair by the table, and he roughed his dark hair with his hands. "If you must know," he said, avoiding Alan's eyes, "I've disobeyed orders—disgraced the force—run away from duty! You don't

know what it is to be afraid—to have to drive yourself to face dangers that other men laugh at!"

Alan's eyes were compassionate.

"It takes plenty of courage for that, Gene," he said gently.

"Oh, don't try to excuse me!" The overwrought and self-confessed coward sprang up again and stalked about the room, beating the air with his fists. "I'm not a fighter, and I knew it when I entered the force. I only did it to please dad."

He swept defiantly up to Alan.

"Now go back and tell him what you've found!" he bellowed. "His son hiding here in this filthy hole like some animal! Afraid even to show his face out of sheer cowardice!"

Tears were in Ann's eyes, but it did not seem to Alan to be a case for tears.

"Oh, your nerves are unstrung, that's all," he said soothingly. "Another month in harness and you'll be as fit as ever."

"D'you think I'll ever wear that uniform again?" howled Gene. "Give me credit for a little decency, at least!"

"But what happened?" asked Alan.

"It can't be as bad as you say."

"Can't it?" Gene smote the table with his fist, and Ann caught at the lamp lest it should overturn. "I was sent here on secret patrol, but I disobeyed orders—thought I knew better than my officers! I was told to come here as a lumber-jack, but I kept on my uniform—and walked straight into a trap!"

"You mean they fired on you?"

"They didn't even show me that much respect! They treated me like a school-boy—stopped me on the trail to borrow some tobacco. The next thing I knew I was being dragged off my horse!"

He held his hands to his eyes as though they burned in their sockets.

"I wish I could forget it all!" he wailed. "One of them was a man of tremendous strength—I was like a child in his hands! He twisted my arm back and up, and he clubbed me to the ground with his fist! I suppose they must have left me for dead—anyway, an Indian found me and brought me here, that night, stripped of my uniform and barely breathing."

Alan, having himself experienced the horrible strength of Barstow, could imagine what had happened.

"Poor old fellow," he said commiseratingly.

"I don't want your sympathy!" Gene yelled at him. "All I want is to be left alone to forget!"

Alan sighed and turned to Ann.

"How did you know he was up here?" he asked.

"He sent an Indian to me with a note," she replied. "The Indian who brought in his horse."

"And the superintendent let you come up here alone?"

"I—I let him think I was visiting friends in Caribou."

"Then your father doesn't know you're alive, Gene?"

"No," Gene retorted, "and he never will, if you're the friend you pretend to be! That's why I asked Ann to come up here. We're going away together, way up in the far north, where no one will ever find us."

"Is that true, Ann?" asked Alan.

"Not exactly," she replied, in a very strained voice. "We were discussing it when you came in."

"I don't think you'll even ask it of her, Gene," said Alan. "To spend the rest of her life in hiding, dead to her friends, because of a mistake you made?"

Gene spread his hands in a hopeless gesture.

**NEXT WEEK'S GRAND
FILM DRAMAS!**



**DICK PURCELL
IN**

"KING OF THE ICE RINK"

When Gaby Dugan, a star ice-hockey player, begins to show a distinct falling-off in his game, his chum, Jumbo Mullins, accuses him of being in the pay of a notorious gambler and hits him on the head with a hockey stick. Gaby loses his sight and becomes down and out, but the girl he loves sets out to find him. A great yarn of the fastest game in the world.

"THE SINGING COWBOY"

In order to save a little child's life, Gene Autry adopts a bold and daring method of raising money for medical expenses. The child is an heiress to a ranch, and an unscrupulous cattleman knows that the property is worth a fortune and does his best to thwart Gene's plans, so that the child will die and he will inherit the ranch. Starring Gene Autry.

Also

Another big episode of the adventure serial:

"THE FIGHTING MARINES"

Starring Grant Withers and Adrian Morris.

"I hadn't thought of it quite like that," he confessed, "but what else can we do?"

"You're going back to Fort Chapelle!" Alan's voice was suddenly stern, almost commanding.

"What?" howled Gene. "And be drummed out of the force for cowardice? The shock would kill my father!"

"No, you're going back with a clean record," Alan assured him. "The Indian who brought in your horse and gave Ann your note is minding my uniform for me. This is yours I'm wearing—I'll explain how that came about later on. Where is Tillicum John?"

"He's down at the river," said Ann.

"I'll send him back," said Alan, and took from his pouch the key of the gaol. "Here, take this, Gene! You'll find two prisoners in the town gaol. Start for the post with them to-night. And whatever you do, don't let anyone in St. Johns see Ann with you."

Gene took the key. "But what'll I tell them back at the post?" he asked bleakly. "What'll I tell my father?"

"Tell them the truth, Gene." Alan replied encouragingly. "That you've been ill—and that I sent you back with your prisoners. Your prisoners, mind! Then ask for sick leave. Later on, we'll contrive to make it permanent—permanently disabled in service, eh?"

Without another word for either of them he went out to find the Indian. Gene looked wretchedly at Ann.

"Permanently disabled in service," he said, and sank down on to the chair by the table and buried his face in his hands.

Close Quarters

BARSTOW'S cabin was in darkness when Alan rode up to it, about a couple of hours later. He led his horse away under the trees and hitched it to a trunk there, then stole back to the cabin.

The door was latched, but not locked. He opened it noiselessly, entered the big room, and closed it behind him. Creeping about with cat-like stealth, he pulled down the blinds over all the windows and approached the roll-top desk.

From a pocket of his breeches he took out an electric torch he had acquired at a store in St. Johns, and switched on its light. He found that Barstow had closed the roll-top of the desk, but with the knife that was part of his outfit he prized back the catch of the lock.

The desk was open, and he was going hastily through drawers and trays when his alert ears detected the sound of footsteps on the stoop outside the cabin. Instantly he switched off the light of the torch, closed the top of the desk, and before the latch clicked was in the inner room with his gun ready for any emergency.

The man who entered the cabin closed the door as carefully as he himself had done, then struck a match; and Alan saw that it was Arnold who advanced to the table and lit a lamp that was standing there.

With the lamp in his left hand the junior partner went to the desk, found it locked, and proceeded to force it open with a cold chisel he took from his coat-pocket. Alan had not had time to close the door of the inner room. He slipped behind it and watched through the crack between the hinges.

The lock gave way and the top of the desk was rolled back. Arnold began to search systematically amongst the papers Alan had disturbed; but inadvertently Alan moved an elbow and the door creaked.

Arnold swung round, dropped a sheet

of paper that was in his hand, and whipped out a six-shooter. It had seemed to him that the noise had come from the inner room, and he strode towards it, carrying the lamp.

Alan stood tense and motionless behind the door for what seemed an almost intolerable length of time while Arnold, on the other side of it, looked about the room and up into the shadows of the loft. But Arnold did not look behind the door, and after a few minutes went back to the desk.

He had opened one of the lower drawers when he heard the sound of voices outside the cabin, and in a panic he blew out the flame of the lamp, almost dropped the lamp on the top of the desk, and in the darkness sped past Alan's hiding-place.

The front door of the cabin swung back, and a flaring match revealed to Alan the faces of Barstow and Berg. Berg had struck the match, and he went to light the lamp on the top of the desk, but nearly dropped its glass chimney.

"Hi, boss," he cried out, "someone's just been here! This lamp-chimney's still hot!"

Barstow lit another lamp, and the first

thing he looked at was the disordered desk.

"You're right!" he exploded with an oath. "He's been going through this desk!"

"Well, he didn't have time to get out," said Berg, "and there's only one place he can hide!"

Arnold heard that, and he made frantic efforts to open a window in the back wall of the inner room. But he fumbled at the catch, and the bottom sash resisted his efforts to raise it. Barstow snatched up the lamp, and he and Berg strode in past the door which concealed Alan.

"Arnold!" roared Barstow.

Arnold had turned from the window the fraction of a second before they saw him, and with rather a sticky smile he said:

"I'm glad to see it's you. I thought I was in for trouble!"

"You are in for trouble!" snarled Barstow. "Come out o' there!"

With an air of self-assurance he was far from feeling the rascally little junior partner walked towards them, and Barstow promptly handed the lamp he was holding to Berg.

"Double-crosser, eh?" he shouted venomously, and seized Arnold by the throat as though intending to choke the life out of him.

"Don't, Barstow!" gasped his victim.

"Let-me-explain."

Alan, behind the door, became convinced that they would hear his breathing; but Barstow hurled Arnold from him into the outer room, so that he went staggering backwards against the table, and followed him in a fury.

"You can't explain anything!" he belated. "I know why you're here! Nobody knows, not even McCord, that I'm his real partner and you're just a figure-head working for me!"

Berg set the lamp upon the table, and Arnold recovered his breath and with it his wits.

"No, but—" he began.

"My only proof was in that desk," Barstow interrupted, "and you came here to get it!"

"No, I didn't!" declared Arnold vehemently. "That desk was open when I got here!"

Barstow stared at him.

"Talk straight—and talk fast!" he commanded.

"Well, I came out here to see you. When I lit the lamp I saw the desk was broken open and the papers scattered around."

"Go on!"

"Well, when I heard you at the door I got panicky. I knew you wouldn't believe what I said, so I tried to get away."

A pair of malevolent eyes bore into a pair of treacherous ones, and Arnold's left arm was suddenly gripped and twisted.

"You're an awful poor liar, Arnold!" said Barstow. "Hand over what you took out of that desk!"

"Don't, Bastow!" pleaded Arnold, who was in agony. "If anything's gone someone else took it!"

It seemed to Alan that it could be only a matter of minutes before the inner room was searched. He had noticed a long black coat hanging from a peg on the wall within easy reach of his hand. He took it down and put it on over his uniform, but as he did so a board creaked beneath his feet, and Berg heard and shouted:

"Wait! There's someone in there!"

There was only one thing for Alan to do, and he did it. Through the crack at the back of the door he took aim with his gun and shot the lamp to pieces.

The voice of Berg rang out in the darkness:

"Careful, you may stop a bullet! Come out of there, whoever you are, or I'll drill you through the door!"

Alan kicked the door shut, rushed across to the window Arnold had tried in vain to open, and took a header clean through the bottom sash, carrying wood-work as well as broken glass with him.

Blazing guns in the other room drowned the noise, and the door became riddled with bullets; but Alan was on his feet and running for his horse before other lamps were lighted and Barstow and Berg ventured into the room he had left behind.

The broken window told its own tale. "Don't let him get away!" yelled Barstow, and Berg knocked out the rest of the window-frame with the butt of his gun and scrambled out over the sill.

Barstow followed, less nimbly, and Arnold followed him. The three ran in all directions, under the trees, but Alan had crossed the road on his horse and was concealed with it in the heart of a thicket.

Berg travelled the farthest, but to no purpose, and when he returned to the cabin he found Barstow and Arnold outside it.

"Which way did he go?" asked the blacksmith.

"I don't know," said Berg. "I lost him."

"I wonder who it could have been?" Barstow looked up and down the road, now faintly illumined by a newly risen moon. "Oh, well, come on!"

They went into the cabin and closed the door; whereupon Alan discarded the black coat and went out from the thicket with his horse, swung himself up into the saddle, and cantered back to the cabin.

"Easy, boy!" he said loudly as he dismounted.

The horse was tethered, and he raised the latch and opened the door quite noisily.

"Hallo, there!" he said.

Barstow looked round from the desk, where he was searching in the drawers and pigeon-holes.

"If someone's got that paper," he growled, "he's got plenty of evidence on all of us!"

Alan pointed a finger. "Oh, is Mr. Arnold one of us?" he asked as though in astonishment.

"What do you think?" snapped the blacksmith, and Arnold grinned.

"Well, it's quite a surprise," said Alan, "but as long as I know who's in it, I may as well—"

The front door went back with a crash, and Gene was bundled into the room by Jordan. He was wearing Alan's uniform, but he was handcuffed; and behind Jordan, as that treacherous foreman crossed the threshold, came the two men Alan had arrested—and they were free of their shackles and grinning broadly.

The Capture of Gene

FOR several seconds there was a dead silence in the room, during which Gene looked anywhere but at Alan. Then Barstow gave vent to horrible laughter.

"Well," he cackled, "so you've brought us another uniform for our collection, have you? Look what's wearing your other one!"

"Yeah," said Alan. "Don't fit so good, but I never was a fussy dresser." Barstow turned to Jordan.

"Where'd you pick him up?" he asked.

"We went over to the gaol to get Tom and Jake out," the foreman answered, "and found he'd already got 'em out to take 'em down the river."

The blacksmith's brows came down in a heavy frown.

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"It was thoughtful of him to open up the gaol for you, wasn't it?" he said.

"Yeah, it sure was," nodded Jordan. "What'll we do with him now?"

"Take the handcuffs off—I'll attend to him!"

Alan unlocked the handcuffs, but he did not dare to make any sign to his colleague with so many pairs of eyes watching him.

"Arnold," said Barstow, "get a light in the back room."

Arnold went off to light the bracket lamp on the wall of the inner room, and while he was doing it Ann crept up to the front door of the cabin.

She had accompanied Gene as far as the main street of St. Johns and from the yard at the side of the hotel had watched him go to the gaol. It had been arranged that she should join him at the pier after he had marched his prisoners there—Tillicum John was to pick her up in his canoe, and Gene was to use Alan's for himself and the prisoners.

But those plans had gone wrong. To her horror, she had seen Jordan and another man pounce on her lover in the street, and a few minutes afterwards he had passed her hiding-place himself a handcuffed captive.

The two men who had been with Jordan had accompanied him no farther than the end of the settlement, but she had followed the others at a distance, and from behind a tree-trunk she had seen them enter the cabin.

She was listening at the door when Arnold returned from the inner room, and Barstow seized hold of Gene's arm.

"I want to ask you a few questions," he said fiercely.

"There's nothing I can tell you," Gene defied him. "And if there were, I wouldn't!"

"You said that before!" jeered Barstow. "Come along!"

He twisted Gene's left arm backwards and upwards, and Ann heard him cry out in agony:

"No, don't, please! No, I can't go through what I went through before! I can't!"

Ann sped to Alan's horse, unfastened it, flung herself up into the saddle, and went galloping off towards the settlement, while in the cabin Barstow put still more pressure upon Gene's right arm, holding his left in a wrist-lock.

"You can't go through with it, maybe," he grunted fiendishly, "but I think I can!"

"Wait a minute, Barstow!" Alan intervened. "I'd like to get in on this."

"You stay out of it!" the blacksmith roared at him. "I want to talk to this skunk alone!"

"I think I know what you're going to ask him, and I can answer it. You want to know where he got the key of the gaol, don't you?"

"Yes, do you know?"

"Sure. He got it from me." With his right hand Alan seized hold of the blacksmith's shoulder, and round came his left fist with all the swing of his body behind it.

Barstow went floundering backwards, releasing Gene as he fell, and Alan's gun was out before anyone else in the room had time to draw. Berg, across the room, half-turned to snatch a six-shooter from his pocket, but his wrist was shattered by a bullet, and the six-shooter clattered upon the floor.

Gene had sunk to his knees, his face distorted with pain, but Alan tugged him to his feet with his left hand and swept him towards the doorway of the other room.

Barstow, roaring like some infuriated bull, rose up and hurled himself at the man he had tortured, knocking him

against the doorpost in open defiance of Alan's gun; but the barrel of the gun snote him on the point of the jaw with such violence that he spun round on his feet before he crashed to the boards.

Alan was over his body in a flash. He sent Gene staggering into the other room, then turned about. Barstow's five accomplices instantly raised their hands, and he backed into the room where Gene was leaning feebly against the wall.

He was slamming the door when Jordan and Berg made a rush at it, and Berg thrust a foot in the way and gripped the edge with his left hand. Alan promptly clubbed his gun and hammered at the exposed knuckles till the hand and foot were withdrawn.

The door was closed and the bolt was shot. An iron bar was standing in a corner, and this Gene propped under one of the cross-pieces of the door.

But Barstow was on his feet again by this time, and he shouted wrathfully:

"They'll get out the window! Berg, Jake, go round the back way!"

Alan heard, and knew that it would be useless to try to get Gene away by means of the window. He raced across the room to set the ladder against the edge of the loft, then hoisted the half-fainting young man over his right shoulder.

"You're all right, Gene," he said. "I won't drop you."

Barstow and some of the others were using a wooden bench as a battering-ram against the door, but the bolt and the iron bar held against their attack, though the door threatened to give way on its hinges.

The ladder was mounted, and Gene was deposited on the mattress at the back of the loft.

"How're you feeling?" asked Alan anxiously.

"I'm all right," Gene replied, and managed to get to his feet.

"Keep back out of sight!"

The warning was only just in time. Gene crouched back under the sloping roof an instant before the door collapsed and Jordan dived through the opening, gun in hand.

Alan crept to the edge of the loft on hands and knees, took aim as the foreman exposed himself, and shot him down. For a few minutes there was no further attempt by anyone to enter the room from the one beyond it, but Berg's ugly face appeared at the broken window, and he was climbing in over the sill when Alan's gun barked again.

Berg fell back, wounded in the shoulder, and for a little while there was a silence that seemed almost uncanny.

Gene stole over to Alan, and Alan asked him if he had any cartridges.

"No," was the reply. "they took all mine away with the gun. Why, haven't you got any?"

"Only two."

"Doesn't look so good, does it?" shivered Gene.

"Never know until the last shot's fired," returned Alan.

The Last Cartridge

WHEN Ann reached the main street of St. Johns there were very few people about, and most of the premises were closed for the night.

She drew rein outside the hotel, half-tempted to seek help in its bar-room, and as she did so the lights in the outer office of the McCord & Arnold Lumber Company were extinguished, and she saw two dark figures step forth on to the boardwalk.

She turned the horse and rode over to them.

(Continued on page 27)

The wife of an eminent professor at a big university dies from heart-failure, but a famous detective is not quite satisfied with the circumstances. A thrilling detective story in which a series of strange crimes come quickly one on top of the other, starring Edmund Lowe

"UNDER COVER OF NIGHT"



Suspense

MANY eager eyes were turned on the venerable figure of Dr. Reed as he rose to make his address. In most eyes there were tears of regret; in all eyes there were excitement and expectancy, but in one or two there were also anxiety and greed.

The assembly hall at the Oliver J. Trent Memorial University was packed with girl and boy students, all in cap and gown. On the rostrum were the professors, the masters and the mistresses of the great college of learning.

"To-day, my friends, we leave Trent University, you to begin your lives, I to finish mine." The old man's voice was hoarse with emotion. "I have only regrets at leaving you and the department, but I have less regrets when I think of the men and women who remain to carry on further than my furthest aspirations reached. I need hardly name to you Professor Marvin Griswald, who, through his achievements in the realm of astronomy, has brought our college into the forefront in scientific research."

Marvin Griswald was a clean-shaven, handsome man. He gave a little smile of gratification. His eyes were expressionless now, but when Dr. Reed continued they hardened.

"Professor John Lamont, whose theory of mass and the distribution of matter in molecules has caused who can say how many heartaches and headaches, is another who has done wonderful work."

John Lamont was a sleek, well-groomed man. Handsome and a little conscious of his good looks. He grinned as if he knew he deserved this praise. With the students he was a shade more popular than Griswald.

"Next in our galaxy is Professor Susan Nash, the only woman to take a doctorate in physics here at Trent."

Many of the girl students smiled at the pleasant-faced, still young, not bad-looking woman. Everyone liked her, but many whispered that she was unhappy. Her eyes were full of greed, but not for herself.

"Youngest in years, but not achievement, I mention last of all Alan Shaw, who, as you all know, has just returned from a six-months exploration in the Mayan Peninsula."

A weather-tanned, happy-faced young man grinned his appreciation of Dr. Reed's words, and dared to wink slightly at a fair, pretty young student. Deborah Reed, granddaughter of Dr. Reed, screwed up her small nose and brazenly winked back.

"It is indeed an honour to have been the head of so rare a company," went on the retiring Head. "And it is a heavy responsibility that has been placed on me. For among the many and overwhelming favours granted me by the trustees, I have been given the perilous but very precious privilege of selecting my successor."

You could have heard a pin drop. All eyes were tense and expectant, and on the rostrum round Dr. Reed fear, dread and hope were clearly to be seen.

Dr. Reed shook his head.

"No, no, not to-day, but a week from to-day in Full Faculty Meeting, I shall make my announcement," he told them, and a sort of sigh of suppressed emotion ran round the building. Little did the dear but doddering old professor know that by putting off the decision he was indirectly the cause of the deaths of four people and one dog.

After singing the college song the assembly then adjourned to the big

banqueting hall and its rooms, where there were tea and refreshments. Here masters, mistresses and students were able to meet and chat with the visitors who had been invited to witness the breaking-up ceremony from the strangers' gallery—most of these visitors had been educated at the college.

Presiding over the special tea-tray for Dr. Reed's own friends and guests was Deborah, and very charming she looked. Maybe Deborah was carefree, but even here the atmosphere of tenseness was apparent. People talked and chattered, but they were on edge.

A tall, plain, pale-faced woman with eyes that seemed much too large came to shake hands with Dr. Reed. Her words were genuine when she said that she was sorry that he was retiring. She was Janet Griswald, and everyone knew that she had spent much time acting as her husband's assistant. A devoted wife and a clever chemist. Everyone at the college liked this quiet, plain little woman.

Alan Shaw had returned the previous day, and one of his prize possessions during his wanderings in the jungle was a photo in a silver frame. One can guess the picture. Alan was very fond of Deborah, and the girl liked Alan, but they were not engaged and though she was a bachelor of arts she liked having a good time. Therefore, when Alan rushed up and gripped her hands, Deborah smiled at him gladly, but when he tried to date her up she shook her head. She was sorry, but she was dated up with Lamont.

The gleam in Alan's eye was jealousy. Lamont was standing not far away talking to Susan Nash, who had been in love with him for years. He was aware of the fact, and though she was a clever woman, she was unaware that he

traded on the fact. He was over forty and had a great passion for Deborah Reed, but when he could not date up the girl then he would fall back on Susan. Susan lived with her invalid, overbearing mother.

"I'd feel a lot better if I knew what old Reed has on his mind," he told her. "Nonsense!" answered Susan, with forced cheerfulness. "You've nothing to worry about."

"Haven't I? I've been sticking to my class-room, remember." Lamont raised his voice slightly. "I haven't been running around getting my picture in the papers amusing myself in the tropics."

Of course, Alan Shaw heard, and he glared at Lamont, whose expression was mocking and contemptuous. In both of the men's eyes was jealousy.

"That wasn't very nice, Johnnie." Susan guided Lamont away. "Alan Shaw isn't your rival—not for the headship, anyway."

A tall man made his way through the crowd. His morning coat and pin-stripe trousers were faultless, his collar and tie the latest shape, shade and pattern, in his buttonhole was a carnation, in his hand he held a thin ivory cigarette-holder. His hair parting was unruined, and his moustache clipped perfectly—a very elegant dandy. And yet this man was Christopher Cross, one of the best known amateur detectives of the day.

"My dear boy"—Dr. Reed held out withered hands in greeting—"so good of you to come."

"Nothing would have prevented me, doctor."

Dr. Reed beckoned Griswald and Lamont and introduced them.

"One of my best pupils, gentlemen," he said with a shake of his head. "He'd have gone far in physics, but he's wasted great talents tracking down criminals."

"Well, someone has to or your sleep might be disturbed even in the best class-rooms," answered Cross, and then opened his eyes wide. "Why, if it isn't Deb, the precocious babe that used to sit on my knee. You'll excuse me, gentlemen." He waved the two eminent professors to one side. "When she was six she promised to marry me. Last time I saw her she was sixteen, and my name was still on the list."

Lamont gritted his teeth. Griswald gave a supercilious smile. Alan Shaw, watching from across the room, gave a sickly grin when the great detective boldly kissed Deborah Reed.

"I still have a chance, but a very slender one," Cross told them and smiled at the girl. "Grand to see you with a mortar-board—I always did think you had brains, but never that you were all that clever."

Alan Shaw came up and took Deborah away to meet some friends of his. Cross studied Lamont and Griswald and decided that neither man trusted the other.

"You heard Dr. Reed's announcement in the auditorium?" Griswald said as they moved out of hearing of the Head.

"Yes," admitted Cross. "I was surprised to see that the doctor has grown so old and frail."

"It isn't pleasant to be suspected of waiting around for a dead man's shoes," Griswald added.

"Wouldn't it be strange if the old boy didn't live to name his successor?" suggested Lamont.

"Not half so strange as if the man he named didn't live to succeed him," the detective remarked.

"I'll send you the data for my obituary," Lamont said quickly, with a April 24th, 1937.

defiant look at Griswald, and walked off to speak with Susan Nash.

"Don't mind him," whispered Griswald. "He's a bit edgy."

"You're all edgy," Cross stated. "Every one of you."

Later Christopher Cross met Janet Griswald. The detective had never met Griswald and Lamont, but Janet had been a student there in his time, and they had done many chemical experiments together. She had always had an affection for Cross since the moment he mixed together some ingredients that he shouldn't have mixed, blew half the laboratory to pieces, and, badly hurt, managed to get her out of danger when the place caught fire. Later she had married Griswald and he had lost touch with her.

"Everyone seems a bit nervy, Janet," he said after greeting her.

"Dr. Reed's holding up of the new principal has made them edgy," Janet answered. "It's an edgy world."

Christopher Cross detected a sharpness in her voice, and when Janet went up to her husband and suggested they should go home he knew that Janet was just as edgy as the rest of them. Little did he know that within a few hours she would be dead, and that her decease would not be from natural causes.

The Pocket Book

THAT same evening Janet Griswald could have been seen busy in the huge laboratory attached to her house. All kinds of weird bottles and lamps and machinery. There was a huge switchboard and electric globes that flickered strangely. On a screen a lantern projected a queer picture of strokes, dashes and signs that would have meant nothing to most people, but were ABC to Janet. The top line of signs were solar-calcium bands, and the lower nebular-calcium bands. Janet sat at a table writing in a notebook, whilst an elderly little man hovered around. Now and again Janet looked at the screen chart.

"The light all right?" he asked.

"Perfect."

"It ought to be. It isn't everybody has a professor of physics for a handy man."

"Now don't begin that all over again," Janet spoke sharply. "What you were and what you are now are not matters that concern me. You played the fool with your chances and drank yourself stupid. You have only yourself to blame, so be thankful that through my husband you have this chance of getting back. Put on slide fourteen, please."

Muttering, the old man obeyed, and Janet had just finished her notes when there was a shrill barking. A Manchester terrier, which had been curled up on a mat near its mistress' feet, was now barking shrilly.

Janet glanced round and glanced upwards as a door closed.

"Turn on the lights, Rudolph," she ordered.

Rudolph Brehmer scowled when he saw the dark, foreign, almond-eyed girl that was coming down some steel stairs from the sleeping quarters of the house. The professor showed his teeth in an expression that was akin to hatred. Janet Griswald's great eyes never wavered from the girl.

Tonya van Horne did not hurry. She was a voluptuous, sinuous creature, and her lips were heavily painted.

"Do you mind knocking when you come in, Miss van Horne?"

"So sorry." The girl stared impudently back with a slight smile near the red lips. "Professor Griswald

wanted to know if the notes were ready."

"I shall be ready for him when he comes."

"The time it is so very short. The department meeting is on Friday and it is already Tuesday."

"You'd better run along and let Mrs. Griswald get along with her work," cried old Brehmer. "Or else Professor Griswald will never get those notes for his precious speech."

"That's enough, Rudolph," sharply cried Janet. "Ask Professor Griswald to step in here, will you, Miss van Horne?"

Rudolph watched the girl go up the stairs.

"Pfft! Half-caste!" he sneered. "Rudolph!" cried Mrs. Griswald. "I will not have you being rude to people in my house."

The door opened and down the steel steps came quick steps. It was Griswald, and there was an angry, bitter expression on his face.

"Why couldn't you trust Tonya with those notes?"

"Rudolph, do you mind?" Janet said to the old man.

"Oh, no, no, no, no!" harshly laughed Brehmer. "I'm used to being sent about my business."

"That man's impossible—getting worse," Griswald muttered as Brehmer slouched away.

"Just a poor old man with a persecution complex."

"You're very charitable, my dear." Griswald twisted his lips, but it was not a smile. Then he sniffed. "Have you been burning something?" He saw some papers that lay partly burnt in the hearth of a brick fire. "Why, they look like your spectrum calculations." He stared at her in horror.

Her smile was bitter and mocking.

"Don't be frightened—everything is summarised here." She held up the leather book. "Such a small book to hold such a large theory."

"Large, that's hardly the word for it." Griswald licked his lips and squared his shoulders. "Imagine, Janet, you and I standing here and that great thing between us—ungessed—undiscovered by the world's greatest scientists. Can you see their faces when I stand before them on Friday and prove to them, step by step, that the only law in physics that has defied variation really does vary—that the velocity of light actually does slow down in travelling great distances? Can you picture the effect on the astronomers at Mount Wilson and Harvard when they find that the displacement towards the red in their own splendid spectrograph has been interpreted in a way that will force Einstein and all the others to revise their laws in accordance with my discoveries?"

"Your discoveries?"

"Ours, of course." He gave a condescending little smile. "Sorry, my dear."

"Ours?" Her voice was sharp. "Well, we've always done our work together, haven't we?" He gave her an anxious glance.

"We've accomplished a great deal in the course of your career."

"Of course, and I give you credit for it."

"Thank you, Marvin!" The large eyes were expressionless.

"Just between ourselves," Griswald spoke cheerfully. "Just between ourselves, my dear, as it's always been. Unless, of course, you've changed?" He still smiled, but he looked anxious.

"I haven't changed."

"Of course I could easily include you in my speech on Friday."

"The speech that will put you into Dr. Reed's shoes," Janet put the small notebook into her bag. "I doubt if you will ever make that speech now, Marvin."

"What are you talking about?" "My dear Marvin, I've been willing for years to do the work and let you take the credit"—her voice was shrill. "But in return—perhaps I was unreasonable—I did want faithfulness."

"You mean Tonya?" His expression was wolfish. "That's absurd. She's merely my prize pupil—the most brilliant graduate that—"

"Yes. That's the pretext on which you've brought her into our house and into my laboratory!" Janet cried fiercely. The little dog had got her mood because he was snarling. "Well, Marvin, she may stay here—but I'm going to-night." She held up the bag. "And this goes with me."

"Look here, Janet, you can't do a thing like that?" He was aghast.

"These years of work are mine."

"But you don't realise what—"

"I realise perfectly," she interrupted. "I'm leaving you to make your own way—with Tonya van Home to comfort you." She looked down. "Be quiet, Benny." She raised her voice: "Rudolph!"

Marvin Griswald walked to the fireplace and stood there biting and fingering his lips. His eyes were wide and staring as he looked at his wife. Then he seemed to shake as if in convulsions.

"Rudolph, tidy up here, will you, please?" Janet Griswald ordered her assistant. "And lock up after me. I'm leaving for a little holiday to-night as soon as our dinner guests have gone."

Janet walked to the stairs, pressed her hand to her side, and then went slowly up the stairs. Marvin Griswald watched her go, and then sensed that he was being stared at—the mocking grin of Rudolph Brehmer. The professor stepped forward with fists clenched, and Brehmer hurriedly moved away. The rage spasm that seized Griswald passed, and he ran up the stairs after his wife.

This was the last night Janet would be in this house, and if she took away those notes he was ruined.

Heart Failure
MARTIN GRISWALD was an ambitious man. All his life he had made use of people to gain his own ends. Janet was a wealthy woman—her money was useful. Janet was also one of the greatest women connected with science. He married her. By his will power he had made her almost his slave. Whilst he loved and cherished her she would do his will, but not while he bestowed his favour on another.

It was his ambition to be the new principal. This dinner-party was just one of those social links that play their part. Lamont seldom entertained. It was almost a foregone conclusion in Griswald's mind that he would get the coveted post, especially through Janet's

amazing discoveries. He knew that she would still help him if he gave up Tonya.

One of the first guests to arrive was Deborah, and she was shown up to Janet's bed-room. Janet helped the girl off with her dark wrap and then laughed. From a chair she picked up a similar wrap.

"I'm sorry, my dear, but I had no idea when I bought it this morning."

"Oh, Janet!" half-laughed, half-sobbed the girl. "And I bought mine to-day especially for your party."

"Never mind, my dear, I'll put some colour to mine and no one will know. Be quiet, Benny."

The little dog was sitting up and begging; on the floor was a small ball. The dog picked it up, dropped it, barked, and then sat up again. Janet picked up the ball, threw it, and Benny caught it. He could play this game for hours. Janet threw the ball again, and he caught it on the second bounce.

"Oh, Janet, you spoil that little beast!" laughed Deborah. "Let's see if he'll do it with me."

Benny would have done it with most people. So they played with the dog, until all the ladies had arrived. Then with strict instructions that he was to behave himself Benny was left in charge of the bed-room.

All the guests were now assembled in the drawing-room. At the piano sat Christopher Cross, who was a very fair musician. Standing behind him and humming the tune he was playing was Deborah Reed. Janet Griswald and Susan Nash were seated near a fire discussing a popular play. Lamont and Griswald were standing nearby and saying very little, because Lamont was too busy watching Deborah near the piano and Griswald kept on glancing at the door.

Drinks were brought in by a butler, and all with one exception were cocktails containing alcohol. The one exception was a grapefruit concoction.

"I like that white grapefruit, don't you, John?" Janet called out gaily.

"I have to since my wretched stomach is allergic to alcohol," Lamont sipped the drink, shuddered, and cried: "Good health!"

An exclamation of annoyance from Susan.

"Oh, I've left my rouge at home!" "Here, use mine!" cried Janet, and fished in her bag.

Griswald's eyes narrowed as he saw that all-important notebook.

Cross abandoned the piano to go for his drink, and noticed the preoccupied expression on Griswald's face.

"Hallo, what's the matter with you?"

"Oh, nothing really!" Griswald was a good actor. "But I'm just a bit worried about Janet. She's not been quite herself these last few days."

Like a whirlwind Alan Shaw burst into the drawing-room, and he carried a huge cardboard box in his arms.

"Hallo—hallo, everybody!" he cried, as if everyone were deaf. "Greetings! Brought along some Mayan junk to show you. Hope I'm not late."

"I'll forgive you, Alan," Janet got up and walked towards him. "What's that—a present for me?"

"Hardly, Janet, but it's thousands of years old." Alan glanced at the detective. "Ought to interest you, Cross."

Alan Shaw began to untie the string of the cardboard parcel, and Susan frowned as she saw Janet beckon the butler, who had appeared with some more drinks.

"That's the third cocktail I've seen you take, Janet," she reproved in a whisper. "You know what it does to your heart."

Janet's laugh was reckless.

"Oh, it's a wonder what a human heart can stand!"

From the parcel Alan took out a grotesque and hideous grinning mask, which he proceeded to hold to his face. Janet had not seen what he was doing as she was busy with her cocktail. She



Cross caught her in his arms just as she went off in a dead faint.

finished this, and turned about a second after Alan had put on the mask.

She gave a startled cry, swayed, and would have fallen but for Christopher Cross, who made a dash across the room and caught her just as she went off in a dead faint. Alan took the mask off and stared at her with anguish. Cross picked her up and carried her over to a couch and laid her gently down. Deborah brought a bottle of smelling-salts and Cross chafed her hands, while poor Alan just stood there looking a picture of misery.

"Alan, don't you ever grow up!" was all that Deborah had to say.

When Janet recovered the first thing she asked for was her bag, and Griswald's eyes narrowed as she clutched it and fingered it—he knew why she was worried. Janet thought someone might have taken her life's work—the work that bound him to her.

Janet got to her feet and said she would like to go upstairs and rest for a few minutes. She was quite all right, and Alan was not to worry any more. No, she would rather not have any help. She had reached the stairs when the front door opened to admit Tonya van Horne. Her husband hurried past her, and she saw the way his hands lingered on the girl's shoulders as he removed her cloak. White of face, Janet went to her bed-room.

Benny barked a greeting at her.

"I thought I could face it, Benny, but I can't." Janet went to a cupboard and brought out a suitcase. "We're going away now. Don't be afraid, little man, you're coming with me. I wouldn't dream of leaving you."

Janet was busy when she heard a step on the stairs that she knew. Her glance went to her handbag and she picked it up, to look desperately round like some trapped animal. Janet had learnt to fear her husband in certain moods. She took the precious notebook out of her bag and put it into the pocket of the

black velvet coat hanging over the end of the bed.

Marvin Griswald came into the room.

"Janet—Janet!" he cried as he saw the suitcase. "You're not going to carry out that crazy threat—you're not going to leave me?"

"I told you." She eyed him defiantly. "You can give up Tonya van Horne or you can give me up."

"You'll ruin me, Janet. You can't do that. You can't do that to me."

"Please don't make a scene—I've stood all I can bear to-night!" Janet's hand was at her heart. The little dog was snarling his hatred of Marvin Griswald. "I leave to-night unless you give up Tonya van Horne for ever."

Marvin Griswald's eyes narrowed. He walked across to the French windows and flung them wide.

"Please don't open those windows!" she cried. "It's much too cold."

"As you don't feel well a little air will do you good." He came closer. "For the last time, Janet, will you stay?"

"Will you send her out of the house?"

Griswald's face muscles twitched, and then his eyes narrowed.

"No!" he shouted loudly, and, turning suddenly, whisked up the dog from the floor. Benny tried to bite him.

"Marvin!" she cried, as he strode towards the open windows.

He laughed harshly, and then hurled the dog through the open windows. It had the effect that Marvin had expected. Janet spun round and dropped in a heap. He picked up from the floor the rubber ball with which Benny loved to play and threw that after the dog. Then he knelt beside his wife and felt for her heart.

Marvin Griswald rushed downstairs crying loudly for help. Janet had collapsed. Everyone rushed up to the bedroom.

"Why, it seems only a minute ago she was laughing—playing with her dog," Marvin told them in anguished

tones. "Then suddenly it happened." "What happened?" Cross asked gently.

"The ball bounced over the railing," Griswald pointed towards the open windows. "She was throwing it to him. She'd throw it, you know, and he'd catch it."

Deborah was so sympathetic that she had to speak.

"She was doing it to-night when—when I was upstairs with her," she whispered.

Griswald bowed his head.

"He loved it, poor little chap. This time when it bounced he jumped after it, and the balcony railing is so very low." He stared at the windows, and covered his face with his hands. "That dog was more like a child to her."

"How did the window happen to be open?" asked the detective.

"She asked me to open it. She said she wanted a breath of air." Griswald looked at them from haunted eyes. "She just gave one cry and crashed down before I could catch her in my arms."

"They did everything they could, and then the little party went downstairs, leaving Griswald with the dead woman."

"I can't believe it—to go like that!" sobbed Deborah.

"She had a weak heart," answered the practical Susan. "And the shock of that poor little dog coming on top of all those drinks. I warned her about it."

Lamont gave a sneering laugh.

"It wasn't the cocktails." He glowered at Alan. "You forget the fright our sportive friend here gave her with his phoney mask."

"I beg your pardon?" cried Alan.

"I said your phoney mask!" cried Lamont.

"I was a fool, an awful fool, and you couldn't possibly call me anything worse than I'm calling myself." Alan stared squarely at Lamont. "But when you accuse me of faking specimens, Dr. Lamont—"



"I've got to dig a grave!" Rudolph Brehmer told them.



Griswald took the war club from Lamont. . . .

"Oh, Alan, can't you take a joke?" cried Susan, trying to save the impending quarrel.

"Was it a joke?" cried the youngster. "No!" shouted Lamont. "The mask is not authentic."

"We'll discuss this, Lamont, some other time, and in some other place!" blazed Alan. "And the sooner the better."

Alan stalked out of the house, and Deborah, who had promised Lamont that he could see her home, was so upset that she left her escort and ran after Alan, calling his name. That did not make Lamont any better tempered.

Christopher Cross frowned. He had only been here a few hours, and yet it was clear to him that all these people were at cross-purposes. Deborah loved Alan, but was a mischievous flirt—Cross decided she wanted smacking. Lamont wanted Deborah, who did not care very much about him, and poor Susan, who adored Lamont, seemed destined to be unlucky. Fancy them wanting to row when only a few minutes before poor Janet had been living! As they left the house Cross saw a figure slinking furtively towards a side entrance.

"Rudolph!" sharply spoke Susan, when Cross touched her arm and pointed out the figure.

Rudolph Brehmer was carrying something wrapped in a rug.

"I've got to dig a grave," he told them.

"What is it?" Susan stared at the bundle.

"It's Benny, her little dog. I saw him fall, poor fellow. I've got to find a grave for her dog. I've got to find a grave," Brehmer mumbled, and his eyes seemed to blaze like those of a fanatic.

"Come, Susan!" Christopher Cross gave the woman an encouraging push. "We must be getting along—I think it's going to rain."

Griswald Goes Out Into the Night

UPSTAIRS in Janet's room Marvin Griswald was busy going through a small desk. He tried the doors, and then stared in perplexity round the room. His eyes looked inquiringly at Tonya as she hastened in through the open bed-room door.

"Well?"

"It's not down in the laboratory."

"I didn't see how it could be. Did you look in the hall?"

She nodded.

"Not there." The girl pointed. "It must be in this room. Is it so important?"

"Merely my career, my child—my reputation," he answered with ironical humour.

"But surely you can get those notes up again. You did it once."

Marvin shook his head.

"No, Tonya, I didn't. She did everything—that was why I was so bound to her. I thought with Janet gone I should be free, but without those notes I'm ruined. We must find that book, Tonya, to-night."

"She had it downstairs."

"I saw it in her bag. Perhaps she gave it to someone."

"To the detective person?" suggested Tonya. "To Rudolph?"

"Rudolph wasn't in the house." Griswald pinched his lower lip as he thought.

"Cross has been away so long—no, I don't think she would have given it to him."

"To Alan Shaw?"

"Possibly—possibly—or Lamont—or Susan Nash." Griswald went towards the door. "Have a final look round. I'll be back in a moment."

When Griswald returned he was wearing a dark rain coat, and was putting on black gloves. It accentuated the ghastly whiteness of his face. The girl shook her head.

"No luck. What about the Reed girl?"

"Deb? Possible, but not probable." He fixed the last button of a glove.

"No. Alan Shaw, John Lamont or Susan Nash. One of them has it."

"Do you think they'll give it to you?"

His eyes seemed to become suddenly large and terrifying, so much so that even Tonya shrank back.

"I shall not ask them, Tonya," Martin Griswald said.

"Are you going to see them to-night?" she whispered.

Marvin nodded.

"To-night!" he told her, and laughed strangely.

In the Dead of Night

JOHN LAMONT was studying a book when there came a short ring at his door, and he frowned when he opened it to admit Susan Nash.

"For heaven's sake, Susan, why have you come to see me to-night of all nights?"

"Well, you didn't expect me to sit around and correct exam. papers after what we've gone through at the Griswalds? I simply had to see you, Johnnie, and I thought we could have a nice cup of coffee together." She looked at him anxiously.

"I don't wish for coffee. Moreover, I'm going out."

"Where to?"

"That intrepid explorer, Alan Shaw." His smile was full of spite and malice. He held up a book. "Someone's got to take the cockiness out of that young cub, and I have text and line for him. This book proves that that Mayan war mask is a fake."

"What does it matter, John?" begged Susan. "He thinks it's genuine and it's all rather a matter of opinion."

"It is not!" Susan gave a resigned sigh.

"Well, run along and get it off your chest, dear, and don't lose your temper. I shall wait for you until you come back."

"I shall probably be quite late."

"No matter. I shall sit and wait if it takes all winter."

Lamont shrugged his shoulders as if he did not care whether she waited or not and went out of his flat.

Alan was able to pacify Deborah on the ride back to town, and she so far forgave him as to consent to come into his flat for eggs and bacon, and to see some of the wonderful masks and things he had collected on the expedition.

There was no light or gas in the place—except candles. He explained that being an explorer he had quite forgotten to settle the electric light and gas bill before he went away, and so they were cut off. He was fixing all these things in the morning.

But before the eggs were out of the larder the jealous Alan had rashly brought up the name of John Lamont. Now that they were all friendly again she would have to stop going out with that bouncer, Deborah was stubborn, and in her opinion Lamont, though weak and bad tempered, was a good fellow at heart. She refused and told Alan not to be absolutely jealous. The eggs were not cooked, and it ended in a row, but Alan was very humble when Deborah said she was going home, and alone.

"How?" he asked.

"By subway," she blazed. "And don't you dare follow me or I'll give you in charge of the police for unwelcome attentions."

Of course, Alan rushed out after her and he followed her down the subway. Deborah's anger cooled because she saw how crazy he must be about her, but she decided to teach him a lesson. She gave him the slip by telling a policeman to stop that man from following her. How she laughed when she saw the policeman telling Alan to be off or else spend the rest of the night in the lock-up.

John Lamont, book under arm, entered the apartment house where Alan Shaw resided. He walked up the stairs quite quietly and was surprised to see the door of Number 6 wide open. He peered in, and saw that the room was lit by candles. He entered and saw a dark-coated figure going over the papers in a desk.

Lamont smiled as he watched. This was funny. He coughed and he chuckled when Marvin Griswald whipped round.

"Well, professor. This is a surprise!" Lamont raised his hat, then tossed it on to a chair.

The vicious defiance faded from Griswald's face.

"Hallo, John!" he managed a smile.

"You're the last person I expected to see here. Where's Alan?"

"He—he just stepped out for a moment. I suppose you think it strange—my being here?"

"Well, yes, rather," admitted Lamont.

"I imagined you would be at home." "Alan asked me to come down and help him with something," Griswald explained, his eyes watchful. "I wasn't sorry to get away from my own house to-night."

"I see. Well, don't let me disturb you." Lamont's thin lips twisted into a mocking smile and he glanced towards the rumpled papers. "I didn't disturb you, did I?"

"Oh, no, merely startled me."

"Sorry! But you were so absorbed with Alan's effects," Lamont said blandly and still smiling. "Interesting, this Mayan stuff, isn't it?"

April 24th, 1937.

"Fascinating. Alan asked me to go through some papers for him."

"Inhospitable chap, isn't he?" Lamont glanced at Griswald. "He might have asked you to take off your coat and gloves."

Griswald's laugh was forced.

"Most amusing. It was cold in here, and these gloves are so light I hardly knew I had them on."

"For the moment, old man, I took you for a thief."

"Look here, John. You don't think I—"

"Don't be absurd," interrupted Lamont, smiling unpleasantly. "Of course I don't. A man can't be a thief and hope for the headship of the college. Now, can he? I suppose you're still doing considerable research for your speech on Friday?"

"There's practically nothing left to do," answered Griswald, who was now certain that Lamont had the book.

Lamont walked over to the table and picked up a queer piece of black ebony.

"Curious weapon, isn't it?"

"War club, I imagine."

"Hefty!" Lamont weighed it in his hands. "By the way, where did you say Shaw went?"

"He went out to post a letter."

"Well, he's—he's taking his time about it. I shall enjoy seeing his face when he finds us here."

"I told you he knows I'm here." Griswald had taken the club from Lamont, and was staring at it fixedly. "I'm afraid he'll get wet, poor fellow."

"I beg your pardon?" Lamont was startled.

"It's raining, isn't it?" Griswald answered, and John Lamont turned towards a window—turned his back on Marvin Griswald.

Susan Nash put a kettle on and made herself some coffee because she was tired of waiting for Lamont, but she vowed she would not go till he did get back. She gasped when she heard a noise in the service dumb-waiter. Who could be using it at this time of night? The waiter stopped at Lamont's small kitchen. Susan didn't know what could be coming up at this time, so she pulled back the sliding trap.

A body wrapped in burlap and with a hideous mask as a face rolled on to the floor. The woman screamed as the binding holding the mask gave and she looked at the dead face of John Lamont.

Half an hour later a woman soaked to the skin, her hair half down her back, her eyes wide with fear, got back to the same flat that she shared with her mother. Mrs. Nash stared in amazement at her daughter and abandoned her game of patience to scold her.

"A fine time of night to come in. You look half-drowned," she shrilled.

"Mother, mother, be quiet!" Susan rung her hands together. "I'm in dreadful trouble. John's been murdered."

Mrs. Nash listened to her daughter's story.

"You've been carrying on all these months with John Lamont, and it won't do you any good if it gets out," decided the vinegary old woman. "You know how they hate scandal at the college. One breath of it and out you'd go, my girl, and then where would we be? Therefore you won't breathe a word to anybody about where you were or what you saw to-night."

"But, mother, he was murdered. I've got to tell the police."

"Let them find things out for themselves." Mrs. Nash went back to her game.

"Oh, I don't care what becomes of me," sobbed Susan Nash.

"But I care, Susie," answered the calculating old lady. "I'm an old woman and I worked hard for you when you were little."

"All right, mother. All right."

"That's a good girl." Mrs. Nash nodded approvingly. "Just keep your mouth shut and you'll be safe."

"Safe?" shrilled Susan. "How can we be safe? Don't you realise that somewhere out there in the rain, somebody is walking who killed John Lamont, who knows that he's lying there, this very minute, murdered!"

Griswald's Cunning

MARVIN GRISWALD entered the Alumni Club and went straight into a telephone booth. The club kept open to the small hours of the morning. He rang his own house.

"Lamont is home," Marvin told Tonya. "He's been taken to his own flat. I know I rang up some while ago and told you something different, but Lamont has been taken home, and as a result I can't get into his place. I'm convinced it's there."

"What are you going to do?" came the voice of his secretary.

"I don't know—yet—but I've got to find a way. Don't worry. I'll get in somehow. Good-bye."

Griswald came out of the booth and stood there, his face quite expressionless. He wondered if some sort of refreshment might help him to think, and walked towards the dining-room for the purpose of speaking to the head-waiter—it was then that he heard the voice of Christopher Cross.

"My dear Fred, there is no such thing as Napoleon brandy, Napoleon rarely drank brandy. And if he did, it's extremely unlikely that he had the forethought to lay any down for the Alumni Club."

Marvin Griswald came to the door and saw the detective talking to the head-waiter.

"Fred, did you ever see a picture of Napoleon with his hand in his coat like this?" Cross adopted the characteristic Napoleonic gesture "You have? Well, the poor chap was suffering probably from a stomach ache from drinking stuff like that." He picked up a bottle. "Take it away, Fred. My spirit is broken. I shall never be able to get a satisfactory glass of brandy in this town."

Marvin Griswald walked into the room, and he looked pretty terrible in the rain-soaked coat and saturated hat—he still wore the black gloves.

"Griswald." The detective was all sympathy. "Here, come and sit down—you look all in."

"I've been walking in the rain, hours it seems. I couldn't rest," Griswald said in dreary tones. "I thought maybe some stimulant—a little brandy, perhaps."

"A spot of brandy wouldn't be bad," agreed Cross. "But you know the impossible stuff they serve here."

"Yes—yes," Marvin nodded. "There's only one man in this town has brandy fit to drink."

"Meaning yourself?"

"Oh, no, no. I was thinking of John Lamont."

"You don't say." Cross was at once interested. "Its year wouldn't be eighteen fifty-eight?"

"I like good brandy, though I'm not an expert," Griswald answered. "Let me think. The date was on the bottle. Yes, it was eighteen fifty-eight. I remember now because Lamont said it was laid down the same year as the Atlantic Cable. Something of a connoisseur, Lamont." He paused, and looked ap-

pealingly at Cross. "I say, why shouldn't we drop in on him?"

"Lamont? Now?"

"Well, if you're interested in that brandy," Griswald muttered, and bowed his head limply, "you see, I don't feel much like going home to-night or being alone either."

Christopher Cross decided that some of Lamont's brandy would do Griswald a lot of good. He felt himself in need of a little cheer, too. The two men took a cab round to Lamont's apartment house. The nigger porter said that Mr. Lamont was out. The man recognised Griswald and was quite willing for Griswald and Cross to wait till Lamont returned. Griswald made some excuse that Lamont would be pleased to see them, and the nigger, on getting a tip, would have let them sleep there if they had wanted.

On entering the flat the sharp eyes of Christopher Cross noticed the hat and coat on a chair.

"That porter must be wrong. Lamont must be in. Here's his hat and coat," Cross raised his voice. "Lamont!"

Cross tried the bed-room and found that the bed had not been slept in.

"Probably in hiding with that fifty-eight brandy?" suggested Griswald. "I wonder where he's gone?"

Christopher Cross opened the kitchen door and switched on the light, and his eyes opened wide at sight of the body on the floor and the ominous pool of blood. Without a word the detective knelt beside the body.

"Shall I send for a doctor?" Griswald muttered hoarsely.

"No, the District Attorney," Cross got to his feet. "Lamont's been murdered."

"There's no 'phone here."

"I'll go and 'phone Pritchard from the switchboard downstairs," Cross decided. "Will you stay here? Remember, nothing must be touched."

While Cross was out of the room Griswald began a feverish search through Lamont's desk. When the detective returned some fifteen minutes later with District Attorney Pritchard, Sergeant Lucks of the Investigation Bureau, and Dr. Bushy, the police surgeon, they found Marvin Griswald standing by the window. The detective introduced Marvin Griswald, who reported that nothing had occurred in Cross' absence.

The police surgeon at once got busy, and after a quick examination stated that he considered the crime had been committed about an hour to two hours previously. The cause of death was a hit on the head, left parietal area, with a sharp instrument. There were six wounds in the head, in distinct groups of three.

"Two groups—three wounds in each group and equidistant," thoughtfully whispered Cross, kneeling by the body. "Any idea of the weapon used, doc?"

"None," came the snappy answer. "This

in my fourth murder to-day and I've had my share of corpses."

The police surgeon hurried away to another case.

"What do you make of it, Cross?" Pritchard asked.

"I'd say he was struck twice. Each blow left three marks. But it was a curious sort of weapon," Cross answered. "Let's take a look round."

A search of the apartments did not reveal the weapon.

"Would a tomahawk leave marks like those on the body?" suggested Griswald.

"That's an idea." Cross nodded eagerly. "A tomahawk of peculiar design or some sort of barbaric instrument."

"Wait a minute, sir," cried the thick-set, burly Sergeant Lucks. "A crime isn't going to be committed in an elevator apartment that way. A piece of wood with nails in it would do the trick. I reckon it's simple."

"Would you mind letting us in on it?" mildly asked Cross.

"Sure! This guy Lamont comes back to his flat a couple of hours ago, takes off his hat and coat in the dining-room, hears something in the kitchen and comes in here. Now this place has a fire-escape entrance and the killer has come up those back stairs. Gets in with a skeleton key, and is laying in wait for Lamont. He cracks him twice over the head and makes his getaway."

"Do you agree with the sergeant's theory?" Pritchard looked inquiringly at Cross.

"No, there's another possibility. Pritchard, have a look here, will you?" Cross beckoned the District Attorney to kneel beside the body. "Notice how the nap of the cloth is pressed down in grooves. Faint, but discernible. I think that negro porter was right when he said John Lamont didn't come back

here to-night through the hall. Somebody brought him."

"What makes you say that?" Griswald asked.

"Because he couldn't have walked."

"Why not?" Pritchard asked.

"Because his legs were tied," the detective replied. "These marks on his trouser legs were made by cords. He was carried in—after he was dead. It fits in."

"With what?" demanded Pritchard.

"With his shoes being dry—bone dry! Look!" He pointed to the dead man's shoes. "He couldn't have walked through the rain without getting his shoes even damp."

"Unless he took a taxi," muttered Lucks.

"And got into it and out of it without even stepping on the sidewalk," countered Cross. "Here, what about this? What do you make of these stains, Pritchard?"

The D.A. looked at the soft hat found in the room.

"They look like blood."

"Blood, but no marks on hat," Cross cried eagerly. "Impossible to make those wounds right through the hat without even cutting the felt. That hat was placed on Lamont's head after he was killed. The body was trussed up and brought here. The crime occurred somewhere else and the murderer not only brought back the body, but it is more than likely he brought back the hat and coat as well."

"It's not possible," cried the sergeant.

Cross stood up and glanced round the kitchen. He pointed to the dumb-waiter.

"What about this interesting survival of early service days? Lend me your torch, sergeant." He pulled back the sliding panel. "Hallo! Stopped right here at our very door." He flashed the torch.



He picked up the limp figure of Deborah Reed in his arms.

"There's one thing we can be sure of," stated Pritchard. "This body was never lugged around by a weakling."

"Then you'd look, I suppose, for a man who was something of an athlete—big, broad shoulders?" said Griswald. "Very good, professor, very good again," approved Cross. "That's exactly the type we'd look for. A young, muscular chap."

"Look, boss, we don't want to play around feeling muscles," cried blunt Sergeant Lucks. "I reckon we've got to find out if this guy Lamont had any enemies."

"By George, Lucks, I think you've hit on something at last!" Cross straightened his back from examining the dumb-waiter. "This enemy undoubtedly brought Lamont into the flat by means of this shaft. I did witness a heated argument Lamont had only a few hours ago. Pritchard, I think a little conversation with one Alan Shaw might be in order."

An Arrest

CROSS, Pritchard, Lucks and Griswald proceeded to the apartment of Alan Shaw, and the young explorer soon broke down under the detective's searching questions, especially when Cross found in a cupboard the bloodstained club and the Mayan mask.

"I didn't do it, I tell you! I didn't do it!" he cried, when Cross accused him of murdering John Lamont.

"You came in just before the rain started," Cross stated.

"I didn't come in till midnight." "Lamont came in a minute after you did."

"You're wrong." "You picked up the quarrel where you'd left it at Griswald's. You grabbed the first weapon that came in handy and struck him twice."

"I never touched him." "Why, man, your fingerprints are all over the club," Pritchard held out the weapon.

"Well, they've a right to be," argued the young explorer, whose face was beaded with sweat. "They're over everything in this room. It's my room."

"It would have been unnatural if they weren't," admitted Cross. "And you were smart enough to know it. When you saw him lying there on the floor you thought fast. You pulled his hat down over his bleeding head, you wrapped the body in burlap—you have quantities of burlap here—and you tied him with rope. Plenty of rope here. The idea of the mask over the face was good. It meant that if any person looked into your car they would see a mummified form. You drove to Lamont's house. You went up to his rooms by the fire escape, but you sent the body up by the dumb-waiter. You removed the wrappings of burlap and the rope bonds and when you left you took this mask and the rest of your accessories. You wanted the police to think Lamont died in his own rooms."

"How are you going to prove it?" shouted the accused.

"By the blood inside the mask," relentlessly cried Cross. "By a grain of stuff that I took off Lamont's hair—it came off the mask. By this tiny piece of headdress I found in the dumb-waiter. But most of all by this club." He took the club from Pritchard. "The three sharp pieces of steel driven into the club fit the wounds in Lamont's skull."

"All right, I did it," Alan admitted. "Well, that's solved," triumphantly grinned the sergeant.

"Wait a minute," Alan was on his feet. "I mean I carried him, but I didn't kill him—I swear it."

April 24th, 1937.

"What do you mean?" Cross frowned. "Look, everybody knew that we hated each other. We'd just had a row at the Griswalds," stammered Alan. "Well, I went out for a minute, and when I came back there he was dead on the floor. I knew nobody'd believe me, so I took a chance. I thought I could get away with it, that's the truth. I lost my head, don't you see? I knew if they found him here that—that I'd go to the chair."

"You can still make it," sneered Lucks. "But I didn't kill him." "Well, who did?" demanded Pritchard.

"There was somebody here before me," cried Alan.

"That's it—that's it!" Griswald stepped eagerly forward. "Of course you can prove it—you can prove it, can't you, my boy?"

"No, but—" Alan bit his lip in despair, then his voice sharpened as he pointed. "My desk, my papers, they—they've been gone through—turned over!"

"Is that the best you can do?" scoffed the District Attorney.

"Guess I'll take him to headquarters," said the sergeant. "It's a shut case."

"Just a moment, just a moment, gentlemen," Griswald gazed beseechingly at the three representatives of the law. "Surely you can't do this without a warrant. A man in Dr. Shaw's position, a member of our Faculty."

"I'm sorry, professor," answered Pritchard. "I understand your feelings, but it's quite impossible. Better get going, sergeant."

"Thanks, anyway, Griswald," Alan managed to stammer out as Lucks led him to the door.

"Well, that's that," said the D.A. with a smile of relief after the body had been removed. "Now, can I give you gentlemen a lift?" "Thanks, just as far as the subway," answered Griswald.

"I'm staying," Cross lit a cigarette. "I've a little snooping to do. I'll look up Pritchard, and when I go I'll leave the key in the manager's office."

Griswald shook hands with Cross before he left with the District Attorney. "Good-night, Cross. I shall never forget your kindness—and your cleverness."

"Oh, it was pretty obvious, the whole thing... Good-night."

When Cross was quite certain that he was alone he walked into the bed-room and up to a large wardrobe. He opened a door and said to the coats hanging there.

"All right, you can come out now." The coats parted and there peered forth the frightened white face of Deborah Reed.

"How did you know I was here?" "I phoned your house."

"Why?" the girl asked. "When I had connected Alan with this business," explained Cross. "I wanted to be certain you were safe abed."

"Well, I wasn't." She was defiant. "So I naturally deduced that I'd find you where you most particularly ought not to be. How did you get down here?"

"Alan called me," Deb explained. "He said I must never let on to anyone that I'd been here earlier in the evening—that I must believe in him and keep away from him. So, of course, I came right down."

"Naturally," grinned Cross. "And when we showed up he hid you in this wardrobe."

"Christopher, can't you get him out of this awful mess?" "My dear child, if you'd only heard the evidence."

"I did hear it." "And you still think—"

"I don't have to think—I know Alan."

Cross shook his head. "If Alan didn't do it, who did?" "Somebody with a grudge against Lamont," Deb answered fiercely.

"Somebody close to him, jealous of him—jealous of his attentions to me."

"Well, that's a pretty good picture of Alan."

"Good heavens, she might have done it!" "Now what are you raving about?"

"Susan Nash!" She gripped his arm so tight that he winced with the pain. "She was crazy about him and terribly jealous of him. She's strong enough and big enough to have hit him with that club. I'm going to see her. I'm going up there right now."

Christopher Cross tried to persuade the girl that she could not do anything so crazy, but she said that if he did not wish to come with her she would go alone.

"You can't wake up people in the middle of the night."

She laughed determinedly. "I'd wake up a grizzly bear in these middle of the night if it would help Alan. You coming?"

"Just for the ride," Cross gave a resigned shrug.

On arrival at the apartment house where the Nashes lived they climbed to the fourth floor. The door was slightly ajar, and there came no answer to their ring. At last Cross ventured to open the door and peer round the corner. Something made him reach for a switch and when light flooded the small sitting-room he gave a gasp of horror.

Mrs. Nash and her daughter had been brutally murdered.

Accident or Murder ?

SOME twenty minutes later Christopher Cross waited outside the little apartment house for the arrival of the police. When the car arrived out tumbled Pritchard and a number of police officers.

"Hallo, Cross, this is a bad business." The D.A. looked in surprise at the girl. "Who's this?"

"It's all right—she's a friend of mine. You'll find what you're looking for on the fourth floor."

"Any clues?" "There were some dark hairs clutched in the old lady's hand."

"Good! Go on up, boys," Pritchard glanced at Cross. "Coming up?"

"You don't need me." The detective shook his head.

"Poor Susan! That poor old lady." Deborah clung to the detective's arm. "It's terrible!"

"Stop thinking about them and go on home. Thank your lucky stars that dark-haired boy friend of yours is in gaol. Otherwise I might have connected him with this."

"You see how ridiculous that is now." "Now that he's safely under lock and key." He hailed a passing taxi. "You get on home. I'll wait till Pritchard comes down in case he should need me."

Christopher had just lit another cigarette when up drove a car and out jumped Sergeant Lucks. The detective saw the swollen and blackened eye, but his grin vanished when he heard that Shaw on the way to headquarters socked him in the eye and got away.

Lucks had heard that his chief had had another call and he had come along

(Continued on page 26)

Halfway Island had spelled disaster to all who had ever tried to gain its shores. Halfway Island, with which the mysterious criminal known as the Tiger Shark was closely linked. Read in this powerful serial how two intrepid Marines braved countless dangers to solve the riddle of it. A thrill-packed drama of high adventure, starring Grant Withers and Adrian Morris



READ THIS FIRST

Corporal Jim Lawrence and Sergeants McGowan and Bob Schiller are three buddies in the U.S. Marine Corps, Schiller being the inventor of a gyro-compass regarding which a mysterious criminal known as the Tiger Shark seems anxious to obtain information.

Schiller is detailed to accompany an officer on a flight to Halfway Island, in mid-Pacific, where the Government hopes to establish an air base. This projects brings a warning from Douglas, a wealthy company promoter, who claims there is an aerial "dead-spot" over the island, but the flight takes place.

The Government 'plane crashes inexplicably, the authorities being unaware that agents of the Tiger Shark are quartered on Halfway Island with an amazing ray-gun which paralyzes the motors of any approaching craft. But later Schiller's compass is discovered by his sister Frances in Douglas' office.

Commandeering it, she is pursued by a man who overtakes her at the Marine depot and snatches the invention from her. Then Jim Lawrence coming to the rescue, the girl's assailant makes for a 'plane which is about to be sent aloft by remote control and sacrificed as a target for an anti-aircraft battery.

The man with the gyro-compass discovers McGowan in that 'plane, making a final adjustment to prepare the craft for its radio-controlled "take-off." He lays out Mac as the latter is about to climb from the 'plane, but takes fright and jumps to the ground when the ship, apparently of its own accord, moves off.

Jim Lawrence realises Mac's danger. Abandoning his pursuit of the thief, he boards the runaway 'plane, and he and

the unconscious sergeant are carried skyward into the range of the anti-aircraft guns, which open fire.

Now read on

Pursuit

CROUCHING in the forward cockpit of the target 'plane with the insensible McGowan, Jim Lawrence held his breath as the salvo of shells burst in the air all around the craft, raining shrapnel into the wings and the fuselage.

The machine rocked wildly as it was caught by the concussion of the exploding projectiles, but it escaped serious damage and flew onward. Nor were Jim and Mac hit by the iron splinters that riddled the ship, and before a second volley could be directed at the craft the corporal reached for the master-switch and turned it to the "off" position, breaking the contact which enabled the vessel's movements to be guided by remote control.

Then even as McGowan was beginning to come round, Jim took command of the 'plane and thrust the joystick forward, thanking his stars that he had taken a course in aviation and held his "A" certificate.

Away down on terra firma, beyond the hangars of the aerodrome, the wireless expert who was acting in co-operation with the anti-aircraft's battery was quick to realise that the target 'plane had ceased answering to the remote control apparatus which he was handling, and he immediately reported the circum-

stance to the officer in command of the gun-crews.

The officer in question merely ordered his men to continue firing, never suspecting that the 'plane was occupied, and once again a storm of death and destruction was hurled skyward at the target ship.

None of the shells struck the craft, but one of them burst close to the tail, and in the very act of sending the machine into a dive, Jim Lawrence realised from its behaviour that it had been badly maimed.

His object had been to land the 'plane with all possible dispatch, knowing that so long as he and Mac remained in the air they would court doom. But now the chances of grounding the ship safely were slender indeed, for like a wounded bird it was threatening to turn into a spin and plunge disastrously to earth.

It needed all Jim's skill as a pilot to retain some control over the machine, but he managed to sideslip towards the edge of the landing-field, and though it was a human impossibility to set it down without mishap, he succeeded in keeping the nose up until the 'plane actually touched ground.

Next moment, however, it had tilted madly and there was a rending of wood, metal, and fabric as the ship buckled. But luckily it did not burst into flame, and after a few seconds during which Jim and Mac lay in a dazed condition amongst the wreckage, the last-named contrived to pull himself clear.

Jim on his part was unable to extricate himself, but the sergeant made haste to lend him a hand, and on being dragged forth the bigger fellow quickly satisfied himself that, like Mac, he had escaped with only cuts and bruises.

April 24th, 1937.

EPISODE 2—

"Isle of Missing Men"

"By golly," Mac said then, "we're sure lucky to walk away from this crack-up. But who was the guy that knocked me out?"

"The guy that knocked you out!" Jim reiterated. "Yeah, we've got to get after him. He's stolen the Schiller gyro-compass."

Without attempting to enlighten the bewildered McGowan he turned from the wreckage of the plane, and as he did so he caught sight of Frances Schiller hurrying towards him, for the ship had crashed only a couple of hundred yards from the spot where she had been overtaken by the thief.

Almost in the same instant Jim descried the figure of the man who had commandeered the gyro-compass. He was sprinting across the flying field in the direction of the road that skirted it, having doubled back with the obvious intention of regaining his sedan car.

Calling on Mac to follow him, Jim started towards the road in an attempt to head him off, and the two Marines were running at full pelt when Frances met up with them.

"Oh, Jim!" the girl panted. "Are you and Mac all right?"

"What do you think?" the corporal rejoined. "Don't look like a couple of stretcher cases, do we? Come on, Frances, we mustn't let that fellow get away!"

He raced on with Mac close at his heels, and Frances set out after them. But their quarry was considerably nearer to his car than they were, and he had scrambled into the vehicle and driven off before they could gain the road.

The dust from the automobile swept over them in a cloud as they reached the highway a few seconds too late. Yet Frances Schiller's car was standing nearby, and the three of them tumbled into it, Jim taking the wheel and starting up the engine.

He drove in pursuit of the man who had robbed Frances of the gyro-compass, and there ensued a hair-raising dash along the San Diego road, with the fugitive holding his foot hard down on the accelerator, but Jim keeping him in view despite the fact that the thief's car was the more powerful.

In entering the town, however, the difficulty of keeping track of the big sedan was increased by the presence of a good deal of traffic in the streets, and by the fugitive's successive efforts to throw the Marines and their fair companion off the scent.

Again and again the man turned off to weave his way through labyrinthine side-roads, and at last, under the impression that he had baffled his pursuers, he swept into a street flanked by tall warehouses and slewed his sedan into the dark, yawning entrance of a building that towered higher than any of its neighbours.

But he had made a mistake in imagining that Jim Lawrence had lost the trail, for the corporal swung round into that street in time to see the tail of the sedan disappearing through the wide doorway of the big warehouse.

"Now we've got him!" jerked McGowan, who had also espied the fugitive's car before it had vanished from sight. "Attaboy, Jim—drive right in after him!"

"That's just what I don't intend to do," the corporal retorted. "That guy may have friends inside there, Mac, and we don't want to run blindly into a tough spot—especially as Frances is with us."

At unabated speed he flashed past the entrance of the warehouse, and, if their quarry saw the two Marines and Frances

Schiller drive by, he must have been convinced that even if they had traced him to this particular street they had failed to see him swerve into the warehouse.

Now at the far end of that building there was a quiet side-road leading to the waterfront, and it was into this side-road that Jim elected to turn. Then, pulling up at the kerb, he climbed out of the car with Mac.

"You stay here," he said to Frances. "We're going in to take a look around. Wait fifteen minutes, and if we're not out by then—well, I reckon you'd better send for the riot squad."

A moment later the two Marines were striding round to the front of the warehouse. Here they discovered that the main entrance to the building had now been closed, but after a tour of inspection they located a small side-door that opened at a touch.

They passed through to find themselves in a narrow corridor with a flight of stairs leading up from it. Then all at once they heard the murmur of voices, and the sound of those voices drew their attention to a room on the left.

The door of the room was closed, but, stealing towards it, they crouched down by the keyhole, and on peering through Jim Lawrence saw three men standing beside a table on which Bob Schiller's gyro-compass had been placed.

One of those men was the rogue who had snatched the invention from Frances, and, taking closer stock of him than he had previously been able to do, Jim noted that he was as shifty-looking a customer as ever he had set eyes upon. As for the other two, one was a hulking, florid individual of a brutal cast of countenance, and the third man was a lean fellow dressed in flying kit.

The aviator was doing the talking at the moment, and he was addressing himself to the man who had stolen the gyro-compass.

"The Tiger Shark will sure be glad to hear that this invention is in our hands, Miller," he was saying. "But are you positive that you shook off the Schiller girl and her friends?"

"I'm certain of it," answered the rogue known as Miller. "But say, if you're goin' to Halfway Island to pick up a shipment of loot you'd better get up to the roof and take off."

"That's right, Nelson," the florid-faced individual put in. "And, by the way, I hope you're expected at Halfway Island, otherwise you might share the fate o' Bob Schiller an' that Marine captain."

"Not a chance," was the reply. "The boys have been warned, an' they know the plane I'm flying. They won't put the spot on me by mistake, you can depend on that."

Outside the door Jim Lawrence and McGowan had heard every word, and they exchanged startled glances. Then, nodding to his comrade significantly, Jim drew himself to his full height and barged his way into the room occupied by Miller and his associates.

Mac followed him, and, though the crooks whipped round at once, they were taken completely unawares by the sudden intrusion of the two Marines, Miller going down before a terrific right-hand punch that Jim aimed at him.

Almost in the same instant McGowan sprang at the man with the florid countenance, and his bunched knuckles took that worthy on the point of the chin, hurling him to the floor in a senseless heap.

Nelson, the aviator, had recoiled, and now he reached inside his leather jacket and plucked out a revolver. But ere he could cover the Marines Jim Lawrence

was within striking distance of him, and a slashing upper-cut knocked back the aviator's head.

Nelson swung away across the room, cannoned against the far wall and slumped to the floor. Yet Jim was taking no chances, and, pouncing on him, he hit him a second time and then wrested the six-shooter from his nerveless fingers.

The crooks lay where they had fallen, and some thirty seconds elapsed before they struggled to their feet to find themselves threatened by the forty-five that Jim Lawrence had appropriated. Tlicu, surveying them grimly, the corporal spoke in a cool and deliberate tone.

"So you guys work for the Tiger Shark, huh?" he observed. "And you've got some kind of a set-up on Halfway Island, huh? All right, how about doing a little talking? How about telling us what happened to Bob Schiller and Captain Grayson?"

The three prisoners looked at one another anxiously, but presently assumed a sullen air, and, none of them volunteering any information, Jim spoke again.

"Close as elms, eh?" he commented. "Well, maybe you don't have to talk. Maybe we can find out for ourselves all that we want to know. We heard you say there was a plane on the roof, ready for a hop to Halfway Island. Okay, I reckon if Sergeant McGowan and I take that plane and make the trip, we'll have a clear run to the island without any accidents. How about it, Mac?"

He had directed a sidelong glance at the sergeant, and the latter was quick to respond.

"You mean, take the place of this guy Nelson, or what his name is? That suits me, Jim, and I reckon Colonel Bennett down at the Marine base won't mind us grabbin' time off for a job like this. There's just one thing, Jim. I'd like to see these fellers tied up afore we leave, and I think I spot some rope over in the corner there."

There was rope in plenty, and, after securing the three hivelings of the Tiger Shark and informing them that they would be picked up by the police in due course, the two Marines took possession of Bob Schiller's gyro-compass and made their way upstairs to the flat roof of the building, where sure enough a sleek plane was standing.

Before climbing into it, however, they moved across to the eastern parapet of the spacious roof and looked down into the side-street where Frances Schiller was waiting with her car. Then, having attracted her attention, Jim scribbled a note of explanation and added a request that she should repair at once to Colonel Bennett's quarters and have him communicate with the police.

Wrapping the missile around a fragment of mortar that was lying loose on the parapet, he tossed it into the street below and lingered long enough to watch Frances pick it up and to wave a hand to her in farewell, after which he and Mac strode across to Nelson's plane.

They clambered into the cockpits, and, from the forward compartment, Jim glanced round at McGowan.

"Here we go, sarge," he declared. "This is the second time we've heard talk of the Tiger Shark. The first time was down in Porto Rico, when the bandits who kidnapped Bob claimed that they'd been hired by the Tiger Shark's agents. But this time we've got a few more facts to go on."

Mac nodded. "You said it, buddy," he stated. "Okay, get that motor started and let's be on our way. Don't stop till you reach Halfway Island—an' don't spare the hosses."

Under Suspicion

A SWIFT drive from the city centre had brought Frances Schiller back to the Marine base, and, leaving her automobile in the carriage-way outside the officers' billets, she hurried to the quarters of Colonel Bennett, O.C. of the depot.

Entering the outer room that adjoined his office, she found Kota there, the colonel's Eurasian valet, a model of deportment and courtesy, with a bearing that was almost military, although he was merely a personal servant and in no way attached to the corps.

"Is your master in, Kota?" Frances asked.

"Yes, miss," was the reply. "But he is engaged at the moment. Mr. Douglas called on him a minute or two ago, and is in with him now."

Frances gave a start, and then, pursing her lips, spoke to the valet urgently.

"Please tell the colonel I wish to talk to him at once," she said. "It is very important."

Kota bowed, and made his way to the inner room, whence he reappeared a few seconds later and informed the girl that Colonel Bennett would see her immediately.

Frances passed through the O.C.'s office, and both the colonel and Douglas rose from their chairs as she crossed the threshold. Then, with a quick glance at the civilian, Bob Schiller's sister addressed the commander of the Marines.

"I have a message for you from Corporal Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan," she said. "I think it will be of great interest to you."

She handed Colonel Bennett the note that had been thrown to her from the roof of the warehouse, and as he read it the changing expressions on the officer's keen features indicated how profoundly he was impressed by its contents.

When he had scanned it he read it

aloud to Douglas, and then laid it on his desk.

"So the mysterious criminal known as the Tiger Shark is in some way responsible for the inaccessibility of Halfway Island?" he said to the promoter. "What do you think of that, Douglas?"

Before the civilian could make any reply Frances interrupted.

"Perhaps Mr. Douglas could have told you about this beforehand, colonel," she announced. "I understand he hinted that something might happen to my brother and Captain Grayson, and it may surprise you to know that I found my brother's gyro-compass in his office early this morning. That's how Corporal Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan have become mixed up in this business. I took the gyro-compass, but a man outside Mr. Douglas' office saw me with it and chased me. Corporal Lawrence came to my rescue, and, together with Sergeant McGowan, we tracked my assailant to the warehouse from which Lawrence afterwards threw that note to me."

A frown had gathered upon the colonel's brow, and he looked sharply at Douglas, who now showed signs of agitation.

"How do you account for Schiller's gyro-compass being in your office, Douglas?" Bennett demanded.

"I was going to tell you about that just before Miss Schiller was shown in, colonel," he said. "As you're aware, I am interested in shipping as well as in aviation, and I may mention that the vessel which came across the floating wreck of Captain Grayson's plane was a cargo-boat belonging to the company I own. That's why I came to be in possession of the gyro-compass, which was salvaged from the wreck and which was handed to me when my ship put into port."

He paused, and then continued his explanation.

"I received the gyro-compass late last night," he went on, "and at once wrote

to Miss Schiller asking her to call on me. She will verify that."

"You didn't mention in your letter why you wanted me to call," Frances interposed.

"No," Douglas admitted. "But I assure you I intended to give you that gyro-compass, as it seemed to me you were the one person who ought to have it. Unfortunately, when you called and were shown straight into my private office I happened to be out of the room, and, seeing the instrument, you jumped to a false conclusion and ran out of the building with it—apparently believing that it had found its way there in some sinister and guilty manner. But I ask you, would I have left it on my desk in full view if I had not wished you to know that it was in my possession?"

There was a silence, and then Colonel Bennett spoke.

"Your story is convincing, Douglas," he remarked. "Yet isn't it possible that Miss Schiller was shown right into your private office by mistake, and that you had no intention of letting her see the gyro-compass?"

"Why should I send for her, then?" The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"I haven't the least idea, Douglas," he retorted. "But who was the man who gave chase to Miss Schiller after she left your office?"

"How should I know?" the promoter cried furiously. "According to this note from Lawrence and McGowan he was an agent of the Tiger Shark. All right, then, the Tiger Shark learned by some means or other that the gyro-compass was at my office. He sent that man to steal it from me, but the fellow spotted Miss Schiller with it and went after her. That's the way I figure it, anyhow."

Colonel Bennett looked at him in a penetrating fashion.

"I wonder if you're telling the truth?" he said. "Douglas, I don't trust you. You had a chance to establish a civil airport on Halfway Island, but failed—



Staring fearfully at the stick of dynamite in the sergeant's grasp, the crooks began to move towards the entrance of the cave.

or, at least, so I have been led to believe. But now it appears that the Tiger Shark has some kind of set-up down there, and is in a position to keep away all intruders."

Anger and derision were struggling for supremacy on the civilian's countenance.

"Colonel Bennett," he ejaculated, "you're not trying to suggest that I am the Tiger Shark, or am in any way connected with him?"

The O.C. of the Marine base compressed his lips.

"I suppose actually I'm not in a position to suggest anything," he conceded, "and I'm certainly not in a position to prove anything. But I'm telling you, Douglas, that I mean to clear up the mystery that surrounds Halfway Island, and it may be that Sergeant McGowan and Corporal Lawrence will go a long way towards solving the riddle. It may be, Douglas, that in this flight which they've undertaken they'll discover the secret of that aerial dead-spot and the secret of the Tiger Shark's identity as well."

Douglas appeared to have some difficulty in controlling his emotions. Was it because he resented the aspersions that had been cast upon him, or because he was shaken and afraid?

For a moment, at any rate, he seemed unable to speak. Then he managed to express himself with some semblance of calm.

"The doubts you've thrown on my character constitute a grave injustice, colonel," he stated. "Perhaps you'll realise that if these two men—Lawrence and McGowan—obtain any vital information, all I can say is that I wish them every success—yes, every success."

And with that he took his leave, slamming out of the colonel's office in a manner that startled the manservant Kota, who was going about his domestic duties in the outer room.

The Ray-gun

THERE was a good deal of activity afoot on Halfway Island, far out in the Pacific Ocean.

A little way inland from the eastern shore, where the incoming surge of the sea boomed like thunder among the reefs, a group of dusky woolly headed natives were straining doggedly on the spokes of a crude windlass which provided a contrast to the amazing instruments of science that had been installed on the island by the Tiger Shark's agents.

By means of a cable the windlass operated a heavy truck laden with material salvaged from a steamer which had been wrecked with the loss of all hands a day or two previously, and, judding round slavishly with their chests to the axles of the hoisting gear, the native islanders were sending that truck up the steep gradient of a narrow-gauge railway leading to a cave three hundred yards distant.

The bulk of the unfortunate steamer's cargo had consisted of dynamite stacked in crates, and the truck had made many journeys to the cave. But it was ascending now with a final consignment of explosives, its progress being watched by a group of five ruffianly looking white men who were standing at the peak of the gradient.

Those white men were the Tiger Shark's hirelings, and every one of them was a criminal with a record that had necessitated a hurried departure from the United States.

They were gathered in the entrance of the cave, and one of them, a rogue whose features were partially shaded by the wide brim of a panama hat, was calling instructions to the natives below, April 24th, 1937.

who seemed to be completely under the domination of the gangsters.

"Come on, you swabs!" he was bawling. "Put yer backs into it. We ain't got all day ter wait."

His exhortations had the effect of spurring the dusky islanders, and a little while later the truck reached the upper terminus of the narrow-gauge railway, whereupon one of the white men laid hold of a rope that was attached to it and made this fast to a hook embedded in the rocky wall of the cavern.

"Okay," the fellow in the panama shouted then, hailing the natives who had been toiling in the blistering heat of the sun. "Now vamoose back to your village."

The dark-skinned islanders abandoned the windlass and slouched off in single file, directing their steps towards a dense tangle of forest and brushwood that smothered the hinterland; and as they disappeared from view the man in the panama hat squared his powerful shoulders.

"Well, that's that," he declared, glancing at the contents of the wagon and casting his eyes over a number of crates which were piled on the floor and which had been unloaded from the truck on its previous ascents to the cave. "Not a bad haul, eh? When this shipment o' dynamite is transported to the Tiger Shark's headquarters in the States it oughta fetch a pretty good price."

"Yeah," another of the gang interposed. "An' the Tiger Shark takes eighty per cent o' the proceeds while we take all the risks. He's safe enough, because nobody knows who he really is—not even the key-men in his organisation."

The rogue in the panama regarded the speaker ominously.

"Better not try to figure out who the Tiger Shark is," he commented. "It ain't healthy. I had a friend in this gang once that learned the Tiger Shark's identity by mistake—an' he took the information to the grave with him. No, my advice to everybody here is to ask no questions an' do just what you're told to do. And as for the risks we're takiu', we're a whole lot safer here than we would be back home."

He paused, and then indicated the truck that was now standing in the entrance to the cave.

"All right, get that last shipment outa there," he ordered.

The other gangsters moved forward to obey him, but before they could carry out his instructions they were checked by a sound that issued from the depths of the cavern, a strange, whining sound that was like the hum of a dynamo, rising to a crescendo and then gradually fading away.

"That's the television signal," jerked the man in the panama hat. "It means there's a message from headquarters."

Followed by his accomplices, he hurried towards the rear of the cave and halted before the switchboards that were built into the wall there, and a moment later he was manipulating a dial that enabled him to tune-in on the required wave-length.

A screen in front of him became illuminated, and the flickering outlines of a man's head and shoulders took form in the panel. Then, the vision growing clearer, it resolved itself into the clear image of an individual whose features were concealed by mask and goggles.

At the same time a voice was heard. It was the voice of the man who had appeared on the screen, and the listeners could not help wondering if this were the Tiger Shark.

They had no means of settling that question, even if they had wished to. They only knew that the voice was

coming to them from far across the Pacific, where the fringe of the ocean washed the shores of California.

"M.3. calling Halfway Island," it said. "Two Marines, known as Lawrence and McGowan, traced one of our men to the warehouse this morning. There they overpowered him, together with another of the gang and our chief pilot, Nelson. Fortunately, our men were released before the police could be notified, and they made their escape from the building by the time it was raided."

"But Lawrence and McGowan are flying towards Halfway Island," the voice continued, "and they are in Nelson's plane. They should be due over the island within an hour from now. Bring them down."

Little did the gangsters beside the switchboards know it, but they were not the only ones who listened to that radio communication from San Diego. For, when they had turned back into the depths of the cave to answer the call-sign a figure in khaki had stolen from amidst a cluster of rocks where he had been hidden and had crept to the entrance of the cavern.

It was the figure of a sergeant of Marines. It was the figure of—Bob Schiller!

Bob Schiller, who had been more fortunate than Captain Grayson, and who had survived the plane crash in which the two of them had been involved. Bob Schiller, who had gained the shore of Halfway Island and who had been skulking in the vicinity of the cave for days, living on bread-fruit and yams, watching the movements of the Tiger Shark's agents and their native allies, and taking every precaution to ensure that his presence remained unsuspected.

He was now as close to the mysterious cavern of his foes as he had ever been, and the news that Jim and Mae were en route for the island had a powerful effect on him. Then, crouching in the entrance of that strange den, he saw the vision on the radio panel gradually fade until it disappeared completely.

Over at the switchboards the man in the panama hat turned to his confederates, and Bob Schiller heard him speak in a hoarse tone.

"So a couple of Marines are headed this way in Nelson's plane, eh?" the fellow rasped. "Well, this is where we get busy an' prepare a welcome for them. Come on, man the controls of the ray-gun."

Bob Schiller had taken up a position beside the truck that was laden with dynamite, and from this vantage-point he watched the gangsters operate the mechanism of the giant device which had given Halfway Island a reputation so ominous.

He had learned enough during his sojourn here to know what was happening now, for he had picked up scraps of vital information from snatches of talk that he had overheard between these men in the course of the last few days. He knew, for instance, that a screen of brushwood on the summit of the headland above the cave was being raised to disclose an instrument of death and destruction—a silent contrivance that was capable of paralysing the engines of any sea-going ship or any craft of the air which came within the scope of its fatal influence.

That contrivance, the masterpiece of a scientific genius with a warped and criminal mind, was operated from the depths of the cavern, and before long a sound-detector had betrayed the approach of a plane. Then, a little while afterwards, the machine was actually seen in a periscope at which the man with the panama hat had posted himself.

Next moment the latter was reeling

off instructions to his accomplices, giving them the readings on certain range-finder dials that were co-ordinated with the periscope, and it was as the curt tones of the look-out were echoing through the cave that Bob Schiller bestirred himself.

He had noticed that one of the crates in the truck by which he was crouching had been broken open, and its contents were laid bare in the form of tightly packed sticks of dynamite.

Warily the young sergeant of Marines reached into that box and withdrew one of the sinister sticks. Then he began to move forward into the cave, and as he did so he heard the voice of the look-out again.

"All right," the scoundrel rapped out, his eyes glued on the periscope. "Let 'em have it."

A switch was thrown, and, up on the headland, an invisible ray was directed from the contraption which had been disclosed there. And like a finger of doom that ray searched out the high-speed 'plane in which Jim Lawrence and McGowan were approaching the island, so that all at once the motor failed and the craft began to plunge seaward, with the sun glinting on its wings and fuselage.

"Got 'em!" exclaimed the man at the periscope. "Now, keep that beam on 'em! Follow them down and don't let 'em regain control. We—"

But he said no more, for it was then that Bob Schiller revealed his presence, stepping quickly forward with the stick of dynamite held aloft in one hand.

"Switch off that ray-gun!" he ordered tersely.

The startled gangsters swung around from the instrument boards at which they were posted, and amazement was written on their villainous faces as they found themselves confronted by a young sergeant in the khaki tunic-shirt, breeches, and gaiters of the U.S. Marines.

"Come on," Bob grated in a tone of fierce command, "switch off that ray-gun, or I'll blow this whole cave sky-high! I mean it! Those fellows in that 'plane are my friends, and even if it costs me my life I'm going to see that you don't bring them down!"

It was clear that he was in deadly earnest, and at a gesture of assent from the man in the panama hat the firing-switch of the ray-gun was turned to the "off" position. Then, still threatening the gangsters with annihilation, Bob Schiller ordered them to the mouth of the cavern.

Staring fearfully at the stick of dynamite in the sergeant's grasp, the crooks began to move towards the entrance of the cave, and, if any of them doubted whether the Marine was actually prepared to detonate the explosive, none of them had the courage to put him to the test by offering resistance.

They stumbled to the cavern-mouth, and Bob brought up the rear, dividing his attention between his prisoners and the cloud-flecked sky beyond. Then he discerned the 'plane that was occupied by his two comrades.

The instant the ray-gun had ceased to operate, the motor of the ship had come into play again, and, in full control of the machine once more, Jim Lawrence was circling over the island in quest of a landing-place.

Bob Schiller smiled grimly as he watched the aeroplane. He could well imagine that Jim and Mac must be sorely puzzled by the eccentric behaviour of their craft's engine, which had petered out so unexpectedly and then recovered power. They could know nothing of the ray-gun which had almost destroyed them, and which would assuredly have

destroyed them if he had not intervened in the nick of time.

Keeping an eye on the 'plane, Bob saw it swoop at last towards a jungle clearing not far from the headland in which the cave was situated, and he followed it with his gaze until it had descended beyond the trees. Then there ensued an interval of waiting, but finally he and his captives espied Jim Lawrence and McGowan emerging from the edge of the thickets on foot.

They came on in a cautious manner, looking to right and left. It was obvious, nevertheless, that they had seen the windlass from which the native labourers had long since departed, for they were making straight for this. But they had not yet perceived the cave at the summit of the narrow-gauge railway, and Bob decided to wait till they were well within earshot before attempting to attract their attention.

There was a deep gully between the newcomers and the windlass, and the pair of them slithered down into this and were lost to view for about thirty seconds. At the end of that time, however, they were seen scrambling up the nearest bank, and as they reached the rim of that bank they advanced to inspect the crude hoisting-gear.

It was at this juncture that Bob Schiller made a mistake that he had good cause to repent, for in his anxiety to reveal himself to his friends he took his eyes off the Tiger Shark's hirelings and stepped forward to give Jim and Mac a shout of greeting.

Before he could utter a sound one of the gang had seen an opportunity of tackling him, the rogue in question being a swarthy individual with a coloured handkerchief bound over his head.

With the liteness of a cat he sprang on Schiller, and in a trice he had wrested the stick of dynamite from the sergeant's clutch. And almost simultaneously, prompt to take their cue from their confederate's action, the other members of the gang closed in on the Marine and dragged him back from the entrance of the cave.

Cursing himself for his thoughtlessness, Bob struggled furiously, and for an instant he came near to wrenching himself from the grip of his assailants. But they were too many for him, and, fastening on him again like leeches, they overpowered him and pinned his arms to his sides so that he stood helpless amongst the ruffians.

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Then he found himself face to face with the man in the panama hat, who was plainly in charge of this outpost of the Tiger Shark's widespread organisation.

"You ain't so smart, after all, soldier," the scoundrel jeered, eyeing Bob mockingly. "So you was ready to throw away your life to save your pals if need be, eh? Well, you ain't got long to live now, I reckon, an' neither have they, for we have a habit of turnin' any unwelcome guests over to the natives. They have a pleasant little way of dealin' with snoopers like you and them side-kicks of yours."

He paused, and then, significantly, he started to caress the bunched knuckles of his right hand.

"I guess your friends down there will start investigatin' our narrow-gauge railway pretty soon to find out where it leads," he drawled. "In case they're arned, we'll just wait for 'em and take 'em as they walk into the cave. And for fear you have any ideas about warnin' them—"

He did not finish the sentence, but suddenly drew back his fist, and with all the brute strength in his body he aimed a cowardly blow at the prisoner's jaw.

The punch landed with a sickening impact, and the cruel force of it knocked Bob Schiller out of the grasp of the men who were holding him. Yet the rogue who had struck him never bargained for all that followed, never dreamed of the consequences which were to result from that blow.

Back went the Marine in the direction of the cave-mouth, and, blundering against the rocky wall on the left-hand side of the entrance, he tried to save himself from falling by grabbing at a rope there.

It was the rope which was attached to the heavy-laden dynamite truck, the rope which had been made fast to the hook in the wall to prevent the wagon from careering down the gradient. And that rope was the only brake on the vehicle, as the chain cable of the hoisting-gear was governed solely by the windlass below.

The rope came adrift in Bob Schiller's fingers, and next second was plucked from his hand as the truck of dynamite jerked forward. At the same time the spokes of the windlass at the foot of the gradient began to spin madly, for there was no check on them.

Earlier on, the natives who had been toiling there had worked on an alternative system, forcing the windlass-spokes round when it had been necessary to send the truck aloft, holding those spokes back to bring the wagon down in easy stages whenever it had been emptied of its freight and released for a fresh cargo.

But the windlass was unattended now, and only Jim Lawrence and McGowan were beside it—two khaki-clad figures who started back in alarm at the first clank of the chain cable and then raised their glance to the summit of the gradient.

They saw the wagon rushing down the metals, and they drew aside, realising that it must crash into the windlass. Yet in calculating their retreat to a safe distance they were unaware of the truck's cargo of death—did not know that in the moment of impact a hundred-weight of dynamite would explode like a thunderclap and blast the two of them out of existence!

(To be continued next week. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Grant Withers and Adrian Morris.)

"UNDER COVER OF NIGHT"

(Continued from page 20)

to report his failure to recapture Shaw. The sergeant's mouth gaped when he heard of the murder of the two women.

"He got away from me and came here and murdered these two dames," exclaimed the sergeant. "Is that what you figure out, Mr. Cross?"

"Those dark hairs seem to indicate Shaw," irritably answered Cross. "I was hoping for Deb's sake that Shaw was innocent after all, but it looks mighty grim. You going in to report to the D.A.?"

"Not now these two dames have been killed," answered Lucks. "Unless I can pick up that guy Shaw I needn't bother to go back—I'll get my marching orders."

"When you feel depressed there's nothing like a Turkish bath," Cross advised. "You look as if you need a clean up, Lucks, so have this bath on me."

Alan Shaw knew of no place in New York where he could hide, and he decided that in the Turkish baths he would be safe until the morning. He could get a famous lawyer, a lifelong friend of the family, to come to the baths and tell him the best thing to do. Strange that Cross and the sergeant should go to the same baths and the three should meet in the steam-room. It was Cross who saw Shaw trying to sneak into a cubicle, and it was Cross who stopped Sergeant Lucks from attacking the man who had dared to give him a black eye.

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" Cross silenced the sergeant at last. "I want to ask Shaw a question, so keep quiet, Lucks."

He stared at the young man. "What made you kill those two women?"

The amazement on Shaw's face was so genuine that Cross was impressed. In a small rest-room the detective narrated the killing of Mrs. Nash and her daughter.

"Let's forget Lamont for a moment," was Shaw's answer at the end. "I can't prove I didn't kill Lamont, but I can prove I didn't kill those two women. I was here when it happened."

"If you didn't kill those women you didn't kill Lamont," Cross stated. "The mystery seems to be thickening."

Cross encouraged Alan Shaw to talk about the people at the Trent Memorial University. He heard about the activities of Lamont and Susan Nash, and suggested that someone might be killing off rivals to get old Reed's position. Alan at once mentioned the name of Rudolph Brehmer.

"He was a brilliant professor who was turned out because of his temper and his drunken ways," explained Shaw. "He has always thought that he should have had Reed's job. Griswald gave him work to do in their laboratory—I think Janet must have persuaded Marvin out of the kindness of her heart."

Cross at once got through to police headquarters. He got in touch with Pritchard and asked that Rudolph Brehmer be picked up at Griswald's and rushed down to the Turkish baths. He made no mention of having Alan Shaw with him. Cross had assisted the police in many cases, and as he was about the only popular amateur detective he could do much as he willed with the police.

Cross was half asleep when Lucks said April 24th, 1937.

he would need a good whisky to pull himself round after all this steam.

"Talking of whisky reminds me of the special old brandy of Lamont's that I didn't get," yawned Cross.

"He doesn't drink any brandy," cried Alan. "He never touches a drop of anything. He couldn't. The poor guy had stomach trouble."

Christopher Cross sat up on his couch. "That's funny," he muttered, and told of his meeting with Griswald. "Do you suppose Griswald used me as a means of getting into Lamont's rooms to-night?"

"Why should he?" argued Shaw. "What could he have wanted in Lamont's rooms? Unless he was looking for something."

"Maybe he was looking for something," Cross glanced at Shaw. "Didn't you say your desk was searched?"

"Yes, but nobody believed me."

"So was Susan's desk," muttered Cross.

"Was Lamont's?" questioned the sergeant.

"No. I looked at Lamont's desk and it was all straight. That's the only place I know that was. I still think Brehmer's our man." Cross lay back, then sat up. "But he could have searched Lamont's desk when I went down to phone Pritchard, and then straightened it out again." He ticked that off on one finger. "That makes three desks all searched and all connected with the Physics Department, and all guests at the Griswald house last night." And two of them were murdered.

Cross leapt off the couch and got an attendant to ring the house of Dr. Reed.

"Why were you phoning?" Alan asked when Cross returned from making the call.

"Deb Reed—she was a guest, too," stated the detective. "Apparently Dr. Reed heard his granddaughter drive up an hour ago, and she's quite safe in bed—thank goodness."

"You don't think Deb's in any danger, do you?"

"No, but she's an impetuous young woman," Cross explained. "There is a murderer at large, and I feel much happier knowing Deb's in bed."

Rudolph Brehmer gave Cross one item that made the detective sit up. He heard that it was Janet Griswald who was the brains, and that without her notes Griswald would be lost. He explained that Janet Griswald was crazy about her husband, and had stuck to him for years, working her heart out.

"Her heart?" sharply exclaimed Cross. "He knew she had a weak heart, and he was up there in that room with her."

"You mean when the dog jumped out of the window?" asked Brehmer.

"You picked up the little dog, didn't you?"

"I was right there when he jumped."

"Did you see him jump?"

"Yes, he jumped after his ball."

"Did you actually see him jump?"

"I was in the garden," said Brehmer. "I didn't properly see him jump—I only heard him hit the pathway."

"Did you see the ball?"

"Oh, sure, it bounced right near me."

"After the dog landed?"

Rudolph Brehmer looked at him curiously.

"What are you driving at, Mr. Cross?"

"I'm trying to find out which came out of the window first—the dog or the ball," Cross answered. "The answer will tell me whether it was accident or murder. We're going up to see Griswald right away. I'll call District Attorney Pritchard."

Walking Into the Spider's Web

DEBORAH REED was tired when she got home. She yawned, and put her hand into the pocket of the cloak to get her handkerchief. She drew out instead a notebook. She gasped when she saw inside the name of Janet Griswald. Very quietly the girl crept out of the house so that she should not disturb her grandfather and hastened to the house of Marvin Griswald.

When Marvin Griswald got back to his house he found Tonya waiting for him. He told her that he had failed to find Janet's notebook.

"That Reed girl!" Tonya cried. "She must have it. You must go to her and get it before it is light."

It was then that both heard the shrill pealing of the front-door bell. Griswald told the girl on no account to show herself. He went down to the front door and boldly opened it.

"Deborah Reed!" he exclaimed. "What on earth brings you here?"

"Oh, I know it's a dreadful hour, Marvin!" She smiled her thanks as he stood aside for her to enter. "But I've found something that I'm sure is of importance."

Griswald's eyes narrowed at sight of Janet's notebook.

"Where did you find this?" he asked quite coolly.

"In my coat-pocket. And I know just how it got there. You see, Janet and I had coats exactly alike, and I must have taken hers." She pointed to the notebook. "When I found it only a little while ago I knew I had to see you because of Alan. You see, I'm sure that notebook has something to do with what happened to-night."

"But how can it, my dear child?"

"It all fits in!" cried Deborah. "Brehmer saw his chance for the glory he's been cheated of when poor Janet had that heart attack. He looked for the notes and he couldn't find them because all the time they were in the cloak I'd taken by mistake. Then the idea came into his crazy head that somebody who was here at dinner stole them."

"I think you're very near the truth, my dear."

"Then let's call the police and tell them to get after Brehmer!" cried the impetuous girl. "They can compare his hair with what the old lady had in her hand."

"They found hair?" Griswald said slowly, and then smiled. "My dear, rest on this couch a while. I'll attend to everything."

In the next room he found Tonya.

"She knows too much!" Griswald snarled like a wolf. "She must be silenced—it is the only way. In my room you will find two old suitcases; see that there are no labels, no marks of any kind. Line them with newspapers." She backed away with a cry of horror. "It is the only way. If we are to gain our happiness we must not hesitate."

When Marvin Griswald came back to Deborah he carried a tray. She must have a glass of sherry to steady her nerves. The sherry was doped, and her senses began to grow muddled.

"The sounder you sleep the better it will be for you," Griswald said in a husky whisper.

The girl opened her eyes and saw the fanatical glare. She reeled back:

"I'm afraid of you! I'm afraid of you!" Then her senses left her, and she slid to the floor.

Marvin Griswald stared down at her, and his hands were crooked like claws when again the bell shrilled. Desperately he glanced round and saw the old oak chest. He picked her up in his arms and carried her across the room.

A small bottle of perfume tumbled from her open bag and smashed on the floor. Griswald placed the unconscious body in the chest, closed the lid, picked up the smashed scent-bottle, tossed it into the glowing embers, the wineglass he hid under a cushion, and when the bell shrilled again he opened the door to admit Christopher Cross.

"Good-evening, Griswald!" Cross said with an engaging smile. "Or should I say good-morning?"

"Oh, Cross, so it's you—come in!" Griswald twitched his lips. "Sorry to keep you waiting. I just dozed off. First rest I've had to-night. Anything further happened?"

"It's an unholy hour, but I wanted a few words with you. You see, you're the one man who can help me solve this murder."

"The one man?"

"Yes. I'd like to ask you a few questions about the suspect—Brehmer. We know he's the man."

"Yes, I was sure Alan had no hand in it. I suspected Brehmer. Are you sure you have a case against him?"

"Not quite, but we shall have," Cross watched the other warily. "We already have a sample of his hair to compare with something we found in the old lady's hand."

"What old lady?"

"Mrs. Nash."

"Don't tell me—how shocking. But what on earth should Brehmer want to kill them for?"

"Then?"

"Didn't you say—"

"I said the old lady."

"Strange—they were inseparable," Griswald licked his parched lips. "I always think of them as one."

"As a matter of fact you've guessed right—they were both killed," said Cross.

"How horrible!" Griswald gasped out. "This has upset me terribly. Might we defer our talk to some more seasonable time? My head aches terribly."

"To-morrow," Cross moved towards the door, then sniffed. "Is it close in here, or do I smell perfume?"

"This," Boldly Griswald held out his handkerchief with which he had mopped up the scent. "Funny about perfumes. They're so tied up with memories. This was something of Janet's."

It was then that Christopher Cross saw the lid of the chest move, but he did not let Griswald know.

"You get some sleep," he managed a smile. "I'll be round later in the day. Auf wiedersehen."

Griswald closed the door and hastened to the chest. He dragged out Deborah, who had partly recovered her senses, and laid her on the couch. He picked up a cushion with the intention of suffocating her, and had just pressed it down over her face when the front door burst open.

Marvin Griswald took one look at Christopher Cross and the police officers before making a flying leap for the stairs. He took refuge in his wife's own room, and when they hammered on the door tried to clamber along the thick ivy to one of the other rooms. The ivy gave, and with a scream of terror Marvin Griswald crashed down on to the very path where he had flung Janet's dog.

After satisfying himself that Deborah was all right, Christopher handed her over to the care of Alan Shaw and darted upstairs after the police. He stared down from Janet's balcony at the prone figure on the path.

"Now I know the ball came after the dog," said the detective.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd., starring Edmund Lowe and Florence Rice.)

"SECRET PATROL"

(Continued from page 12)

"I'm looking for Mr. McCord," she said agitatedly.

"I'm McCord," responded that harassed man, staring up at her. "What's wrong now?"

"The mounted police are trapped, and I've come for help!"

"Mounted police?" he echoed. "More than one of them?"

"Yes, two—and they'll both be killed unless you hurry."

"Where are they?"

"I don't know what the place is called, or whose it is. You get the men, and I'll show them the way. But, oh, hurry—do hurry!"

McCord turned to his companion, who was the clerk ordinarily in charge of the counter.

"Dan," he said urgently, "go find some of the men, quick!"

The clerk scurried off to the hotel, and in a very few minutes returned with several men. Others appeared with two horses, and a wagon outside the blacksmith's was commandeered. Not more than ten minutes later Ann was riding beside the wagon in the direction of Barstow's cabin.

In that cabin, meanwhile, the former prisoner known as Tom had ventured into the back room, over the broken door, only to be driven forth again by a bullet that sang past his left ear—and after that there was more silence.

Gene gave Alan a hand with the big packing-case, and it was moved to the edge of the loft to provide them with a shelter.

"Only one cartridge left, eh?" said Gene.

"Only one," Alan replied grimly. "And I'm saving that for Barstow."

Barstow, in the outer room, had ripped two curtains down from a window and made a roll of them.

"I'll drive those rats out if I have to burn this place down!" he raged, and from a cupboard he took out a can of paraffin which he emptied upon the rolled-up curtains.

"There's a window in the gable at the end of the loft," he said, "and I'm going to use it! Here, take this, Tom! As soon as I start firing outside, light it and toss it up from the doorway—there's a mattress up there, and when that's ablaze and they're trying to put it out I can shoot 'em down from the

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"SECRET PATROL"—Alan Craig, Charles Starrett; Gene Barkley, Henry Mollison; Ann Stevens, Finis Barton; Mike Barstow, J. P. McCowan; C. J. McCord, L'Estrange Millman; Timothy Arnold, James McGrath; Jordan, Arthur Kerr; Superintendent Barkley, Reginald Hincks

"UNDER COVER OF NIGHT"—

Christopher Cross, Edmund Lowe; Deborah Reed, Florence Rice; Sergeant Lucks, Nat Pendleton; Marvin Griswald, Henry Daniell; Janet Griswald, Sara Haden; Alan Shaw, Dean Jagger; Rudolph Brehmer, Frank Reicher; Mrs. Nash, Zeffie Tilbury; District Attorney Pritchard, Henry Kolker; Tonya van Horne, Maria Shelton; John Lamont, Theodore von Eltz; Susan Nash, Dorothy Peterson; Dr. Reed, Harry Davenport.

window! You come with me, Arnold!"

Tom took the improvised torch, and Barstow went out from the cabin with Arnold and round to the back of it.

"They're up to something!" said Alan, as the silence continued. "Things are too quiet!"

"Alan," said Gene, terribly afraid that the end of both of them was near, "there's something I've got to tell you. Dad was right about Ann—it's been you she's cared for all along! She admitted it to me this evening, after you'd left."

A ladder had been set against the back wall, under a little window in that end of the loft. Abruptly guns began to blaze out there, and Alan's attention, which had been distracted by Gene's confession, was diverted by the sudden din of firearms, so that he did not notice Tom creep into the room below, nor realise what was happening till the flaming roll of curtains cut through the air and fell upon the mattress.

He ran to stamp upon the flames, and he shouted to Gene to get a blanket from the other end of the loft. Gene made a dive for the indicated blanket, but stopped short half-way because Barstow was at the upper window, taking aim at Alan through one of its dirty panes.

In that moment he forgot to be a coward and sprang sideways into the line of fire as the trigger of a six-gun was pulled. He swayed on his feet, tottered on the very edge of the loft, and pitched backwards to the floor below while Alan's gun spat fire.

Alan had saved his last cartridge for Barstow, and he had not saved it in vain. The murderous blacksmith fell headlong from the top of the ladder to the ground with a bullet in his brain, and Jake and Arnold did not hesitate. They went tearing round to the front of the cabin, and they burst in upon Tom and the wounded Jordan.

"He's done for!" gasped Jake.

"Who is?" demanded Jordan.

"Barstow!" said Jake.

"We haven't got a chance!" shrieked the white-livered Arnold. "Let's get out of here!"

They stumbled forth from the cabin, in haste to escape. But the wagon from St. Johns was in the road, and the men who had travelled in it were approaching the door, headed by McCord.

"There's three of 'em!" McCord shouted. "Get 'em, boys! There's a fourth!"

Hank Berg was found under the trees at the back of the cabin, unconscious and bleeding badly from his wound, only a few yards away from the dead body of Barstow. But Alan had put out the fire by reversing the mattress and stamping on it, and had scrambled down to Gene with the useless gun in his hand.

He dropped on one knee and leaned over his dying chum, and it was thus that Ann found him when she ventured in at the doorway.

Gene opened his eyes as Alan raised his head, and in a voice so faint that Ann could barely hear the words he uttered he managed to say:

"I'll be—leaving—a clean record—like you—said. Permanently—disabled—in service."

With a smile on his lips he dropped back, in Alan's arms.

Eight days afterwards, Gene was buried with military honours at Fort Chapelle; and Alan was one of the bearers of his coffin, and Ann followed on the arm of the superintendent.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Charles Starrett.)

April 24th, 1937.



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 199, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Hollywood "Twins"

A birthday celebration pact has been made between Tyrone Power and Alice Faye to take effect on May 5th, when they celebrate their joint birthdays.

Although separated by several sound stages, on one of which Tyrone is working in "Café Metropole" and Alice in "Wake Up and Live" at Twentieth Century-Fox, they managed to get together and work out some of the details for their coming celebrations.

They were both born on exactly the same day and will be twenty-three years old on May 5th. The only difference in their age is a matter of six hours by which Tyrone beat Alice into this world.

They decided that no matter where they may be or what they are doing, they will drop everything on that day to stago a six-hour birthday party.

New Goldwyn Film

With his studio working at high pressure on "The Woman's Touch," starring Miriam Hopkins and Joel McCrea, in production, and "Hurricane," "The Adventures of Marco Polo," "Stella Dallas," and "The Goldwyn Follies," in preparation, Samuel Goldwyn has signed Malcolm Stuart Boylan and Harvey Gates to begin work immediately upon the script of "The Real Glory."

This is described as a dramatic story of the occupation of the Philippine Islands by the American troops. Either Gary Cooper or Joel McCrea will star in it.

Spencer Tracy's Menagerie

The circus business lost a natural-born animal trainer when Spencer Tracy decided to become an actor.

Tracy admits it himself.

As an instructor of chickens, rabbits, Shetland ponies, Irish setters and New England codfish he has few, if any, equals, he declares.

He acquired his power over codfish only recently. After working among thousands of pounds of them, both alive and frozen, for a new Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, he feels that he has more than a speaking acquaintance with them. For while ocean-location sequences went on for weeks and weeks, the codfish went on for ever.

Tracy fished for them with hand line

and trawl. He hauled them into dories, he tossed them up into bins on schooner decks. He fought and wrestled with them, he sat on them, he worked entirely surrounded by them. After he got back to the studio and was shown splitting them and cleaning them for close-up "shots," cats by the dozen would follow him into the driveway of his San Fernando Valley home at night.

Which added another species to his menagerie.

The chickens have been out on his ranch, of course, ever since he bought the place. The rabbits and the Shetland ponies belong to his youngsters. Then there are fourteen Irish setters.

Winfield Sheehan gave Spencer his original setter, several years ago. It seemed lonesome, so Tracy acquired a pal for it. Since then, the setter family has grown. The Tracys are hoping they won't have to move out of their house to make room for the dogs.

The horses—oh, yes, we nearly forgot the horses—occupy considerable space, too. Spencer has four polo ponies and his wife has two that are in active service. Then there are two more which are on the retired list. In addition to which there are two racing fillies and their mares. The fillies, two-year-olds, will get their baptism of fire this season. April Lass, the more promising of the two, will go to the post first, "to decide whether the horse eats, or we eat the horse," says Tracy.

If April Lass does pay her feed bill, then the chances are that somewhere on the Tracy ranch there'll have to be room for a genuine racing stable.

"I moved out into the Valley in the first place for peace and quiet," concluded Spencer, "but this animal thing just seems to be getting out of hand. I'll probably end up by starting a lion farm, too, and charging admission so as to pay expenses for the rest of the place."

Anna May Throws Her Weight About

When Anna May begins to throw her weight about, executives and technicians at work on the 20th Century-Fox's "Wee Willie Winkie," in which Shirley Temple stars, certainly take notice.

The reason? Anna May happens to be a two-ton elephant required for several

scenes in the Kipling story, and, when she travels, it is by lorry.

On her way to the location in Santa Susanna Mountains, she decided against the lorry and in favour of the road, so she threw her weight about to such an extent that she threatened to send lorry, driver and production officials hurtling to the bottom of a cañon.

Naturally, Anna May was permitted to get out and walk.

Getting to Sleep

It's not unusual to see Joan Crawford, Luise Rainer, Katharine Hepburn, or Claudette Colbert driving along the open road by the beaches at midnight, trying to get rid of sleeplessness.

Spencer Tracy, Wallace Beery, Lewis Stone and other ranch-Hollywoodites think nothing of having a horse saddled so they can take a moonlight ride in order to bring them closer to the arms of Morpheus. Robert Taylor used this method when he lived on the outskirts of Hollywood and owned a saddle horse. Now that he is in Beverly Hills he has become a "walker."

Others in Taylor's classification include Bing Crosby (no, he can't sing himself to sleep), Jean Harlow, Nelson Eddy, Robert Montgomery and Arline Judge.

Clark Gable seems to "kill two birds with one stone." He gets out of bed and does setting up exercises for a half hour. He has passed this idea on to Gary Grant, Caroline Lombard, Madge Evans and Jean Parker. They find it works like a charm.

Light fiction does the trick for Eleanor Powell, Frances Langford, Janet Gaynor and Lionel Barrymore. James Stewart, Sid Silvers and Buddy Ebsen like to work out puzzles.

The Marx Brothers seem to be the luckiest people in Hollywood. They're so tired of playing tricks on people that they can't help but fall asleep at night.

Una Merkel likes to have the back of her neck rubbed. Franchot Tone goes to another extreme and takes a dip in his swimming pool.

May Robson still stands by the advice that her mother passed on to her, and takes a glass of steaming hot milk.

And Nat Pendleton plays solitaire. He gets so lonely that he always falls asleep.

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The CASE of the BLACK CAT

A THRILLING MURDER
MYSTERY

Starring
RICARDO CORTEZ

(س)

When a charred body is found in the bed of old Peter Laxter, an eccentric millionaire, after a fire, several different people are suspected of murder, and Perry Mason, lawyer-detective, sets out to solve the mystery. A black cat provides him with a clue, after an old caretaker is done to death, but there is still another killing before the entirely unexpected truth is revealed. Starring Ricardo Cortez and June Travis



A Troublesome Patient

FROM a post under one of the trees in the drive a wooden arm projected, something like a gibbet; but it was a quaintly shaped lantern that hung on a chain from the arm, and an electric lamp burned in the lantern, although it was after two o'clock in the morning.

A black cat had been perched on top of the wooden arm for some little while, half-asleep, but as an open two-seater came sweeping along the drive the creature rose up and arched its back, mewed defiance at the approaching headlights, then took a flying leap to the ground and disappeared into the darkness.

The two-seater was brought to a standstill near the brick porch of a fine old creeper-covered mansion, and a good-looking young fellow got down from behind its wheel and ran round to open the other door for the golden-haired girl who had been sitting beside him.

He took her in his arms as she rose to descend, and he continued to hold her after he had set her down upon her feet.

"This is good-night, Doug," she said. "Let me go."

"Aw, just a moment!" he protested. "Have a heart!"

"No!" She shook her head. "Don't you realise it's after two?"

"So what?" he laughed.

"So good-night."

He held her close, and he was in the act of kissing her when the crunch of a footstep on the gravel caused him to glance over her shoulder, and he saw the glowing end of a cigarette and glimpsed a tall dark figure, half-

screened by a laurel bush, some yards away.

"Who's that watching us?" he asked abruptly.

The girl, who was Wilma Laxter, granddaughter of Peter Laxter, the millionaire owner of the house, looked swiftly round at the bush and released herself.

"That's my Cousin Frank," she said, and raised her voice indignantly. "You don't have to spy on us, Frank! Come out and be introduced."

The dark figure moved slowly towards them, and in the light of the lantern and the light that shone through the frosted glass panels of the front door of the house stood revealed as a bare-headed young man of twenty-five, or thereabouts, with wavy brown hair, a very pointed nose, and rather thick lips.

"Good-evening," said Wilma's companion stily, and Wilma herself said: "Frank, this is Douglas Keene."

"Someone else who wants to marry you for your money?" inquired the cousin sneeringly.

"That's not a bit funny!" she stormed at him.

"Oh, it really doesn't matter to me in the least, you know!" Frank Oafley drawled, flinging down the end of the cigarette he had been smoking and grinding it beneath his heel. "I get my share of the estate, anyway."

Douglas Keene was furious.

"Wilma always told me you were unpleasant," he said scathingly, "and I call that a magnificent understatement!"

Frank Oafley turned away without another word and strode off in the direction of a large garage at the side of the house.

"I'm sorry, Doug," murmured Wilma.

"Oh, that's all right, dear!" shrugged her lover. "I don't mind."

He climbed into the two-seater, and its self-starter buzzed.

"Good-night," he called out to her with a wave of his hand.

"Good-night," she responded, and she stood on the top step of the porch till the tail-light of the car had vanished under the trees that fringed the drive, then turned to open the front door with a key she took from her handbag.

In a room of considerable size on the first floor of the house, Peter Laxter was sitting up in a four poster bed with a dressing-gown over his pyjamas, going through some books and papers which strewed the coverlet. He was old, the skin of his face was like parchment, and he had the reputation of being eccentric.

His white hair looked as though no brush or comb had touched it for days, but he was cleanly shaven. A pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez drooped from the bridge of a nose that would not have disgraced an eagle, and as often as not he looked over the top of the lenses instead of through them.

Some months before he had slipped on the stairs and fallen down them into the hall, injuring his hip, and it was generally believed that he never would walk again. A nurse named Louise de Voc had been engaged to look after him—and suffered considerably from his temper. She was a beautiful woman, and quite a young one, but there was a hardness about her features which suggested that she was well able to take care of herself, and she bore her employer's insults with seeming equanimity.

At night-time she occupied an adjoining room, and she was in that room, dozing on a sofa, when Wilma entered the hall and quite unintentionally slammed the door.

Peter Laxter immediately dropped the paper he was holding and shouted angrily at the top of his voice:

"Who's that out there? Who's that? Come here! Who's that on the stairs?" There was no one on the stairs, and there was no reply at all. Peter Laxter banged a fist on the bed-post, and bellowed:

"Nurse! Nurse! Come here!" From the adjoining room Louise de Voe appeared.

"What is it now, Mr. Laxter?" she asked.

"There's somebody prowling in the hall," he snapped. "See who it is!"

"You're imagining things," she rebuked. "I never heard a sound."

"Of course not!" he retorted irascibly. "You were asleep! Huh! Fine nurse you are! I might he killed in here and you'd never hear it!"

"Now, Mr. Laxter," she said severely, "you mustn't excite yourself." "I'll excite myself as much as I want!" he roared. "Go out and see who it is—and bring 'em in here!"

She went out along the upper hall to the stairs, and she met Wilma at the top of them on her way to bed.

"Oh, hallo, nurse!" exclaimed Wilma. "Did grandfather hear me?"

"He certainly did," Louise de Voe replied, "and he wants to see you."

"How is he? Is he any worse?" "He's always worse!"

"Oh dear!" sighed Wilma. "Thank you."

She turned towards her grandfather's bed-room, and as she entered it she greeted the invalid cheerfully:

"Hallo, darling!"

"I thought so!" growled Peter Laxter, scowling at her as she walked round the bed. "I thought so!"

"I'm terribly sorry if I woke you up," she said penitently.

"I wasn't asleep!" he snorted. "Don't fool yourself! Huh! And stop

fiddling around! You can go to bed!"

Her green eyes twinkled at him and her lips parted in a smile. But at that moment Louise de Voe walked in from her own room.

"It's time for your medicine," she said.

"I don't want any!" he bellowed at her.

Wilma sat down on the edge of the bed; Louise de Voe began to gather up some of the papers with which the coverlet was littered.

"Leave those alone!" rapped the millionaire, and waved her away with his hand. "Go to bed!"

The nurse retreated to her own room, but before she had closed its door he said in a voice intended to reach her ears:

"I never did like that woman, anyway!"

The door was closed, and Wilma rose. "Darling, how can you sleep in such a messy-looking bed?" she exclaimed.

"And what, in the name of goodness, is all that junk?"

"Nothing!" snapped her grandfather. "Just going through some old papers."

"Where did they all come from?"

"They were in storage. I had Ashton bring them."

She drifted to the foot of the bed and looked down at a huge chest she had never seen there before.

"Oh, what's in here?" she asked, and stooped to raise the lid.

"Nothing. Old papers. Leave 'em alone!"

"All right, darling." She let go of the lid. "Don't snap at me."

"Where have you been?"

She sat down on the edge of the bed again and tilted her head at him.

"I was out with a young man."

"With who?"

"With whom, darling," she corrected. "Whom."

He whisked off his pince-nez and pointed them accusingly at her.

"You were out with Johnny Briker!"

"Wrong again," she laughed. "I was out with Douglas Keene."

"Huh!" "But, darling, he's so nice! We're - er—we're going to be—" "How do you know for certain that he isn't only interested in the money you'll get from me?" "You say that about all my friends," she complained.

A Call for Perry Mason

THE black cat had wandered round to the back of the house and was sitting on a fence near a cucumber-frame, making melancholy noises. Sam Laxter, another grandson of Peter Laxter and cousin to Wilma and to Frank Oaffley, was in a bedroom overlooking the kitchen garden, and the noise was an abomination in his ears.

He hated all cats, but in particular he hated Clinker—mainly because it belonged to Ashton, his grandfather's caretaker. He got out of bed, slipped on a dressing-gown and a pair of slippers, and went to a window, which he opened. With far more violence than accuracy he hurled a hairbrush at the disturber of the night.

The brush struck the cucumber-frame, smashing one of the panes of glass in it, and the cat leapt down from the fence and ran off.

Charles Ashton, a baldheaded old fellow and a cripple, had a room of his own on the ground floor. His bed was set against the wall, under a narrow window, and he rose up from it and opened the window.

"Here, Kitty, Kitty, Kitty!" he called out into the darkness. "Come here, Kitty—come on!"

Over the sill of the window the black cat scrambled into his arms, and he petted it.

"Nice Kitty," he said soothingly. "Nice Kitty! Nice Clinker."

The cat purred and rubbed its head against his face. But upstairs Sam Laxter went out from his room to the room of his grandfather in a fury. He was a very tall man, nearer forty than thirty, and not a pleasant one at any time. Like his cousin, Frank Oaffley, he

Louise de Voe began to gather up some of the papers with which the coverlet was littered. "Leave those alone!" the millionaire rapped at her.



had a long nose and thick lips, but his rather full face was a weaker one than his cousin's, and a little moustache accentuated the petulant droop of his mouth.

He hardly noticed Wilma as he burst into the room.

"Listen, grandfather!" he shouted. "Something's got to be done about that damned cat!"

"Doesn't make half as much noise as you do throwing things at it and smashing glass!" retorted Peter Laxter.

"I'll poison it, that's what I'll do!" raged Clinker's enemy. "The beastly animal keeps me awake every night!"

"Oh, have a heart, Sam!" said Wilma. "The cat's in love. Haven't you ever been in love?"

Sam Laxter scorned to answer that question, but his grandfather shook a fist at him.

"You'll not molest Clinker any more," he cried, "and you'll pay for the broken glass! Now, get out!"

"All right," Sam Laxter scowled, but backed out through the doorway. "If my sanity is less important to you than the caretaker's cat, I—I'll—"

He did not complete the threat, if that it was, but closed the door with a bang.

"Good-night, darling," said Wilma, kissing her grandfather on the cheek before he could prevent her. "Sleep tight."

"Huh!"

She went out from the room, and he immediately reached over to a telephone on a little table beside the bed and dialed a number.

In the bed-room of a luxurious flat, situated on the sixth floor of an apartment-house in Inglewood Avenue, Los Angeles, a bell disturbed the slumbers of Perry Mason, attorney-at-law, and his black head moved uneasily upon a pillow. The ringing persisted, and he became sufficiently awake to reach out to a white-enamelled telephone on a reading-table beside his bed.

"Hallo!" said the voice of Peter Laxter in his left ear. "I want some legal work done! Laxter speaking! Legal work!"

"Yes, Mr. Laxter," yawned Perry Mason.

"I want to change my will before morning!"

"But, my dear, sir," protested the lawyer, glancing at a clock across the room and yawning again, "it's past two-thirty."

"I know what time it is!" barked the millionaire. "If you charge extra for late calls, you can put it on the bill!"

"All right."

The white-enamelled telephone was restored to its accustomed place, and Perry Mason flung back the bed-clothes.

Peter Laxter, who was not in the least bit sleepy, shouted for Louise de Voe until she emerged from her room and eyed him with unconcealed annoyance.

"What is it this time, Mr. Laxter?" she asked.

"I've sent for my attorney," he replied curtly. "I want you to go down to the caretaker and tell him Perry Mason's on his way here. He'll have to open the door for him."

"Very well."

She began to gather up some books which were upon the bed, but he knocked them out of her hands.

"Stop fiddling around!" she snapped at her. "I like the bed this way!"

A little over half an hour later a dark green coupé drew up outside the front door of the house, and Perry Mason alighted from it.

"I won't be more than a few minutes July 3rd, 1937.

if I can help it," he said apologetically to the chauffeur.

"Very good, sir."

The man stifled a yawn, and Perry Mason was about to mount the steps to the porch when a sound of footsteps on the gravel caused him to stop and to turn.

It was Sam Laxter who walked up to him, still in pyjamas, dressing-gown, and slippers.

"Good-evening, Sam," said the attorney dryly. "Taking a little moonlight stroll?"

"What are you doing here at this time of the morning, Mr. Mason?" countered the growler.

"That's just what I want to know," was the smiling reply. "Your grandfather phoned me—said he wanted to see me about something urgent. Is he getting worse?"

"I hope so!" The grandson's voice was harsh and his manner uglyly emphatic. "I hate people when they're old! They're just a nuisance! If ever I reach his age—which I doubt—I hope someone will have the kindness to do away with me!"

Perry's brows went up, but he made no verbal response to this statement, and Laxter went off under the swinging lantern. Perry tucked under his arm a leather brief-case he was carrying, ascended to the front door, and rang the bell.

Ashton might very well have been waiting in the hall so swiftly did he answer the summons, and he stood leaning on his crutch and holding the cat after the visitor had entered and the door had been closed.

"Well, here we are, Ashton," said Perry, and he reached out a hand to stroke the cat. "Hallo, Clinker!"

The cat spat at him, and he withdrew his hand in haste.

"Friendly little beast, isn't he?" he said.

"I guess you'd be that way, too," returned the caretaker, "if people had been throwin' things at you."

"Oh, is that what it is?" laughed Perry. "And why am I here?"

"Don't ask me, Mr. Mason, I don't know. I'm only the caretaker around here. All I'm told is to get dressed and open the door to you. You're to go right upstairs to his room."

Perry ascended to Peter Laxter's room, looking as fresh as if he had enjoyed a full night's rest. He was a handsome man of rather a Latin type, clean-shaven, with a pair of very quick brown eyes which could express everything, or nothing, as their owner willed.

Soon after he had disappeared, Sam Laxter entered the hall from the grounds, and he was on his way up the stairs when he caught sight of the caretaker near the door that led to the servants' quarters.

"Ashton," he shouted over the banisters. "I warn you for the last time! If that cat bothers me again I'll kill it! I haven't had a wink of sleep!"

"That's too bad," returned the caretaker insolently.

Perry Mason, by this time, was occupying a chair beside his aged client's bed and making notes on a sheet of paper.

"Now, is that all clear?" asked the millionaire.

"Certainly," nodded Perry. "You want your will changed so that your granddaughter Wilma—"

"S-s-sh!" Peter Laxter raised a warning finger. "Find out if that woman's listening at the door," he whispered.

Perry tiptoed to the door of the nurse's room, and he opened it so suddenly that Louise de Voe fell to her

knees and very nearly dropped a small tray she was holding.

"Oh!" she cried out.

"I'm so sorry," murmured Perry.

"Did I hurt you?"

She shook her head and scrambled to her feet.

"I—I was just fixing Mr. Laxter's medicine," she stammered.

"And you got your own medicine!" Peter Laxter shouted from his bed. "I'm glad of it—you were eavesdropping!"

"I'll give it to him," suggested Perry.

"I won't take it!" bellowed his client. "Throw it out of the window!"

Perry smiled at the beautiful nurse, closed the door, and went back to his chair.

"And now, as you were saying," he resumed, "you want your will changed so that your granddaughter Wilma will be cut out entirely—"

"That's right," Peter Laxter interrupted. "And then she'll find out which one of those fellows hanging round her is really on the level!"

"And you want your estate to go in equal portions to your two grandsons, Sam Laxter and Frank Oafley?"

"That's right. And don't forget the eat!"

"Oh, yes, yes, the caretaker's cat!" Perry made a note. "Uhuh! Your heirs are to continue to employ Ashton, the caretaker, and he must always be permitted to have the company of his cat."

"That's right."

Perry put the sheet of paper in his brief-case and picked up his hat.

"And now," he said, "will you tell me just why you wanted all this attended to at this ungodly hour? Couldn't you have waited until the morning?"

"I may not be alive in the morning!"

"You look a pretty healthy invalid to me."

"I don't anticipate death as the result of ill-health," was the unexpected rejoinder, and then a dismal noise rang through the house.

"What in the name of heaven was that?" exclaimed Perry.

"That was only the caretaker's cat," replied the old man.

Peter Laxter's Will

AT the back of the hall there was a door which opened into the garage at the side of the house, and Ashton used that door after breakfast in the morning. He stepped down on to the concreted floor of the garage with his crutch, and passed round the cars in it to open the big double doors beyond which was the drive.

He had heaved himself up behind the wheel of a big open touring car when Frank Oafley sauntered in from the grounds, dressed in tweeds and carrying a golf-bag.

"Good-mornin', Mr. Oafley," greeted the caretaker. "Want anything done in town? I'm goin' in to do some errands for Mr. Laxter."

"No, nothing for me, I guess," replied the young man.

Louise de Voe appeared on the top of the steps from the hall, and he went over to her.

"Well, good-morning, nurse," he said. "How's the—er—patient?"

"He's well enough to be very fussy about his breakfast," she responded wryly.

Frank Oafley jerked his head ever so slightly.

"Oh—er—Ashton's going into town," he said. "Is there anything you want?"

She glanced across at the caretaker, and she said in quite a different manner:

"I have everything I need, thank you, sir."

"Then I'll be gettin' along," announced Ashton. "Would you be good enough to close the garage doors after me, sir?"

"Sure!" nodded Oafley, and off went the touring car out from the garage and along the drive. Oafley flung down the golf-bag and closed the double doors, then went back to the girl and took her in his arms.

"Darling!" he said, and kissed her. "Careful, dear," warned Louise de Voe. "Someone may see us."

"I don't care," he declared. "Let them! I'm sick and tired of acting like a stranger when people are around!"

She freed herself gently from his embrace.

"Listen," she said in a low voice. "I came in a minute or two ago and no one was here. The engine of the roadster was running. I looked around and saw Sam coming. Then I turned it off."

"Sam?" Frank Oafley bit his lip. "Did he see you?"

"No." She shook her head. "He was in too much of a temper."

"Why?"

"He saw Chiukey, and then he tripped over the hose."

Perry Mason's office was on the fourth floor of the Hamilton Building, in Hill Street, Los Angeles, and he was at his desk in his own private room very early that morning, despite the lateness of the hour at which he had returned to the comfort of his bed.

He had made out a draft will in accordance with the instructions he had received from Peter Laxter, and soon after nine o'clock the draft was handed over to a member of his staff who made an engrossment from it. Before ten o'clock the engrossment was on its way to Peter Laxter's home at San Morego, fifteen miles away towards the Pacific coast, and Perry Mason had settled down to the solving of a crossword puzzle for all the world as though he had nothing more important to do.

He had filled in only a few words, however, when Wilma Laxter opened the door from the outer office and looked round it.

"Hallo, Mr. Mason!" she called across to him.

Down went the newspaper which contained the crossword puzzle, and Perry smiled at her.

"Hallo, Wilma," he said. "Come right in."

The golden-haired girl stepped into the room, and with her was Douglas Keene.

"Won't you sit down?" said Perry. "No, we can only stay a minute," Wilma informed him.

Perry eyed her companion, an utter stranger to him.

"Well, I'm delighted to see you, young man," he said in his own smooth way, "but just who are you?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Wilma laughed. "I forgot. Mr. Mason, this is Douglas Keene. We're going to be married!"

Perry pursed his lips, gazing first at one and then at the other.

"In spite of the will?" he inquired. "Don't you know that Mr. Laxter has disinherited his granddaughter?"

"I know," nodded Douglas, "and I'm tickled to death. I don't like girls with money—they get too bossy!"

Wilma made a face at him. "Mr. Mason," she said, "why have I been cut out of my grandfather's will?"

"My dear," lied Perry, "I haven't the remotest idea."

"I can't understand it. Grandfather just called us all into the room and



"Who sent this?" demanded Perry, and Frank Oafley replied: "You know as much about it as I do!"

bluntly said I wouldn't get a nickel. He said Frank and Sam would have it all and gave no explanations."

"Humph! And what were your reactions?"

"She told him to sit on a tack," Douglas replied for her. "Then she packed her things and moved right out."

"Atta girl!" said Perry. "And what are your plans?"

"Do you like waffles?" asked Wilma. "I beg your pardon."

"I'm opening a waffle shop quite near here—in Ninth Street. You see, I've saved a little money out of my allowance. In that way I'll be independent. Do you think it's a good idea, Mr. Mason?"

"Well, on one condition," replied Perry gravely.

"What's that?"

"I can't approve of any waffle shop unless you serve plenty of melted butter."

"Melted butter it is," laughed Wilma, and Perry asked her when the shop was to be opened.

"Almost right away," she replied. "I'll be your first customer," he said. "That is—er—if you don't mind."

Wilma and her lover had departed, and Perry was frowning over the crossword puzzle again, when a telephone bell rang in the outer office, and Della Street, Perry's pretty and very efficient private secretary, dealt with the call.

Mrs. Pixley, the elderly and rather prim housekeeper at the Laxter residence, was on the other end of the line, standing beside the bed in which her employer was sitting bolt upright.

"Mr. Laxter wishes to speak to Mr. Perry Mason," she said. "It's very important."

"I'm sorry," responded Della Street, "but Mr. Mason is terribly busy. Oh, well, hold the line; I'll see if he can talk to you."

Several clients and would-be clients were waiting in the outer office to see the famous attorney, some of them being rather shady-looking characters. Wrongdoers, as well as perfectly innocent people, often sought his aid.

A fat man with a very coarse face intercepted Della on her way to Perry's room.

"Listen, sister," he said complainingly. "I've been waitin' an hour to see Perry Mason. How long is he gonna be?"

"I'm sorry," said Della, "but he's terribly busy."

She stepped into Perry's rather elaborately furnished room, and she closed the door carefully behind her.

"Mr. Mason?"

Perry looked up at her from the newspaper on his desk and stabbed the air between them with a pencil.

"Unless you can give me a seven-letter word beginning with 'X,' meaning a Mongolian lizard," he said. "I don't want to talk to you."

"But, Mr. Mason," she began, "this is very—"

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Della," he broke in. "I'll settle for a seven-letter word beginning with 'S,' meaning lawyer."

"Shyster," she promptly suggested.

"Getting a bit fresh, aren't you, Della?" he chided; but the word fitted and he wrote it in its appropriate squares. "What do you want?"

"Well, there's a Mrs. Pixley on the telephone. She says it's very important."

"Pixley?" Perry repeated the name with disfavour. "I don't know anyone by the name of Pixley, and if I did I wouldn't talk to 'em over the telephone."

"She says she's Mr. Peter Laxter's housekeeper."

"Oh, you've put the call through here?" Perry picked up his own tele-

phone. "Yes? This is Perry Mason speaking."

Peter Laxter, in his bed, reached out a hand.

"If that's Masen, gimme that 'phone," he said.

The instrument was surrendered to him.

"Hallo, Mason," he barked into it, "I've just signed my will, and I'm sending it over to you now by your driver. Put it in your safe-deposit box and keep it there until you hear from me."

"I'll take care of it," promised Perry, and he planked his right hand down upon the newspaper because Della Street was bending over it with his pencil. "You work out your own crossword puzzles, young woman! What's that? Oh, no, Mr. Laxter, I wasn't talking to you. I'm sorry. Yes, I'll take care of it."

Peter Laxter put the telephone he had been using back on to its table, and from the coverlet of the bed picked up a long envelope containing the will he had signed a few minutes before. Louise de Voc, who had been one of the witnesses, was listening behind the door of her room.

"Give that to Mr. Mason's driver," the millionaire said to his housekeeper. "Tell him to take it to Mr. Mason right away. Go on, don't keep the man waiting!"

Perry Dictates a Letter

THAT morning Wilma Laxter took over the tenancy of the premises in Ninth Street which she proposed to open as a waffle shop. The place had been unoccupied for some months, but previously had been run as a restaurant, so that only minor alterations were necessary to its reopening.

The fact that the restaurant had proved a failure in no way dismayed the two lovers, and they embarked with zest upon rearrangements and decorations. Workmen invaded the shop during the afternoon, and among ladders and trestles the two went into figures and dispatched orders.

There were rooms over the shop in which Wilma proposed to make a home, and furniture for these rooms arrived before nightfall. Douglas Keene and the girl he was going to marry were far more active than the workmen in the shop, and they toiled for hours after the workmen had gone. The upstairs rooms were quite habitable by the time Douglas went off to his own flat in Acacia Avenue, tired out but happy, and Wilma slept soundly in a brand new bed.

Douglas was back with her for breakfast before seven o'clock in the morning, and the workmen arrived to find them most enthusiastically in the way.

"When will you men be through here?" Wilma asked anxiously of a carpenter who was erecting a sign over the front door.

"Oh, we'll be out of here in a few hours now," was the smiling reply. "You can start selling waffles by to-night."

At eight o'clock the raucous voice of a newsboy in the street rang out over and above the noise of hammering and the buzz of saws.

"Extra! Extra!" Wilma and Douglas heard. "All about the big fire! Millionaire dies in flames! Read all about it! Extra!"

For some reason she could not very well have explained, Wilma was filled with sudden misgiving.

"Get a paper!" she commanded. "We haven't got time to read a paper," objected Douglas.

"Get a paper!" she insisted, and he went out to the newsboy and acquired a copy of the "Los Angeles Chronicle."

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He was back in the shop with it almost immediately, and she knew by the expression on his face that her worst fears were confirmed. The paper was spread out on a table in one of the numerous recesses provided for customers, and they read together the front-page story beneath flaming headlines:

MILLIONAIRE BURNS TO DEATH.

FIRE DAMAGES LAXTER ESTATE.

Peter Laxter, eccentric millionaire, perished last night in a fire which started in his bed-room and for a time threatened destruction of his beautiful home. Trapped in his room, the aged man, a cripple, could not be reached by relatives. The charred remains were removed to an undertaker's parlour and the day of the funeral will be announced later. Valiant efforts were made to rescue the wealthy man from his burning home, but flames covered all entrances. . . .

Wilma's waffle shop was opened for custom that evening, but Wilma served those who patronised it with a heavy heart. She never had been very fond of her grandfather, but the manner of his death appalled her, and she told Douglas bitterly that most of the people who came and ate waffles did so only to stare at her and ask a lot of questions. Perry Mason was not her first customer; he did not appear at all.

The newly opened shop was closed on the day of the funeral, but Wilma did not attend the obsequies, and it was not till an elaborate monument had been erected in the San Morego cemetery that she paid a visit to the grave.

One morning, about two months after the fire, Della Street walked into Perry Mason's room on the fourth floor of the Hamilton Building, in Hill Street, and said to him in her quiet way:

"Mr. Mason, would you like to see a man about a cat?"

Perry Mason looked up from a law book which had been engaging his very close attention. His eyes frowned, but his lips smiled.

"Ashton!" he exclaimed. "Sure—send him in!"

The lame old caretaker hobbled in on his crutch a few minutes later, and sat down in a chair Perry indicated, holding the crutch.

"Good-morning, Ashton," said Perry pleasantly. "How are you? Glad to see you. What can I do for you?"

"You can do plenty, I guess," was the growling response. "Sam Laxter wants to get rid of my cat and I want you to stop him!"

"You're still working as caretaker in the household, aren't you?" inquired Perry.

"You bet your sweet life I am! That was in the will! But Sam says that arrangement don't include my cat—says if I don't get rid of him he'll poison him!"

"Does he?" said Perry. "And what do you want me to do?"

"You can help me, if you want to, Mr. Mason, and I can pay! Oh, I know that you big attorneys don't work for little apples, but if you'll just save Clinker for me I'll make it worth your while."

From the breast-pocket of his old-fashioned coat, Ashton produced a well-worn wallet, and from the wallet he took out quite a thick wad of notes.

"You certainly have plenty of money, anyway," remarked Perry. "Did—or—Mr. Laxter leave that to you?"

"Not a dime!" declared the care-

taker. "Just said I was to be kept on in me job. But I worked for him for twenty years, fifty dollars a month and all found, and I've saved my money, I have!"

"Well, you needn't worry about a thing," Perry assured him. "I'll send a letter to Sam Laxter that will throw a good scare into him."

Ashton looked infinitely relieved.

"How much is that gonna cost me?" he asked.

"Oh, don't bother me about that!" Perry waved the matter aside with a paper-knife, and as he did so the door from the outer office swung back and a loose-lipped and youngish man with rather prominent blue eyes swept over to the desk, waving a newspaper.

"Look!" he cried excitedly. "It fits, chief! It fits!"

His name was Paul Drake, and he was a faithful if not exactly brilliant assistant, sometimes known as "Spudsy." The caretaker gaped at him and rose.

"I—I said, how much is it gonna cost?" he stammered.

"Don't you worry about a thing, Mr. Ashton," said Perry, silencing Paul Drake with a gesture. "Leave two dollars outside with the girl as a retainer and I'll save your cat for you."

"Two dollars, eh?" The caretaker looked astonished at being charged so little.

"Yes," said Perry. "Good-bye, Ashton."

The caretaker went out from the room, and Perry turned to his assistant.

"What's on your mind?" he asked. "Monandrous," was the reply.

"What?"

"Monandrous—a ten-letter word meaning a flower with a single stamen. It fits, chief! Look!"

Perry gave one glance at the crossword puzzle presented for his inspection.

"I solved that thing last Tuesday," he said.

Della Street re-entered the room.

"Somebody's following your caretaker," she remarked; and Perry went over to a window and looked down into the street. Ashton was driving off in the big touring car, and a dark saloon was close behind it.

"Huh!" Perry returned to his desk. "Della, did you notice the roll of bills Mr. Ashton was carrying? I wonder where he got it? Oh, Drake, did you make those inquiries for me?"

"You know me, chief," boomed the assistant, and took out a notebook.

"Here we are. I got the dope at the bank. Just about a month before the old man died he sold all his stocks and bonds and cashed in for about a million bucks in currency."

"That's a lot of money to have around," mused Perry. "I wonder what he did with it?"

"That's what the heirs would like to know," commented Drake.

"Perhaps it was burned in the fire," suggested Della.

"Perhaps," said Perry. "Take a letter, Della."

The letter he dictated was addressed to Sam Laxter, and it ran:

"Dear Sir,—My client, Mr. Charles Ashton, has consulted me regarding his cat Clinker, and has retained me as attorney to protect the cat's interests as set forth in the will of the late Peter Laxter.

"This is to advise you that I will rigorously prosecute anyone molesting the cat in any manner whatsoever.—Yours truly, PERRY MASON."

Something About Sam Laxter

TOWARDS noon on the following day, Sam Laxter was ushered into Perry Mason's room by Della Street, and with him was a fiery little attorney named Shuster, bald-headed except for two tufts of black hair which sprouted thickly over his ears; and Shuster's gold-rimmed pince-nez nearly fell from his prominent nose as he banged a fist upon the desk behind which Perry was seated.

"I know you, Perry Mason!" he shouted, flourishing the letter Sam Laxter had received. "You're trying to break Peter Laxter's will! What's the meaning of this letter to my client?"

"It's all very simple, Mr. Shuster," Mason blandly replied. "I want my client to keep his cat."

"Don't let him bluff you with the cat!" snorted the little lawyer. "Huh! He's trying to break that will!" He thrust the letter under Perry's nose. "You're hired to—"

"Calm yourself, Mr. Shuster," Perry interrupted sharply and rose to his feet. "I drew the will. I've no possible interest in trying to break it."

Sam Laxter found that statement hard to believe.

"Don't you represent my cousin Wilma, who was cut out of the will?" he demanded.

"I do not," Perry replied. "I represent the cat."

Sam Laxter scowled at his lawyer.

"Didn't you tell me that Wilma was behind all this?"

"Sure she is!" raged Shuster. "Don't let Mason fool you! You're a very clever man, Mr. Mason, but you're—"

"But you're much cleverer, counsellor," jecred Perry. "I know. Mr. Laxter, I'm sort of sorry you retained Mr. Shuster—Mr. Shuster, I mean. You see, he's apt to—"

"Now let's get down to brass tacks, Mr. Mason!" cried the angry little lawyer, with a thump of his fist. "Here's what my client is prepared to do. He'll guarantee not to molest the cat—on one condition."

"And what is that?" purred Perry.

"I want a waiver from Wilma Laxter, guaranteeing not to contest the will."

"I've already told you I don't represent Wilma."

"Very well, then. No waiver—no cat!"

Perry addressed himself to the client. "I advise you, Mr. Laxter," he said warningly, "to leave out the cat, or you'll be left out in the cold."

"There!" howled Shuster. "What did I tell you? What did I tell you? He's trying to break the will! He's representing Wilma! But you won't succeed, Mason! You're bluffing!"

Perry crossed the room and opened the door widely.

"Good-day, counsellor," he said. "Good-day, Mr. Laxter. I'm awfully busy. You'll forgive me, won't you?"

Lawyer and client went off together, the lawyer nearly bursting with rage, and Perry closed the door. Della, who had been present at the interview, burst out laughing.

"I think we should have charged a larger fee for representing that cat," she said.

"I think you're right," said Perry, "but don't be so mercenary. You just sit back and watch the fur fly!"

A telephone-bell rang, and he picked up the instrument.

"Yes?" he said. "Speaking. Oh, where are you, Drake? Fine; I'll be right over."

"Where are you off to now?" asked Della, as he replaced the telephone.

"Waffles and melted butter," he replied.

Paul Drake had rung up from Wilma's waffle shop, which was flourishing, and Perry joined him at a table in one of its recesses. Wilma and Douglas Keene were busy serving customers.

"So then," reported Drake, after they had both eaten waffles, "I got on the trail of De Voe, the nurse, see? And I found out where she's at. Here's the address here." He exhibited his notebook, from which it appeared that Louise de Voe was now living at flat 7B, Victory Arms Apartment-house, Olive Street.

"Uhuh!" nodded Perry.

"Then I nosed around to the bank," Drake went on, "and you were right, chief. Ashton's got a safety-deposit box there. He rented it about two months ago—just before the old man died. Couple o' days after he rents it he comes back and wants to rent the adjoining box for his half-brother—a guy named Watson Clammert."

"I didn't know he had one," commented Perry.

"Well, he has! He's at the General Hospital. They tell me, there, that Ashton paid all his half-brother's expenses."

"Drake," said Perry thoughtfully, "you know there are times when I almost think you're not as dumb as you look!"

That was praise from him, and Drake accepted it as such and was beaming with pleasure when Wilma walked up to the table.

"Now I can give you a little time, Mr. Mason," she said, seating herself beside the assistant. "But you'd better make it snappy because I may have to make more waffles any minute."

"And they're very tasty, too," said

Perry, who had become quite a regular patron of the place.

"Is there going to be some trouble about the will?" she inquired.

"It all depends on the cat."

"On Clinker?" she exclaimed.

"Yeah," said Drake. "Your cousin Sam wants to poison it. Nice boy!"

Douglas Keene had just served a customer in an adjoining recess and Wilma called him over.

"Glad to see you, Keene," said Perry.

"Oh, Doug," said Wilma, "this is Paul Drake, investigator for Mr. Mason. This is Douglas Keene, Mr. Drake."

"How are you?" murmured Douglas; and Drake gazed fixedly up at him, then turned a page of his notebook.

"Douglas Keene," he said, "I got the dope on him, too! Here it is, right here. Douglas Keene, unemployed architect. Worked in a filling station."

Perry grinned behind his hand; but Douglas Keene was annoyed, to put it mildly.

"Who is this man?" he burst out.

"What is all this?"

"It's all right, darling," Wilma assured him. "I told you—he's a sort of investigator."

"Well, I don't care to be investigated!"

He went off in quite a temper, and Wilma ran after him.

"Why do you always gum up the works?" rebuked Perry.

"But, chief," protested the blunderer, "you told me to get a line on—"

"Let's call on the nurse. Pay the bill."

From Wilma's waffle shop the two proceeded on foot to Olive Street, which was not very far away, and in the hallway of a tall apartment-house Perry scanned a list of tenants framed upon a wall.



Perry went down on one heel between the gun and the dead woman, trying to reconstruct in his mind what had happened in the room.

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"Louise de Voe," he said. "That name sounds more like a chorus-girl than a nurse!"

"What are you gonna tell her, chief?" asked Drake.

"She's the one who's going to tell—I hope!"

They ascended to the second floor, and in a wide and carpeted corridor Perry rang the bell of flat 7B. Louise de Voe, dressed rather elaborately in black, rose from a couch in a well-furnished sitting-room and went to the door.

"Who's that?" she called out, with one hand on the latch. "Is that you, Frank?"

No voice replied, and she opened the door.

"Good-afternoon, Miss de Voe," said Perry, raising his hat. "May we come in a moment?"

He brushed past her into the sitting-room, and Paul Drake followed.

"What do you want, Mr. Mason?" she asked, staring at him.

"Just a little information," Perry closed the door. "This is my assistant, Paul Drake. Expecting someone, aren't you?"

"No." There was a note of defiance in her voice.

"Then why did you say 'Is that you, Frank?' when I rang?" He perched on the edge of a gate-leg table, the leaves of which were down, and eyed her shrewdly. "That would be Frank Oafley, wouldn't it?"

"Suppose you tell me what you want to know, Mr. Mason," she said icily. "I have an engagement."

Paul Drake helped himself to a chocolate from an open box on the couch, and she glared at him.

"Oh, make yourself at home, Mr. Whatever-your-name-is!"

Drake grinned and sprawled on the couch. Perry said:

"I'd like to know how that fire started. Have you any idea?"

"No," she snapped. "Have you?"

"Come on, De Voe," bullied Drake, "quit the stallin'! You know plenty, and if you're a smart dame—"

"Now, take it easy, Spudsy, take it easy!" Perry intervened. "I understand from Sam Laxter—"

"Has Sam been saying things against me?" cried the nurse angrily. "If he has he's a liar! Do you want to know something about Sam Laxter?"

"Well, I wouldn't mind a little information."

She knelt on a chair and leaned over the back of it as though it were a sort of rampart.

"If you want to know what I think," she said, "he knows a great deal more about the fire than he'll admit! I think he had something to do with it."

"Why?" challenged Perry.

"There was something very funny going on in the garage. I went down to get something for my patient. The garage was empty, but the engine of Sam's roadster was running."

"When was this?" asked Perry.

"The day before the fire. After a while Sam came in and drove away. But a rubber tube had been connected to his exhaust that led directly to the furnace."

"That's all very interesting," remarked Perry. "Have you told anyone about this?"

"No, I—"

"You may as well tell the truth, Miss de Voe."

"Well, yes," she admitted, "I—I did tell Frank."

"And what did he say?"

"He told me to keep quiet about it—said I'd get into trouble, telling things like that. But if Sam Laxter wants to send you and this detective of

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yours to snoop around, implying I had anything to do with it—"

"I'm not representing Sam," Perry broke in on her flow of words. "I'm the attorney for the cat, Clinker. Sam wanted to poison it. Do you know why?"

"Sam doesn't like cats or old men," she replied. "Says they should all be put out of their misery."

"I see."

She stood up, frowning at him. "Anything else you want to know, Mr. Mason?"

"Not just now, Miss de Voe," he decided. "You've been a great help. Thanks very much." He moved towards the door. "Come on, Drake!"

The District Attorney Acts

THE District Attorney's office was situated on the first floor of the Municipal Building, in Hill Street, and late in the afternoon of that day Perry invaded it. He did not like Claude Burger, and Claude Burger did not like him, but District Attorneys have their uses, and Perry liked to keep inside the law—if not too far inside it.

Burger was a broad-shouldered man of almost military appearance, and he had a tendency to bark. His face was full, his ears were large, and there were bags of flesh under his eyes. A ragged little moustache added to the general fierceness of his expression.

He was most unwilling to do what Perry wanted, but Perry had a way of surmounting opposition.

"The insurance company found everything in order, and they've paid up," blustered the District Attorney. "Now why should—"

"Insurance companies, my dear Mr. Burger," interrupted Perry in the smoothest of voices, "have one thing in common with District Attorneys—they don't know everything."

Burger bristled, but at that moment a telephone on his desk claimed his attention.

"Hallo!" he snapped. "Oh, Dr. Jacobs? Yes, have him come right in."

A police-sergeant ushered into the room an elderly man with a stoop who looked in no way like a doctor, but was, in fact, a distinguished pathologist and the local coroner.

"Evening, Mr. Burger," he greeted briskly. "Sorry I'm late. I came over as quick as I could. Oh, hallo, Perry! Well, what's it all about?"

"Oh, sit down, doctor," said Burger pointing to a chair. "Mason wants to ask you something about gasoline vapours."

Dr. Jacobs sat, and he looked inquiringly at Perry, who said:

"This is the problem, doctor. A man has been burned to death by a fire, but I have reason to believe that he was murdered by exhaust fumes before the fire started. Could an autopsy determine that?"

Jacobs compressed a pair of very thin lips.

"Yes," he stated, "provided the remains were available."

Perry gazed triumphantly across at Burger.

"How about it, Mr. District Attorney?" he asked silkily. "Do I get the order to exhume the body?"

Burger put his arms on the desk at which he was sitting and leaned forward to address the coroner.

"But wouldn't there be a trace of the poisoning element in any event if the man perished in a fire?" he barked.

"There certainly would," agreed Jacobs.

"Then what do we gain?"

"But that's not the whole story," Perry intervened. "What I want to know, doctor, is this: Could you determine by examination if the man was dead before the fire was started?"

"Yes," said the coroner definitely.

"Would the blisters produced by the fire on the body of a dead man differ from those on the body of a man burned to death?"

"Show me the blisters," was the reply, "and I'll tell you."

"Okay," growled the defeated District Attorney. "You win! The body of Peter Laxter shall be exhumed."

When Perry got back to his own office he put through a call to the Laxter residence, and while he was doing so Mrs. Pixley, the housekeeper, entered the library of that residence with a glass of milk on a tray.

She looked up in surprise at Sam Laxter, who was standing on the top of a step-ladder by some of the bookshelves with an open volume in his hands.

"Here's the milk you ordered," she said.

"All right," Sam Laxter curtly responded. "Put it down somewhere. I'm busy."

"Looking for something?" she inquired, placing the glass on a long oak table.

"I'll ring if I need you again!" he snapped.

"If you're looking for the Koltzdorf diamonds, you're wasting your time," she informed him. "Your cousin Frank's been over this room a dozen times with a fine-tooth comb."

The telephone-bell rang, and she went to the main instrument, which was on the long table.

"Mr. Samuel Laxter's residence," she said.

Perry Mason was on the other end of the line, and he asked to be put through to the caretaker.

"Just a moment." She crossed the room and moved a switch to put the call through to the caretaker's room.

"Someone for Ashton," she explained.

"All right," said Sam Laxter. "You may go."

She went out with the tray, and he immediately descended the ladder and picked up the main telephone so that he could overhear the conversation which followed.

It was a very brief one.

"This is Perry Mason," said Perry. "Is your cat still alive?"

"Yes, Mr. Mason," Ashton replied. "No one ain't poisoned him yet. He's right here with me now."

"You needn't worry any more, Ashton. Sam Laxter won't have time to molest your cat from now on. No, he'll be too busy answering the District Attorney's questions!"

Sam Laxter replaced the instrument he had used, but the caretaker cried out in alarm.

"Hold on! Wait a minute, Mr. Mason. I don't want this thing to go too far!"

He might as well have saved his breath, for the line was dead.

In the region of half-past eleven o'clock that night, a long dark blue saloon swept up the drive past the lantern that hung on a chain from the arm of a post and came to a standstill near the porch of the house. Perry Mason was the first to descend from it, the District Attorney followed, and Paul Drake joined them on the gravel.

"Who lives here now?" inquired the District Attorney.

"Sam Laxter, Frank Oafley, and three servants," Perry replied, and led the way towards the double-doors of the garage. "Hurry up with those keys, Spudsy!"

"I've got 'em!" Paul Drake held up a bunch of keys.

"Don't shout!" hissed Perry. "Open up!"

The doors were opened and the three stepped into the pitch darkness of the garage.

"Let me have the flashlight," said Perry, and a moment later the beam of an electric torch shone upon several cars in turn and shifted to a wall. "Put that light on over there."

The garage became illuminated, and Paul Drake pointed to one of the cars. "There it is!" he exclaimed. "She said it was a roadster, chief!"

They went over to the two-seater.

"Look, something's been clamped down on this," said Perry, stooping over the end of the exhaust pipe.

The District Attorney looked and nodded; Drake went to the dickey seat and raised its lid.

"Here!" he called excitedly; and they all three looked down at a large coil of rubber tubing.

"Well, Burger," said Perry, "do you still maintain that I've brought you on a wild-goose chase?"

"We'll go and question him right away," decided the District Attorney.

The light was switched off, and they went out from the garage.

"Who's there?" challenged a voice. "Who's that by the garage?"

The voice came from the direction of the porch, and Perry recognised it.

"Hallo, Mr. Oafley," he said, and walked straight towards that startled young man who was standing at the foot of the steps. "A delightful evening, isn't it?"

"Yes," Oafley managed to say; and then Paul Drake arrived with the District Attorney, and Mason introduced them.

"Hope we haven't alarmed you," he said.

"No, I—I just couldn't figure who it was prowling around."

In the light that shone through the glass panels of the front door the District Attorney noticed that there was blood on Oafley's hands.

"You seem to have scratched your hands rather badly," he said sharply.

"Yes—er—this confounded rosebush was right in my way."

The three men looked round at the rosebush, and they saw that the ground beneath it had been disturbed.

"Rather an odd time to be gardening," remarked Perry, "or were you just digging?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, Mr. Mason," Oafley replied, "I was digging for treasure."

"Treasure? Ah, the Koltsdorf diamonds, no doubt!"

"Yes."

"What?" barked the District Attorney.

"Old man Laxter fell for some diamonds some years ago," Perry explained, "and since the fire there hasn't been a sign of them."

"What made you think they were out here?" rapped the District Attorney.

"Well—er—er—a telegram I received about—about half an hour ago," stammered Oafley, and produced a folded sheet of paper from his coat-pocket. "Here it is."

Perry took the telegram and opened it out. It was addressed to Frank Oafley; it had been dispatched from an office in San Morego, and it ran:

"You will find the Koltsdorf diamonds buried near the rambler rosebush at the south-east corner of the house not more than six inches down.—A FRIEND."

The District Attorney read the message over Perry's shoulder.

"Who sent this?" demanded Perry.

"You know as much about it as I do," was the reply.

"Well, did you find the diamonds?" asked the District Attorney.

"No, but we certainly looked every place else for them."

"I'd like to ask you and your cousin Sam Laxter a few questions."

"Well, all right," said Oafley, none

too readily. "Er—let's go into the house."

The Dead Caretaker

IN the library, Braudon, the Laxters' butler, was on the step-ladder at the bookshelves when Frank Oafley conducted the unwelcome visitors into that spacious room. He looked a typical butler, but butlers do not usually perch on step-ladders late at night.

"What are you doing there, Braudon?" rapped Oafley.

"Restoring some of the books to the shelves, sir," was the reply.

"Has Mr. Laxter come in yet?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Well, let me know when he does. In the meantime bring us some whisky-and-soda, will you?"

The butler descended the ladder, put it away in a corner, and went out from the room.

"You'd better put some iodine on those scratches," Perry suggested, but Frank Oafley looked at his hands and laughed.

"These?" he said. "Oh, they're nothing. We gardeners get used to that sort of thing."

The District Attorney walked over to him.

"Mr. Oafley," he said, "did Miss de Voe inform you of her suspicions about the exhaust fumes?"

"Exhaust fumes?" For a moment the young man seemed agast. "Miss de Voe?"

"I wouldn't be too innocent if I were you, Mr. Oafley," rasped the District Attorney. "Better tell me all you know!"

Through the open doorway of the library came the sound of the front door being opened, and then the voice of the butler raised in alarm.

"Mr. Laxter! Why, what's happened, sir?"

"It's all right," responded Sam Laxter's voice. "Don't be excited. I just had a smash-up—nothing serious."

"The District Attorney and Perry Mason are here to see you, sir."

"What for?"



Perry began a story which was to grip the attention and the imagination of all who listened to it.

Perry Mason strode out into the hall with the District Attorney close behind him. Sam Laxter's face was cut and bruised, and his hands were bleeding.

"We're trying to determine, Mr. Laxter," said Perry sternly, "if you know who murdered your grandfather. I suggest, Mr. Burger, that you quiz Mr. Laxter at once."

He beckoned to Drake, who was hovering in the background, and as Sam Laxter went into the library with the District Attorney he said in a low voice:

"Call Wilma Laxter on the 'phone. I want to speak to her."

Drake went to a telephone on a side table under the stairs, and then the door-bell rang and the butler hurried out from the dining-room with a tray in his hands.

"Never mind," Perry said to him. "I'll answer it. You'd better take those drinks into the library—Mr. Laxter looks as though he needs one."

He went to the front door and opened it. Bertrand Shuster was standing on the porch, about to ring again, and he scowled up at his tall fellow attorney.

"What are you doing here?" he blared.

"Roller-skating," replied Perry flippanantly. "Come in!"

The irascible little man stepped into the hall and the door was closed.

"Where's Sam?" he demanded fiercely. "Where's my client? What's going on here?"

"Step right this way, counsellor," said Perry, with a wave of his hand and a mocking bow. "Calm yourself!"

Shuster strode into the library, glared at the District Attorney, and thrust himself between his client and that official.

"I'll do the talking!" he shouted. "They've exhumed the body. They're trying to frame you, Sam. I'll take care of everything!"

He shook a puny fist in the District Attorney's face.

"What have you been trying to do with my client?" he raged—and became aware of his client's disordered appearance. "What's happened to you? Has he been trying to give you the third degree? This is not the Middle Ages, you know. You can't torture your witnesses!"

"Calm yourself, Mr. Shuster!" barked the District Attorney. But the little man was not to be calmed.

"I saw everything!" he stormed. "I was passing the cemetery—I hid behind a tombstone—I saw them exhume the body!"

Paul Drake slipped up to Perry and whispered, and Perry went out to the telephone in the hall.

"Hallo, Wilma!" he said. "This is Perry Mason speaking."

"Oh, I'm so glad you've rung up!" Wilma's voice agitatedly responded. "I've been trying to reach you everywhere. I can't talk very well here, but something terrible has happened. Can you please come over?"

"Why, yes," Perry assured her. "Gladly! I'll be with you as soon as ever I can."

Shuster was holding forth when he returned to the library.

"Why don't you question Mr. Mason's client, the caretaker? Why bother Mr. Laxter? Why don't you

"Oh, shut up!" roared the exasperated District Attorney, and he turned to Perry. "What's all this about Koltzsdorf diamonds and cats, and a missing million dollars?"

"It is a bit confusing, isn't it?" said Perry. "Why don't you send for Ashton?"

"Mr. Laxter's been ringing for him," July 3rd, 1927.

the District Attorney replied, "but he doesn't answer."

"He's usually somewhere at the back of the house. Let's go and find him. Come on, Drake!"

Brandon, the butler, led the way to the back of the hall and down several stairs to the servants' quarters.

"That's the door, right there," he said, pointing.

Perry knocked on the door, but there was no answer, and he and the District Attorney entered the very plainly furnished room and looked round it.

It appeared to be untenanted, but a soft-felt hat projected from the edge of the coverlet on the bed under the narrow window, and Perry swept over to the bed and raised the coverlet.

"Ashton!" he said, staring blankly at the District Attorney after he had looked down at a distorted face. "Dead!"

There were muddy paw-marks on the dead caretaker's face and upon the coverlet. The District Attorney saw them.

"Say, look at those tracks!" he exclaimed. "Right over the poor man's face!"

Perry lowered the coverlet and rubbed his chin reflectively.

"That's very interesting," he said. "Do you see any cats around here?"

"Probably jumped out again," suggested Burger, jerking a thumb at the narrow window. "Hi, where are you off to now?"

"You'll have plenty to do till I come back," said Perry, at the door. "I've a sudden desire to consume waffles."

"Waffles?" The District Attorney looked bewildered.

"Yes, waffles," said Drake from the passage outside the door, and he followed his employer up into the hall and out from the house to the dark blue saloon in the drive.

There was comparatively little traffic on the roads at that time of night, and Wilma's shop was reached in considerably less than half an hour. Drake was left at the wheel of the car, and Perry rang the bell at the side door of the shop. Wilma opened it almost immediately and conducted him to a pleasant little sitting-room upstairs.

"Sorry I'm late," he said on the way. "Oh, I'm so glad you're here!" she declared fervently.

"You said you were in trouble. What is it?"

The door of the sitting-room was opened, and a black cat on the hearth-rug sprang up, spat, and scuttled away under a chair.

"Great Caesar's ghost!" exclaimed Perry. "What was that?"

"That's Clinker," said Wilma.

"Clinker? Well, how on earth did he get here?"

"Douglas brought him." She sat down in a chair, and he saw that she had been crying.

"Tell me what's been happening," he said, perching on the edge of a table opposite her.

"Well, Ashton rang me up this afternoon on the 'phone. He was worried about the cat, and something you'd said about the District Attorney, and he asked me if I'd take care of Clinker for a few days. I said all right."

"How did Douglas get mixed up in it?"

"Well, he was here at the time," she explained, "so I gave him my key to the house—I still had one, although I'm not living there—and I asked him to go over and pick up the cat."

"What time was this?"

"Doug left about ten, and not very long afterwards he 'phoned me from the house that Ashton wasn't there. As

a matter of fact, he said that everyone was out, and he asked me what to do. I told him to wait a while, and then, if Ashton didn't come back, he'd better bring the cat here, anyway. About a quarter-past eleven he brought the cat here."

"And then where did he go?" asked Perry.

"I don't know," she faltered. "He said good-bye and left."

"Are you sure he phoned you from the Laxter home?"

"Yes. He said he was using the extension in Ashton's bed-room."

"I've just come from that bed-room," said Perry gravely. "Ashton has been murdered."

"Murdered?" She rose from her chair in horror. "Oh, Mr. Mason, you don't think Doug could have done it? You surely don't think—"

"It isn't what I think, my dear," Perry said gently, "but what are the police going to think? Where is Douglas now?"

"I—I don't know," she sobbed.

"That's why I asked you to come here. You—you see, he rang me up again a little later. He seemed terribly excited, and—and sort of incoherent. He said something about a murder, and told me not to worry and to trust him."

She dropped back into the chair, weeping bitterly, and Perry was considerably moved by her distress.

"Now, now, now, please stop crying," he said. "You don't think he did it, do you?"

"No," she gulped.

"Neither do I. Now, listen. If Clinker is found here you're a cinch to be dragged into this."

There was a basket in a corner of the room, and it was open. Obviously the cat had been brought to the girl in the basket, and he prevailed upon her to coax the creature into her arms and put it back into the basket.

"Come on, cat," he said, when the lid had been fastened, "you're going for a ride! Now, Wilma, you answer no questions and you tell no one that I have been here. Do you understand?"

She nodded miserably, and he picked up the basket by its handle.

"Oh, by the way, did you mention the Koltzsdorf diamonds to Douglas?" he questioned.

"Yes," she admitted. "We talked about them. He had a theory that Ashton probably had them—I mean I—I thought Ashton had them, but he thought Miss de Voe might know more than she told."

"Miss de Voe?"

"Y-yes."

The black cat began to struggle inside the basket, making frantic noises.

"Maybe you're right, Clinker," said Mason. "Well, don't worry about a thing, Wilma. You'll hear from me."

He went off with the cat, and Paul Drake drove him to an apartment-house in Court Street, where Della Street lived in a cosy little flat, and was fast asleep in bed.

She was awakened by the ringing of the door-bell, and with mules on her bare feet and a silken wrap over her pyjamas she admitted her employer to a small but elegant sitting-room.

"Good-evening, Della!" he said.

"Good-evening my eye!" she retorted, staring at the basket from which prolonged meows issued. "Do you know it's nearly two o'clock in the morning? What on earth have you got there?"

"Love brings a gift," said he, and with a flourish he thrust the basket into her arms.

"Have you gone mad?" she cried

indignantly. "Did you wake me up just to bring me a cat?"

"This is Clunker," he informed her. "Keep the beast here and see that he doesn't get out."

"But why—what can I—"

"I'll tell you all about it at the office in the morning. I have many things to do, my pet. Nighty-night! Take care of Clunker!"

He went out from the flat, and he closed the door behind him.

Bloodstains!

FROM the apartment-house in Court Street Perry was conveyed swiftly in the dark blue saloon to the Victory Arms apartment-house in Olive Street. Paul Drake was left once more to doze over the wheel of the car, and Perry ascended the stairs to the second floor.

He rang the bell of Louise de Voe's flat again and again without obtaining any sort of response from within, and then he tried the handle of the door. To his surprise the door was unlocked and opened easily.

He stepped into the sitting-room where he and Drake had interviewed the nurse, and his eyes widened at what he saw. A broken crutch was lying on the pale blue carpet near the gate-leg table, plainly visible in the light of a tall standard lamp, and not far from the broken crutch Louise de Voe was lying upon her face, an overturned chair beside her feet.

Between the jet-black head of the nurse and a leg of the couch a six-chambered revolver attracted Perry's attention. He went down on one heel between the gun and the dead woman, trying to reconstruct in his mind what had happened in the room.

The presence of the broken crutch baffled him, however, and after a while he got to his feet and went to a little bureau upon which a telephone was standing. The top drawer of the bureau was open, and he looked down into it; then he picked up the telephone, dialed the operator at the exchange, and asked to be put through to Police Headquarters, Homicide Bureau.

"A woman's been murdered in Apartment 7B, Victory Arms apartment-house," he informed a startled sergeant, and with that he put down the instrument and went out from the flat.

From a flat farther along the corridor sounds of merriment were issuing, and beyond the front door of that flat a wooden seat was set against the wall of the corridor, under a window. Perry tiptoed to the seat, took off his hat and coat, and flung them on the seat, ruffled his hair, and went and rang the door-bell of the flat.

The door was opened by a very fat man in his shirt-sleeves, and Perry had a perfectly good view of what appeared to be a poker-party, seated round a table and making a lot of noise.

"Say, fellows," he said with a prodigious yawn, "how about piping down so a guy can get some sleep?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, buddy!" apologised the fat man. "I thought we were bein' pretty quiet. You must have heard the celebration next door!"

"Celebration?" yawned Perry.

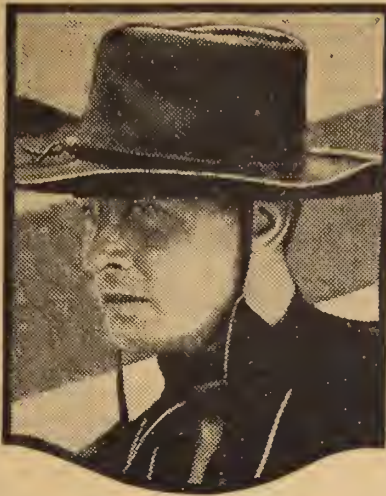
"Yeah. Dame next door got married. A couple o' the boys here witnessed the ceremony."

"What did you do," asked Perry, "rope the happy bridegroom into a poker game on his wedding night?"

The men inside the room laughed, and Perry laughed with them.

"Gosh, no!" chuckled the man at the door. "We don't even know who he was."

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"Guess they've calmed down now," remarked one of the players. "But there's been racket enough next door."

"Well, listen, fellows," said Perry wheedlingly, "keep the party quiet so I can get some sleep."

"Okay, pal," nodded the fat man. "Sorry we disturbed you."

Perry turned away and the door was closed. He smoothed his hair with his hand, put on his coat and hat, and sped to the stairs.

Ten minutes later the dark blue saloon had entered Acacia Avenue, a thoroughfare completely devoid of trees and lined with rather shabby buildings possessing basements and areas. Paul Drake was no longer sleepy; Perry Mason's sensational story had roused him very completely.

"I found the janitor," Perry said, "and he gave me the low-down. Sam Laxter and Frank Oafley were there—he knows them, and he saw them go into her apartment."

"So one of 'em killed her, eh?" suggested Drake.

"Take it easy!" rebuked Perry.

"What about the caretaker's crutch? Douglas Keene was there, too."

Drake braked abruptly.

"One-seventeen!" he exclaimed.

"That's the number, chief!"

Perry got out from the car, crossed the pavement, mounted worn steps, entered a bare hallway, and rang a bell beside a door which bore the word "Manager" upon its upper panel.

After some little period of waiting, a grey-haired man appeared at the door, scantily clad and not by any means in the best of tempers.

"What do you want?" he demanded surlily.

"Does Douglas Keene live here?" asked Perry.

"Yes, but this ain't no time for visitin'!"

The door would have been slammed in Perry's face, but he thrust an arm against it.

"Now, just a minute!" he said imperiously. "I'm Perry Mason, insurance attorney. It's very important that I see him."

"First door at the end of the hall," said the manager.

"Thank you."

The door was slammed, and Paul Drake stood grinning beside his employer.

"He won't worry us any more!" he rejoiced. "Question is, can we get in?"

They went together along the hallway, past the stairs, and Perry had no difficulty whatever in opening the first door they came upon there. Lights were switched on, and they crossed a tiny living-room which seemed to be in perfect order and entered a bed-room.

There Perry proceeded to ransack the drawers of a dressing-table, but his companion drifted over to a wash-basin provided with running water.

"Look, chief!" he cried excitedly. "Bloodstains!"

"Don't touch 'em!"

Perry joined his assistant beside the basin and stared at some red stains on one of the two taps above it, then made straight for a wardrobe cupboard near the bed. On a suit hanging from a rail inside the cupboard bloodstains were almost too plentiful. He backed out from the cupboard with a coat to examine the garment in a better light.

"Huh!" he grunted.

Drake jerked a thumb at a framed photograph of Wilma, standing on the dressing-table.

"Poor kid!" he exclaimed. "She thought he was such a nice guy, too!"

Perry dropped the coat on a chair.

"Drake," he said, "there's a phone out in the hall. Call Wilma, and see if she's heard from Keene since I left there."

"Right," said Drake.

"And don't tell her about these stains!"

"Okay, chief."

Drake went out to find the telephone, and Perry was looking about the room when a voice in the doorway made him jump.

"Can I help you, mister?"

It was the manager, now invested in a dark brown dressing-gown and wearing slippers.

"Yes," said Perry. "What time did Keene leave?"

"I don't know." The manager shook his grey head. "What's happened?"

Perry did not answer that question.

"Did he have any visitors to-day?" he asked.

"Yes, there was a man called here late this evening."

"What did he look like?"

"Gosh, mister, I don't know!" exploded the manager. "I've got twenty rooms here, with people comin' all the time!"

"Anybody else call?"

"Well—er——"

"Come on now! Think hard—think hard!"

The manner Perry so often used in court when cross-examining witnesses had its effect.

"Well—er—Miss de Voe called," the manager remembered.

"De Voe?"

Perry was astonished.

"Yes, but that was earlier. Left word for Keene to call her. When he got the message he left at once."

"Did you see Keene come back?"

"No, I was asleep."

"I see. Well, if you hear from Keene tell him to 'phone me immediately."

"Yes, sir." The manager took the card Perry proffered and followed him out from the rooms. "Is Mr. Keene in a jam of some sort?" he asked.

"I'll say he is!" Perry replied.

"You'll probably have the police here in five minutes. But don't tell 'em I was here. Understand?"

Paul Drake was in the act of restoring a receiver to the prongs of a telephone on the wall when they reached the front of the hallway, but it was not till he and Perry were back in the car that anything was said.

"Well, what did you find out?"

Perry asked then.

"He was there, chief, but he only called in to say good-bye. The girl said he was very excited, but wouldn't give any explanation. She tried to hold him there, but he ducked."

A siren shrieked in the distance.

"Not bad for Burger!" commented Perry. "Here come the police now! We'd better find Keene before he does! Step on it, Drake!"

Shuster Loses a Client

IN the morning papers there were front-page headlines variously describing what most of them called a "Sensation in the Laxter Case," and there was a statement to the effect that District Attorney Burger had issued a warrant for the arrest of Douglas Keene, charging him with the murder of Charles Ashton and Louise de Voe.

Perry Mason's name was mentioned in the "Dispatch" as attorney to the dead caretaker's cat, and a parson was waiting to see Perry when Paul Drake arrived at the office. He gave his name as the Reverend Thomas Stillwell, and Drake conducted him into Perry's private room.

There he waited for more than half an hour while Drake struggled with a crossword puzzle and answered the telephone once or twice. Finally, the parson looked at his watch and rose.

"When will Mr. Mason be back?" he asked. "I have some matters to—"

"He's on his way now," Drake interrupted. "That was him on the 'phone a coupla minutes ago. He told me to hold you here if I had to knock you stiff!"

"I'll wait," said the parson.

"You're wise," said Drake.

And then footsteps sounded in the corridor, and Perry walked in with Della Street.

"What a break, chief!" cried Drake. "Here's the guy that married De Voe to Frank Oafley last night!"

"No!" exclaimed Perry, who had not telephoned at all.

"Yes, Mr. Mason," confirmed the Rev. Thomas Stillwell, bowing, "I performed the ceremony, and when I read in the papers this morning of this terrible tragedy to the bride, I thought perhaps I could give some information."

"You bet your sweet life you can!" said Perry. "Take this down, Della!"

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Della seated herself at the desk with pencil and notebook; Perry faced the elderly parson.

"At what time were you at the apartment-house?" he questioned.

"About ten o'clock," was the reply.

"Were there any witnesses to the ceremony?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Mason—two gentlemen from the next-door flat. They were playing poker. Their names—"

"Never mind their names! What time did you leave the apartment-house?"

"I can tell you that with great accuracy. It was exactly ten-seventeen when I stepped into my car. You see, I had a little accident—er—a crumpled fender—which I reported to my insurance company."

"Was this in front of the apartment-house?" asked Perry.

"Yes, Mr. Mason. I was parked directly behind another car, and in pulling out I damaged my fender and scratched some paint off the other car."

"I see. Did you notice this other car?"

"Yes," nodded Stillwell, "it was a black touring car. It was empty, but I got the name of the owner from the licence. Now, let me see!" He turned over some pages of a tiny notebook. "Here it is! Watson Clammert."

"Watson Clammert?" exclaimed Drake. "Why, that's Ashton's half-brother!"

"Did you get the licence number?" asked Perry.

"Oh, naturally—naturally! Here it is!"

Perry copied the number on to a slip of paper and handed the slip to Drake.

"Call the Motor Vehicle Department," he instructed, "and find out where the car was bought and where it's insured—and you'd better hop down to headquarters and get that information I asked you about."

Drake went out, and Perry turned to his visitor.

"Mr. Stillwell," he said, "I can't thank you sufficiently for all this information. By the way, I may have to subpoena you as a witness at the trial of my client, Mr. Douglas Keene. Will you be willing to testify?"

"By all means," declared the parson; and Perry thanked him again and ushered him forth into the corridor, while Della disappeared into the outer office to transcribe the notes she had made.

In less than three minutes she was back in Perry's room.

"Sam Laxter, Frank Oafley, and Mr. Shuster," she announced. "Got your gun ready?"

"I'll see them out there," Perry decided, and followed her out just in time to prevent the fiery little lawyer from bursting in upon him.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Shuster?" he inquired.

"My client tells me you're libelling him!" was the fierce reply.

Perry looked at Sam Laxter, and that unpleasant legatee blurted:

"You said over the 'phone yesterday that I was going to be accused of murdering my grandfather!"

"I didn't speak to you over the 'phone yesterday," said Perry.

"You spoke to Ashton—I listened in."

"Oh, you did that? Well, since both Ashton and Miss de Voe are no longer with us, it's going to be difficult to prove that I said any such thing, isn't it?"

"It's a lie!" shouted Sam Laxter. "An invention of yours!"

"Not mine," disclaimed Perry, and turned to the cousin. "You shared

Miss de Voe's suspicions, didn't you, Oafley, and discussed them with her?"

"Well, yes," Frank Oafley reluctantly admitted. "She—she told me about the tubing in the garage, but I couldn't believe it. I—I—"

"You want to know what I think?" Sam Laxter roared at him. "I think you married her because you each had too much on the other, and you were afraid one of you might be called on to testify!"

"What are you trying to insinuate?" howled Oafley. "You were in the garage! I saw you!"

Little Shuster thrust himself hastily between the two cousins.

"Now, boys, be careful!" he cried. "Let me do the—"

"What about the Koltsdorf diamonds?" Sam Laxter bellowed over the top of the attorney's bald head. "I suppose you didn't order the chauffeur to follow Ashton all the time? You thought he had them, didn't you?"

"Mr. Laxter, please!" implored Shuster, turning from one to the other. "And Mr. Oafley, remember I'm representing you two gentlemen."

"You're not representing me!" snorted Oafley. "I'm through with you! I'm getting another lawyer! You're a shyster!"

He strode out from the office, leaving the door wide open, and Perry smiled sardonically at Sam.

"You know, Mr. Laxter," he purred, "I'm inclined to agree with your cousin in that respect. Oh, good-bye, counsellor!"

Shuster had made for the door, very red in the face, and his remaining client followed him. Perry marched Della back into his own room, chuckling delightedly.

"What a break!" he exulted. "We've got 'em fighting among themselves!"

Ten minutes later, Drake rang up from police headquarters to say that he had just seen the autopsy surgeon's report concerning Ashton, and that it stated the caretaker was killed at approximately ten-thirty.

"Ten-thirty, eh?" mused Perry, after he had hung up.

"And Douglas Keene was out at the house from ten till eleven!" exclaimed Della.

"He certainly was."

"Well, that looks pretty bad for him, doesn't it? What are you looking so pleased about?"

"Della," replied Perry impressively, "I'm thinking about the caretaker's cat!"

The Arrest of Douglas Keene

THE District Attorney reached his office, on the first floor of the Municipal Building, that morning to find half a dozen newspaper reporters in possession of it. He was tired and irritable, and he tried to get rid of them, but they clamoured for what they termed "the doped on Keene."

"We haven't found him yet," growled the District Attorney. "But we will!"

"Yes?" said one of the reporters, with a wink for his colleagues. "And have you got a case against him?"

"Tight as a drum! He was seen leaving De Voe's apartment. My men searched his rooms and found blood-stained clothing, and the kid ran away."

A telephone-bell rang, and he spoke into an instrument on his desk.

"Holcomb?" he said. "Oh, yes, send him in!"

Detective-Sergeant Holcomb was not

(Continued on page 24)

Through a difference of opinion with his colonel, a cavalry officer obtains a commission with the Texas Rangers. A rascally half-breed plans to pillage a wagon-train. Can the young ranger save it from a terrible fate? Starring Gene Autry

"Ride Ranger Ride!"



The Rangers Join the Cavalry

LIUTENANT GENE AUTRY felt very proud as he rode with his men along the trail. The authorities had decided that as there was peace in the United States it was not necessary to employ so many Texas Rangers. Therefore the men were all discharged, and several squadrons of United States cavalry were sent to take over their work. The lieutenant, knowing the Indians, felt sure that the disbanding of the rangers was a grave mistake. He had done such good work that he had been offered a commission in the cavalry. Not wishing to become a trapper or a guide he accepted the commission. The reason for his pride was the action of his own comrades. A dozen of them on being discharged had applied to join the cavalry, and had been accepted as scouts.

Now they were riding to Fort Adobe to report for duty to Colonel Summerall, and as they rode they sang a pleasant but for them a melancholy air:

Ride, ranger, ride!"
 You have conquered every foe
 Since a hundred years ago.
 Ride, ranger, ride.
 For old rangers who are gone
 You are pledged to carry on.
 Ride, ranger, ride!"

Naturally, the cavalry looked disparagingly at the lieutenant and his scouts when they rode through the heavy wooden gates into Fort Adobe, but they were soon to find it wise not to make any disparaging remarks, because these one-time rangers were quite fearless, easy to anger, and great horsemen.

They had not been in the fort many days when Dixie Summerall, the colonel's daughter, arrived. Gene decided that this dark-haired girl was as sweet as she was pretty. The handsome, swaggering Lieutenant Cameron informed Autry that he was as good as engaged to the young lady. Gene just smiled, because he felt sure Cameron was lying.

To celebrate the arrival of Dixie a ball was held in the mission hall, and both lieutenants asked Dixie if they could escort her. The bright-eyed young mischief said that both officers were riding in the horse race round the walls of the fort, and the first home should be her escort.

Lieutenant Cameron laughed to himself because he thought this would be easy, but he did not know that Gene's horse Champion was one of the fleetest animals in Texas.

On the parade ground the next morning Colonel Summerall addressed his men.

"I wish to explain why the Government has brought the United States cavalry here to Fort Adobe. We're not here to fight the Indians as has been the custom in the past, but to make friends with them."

"He don't know about Redskins," whispered one ex-ranger to another.

"Our orders from Washington are to sign an agreement with the Indians, and we do not expect any trouble." The colonel paused. "But we do want your co-operation in abstaining from antagonising the Indians. So if there are any Indians present at the race this afternoon, hold out the hand of friendship."

The race proved a most grueling and

thrilling event. There were forty entries, but only two officers competed, and they were the first to complete the course. Lieutenant Cameron was a disgruntled loser because he had been so certain of victory. All the way he had been in front of Autry, but in the last mile his rival had begun to gain. A quarter of a mile from home it was neck and neck, and then Champion just seemed to stretch his mighty limbs and romp home an easy winner.

The colonel's daughter presented a beautiful set of saddlery to the winner, and with a blush said she would be pleased to accept his escort. The gruff old colonel patted him on the back and said that considering he had been a ranger he rode uncommonly well.

A lanky, bewhiskered settler was led forward by a sergeant.

"Sorry to bust in on ye, connel," mumbled the man. "But Injuns just stole some of my hosses."

"It must be one of Tavibo's renegade bands," reported the sergeant. "Anybody hurt?"

"Yes, suh," Proffer grinned proudly. "Some of them Injuns."

The colonel snorted.

"That's the way you Texans keep 'em on the warpath," he raged. "Now the policy of the Government is to avoid hostilities. Lieutenant Cameron, you will take Scout Jones here and a squad of your men. Persuade that band to come to the post for council."

"Pardon me, sir." There was a slight smile on Cameron's thin lips. "May I suggest, sir, that Lieutenant Antry and some of his men go along also. Being acquainted with the country, they would be of considerable help."



"Major Crosby," said the Governor, after a pause, "I authorise you to reorganise the Texas Rangers at once!"

"Scout Jones is very competent, sir," hurriedly spoke Gene, not wishing to be deprived of escorting the colonel's daughter. "And I'm afraid we couldn't be of very much help."

"On the contrary I think Lieutenant Cameron's suggestion is a good one," retorted the colonel, who was a very thorough, very genuine and very stubborn soldier. "Lieutenant Autry, you will take six of your men and accompany Lieutenant Cameron."

"Nice work, Cameron!" whispered Autry, as he saw the mocking grin of his rival, but he had some consolation in the angry frown that Dixie Summerall bestowed on the cavalry officer.

After two hours' riding the small party came to country that was heavily wooded and very hilly.

"Well, boys, we're heading into the Peace River Country now," grinned Rufe, who had been one of the finest guides attached to the rangers. "That river should have been called Trouble."

Proffer was with the party, and he indicated the land that had been allotted to him. His shack was just over the side of the hill and close to the river.

"My plan is to spread out and surprise the Indians," stated Cameron.

"Surprise them?" Gene gazed at the officer incredulously. "With about a dozen men and little reserve ammunition."

"We're only carrying regulation supplies," haughtily replied Cameron.

From the shelter of the trees three Indians watched the approach of the soldiers. The Indians clutched long-barrelled rifles, but their leader, who was lighter of hue, restrained them.

"The long knives hunt for stolen horses. When I give the signal—surround them—fight!"

The two Indians disappeared, leaving their leader to glower venomously down at the cursed white men. He turned as his two warriors returned, and they signed to him that his orders had been sent to the Indian braves hiding in

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nearby ravines. When the cavalry troop had entered a narrow ravine, then did Tavibo and his two warriors ride forth from the woods and make signals with their arms.

"Injuns!" cried Rufe. "Comanches, but they're making peace signs."

Lieutenant Cameron halted the troop.

"They want to pow-wow," said Gene.

"But I think it's a war party."

"What makes you think so?"

Gene touched his cheeks.

"War paint."

Cameron twisted his lips into his habitual sneer.

"War paint is hardly reason to mistrust their peace signs. Besides, there's only three of them."

"Lieutenant, when you see Injuns, be careful," warned old Rufe. "And when you don't see Injuns, be more careful."

"Tell them to advance and we'll hold a council with them," ordered Cameron.

"I think we're walking into a trap."

"That's my responsibility, Autry!" cried Cameron, dismounting.

"We three will hold council, and you men stay here. Remember, no firing unless I give the order."

Cameron, Autry and Rufe walked towards the Indians, who were holding their guns above their heads. Autry was on the watch for any treachery. The Indians dismounted and hitched their horses to a stunted pine. Autry noticed that two of the Indians had both hands holding their rifles above their heads, but one, who was the leader, used only one hand.

"You wish to hold pow-wow with us," began Cameron as each side halted within six paces of each other. "I am prepared to—"

That was as far as Cameron got because Autry had seen the leader's hand and the mirror that it contained. Out flashed his gun and the mirror in Tavibo's hand was smashed to pieces. The two Indians fell to their knees, but as they fired so did Gene and Rufe.

Tavibo sped like an arrow for his horse and scrambled into the saddle.

Safe among the trees Tavibo glanced back.

"One soldier—too quick—shoot—bad medicine." Two war-painted braves appeared. "No fight to-day. Soldier, one-time ranger, know my signal. But for him our belts would be heavy with scalps—Tavibo will not forget ranger."

One Indian brave was dead and the other badly wounded, but the troop lost one man, who toppled from the saddle—he had been hit by a stray bullet when the Indians had fired wildly.

One can imagine the kind of report that Lieutenant Cameron made to his colonel on getting back to the fort, with the result that next morning Autry and Rufe were for the orderly-room.

The colonel read out a statement about preserving peace with the Indians, talking of the orders that he had given, and then listening to Cameron's report. At the end he turned to Autry.

"In the exchange of shots Trooper John Davis was killed. According to Lieutenant Cameron's report, you opened fire against the strict orders of your senior officer. Is that true?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you, Scout Jones, did you fire?"

"I always fires, cunnel, when I see Injuns," boldly answered Rufe Jones.

"That's why I stays so healthy."

"What have you to say for yourself, Autry?"

"I'm positive the Indians were trying to draw us into an ambush," was the answer. "I only shot to prevent the one with the mirror from giving the signal."

"Did you see the Indians in ambush?" the colonel asked Cameron.

"No, sir."

"Didn't have to see 'em, cunnel." Rufe spoke up. "Injuns don't carry mirrors to see how purty they are."

The colonel ignored these remarks, and glanced at his orderly sergeant.

"Bring in Duval, the interpreter, and the Indian prisoner," he ordered.

Duval was a tall, pallid-faced man of middle-age. Autry thought the interpreter looked a cunning and unpleasant half-breed.

"You sent for me, colonel?"

The colonel pointed to the prisoner.

"Ask him his name and what was their purpose in stopping my men."

There was much jabbering, which both Autry and Jones wished they could have understood.

"He says his name is Bobtail Horse," stated Duval. "That he and two other Indians had just killed a buffalo and wanted to trade some meat for sugar and coffee with the white men."

"Injuns don't go out hunting buffalo in war paint," cried Scout Jones.

"Scout Jones apparently isn't well acquainted with such peaceful people as the Comanches, colonel," Duval said in oily tones. "I've known Bobtail Horse a long long—very good Indian."

"Well, if he's a good Indian, maybe he'll tell us who's supplying Tavibo and his men with cavalry rifles and ammunition?" demanded Gene.

"We have no proof of that, Lieutenant Autry," cried the colonel. "I am not interested in groundless suspicions." The colonel nodded at Duval. "Tell him that he may go. Nothing this time will be said about him carrying a rifle and ammunition."

When the Indian had gone the colonel stared at Autry and the scout with harsh expression.

"Lieutenant Autry, I find you guilty of jeopardising our treaty negotiations with the Indians, and of rank disobedience to orders. And of being the direct cause of the death of Trooper John Davis. I cite you for general court-martial, and guarantee that you will be reduced to the rank of trooper. As for you, Scout Jones, I fine you one month's pay."

"That's okay, eunel," grinned the scout impudently. "I don't need the five dollars, anyhow."

Lieutenant Cameron was then told to march the two accused out of the orderly-room. Autry was on parole pending trial.

The colonel glanced at Duval.

"Personally I think the accusations of Autry are unfounded, but I wish you'd keep your eyes and ears open, Duval, and see if anyone is selling arms and ammunition to the Indians."

"I'll do that, colonel."

"And because of the large wagon train of settlers and supplies due during the month, I think it would be advisable to sign the peace treaty with the Indians as quickly as possible, and thus we'll assure the safe arrival of the wagon train."

Duval bowed.

"I'll speak to the chiefs, colonel, and arrange a meeting." The half-breed interpreter's

eyes had a curious gleam when he left the colonel.

Rangers Once More

THE two who had been before the colonel for disobedience of orders paused in one of the corridors to discuss the business.

"I ain't natchally suspicious, but there's something mighty queer 'bout that Duval coyote."

"Certainly he did seem glad when the colonel let Bobtail Horse go."

"You bet he did!" Rufe snorted indignantly. "And I don't know Comanches. Why, dang his hide, I cut my teeth on a Comanche tomahawk!"

Frog Burnette, who had served under Autry in the rangers, hastened along the corridor as he saw the two talking together. He had been in many adventures with Gene. A big, plump, honest fellow was Frog.

"I heard the colonel let Bobtail Horse go," Frog said, with a glance round to see he was not overheard. "And that pesky Redskin went into the cantina."

"That's Duval's place, isn't it?" questioned Autry.

His two friends nodded.

"Round up some of the boys."

"We gonna grab him?" Rufe's eyes glistened at prospect of a fight.

"No, but we're gonna take a look around," answered Gene.

In a private room up some wooden stairs Duval sat at a table that was laden with papers. Before him stood Bobtail Horse.

"Listen closely to Tavibo," spoke Duval. "In the next moon many wagons come to fort carrying guns and supplies. White colonel wants to sign treaty with Indians. You tell chief's Tavibo says we must sign, then the colonel's eyes will be closed and he will leave the wagons poorly guarded."

"Bobtail Horse understand," the Indian answered, and nodded his head. "Tavibo wise."

"Wait," imperiously ordered Duval.

He had heard sounds that indicated some more customers in the cantina. The half-breed's eyes narrowed as he saw Gene and his two companions. He went to a curtained recess and held it back. "Go this way."

Duval from the top of the stairs watched the three men seat themselves and order drinks, then one of the string band handed over his guitar to Gene and asked for one of their famous camp-fire songs. The half-breed gave a slight smile—this would give Bobtail Horse plenty of time to get away from Fort Adobe. Back in his room he rang a small bell, and when a servant appeared gave orders that he wished to see two people immediately. Not many seconds later a fair-haired, bull-necked man and a fair-haired girl appeared. Jack was manager and chucker-out at the cantina, whilst Goldie was the chief of the dance girls. Duval whispered across the table how he wanted a suspicious ranger removed.

Goldie went downstairs and sauntered towards Gene's table.

"Hallo, soldier—how about a drink?"

"No, thanks," said Gene.

"Oh, come on, just one!" Goldie wound her arms round his neck.

"I'm sorry, I don't drink," said Gene, removing her arms.

"Say, that's my girl!" rasped Jack, pushing people to one side, and hit Gene full in the jaw.

Gene Autry crashed full length, but he was up like a flash, and the grin was wiped from the bully's face when a right thudded to his jaw.

"Go on—hit him!" encouraged Frog.

And Gene did with all his force. Jack slumped in a heap, got to his feet and went down before a furious hail of blows. Duval watched with angry eyes from the top of the stairs. He had hoped to see Autry beaten to a pulp, but it was his man Jack who was getting the licking. With a curse he took out a thin "throwing-knife," and drew back his arm to throw the knife.



"These men have been clubbed with this rifle!" cried Gene in horrified tones.

Some lucky chance caused Frog Burnette to glance upwards, and all he could see was an arm swaying backwards and forwards round the jamb of the door, and there was a knife in the hand. Frog saw that Gene was pouncing Jack to the floor and that his back was an easy target. Swiftly the scout picked up a chair and thrust it forward in the nick of time. Plunk! The knife was quivering in the woodwork.

Frog whipped out the knife and made a dash for the stairs. Like a rabbit Duval darted into his office, locked the door and left by the same secret exit as Bobtail Horse. Coming down the street was Lieutenant Cameron, and Duval knew how that officer hated Autry.

Gene Autry was dragging Jack to his feet to give him the chance of an apology when Lieutenant Cameron, two troopers and Duval charged into the cantina.

"What's going on here?" Cameron demanded.

"These two men got into a fight over this girl," explained Duval.

Cameron grinned unpleasantly.

"I'll have to place you under arrest, Autry."

Frog, after a vain search upstairs, came down and asked Rufe where Gene might be. His big mouth gaped open when he heard that Gene had been arrested for causing a disturbance.

Gene's friends were hanging about near the orderly-room when their friend and old leader appeared.

"Well, boys, the colonel just asked for my resignation." Gene gave a dispirited shrug. "Guess I'm not wanted in the cavalry."

"You mean they're kicking you out for fighting in the cantina?" cried Rufe.

"Fraid so."

"Well, we joined on account of you," cried Rufe. "I'm for quitting."

"And so am I," cried Frog, and all the rest.

"You can't quit like this," Gene argued, as they began to take off their tunics. "You've got to wait until your enlistment expires."

Frog suddenly whispered in Rufe's ear. Gene saw a lot of whispering, and then the whole bunch of them were running along the road to the cantina. By the time they had finished there, there wasn't a table left in that sink of iniquity. In fact, those husky ex-rangers had almost wrecked the place when they were attacked by a body of cavalry and eventually arrested.

The colonel told the prisoners that they were a disgrace to the cavalry, that they could turn in their uniforms as they were through, and clear out of Fort Adobe. Like a pack of children they set out to find Gene Autry, and ask if he would mind if they rode along with him when he left the fort.

Gene was very much touched by their devotion to him.

"Okay, boys, saddle up your horses and get ready for a long ride. In about an hour's time we'll be riding for the state capital."

Gene wanted to say good-bye to Dixie before he rode away. He found the girl seated on the veranda of the small bungalow that had been reserved for the colonel. She received him coldly, because Lieutenant Cameron had thought it his duty to tell Dixie that Autry had been fighting in the cantina over a dance girl.

"I wonder you have the impertinence to speak to me after quarrelling over a dance girl." Her eyes flashed her anger.

"I never saw the girl until to-day July 3rd, 1937.

She would try to flirt with me, and I was telling her that I was not interested when a big fellow got rough." Gene grinned. "I have an idea it was all arranged."

"Then why did you let them think that—"

"Because it was the best way I knew to get out of the cavalry."

Colonel Summerall came out on the veranda just in time to hear this astounding statement.

"What's wrong with the cavalry?"

"It's your way of handling the Indians, sir," politely answered Gene.

"You're endangering the lives of the people you're here to protect, as well as the safety of that supply train."

"What nonsense!" was the heated retort. "Why, the chiefs have already agreed to sign the peace treaty."

"Which means absolutely nothing with Tavibo on the loose. I'd suggest you send your men out to meet that supply—"

"I'm perfectly capable of making my own decision, Autry."

"I hope so, sir," Autry held out his hand to the girl. "I just came to say good-bye. I've leaving to-night."

"Leaving?" questioned Dixie, and her hand went to her lips as if distressed. "Where are you going?"

"That hardly concerns you, Dixie," cried the angry colonel.

Dixie pressed Gene's hand.

"Good-bye and good luck," she whispered.

"Thanks. Good-bye." Gene paused by the veranda steps. "Colonel, remember this. Make your peace signs with one hand and keep your rifle ready in the other."

Gene and his men rode day and night till they reached the state capital. First of all he visited Major Crosby, late leader of the Texas Rangers, and afterwards they had an interview with the governor.

"Sir, there's enough guns and ammunition on that cavalry supply train to outfit every Indian on the plains," stated Gene Autry.

The governor had listened to Gene's story with interest.

"And you think this unknown Tavibo is getting the Indians to sign the treaty intentionally to allay suspicion?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"What do you think, Major Crosby?"

"I would say it was good reasoning."

"And you don't feel the cavalry can handle the situation?"

"They could if they would," was Gene's answer to the governor's question. "But Washington has given strict orders not to be antagonistic. Their hands are tied."

The governor thought for some moments.

"Naturally, I hesitate to interfere in Government business, but the security of the people must be safeguarded. Major Crosby, I authorise you to reorganise the Texas Rangers immediately, enlisting enough men to combat any situation that may arise."

"Certainly, sir," agreed Major Crosby.

"Mr. Autry, you will retain your old commission as lieutenant," added the governor. "And I want to thank both you gentlemen for your interest and concern."

Duval's Treachery

MAJOR CROSBY got busy at once, and within twelve hours he had got together from fifty to sixty of the old rangers. As Gene felt that no time must be wasted the rangers were equipped and set out for Fort Adobe within twenty-four hours of their reorganisation.

The route taken was through the Peace River country, and when a scout was fired at from the trees Gene executed an encircling movement. He rubbed his hands together as he rounded up two Indians, one of whom was Bobtail Horse. The other evil Indian was named Crazy Crow.

Naturally, they denied all knowledge of Tavibo, and Major Crosby ordered the prisoners to be taken to Fort Adobe. The Indians would talk when they got hungry.

Naturally, the cavalry did not give the Texas Rangers a warm welcome when they rode into Fort Adobe. Colonel Summerall was seething with indignation.

Quarters were found for the rangers in some old barns and it was as far away as possible from the cavalry. A small adobe hut was the prison of the fort and the two Indians were locked in with a ranger on guard.

That night Major Crosby discussed his plans with Gene.

"I'm leaving first thing in the morning with a detachment of men to meet the supply train at Buffalo Wells," stated Crosby. "You'll be in charge during my absence."

Duval was one of the first to learn about the arrival of the rangers, and he muttered angrily when he heard what his man Jack had to report.

"Autry and his men have got Crazy Crow and Bobtail Horse in gaol. Major Crosby and his men are riding out to Buffalo Wells to meet the supply train. They start at dawn."

Duval paced his room.

"You get to that supply train first," were his instructions. "Tell them the colonel sent you—that the Indians are laying for them at Buffalo Wells, and to come through Coyote Pass instead."

When Major Crosby and his men had left in the morning Duval went round to the gaol.

"I hear the rangers have secured a prisoner already?" he remarked, as if amused.

"Just a couple of Indians," answered the guard.

"Ho—ho!" Duval roared with laughter. "You'll never be able to keep 'em in that old prison."

"Why not?"

"Why, the bars are loose on the back window. Didn't you know that?"

"No," muttered the somewhat dense ranger, and he hastened round to the back of the hut.

Noiselessly as a cat Duval followed him, and when the ranger was trying the bars hit him over the back of the head with a gun butt. The limp figure he carried across to an old shack, where two of his men were waiting. They would dispose of the ranger. With the gaoler's keys Duval went back to the prison. He left the place some time later and securely locked the door.

He went to report to Colonel Summerall that he thought it was monstrous that two Indians, one of whom was a man the colonel had pardoned, should be in prison again.

The result was a visit by Colonel Summerall and some of his troop to Gene's headquarters.

"Autry, I understand you're holding Bobtail Horse and Crazy Crow prisoners?"

"That's right."

"You will release them immediately."

"Sorry, colonel, but I can't do that until they answer some questions."

"If you have any question of importance, submit them to me and I'll take care of the matter."

Gene shook his head.

"You had that chance and didn't take it."

The colonel went purple in the face. "The signing of the peace treaty made those Indians wards of the United States Government and removes them from your jurisdiction."

"The treaty isn't worth the paper it's written on."

"As colonel in the United States Army, I demand that you turn those men over to me at once."

"As lieutenant of the Texas Rangers in command of this post during the absence of Major Crosby I am forced to refuse."

"Unless you turn those men over to me at once I'll order my men to fire upon you!" yelled Rufe.

The guns of the troopers were on Gene and the rangers clustered round him. The rangers clutched their guns and waited for the signal from their officer.

"Ye can start shooting whenever you're ready!" yelled Rufe.

"Lieutenant, prepare to fire!" the colonel shouted to Cameron.

Gene gave a reluctant sigh. What a stubborn old fool the colonel was! If Gene stuck to his rights then there would be heavy bloodshed, and the rangers being unprepared would have to surrender or die fighting. It would be playing right into the hands of the Indians under Tavibo.

"All right, colonel, you win. We can't afford to kill the men we are going to need."

Colonel Summerall grinned in triumph.

"Mr. Cameron, return carbines," he ordered.

Gene sent the rangers back to their quarters, and with Rufe went with the colonel to the prison.

"I thought Wilson was on guard here," Autry said in surprise at seeing no guard.

A duplicate set of keys had to be brought before the door could be opened.

Huddled in a corner were the two Indians, and Rufe gave a shout of surprise and went swiftly across to them. Bobtail Horse was dead and so was Crazy Crow. Gene picked up a blood-stained rifle.

Colonel Summerall and Lieutenant Cameron followed the two rangers into the prison, and they were staring at the dead Indians when Duval appeared—as interpreter he had a right to be there.

"These men have been clubbed with this rifle," Gene stated in horrified tones.

"And who could have done it?" rasped the colonel.

Gene stepped towards him.

"I'm going to look for Wilson, the guard. If someone got in here, they've done away with him, too."

"I think not," The colonel barred his progress. "You didn't need a guard for dead Indians. So

this is the way the rangers ask questions. A rather persuasive method, I'd say."

Gene was amazed.

"Why, you don't think we did this, do you? These men were the only chance we had to prove who Tavibo is."

"That's right, cunnel," cried Scout Jones. "We wouldn't let 'em get killed before we knewed."

"You can save your explanations for the trial," stormed the colonel.

Duval gave a slight smile of satisfaction. He had dealt very satisfactorily with this interfering ranger.

"Lieutenant Cameron, place these two men under arrest," the colonel ordered.

"On what crime?" Gene demanded angrily.

"For the brutal murder of these two Indians," came the answer.

"But, colonel, this is absurd! Why—"

"Mr. Cameron, do your duty!" sternly cried the colonel.

Gene and Rufe had their arms taken away, and they were locked in the gaol to await trial for the murder of Bobtail Horse and Crazy Crow.

"Well, I'll be a horned toad!" muttered Scout Jones, as the door clanged on the two prisoners. "Imagine getting arrested 'cause a couple o' Injuns got killed!"

The Escape

SCOUT JONES stared moodily through the bars at the troopers on guard.

"Hey, hossface," he shouted. "How much longer we gonna have to stay in this calaboose?"

"Don't worry," leered the guard. "You'll be out pretty soon."

"We will?" questioned Rufe.

"Sure," said the guard. "We're gonna take you murderers out, stand you against a wall and shoot you full o' lead."

Rufe looked at Gene, who was sprawled on a bench.

"After fighting the Injuns all my life a bunch o' tin soldiers has got to get me. Why, it's a wuss disgrace than being scalped."

"Ah, I don't think they're gonna shoot you," Gene sat up. "You see, you were only acting under my orders."

Rufe glared.

"Well, dang yer hide if you think I'm gonna let you stand up there alone. No, siree! I'm going where you go, regardless."

"Halt! What do you want?" shouted the guard.

"It's Frog," Rufe reported.

"I wanna talk to the prisoners."

"You'll have to leave your gun out here," the guard stated, and then unlocked the door.

"What have you found out?" Gene demanded, when the door had been locked.

"The wagon train is coming by way of Coyote Pass."

"Tell my men to get out and—"

"What men?" interrupted Frog.

"There ain't no men here—they're all out hunting Wilson."

"Guess they'll never find that poor fellow. If they did it would clear up the murder of those Indians," said Gene.

"A fine howdy do," grumbled Rufe. "We're in gaol—the rangers at Buffalo Wells, and the supply train right where Tavibo would want it."

"Have you seen Duval?" Gene asked Frog.

"Yes. He rode east right after you were jugged."

Gene was startled.

"Why, that's in the direction of Coyote Pass."

"And the wagon train," Rufe added with ominous meaning.

"We gotta get outa here somehow."

Gene stood up and glanced round at the strong walls. His gaze came to



The ranger removed the feathered headdress. "Duval!" gasped the astounded colonel. July 3rd, 1937.

rest on the table with its tin mugs and plates. "Gosh, I've an idea. Fellows, start singing and make plenty of noise. The guard will think we're trying to cheer up our last moments. I want to flatten out one of those plates."

"The gaol's getting him," Frog hissed in Rufe's ear. "Maybe we'd better humour him and sing."

They sang an old Indian hunting song, and while they sang Gene flattened out the tin plate by banging it with a stone he had picked up from the floor. When it was quite flat he hid it in his shirt.

The song ceased at his signal.

"Now you've fixed it so you can't eat off of it, what you gonna do with it?" demanded Frog.

"Never mind that," curtly spoke Gene. "You get outa here. Just saddle our horses and trot 'em by in front of the guardhouse."

"Horses?" gaped Frog.

"Yeah, hosses," snapped Rufe. "Them things you fall off."

So Frog banged on the door and shouted that he wanted to be let out, and the guard hastened to answer the request. But as the door was closing Gene whipped out the flattened plate and shoved it between the door and the doorpost, preventing the lock from catching.

"Slick as a whistle," chortled Rufe, and then scurried to the window. "Dang it, here comes our grub!"

The two prisoners stared from between the bars, and wondered if their trick was going to be discovered.

"Hey, we don't want that stew!" shouted Rufe.

"What do ya want—chicken?" leered a guard.

"We don't want nothin' 'cept to be left alone."

"You'll be alone a long time after to-morrow," the guard shouted back, and moved towards the door.

Gene was just in time to whip away the plate as the door opened inwards. The guard saw nothing, and dumped the stew pot on the table and looked round.

"Where's that other plate?"

"What plate?" said Gene.

"Got so hungry I musta et it," jeered Rufe.

"You don't get any stew till you find that other plate." The guard put some stringy meat on the one plate.

The guard picked up the pot and moved to the door, with Gene keeping as close to him as possible. As the door closed he was just in time to get the plate once more into position.

"Whew!" Rufe gasped. "That was a close one."

"I'll say it was." Gene moved over to the window. "Ah, here comes Frog with the horses. Get ready."

Very quietly they jerked open the door. The two guards were pointing their carbines towards Frog and the two lead horses as if suspicious, whilst the guard with the stew pot had vanished round the guard house.

The two troopers heard a sound behind them too late. Strong hands gripped them by the throat and flung them down and tossed their carbines into their late prison. A sprint and a vault and they were in the saddle of their horses.

A trooper tried to shut the gates, but he was too late, and the shots fired by the guard were wide of the mark.

Lieutenant Cameron rushed into the colonel's quarters.

"Prisoners Autry and Jones have escaped, sir," he reported.

"Get the men mounted!" bellowed the colonel.

Out of the fort charged Colonel July 3rd, 1937.

Summerall and forty of his troopers. A distant cloud of dust showed him the trail.

Laying a Trail

THE three rangers rode at a steady pace, but continually Gene was looking back to see if they were being followed.

In some dense woods Gene drew rein. "Frog, you ride to Buffalo Wells and tell Major Crosby to get to the supply train at Coyote Pass as quick as he can. We'll meet you there."

Frog half turned his horse.

"Say, I almost forgot something. Dixie told me to tell you that she didn't think you was no murderer. She said she would've come to see you herself, only the colonel wouldn't let her."

"Say, this ain't no time for that sort of slush," shouted Rufe, as he saw Gene smile happily. "Get going, you fat toad."

Frog spurred his horse and vanished among the trees, but Gene seemed in no hurry and cantered slowly towards an open stretch of grassland.

"What we waiting for?"

"The cavalry."

"Are you loco?" demanded Rufe.

"It ain't gonna be healthy for us if it catches up with us."

"Well, it isn't going to be healthy for that supply train if we don't have a convoy."

Rufe understood and grinned. "You mean we're leading 'em there?"

"That's right."

"And what's gonna happen if the Injuns don't attack?"

"They will." Gene was confident. He glanced back. "Good! They've located us."

"No, they haven't," said Rufe.

"They're heading south. They don't see us."

"They soon will," said Gene, and cupping his hands began to make a sound that carried for a long distance. Rufe followed his example, and then both men waved their hats. Not till the troop changed direction did they urge their horses to a gallop.

"They've seen us."

"Hope they didn't forget their guns," anxiously spoke Gene.

The troop were now not much more than a quarter of a mile distant, and several reports rang out as the cavalry opened fire.

"They haven't." Gene smiled, as bending low over the saddle, he urged Champion to a faster gallop.

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In the thick undergrowth overlooking Coyote Pass, Tavibo, in full war-paint, stared down at the huge supply train that wound along the valley. By his side were a number of bedaubed Redskins.

"Lame Bear and many warriors on other side of pass await your signal, Tavibo," a chief stated.

"Good!" Tavibo answered, and a piece of glass was turned to catch the rays of the sun. It flashed three times, and then there came an answering reply from several points on the other side of the pass.

It was the signal to attack.

When the Indians, yelling like fiends, came pouring down from both sides of the pass the wagon train was hurriedly turned to form a corral.

The horses and people were inside a circle or corral formed by the wagons, and the defenders were able to shoot at the Indians as they rode round and round in their circle of death.

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The rangers rode steadily and just fast enough to keep out of range of the troopers, and after a while Gene glanced at Rufe in significant fashion. The sound of distant firing was easy to hear. They reached a line of hills, and then rode through a narrow pass into the wide stretch of valley known as Coyote Pass. A mile distant was the wagon train, and round it rode a mass of shrieking fiends.

Gene and Rufe reined in their horses and waited for the troopers. They did not even bother to raise their hands.

The colonel saw first the two prisoners and then gasped as he saw beyond the wagon train and its attackers.

"Howdy, cunnel," mocked Rufe. "What da think o' your treaty now?"

"You were right, Autry," Colonel Summerall shouted. "But remember, you're still under sentence to be shot."

Gene laughed. "It looks like we may be shot without any sentence."

Colonel Summerall drew his sword.

"We've got to get to that wagon train and prevent the Injuns breaking through!" yelled the old martinet.

"Show no mercy! Charge!"

The cavalry with Colonel Summerall, Lieutenant Autry and Scout Jones in the lead raced across the flat grasslands towards the attacked wagon train.

A Fierce Battle

TAVIBO and his warriors had hoped to get the wagon train so completely by surprise that the settlers would not be able to form up in a corral. But the besieged put up a stubborn resistance and quite a number of braves bit the dust. Tavibo urged his men to attack more fiercely, and but for the guns and ammunition that he coveted would have shot blazing arrows and flung fire-brands at the prairie schooners.

Though there were several hundred human beings in the wagon train a great number were women and children, and that meant that no more than fifty men were endeavouring to beat off an attack of at least five hundred braves. They made a desperate and valiant resistance against these overwhelming odds. Inside the corral there was a dried-up ditch, and the women and children were able to lie down in comparative security. But the men and women of the wagon train knew they could hope for little mercy from these screaming savages.

Gene Autry rode alongside the colonel.

"Have you any plan of campaign, sir?"

"Attack the Indians and drive 'em off," was the reply.

"We're not strong enough," Gene shouted back. "Tavibo is a noted fighter, and as one man falls so will another rider take his place. On those wild ponies they can ride as well and perhaps better than your cavalry. The Indians outnumber us by about ten to one."

"What do you suggest, Autry?"

"I believe there are one or two rangers with the train," Autry answered. "They are there as a guard and to act as scouts. If you let me take the lead, sir, they will recognise me and act accordingly. Our best chance of beating off the Indians is to ride straight through the circle of death and into the corral. Your men are better armed and are better shots. Moreover, it is easier to shoot through a wheel of a wagon than from the back of a galloping bronc."

(Continued on page 26.)

The Concluding Chapters of:—**The Get-away**

TRAPPED between the contracting walls of the passage that led to the laboratory, Corporal Jim Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan strove in vain to arrest the vice-like motion of those steel partitions that threatened to crush the life from their bodies.

Powerful as they were, they could not hold the closing walls in check, and they had almost given up hope when suddenly Jim's glance fell upon a heavy crowbar that was lying on the floor of the corridor.

It offered a slender prospect of salvation. True, it might prove unequal to the strain—like the table which the two Marines had jammed between the shutters and which had been smashed to matchwood. But as a last resort Jim seized it and poised it horizontally above his head until the walls came into contact with the ends of it.

The crowbar did not bend to the strain, as the corporal had feared it would. It remained firmly wedged between the steel partitions and kept them apart, and all at once a silence descended upon that grim corridor in which Jim and McGowan had so nearly met their doom.

The drone of the hidden machinery that had operated the walls of the trap seemed to peter out of its own accord, and in the deathly quiet that ensued the Marines looked at each other thankfully.

They were still in an unenviable position—caught, as it were, in a narrow fissure which was like to become a lethal chamber if no air reached its interior. Already indeed the atmosphere was stifling and fetid, and with no means of escape visible to the prisoners they had little reason to nurse any feeling of triumph.

Yet at least the imminence of a cruel death had been staved off, and on that score alone they had cause to congratulate themselves.

Standing face to face with Jim, McGowan drew in a long breath and opened his mouth as if to speak. But before he could utter a word the big corporal restrained him, for a movement beyond the inner door of the corridor had reached his ears.

On the other side of that door, in the secret laboratory where they were ensconced, the Tiger Shark and his agent Steinbeck were posted by the switchboard that had controlled the walls of the passage wherein Jim and Mac had been trapped.

"The machinery has stopped!" said Steinbeck. "That means the shutters have come together. And it means, Tiger Shark, that you have nothing more to fear from those two Marines."

Jim Lawrence and McGowan heard those words, and then the muffled response of the scientist's unknown employer became audible to them.

"You are right, Steinbeck," the master-criminal declared. "They have meddled in my affairs for the last time. But the fact remains that the situation in San Diego has grown too hot for my liking—and besides, it is necessary that I should head for Halfway Island without delay."

Beyond the door of the corridor in which he believed that his foes had been destroyed, the Tiger Shark moved a pace nearer to the scientist known as Steinbeck.

"Halfway Island is no longer a haven of safety," the mysterious scoundrel went on. "Colonel Bennett of the Marine Corps is now aware of the activities which we carried on there, and, thanks to Lawrence and McGowan, he even knows that a ray-gun was responsible for the disasters which over-

took so many sea-going ships and aeroplanes in that vicinity."

Steinbeck pursed his lips.

"Then it is only a question of time," he said, "before the Marines occupy the island in force and establish their projected air-base there. As it is, they recently succeeded in landing a troop-carrying plane. Admittedly, they grounded their ship without mishap owing to the bungling tactics of our men. But a second venture, perhaps by a whole squadron, would be even more effective. The ray-gun might bring down one plane—the others would come through safely."

The Tiger Shark inclined his head.

"Exactly," he rejoined. "Therefore we must abandon Halfway Island to the U.S. Government. But first I intend to secure the loot that is stored there—the loot amassed from innumerable vessels that the ray-gun has decoyed to destruction."

"And what then, Tiger Shark?"

"What then?" the unknown grunted. "I have not quite decided, Steinbeck. But you will hear from me in due course, when I shall acquaint you with my plans."

The other man looked at him apprehensively, and tried to read his employer's thoughts. But the mysterious and sinister aviator who stood before him was an inscrutable enigma. The flying helmet which he wore, and the scarf which was tightly wrapped about the lower part of his features, not only concealed his identity but screened from Steinbeck's view any expression which might have conveyed an inkling of what was going on in the Tiger Shark's mind.

Only the master-crook's eyes could be seen, and even these were partially obscured by the tinted goggles through which they regarded his hireling.

"Tiger Shark," Steinbeck faltered jerkily, "you—you're not going to run out on me? Remember, I've served you
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EPISODE 12—**"Two Against the Horde"**

well, I helped you to create the ray-gun. I—"

The Tiger Shark motioned him into silence with an impatient gesture.

"You have no cause for alarm," he said. "You have been useful to me, and I shall have need of you in the future. As for the rest of the organisation—well, such of them as are not already in the hands of the authorities can look to their own safety."

"But why not take me with you to Halfway Island?" Steinbeck protested. "Why not take me there with you, Tiger Shark—and thence to your ultimate destination?"

"No," came the reply. "I prefer you to remain here for the time being. You have nothing to fear, Steinbeck. No one knows that this building has been my headquarters. McGowan and Lawrence, who followed me here, lie dead between the walls of the corridor."

He paused, and then tapped his associate on the shoulder.

"Incidentally, you had better dispose of their carcasses as soon as I leave," he added. "When you have done that, stand by for a message on the television set. I shall contact you just before I take off from Halfway Island with the loot."

Steinbeck nodded humbly, and without further discussion the Tiger Shark moved away from him, to cross the laboratory and make his exit via a door at the far side of the spacious workshop. Then, as that door closed behind the unknown criminal, Steinbeck turned to the switchboard which controlled the walls of the passage where Jim and McGowan had been snared.

A touch on a lever set the walls in motion again, but this time they drew back, and if it had not been for the clamour of the mechanism that operated them Steinbeck might have heard the metallic thud of a crowbar on the floor of the sealed corridor.

It was the crowbar which had saved the lives of Jim Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan, and which now dropped from the position in which it had been jammed.

A few seconds after that implement had fallen, Steinbeck opened the door that connected the laboratory with the passage, expecting as he did so to see the crushed and mangled bodies of the two Marines. Instead he found himself confronted by their erect, stalwart and menacing forms, and the colour draining from his features in an instant, he whipped round with a hoarse cry of terror.

Another moment and he was running towards the door by which the Tiger Shark had left the laboratory, but Jim and McGowan had bounded after him, and they overtook him before he could make his escape.

"No, you don't!" Jim rapped out. Steinbeck attempted to put up a fight, yet either of the Marines could have dealt with him single-handed, and the scuffle was of brief duration. Then Jim Lawrence addressed Mac tersely.

"The Tiger Shark must have gone through this door!" he rapped out. "You hold this man while I—"

But the sentence was left unfinished, for at that juncture the two non-commissioned officers heard the unmistakable sound of a plane's motor somewhere above them, and, as the engine-note rose to a higher key, the pair of them thrust Steinbeck aside and stumbled across to a window of the laboratory.

Throwing up the sash of that window, they looked out and beheld an auto-gyro soaring into the sky from the flat roof of the building.

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"There goes the Tiger Shark!" Jim gazed.

"Yeah, and headed for Halfway Island," McGowan said.

Behind them Steinbeck had recovered from their somewhat violent handling of him, and, intent upon escape, he began to sneak in the direction of the passage whence the two Marines had emerged. Then, halting by the switchboard, he drew down a lever and opened the far panel which gave access to the main staircase of the premises.

Unlike the Tiger Shark, however, Steinbeck was not destined to make his get-away. For suddenly Jim and McGowan chanced to turn their heads, and as they saw the scientist in the act of entering the corridor they charged in pursuit of him and again overhauled him.

"Not so fast, my friend," Jim said grimly, as he and Mac rendered the fellow helpless. "It was mighty thoughtful of you to unhitch that outer panel, but we're going along with you."

"Me pal means that you're goin' along with us," McGowan interposed, addressing Steinbeck in a dry tone. "Where to, Jim? The Marine depot?" "Sure!" was the answer. "And when we've handed him over to Colonel Bennett we'll grab a plane and fly to Halfway Island."

Mac directed a sharp glance at his comrade.

"You think the O.C. will let us do that?" he queried.

"I'll say he will," Jim retorted. "He may organise a squadron as well, but that's liable to take up valuable time, and I reckon we can persuade him that every second counts."

The Ray-gun

AN atmosphere of excitement prevailed in the jungle village which was inhabited by the native population of Halfway Island. For an auto-gyro had been seen flying from the east, and when it had glided to earth somewhere beyond the belt of forest there had been a good deal of anxious speculation amongst the savages regarding the identity of its occupant.

They remembered the defeat they had suffered at the hands of the platoon of Marines who had made a brief sojourn on the island only a day or so previously, and they could not help wondering whether they were to undergo a further chastisement.

But they need not have been concerned, for the auto-gyro was no troop-carrying outfit. It was the machine piloted by the Tiger Shark, and within twenty minutes of landing his ship the unknown criminal marched into the native village.

The savages at once clustered around him and began to ply him with questions in their barbarous dialect. But, giving no indication as to whether he understood their interrogations or not, the Tiger Shark singled out a woolly-headed individual who appeared to be a witch-doctor of some description, and to this personage he addressed himself in English.

"Follow me—alone," he commanded. "Leave the niggers here."

The witch-doctor turned to the rest of the tribe, and, silencing the blacks with a gesture, he spoke a few words to them in their own tongue. Then he glanced at the Tiger Shark again and indicated that he was ready to accompany him.

Together they made their way from the clearing in which the native village stood, and, entering the jungle, they trekked through the gloom of the tangled thickets until they reached the headland where the cave containing the Tiger Shark's loot was situated.

On a patch of open ground in close proximity to that headland was the auto-gyro which had brought the unknown master mind to the island. But, ignoring the craft, the Tiger Shark conducted his companion to the lair in which his agents had stored the spoils of their grim depredations.

Once in the shelter of the cavern, the mystery airman and the witch-doctor halted. Then suddenly, with a kind of grimace, the latter plucked the mop of black woolly hair from his head.

It was a wig, and underneath it the fellow's own hair was the light-coloured thatch of a white man. For a white man he was, though even the natives among whom he had lived had been deceived by his skilful disguise.

"Gee, Tiger Shark," he stated, "it sure is good to act natural again. I'm plumb sick of playin' medicine man to them niggers. Say, how much longer have I got to keep up this pretence, anyhow? When am I gonna be able to scrub this black dye off my face an' body?"

The Tiger Shark eyed him thoughtfully through the tinted goggles he was wearing.

"Your rôle has been a useful one, Larsen," he commented. "Your knowledge of the Pacific Islands and the dialects of their inhabitants enabled you to go amongst the savages here in the character of a witch-doctor, and through you we succeeded in establishing an allegiance with that jungle tribe. Yes, you played a valuable part—while the game lasted."

The man known as Larsen glanced at him quickly.

"While the game lasted?" he reiterated. "You mean, it's all washed up now?"

"Isn't that obvious?" the Tiger Shark rejoined. "Metcalf and the others who occupied this cave are either dead or in the hands of the Marines. The secret of Halfway Island is a secret no longer. There is only one course open to us—to transfer our plunder before this whole area is swarming with troops."

Larsen nodded.

"I get it," he muttered. "All right, where do we go?"

"Back to the mainland for the time being," the Tiger Shark announced. "But come, let us first load the auto-gyro."

With that he turned towards a steel door embedded in the left-hand wall of the cavern. It was the door leading to the vault-like chamber in which the loot had been cached, and a moment later the Tiger Shark and Larsen were standing beside a number of strong-boxes packed with the spoils of the activities which had been afoot on Halfway Island during the past few months.

Opening the lid of one of those boxes, the Tiger Shark revealed a mass of treasure that was fit to dazzle a man's eyes, for there in close-packed profusion lay pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires—gems of every description. Here in this single iron-bound chest reposed a fortune as great as a king's ransom; and from Larsen, who had not had the opportunity of entering this room before, there came an inarticulate cry of wonder and greed.

Stumbling close to the Tiger Shark's side, he ran his fingers through the jewels caressingly, scooping them up and letting them rain down into the box again, crooning like some evil miser as he did so. And in the meantime the scoundrel who had enlisted his services watched him in a sly fashion, a hint of amusement playing in his dim-seen eyes.

"Wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, eh, Larsen?" the Tiger Shark observed presently. "Yes, and you are fondling only a portion of the riches that this room contains. In these other boxes there are more gems—and gold and silver, too."

"Tiger Shark," Larsen blurted, "we're made—made for life. We can live like princes!"

The unknown airman inclined his head.

"Yes, like princes," he murmured. "H'm, we have had a good innings. The ships that we snared were rich prizes. Indeed, we only concerned ourselves with those which were carrying valuable cargoes, for I made it my business to learn what was below the hatches of every vessel using this trade-route, and I gave my instructions accordingly. The boats which were not worth sinking were allowed to pass. The others were made helpless by the ray-gun, so that with engines paralysed they were trapped by the dangerous currents in these waters and left to founder on the reefs. Believe me, Larsen—"

And then he paused, for all at once a familiar sound reached his ears. It was the drone of an aeroplane's motor, and with an oath the Tiger Shark stumbled out of the treasure room and hurried to the mouth of the cave.

Larsen followed him, and, looking up into the sky, the pair of them espied a monoplane circling over the island. Then, as he noticed the unmistakable cipher of the U.S. Government on the craft, the Tiger Shark gave vent to an exclamation.

"A Marine 'plane!" he snarled.

A seared expression dawned on Larsen's face, and he clutched at the other man's sleeve.

"We've got to get outa here," he jerked.

"And abandon the loot?" the Tiger Shark rasped. "Don't be a fool! Listen, we can deal with that solitary 'plane by means of the ray-gun!"

In another moment he was diving back into the cave, and, Larsen accompanying him, the Tiger Shark ordered the fellow to the controls of that singular device and instructed him to throw the elevating-switch. Then he himself took up a position at the periscope.

Up on the summit of the headland, high above the cavern, the ray-gun rose into view from its emplacement, and within the space of a few seconds it was ready for action.

In the gloom of the cave the Tiger Shark was preparing to take the readings from the range-finder attached to the periscope. Mirrored in the dead-centre of that periscope he could now see the Marine 'plane.

"Quadrant north-east 12!" he bit out. "Quadrant north-east 12," Larsen intoned, moving a lever on the main control-board.

"Altitude two thousand feet!" the Tiger Shark added swiftly.

Again Larsen operated a switch.

"Altitude two thousand feet."

"Power!" barked the man at the periscope, and in an instant his hiring had pulled back the firing-lever of the gun.

There came a whining of dynamos, and that sound was the only indication of the sinister forces that had been released. Then, staring into the periscope, the Tiger Shark saw the Marine 'plane waver uncertainly—saw it come down by the nose and turn into a fatal spin—its motor rendered useless by the invisible ray which had been launched against it.

Next second, however, two dark figures leapt from the plunging craft, and immediately afterwards a couple of parachutes billowed out to check the

rapid descent of the men who were wearing them.

Through the periscope the Tiger Shark watched the 'plane crash to earth on the edge of the jungle and burst into flames. Then he transferred his attention to the parachutists who had jumped from it, and he followed them with his narrowed eyes until they had sunk out of view in the heart of the tropical forest that clothed the island's interior.

Larsen had joined him by this time, and the Tiger Shark spoke to him in a muffled voice.

"There were two of them in the 'plane, and they bailed out," he informed Larsen.

"Bailed out," the other echoed. "Then we're liable to have trouble with 'em, yet."

The Tiger Shark drew back from the periscope.

"No," he said, "we won't have any trouble with them. They landed in the thick of the jungle, close to the native village. The savages will take care of them, Larsen."

Unmasked

IN estimating that the occupants of the ill-fated Marine 'plane had come down within a short distance of the native settlement, the Tiger Shark had not been mistaken. For, after plunging through a tangle of foliage, both men alighted on the edge of a swamp that was no more than a couple of hundred yards from the village.

The two men in question were none other than Jim Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan, and, having picked themselves up and divested themselves of their parachute harness, they joined each other on a beaten track that skirted the morass.

"You all right, Mae?" Jim panted.

"Yeah," came the response. "I bounced around a little, but I'm still in one piece. Huh, that 'plane sure took a nose-dive."

Jim Lawrence gritted his teeth.

"The Tiger Shark must have seen us," he stated, "and he put us on the spot with that ray-gun. It's lucky we had parachutes."

McGowan nodded, and was about to make some comment when Jim interrupted him and swung round in an attentive posture.

"Listen, Mae," he hissed. "D'you hear what I hear?"

From somewhere not far away there came a swift pattering as of many feet hurrying over the sun-baked trail. Then all at once a swarm of dusky humanity turned into view round a bend in the forest path, a throng of demonic savages from the nearby village.

They had witnessed the descent of the khaki-clad parachutists, and, smarting under the defeat they had sustained only a day or two before, they had rushed eagerly from their settlement to avenge themselves by murdering the two representatives of the Marine Corps.

On sighting Jim and Mae they raised a tumult that might have been likened to the howl of a wolf-pack, and in another moment they were surging forward in anticipation of the "kill," brandishing spears and knives and war-clubs as they charged.

The situation looked ugly for Jim Lawrence and McGowan, but in taking it for granted that the Marines would fall easy victims to their wrath the savages had erred. For corporal and sergeant had not made the flight to Half-way Island without preparing themselves for an eventuality such as this.

Both of them carried hand-grenades as well as revolvers, and it was on their supply of bombs that they relied now. And no sooner were the natives within range than the two non-commissioned officers began to lob those deadly missiles at them—with dire effect.

Grenade after grenade burst in the path of the dark-skinned islanders, and the storm of destruction broke the onset of the tribe. With the foremost warriors lying stricken on the ground the rest of the mob turned tail, and soon they were fleeing back in the direction of their village.



"You!" McGowan breathed. "So you—are the Tiger Shark!"

Jim and Mac pursued them, harrying them with more bombs—not from any wanton desire to slaughter them, but in the conviction that the more rigorous the punishment the less likelihood there would be of these barbarians rallying to menace them afresh.

At length, however, the two friends gave up the chase, feeling satisfied that they had nothing more to fear from a crew of natives so severely chastened. Then, wheeling to retrace their steps, the pair of them set off through the dense jungle.

Their objective was the cave in the headland, and, familiar as they were with the island, they pushed steadily onward until they gained the edge of the forest, where the close-knit trees and the riotous undergrowth gave place to a sweep of terrain strewn with boulders.

There was one patch of clear ground in that rocky scene, and it was in the middle of this patch that Jim and Mac perceived the Tiger Shark's auto-gyro. Then, even as they set eyes on the craft, their attention was diverted to the headland by the approach of two men.

One they recognised as the Tiger Shark, from the distinctive flying kit that he wore. The other, a stranger to them, was Larsen, the pseudo witch-doctor of the savages whom they had routed.

The rogues had emerged from the cave that had been the lair of the Tiger Shark's agents on the island, and they were laden with sacks that doubtless contained the spoils of the nefarious handiwork which had been practised there.

From the cover of the boulders Jim and Mac watched the scoundrels descend to the auto-gyro and pack those canvas bags into a compartment of the machine. Then the Tiger Shark and his accomplice turned to climb in the direction of the cave again, with a haste which suggested that they were anxious to be quit of Halfway Island at the earliest possible moment.

"They're stovin' the loot aboard that crate, and they're goin' back for more," McGowan volunteered superfluously.

"Yeah," Jim answered, "and this is where we get close enough to hold 'em up. Come on."

The two Marines stole in the direction of the headland, being careful to keep out of sight as they did so. But, when the Tiger Shark and his minion had vanished into the cave above, they quickened their steps and struggled up the slope as rapidly as they could.

A minute later they had gained the mouth of the cavern, and here they paused to draw their Service revolvers from their holsters. Then they advanced boldly into the half-light of the cave, and immediately they heard the murmur of voices issuing from the vault on the left.

"We'll have to make a good many more trips afore we get all this stuff loaded, Tiger Shark," Larsen was saying.

"Yes," came the reply, "and we've got to act fast. I didn't like the sound of those explosions away in the heart of the jungle. Those Marines must have been equipped with grenades, and I doubt if the natives made much of a show against them."

Jim and Mac exchanged a glance, and next instant the pair of them were advancing into the treasure-room, to surprise their foes in the act of stuffing quantities of gems into a couple of sacks that were lying on the floor.

"You're right, Tiger Shark!" Jim Lawrence announced crisply. "The natives didn't make much of a show against us. In fact, I reckon they won't

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be bothering the U.S. Marine Corps at all from now on."

The Tiger Shark and Larsen had started to their feet, the former recoiling with a hoarse ejaculation as he clapped eyes on the men whom he had believed to be dead.

"You!" he panted.
"Yep, Corporal Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan at your service," Jim declared. "I guess you didn't squeeze us hard enough when you had us trapped between those walls at your San Diego headquarters, my friend."

He paused, juggling ominously with the revolver that he was grasping. Then he went on speaking in a conversational tone.

"By the way, Tiger Shark," he observed, "your pal Steinbeck is under lock and key, and it may interest you to know that before we left the Marine Depot we had word that the police had rounded-up Miller, Crowley, Red and Pete. So you and your side-kick here will have plenty of company in the gaolhouse when we get you back to the mainland."

The arrest of the Tiger Shark and his last accomplice was not to prove so easy of accomplishment as Jim imagined, however. For, actuated by an intense though natural curiosity, McGowan moved forward with the object of unmasking the scoundrel there and then, and in doing so gave Larsen an opportunity to strike.

Larsen was not slow to take advantage of Mac's blunder. With an unexpectedness that took the sergeant completely unawares he pounced on the burly Irish-American and brought him headlong to the floor.

McGowan lost possession of his revolver, the weapon rattling out of reach as Larsen fell a-top of him, and in another instant both men were rolling to and fro in a fierce tussle for supremacy. Meanwhile, Jim Lawrence had turned to aid his comrade, but the Tiger Shark had promptly engaged him, snatching at the barrel of his gun in an attempt to wrest the six-shooter from him.

With Mac and Larsen at grips on the floor, Jim found himself involved in a desperate struggle with the unknown airman, and it was a struggle that kept him fully occupied, for although the corporal of Marines was a head taller than his antagonist and a stone the heavier, yet the Tiger Shark was a creature of unusual strength, and moreover he fought with the fury of desperation.

True, Jim was never at any time in danger of being overpowered. Nor did the Tiger Shark ever come near to relieving him of the gun. But the big corporal had a tough job in handling the blackguard—a far more difficult job than the one with which McGowan was faced, for it did not take the sergeant long to turn the tables on Larsen and stretch that ruffian senseless with a heavy jolt to the chin.

Having disposed of the bogus witch-doctor, Mac scrambled to his feet and jumped to the assistance of his comrade, and in the space of a few seconds the Tiger Shark was a helpless captive.

With Jim pinning the scoundrel's arms to his sides, McGowan lifted a hand to the scarf that the man was wearing across the lower part of his features, and in one swift gesture he dragged down that improvised mask to disclose a sallow, thin-lipped face. Then the Irish-American whipped away the prisoner's goggles, and the Tiger Shark's countenance was revealed from forehead to jaw.

Mac stared at that countenance amazedly. He had anticipated a shock, since there had been reason to believe that the arch-criminal was someone in

close contact with the Marine Depot. But he had never suspected that this individual who was glowering at him now had been the ruthless killer in question—this man who had always seemed so bland and suave, but who had become in this moment the very picture of rage and chagrin.

"You!" McGowan breathed. "So you—are the Tiger Shark!"

Jim Lawrence drew back, and, his revolver still in his fist, swung the culprit round with his free hand. Then he, too, gazed at the murderous-schemer's features in astonishment.

"Kota!" he rapped out.

Kota it was. Kota and the Tiger Shark were one and the same, and it was easy to see now why every move that Bennett had made had been frustrated. The Eurasian had entered the colonel's employ as a valet about the time that the Government had first instructed the O.C. to report on the suitability of Halfway Island as an air base, and Jim recalled that the half-caste had applied for the position of manservant immediately after Bennett's former valet had mysteriously disappeared.

It was all plain to Jim now. Kota, the Tiger Shark, had been responsible for the disappearance of the colonel's previous employee. Then this sinister rogue, this man who had shared with Steinbeck a genius which might have been acclaimed by science if he had only turned it to more honourable uses—this deep-dyed villain had assumed the rôle of a menial to safeguard his dastardly interests in the Pacific.

Such were the thoughts that flashed through Jim Lawrence's mind, and no doubt McGowan was a prey to similar reflections. At any rate, neither of them saw that Larsen had recovered his wits and was reaching for a heavy stick that lay near him—and neither of them realised, until too late, that the man was preparing to launch an attack.

It was on Jim that Larsen concentrated, for McGowan had not retrieved his gun and the corporal alone was armed; and, suddenly springing to action, the man who had played the part of a witch-doctor struck Jim a stunning-blow before the Marine could raise a hand to defend himself.

Jim went down like a log, and with a shout Mac flung himself at the big fellow's assailant. But though he connected with a right that sent Larsen staggering, the Tiger Shark threw himself into the scuffle and swung his bunched knuckles to the base of the Irish-American's skull.

McGowan pitched forward, and, striking his head on the floor, finished up in a sprawled and insensible attitude. Then, wheeling towards Jim Lawrence the Tiger Shark secured the latter's revolver.

He straightened with the gun clutched in his fist, and as he did so Larsen called out to him excitedly:

"Okay, Tiger Shark. Fill them guys full o' slugs, an' then we'll dump the rest o' the treasure in the plane and pull outa here."

Kota, alias the Tiger Shark, was eyeing his satellite narrowly.

"You think I'm going to let you live, Larsen?" he said in a low, tense voice. "You think I'm going to let you live, and take a chance on you? No, my friend, you have been unfortunate enough to learn who I am, and you will carry my secret with you—to eternity."

Larsen's face had fallen.

"Tiger Shark!" he blurted. "You can't mean this! I'll play square. You can trust me—"

"I trust no man," the other broke in harshly. "That is why I have lasted so long. Steinbeck was closer to me than

alone, yet even he did not know who it was. No, Larsen, this is the end—for you as well as for these two Marmies."

"Tiger Shark!"
Larsen screamed the name in wild, imploring accents as he saw the Eurasian level the revolver that he was gripping. Then, realising that his abject appeal was in vain, he tried to hurl himself at the assassin, but the gun belched flame and lead in the instant that he sprang.

The bullet thudded into Larsen's chest, and the impact of it stopped him in mid-career. Back he went, with a queer, choking sob on his lips—to reel against the wall and to sink down there in a heap.

The Tiger Shark looked at him for a brief interval, and then turned towards Jim Lawrence and McGowan. The former was showing signs of regaining his wits, and the murderer waited until he had opened his eyes before he levelled the six-shooter.

He wanted Lawrence to be fully conscious before he drilled him—yes, and McGowan, too. He wanted both these men to experience the mental torture of anticipating their doom—these men who had struck at the very roots of his organisation and who had been primarily responsible for his enforced evacuation of Halfway Island.

Another moment and Jim must have died, but over at the wall Larsen had roused himself with an effort and had laid hold of a gun which had been over-

looked by all in the last few minutes.

It was McGowan's, and Larsen had fallen within arm's length of it; and now he was picking up the weapon to take aim at the Tiger Shark's back—not because he had any interest in the fate of Jim Lawrence, but because he was determined to avenge himself on the Eurasian.

Larsen was at the point of death. Yet his glazing eyes marked the figure of his victim clearly enough, and his trembling wrist seemed to steady itself the instant before he fired.

A shot burst from the gun he was clutching, and through the haze of smoke he watched the Tiger Shark come up on his toes and crash lifelessly to the floor. Then, with his mouth twisted in a ghastly smile, Larsen keeled over and lay still.

Several weeks had passed by, and at Halfway Island, once the haunt of the Tiger Shark and his agents, but now occupied by a company of Marines who had established friendly relations with the natives, the work of building an aerodrome was going ahead.

Jim Lawrence and McGowan had no part in that assignment. Their associations with Halfway Island were at an end, and they were enjoying a fairly restful life at the depot in San Diego.

During the weeks that succeeded their return, however, two events of special consequence took place, one being the marriage of Corporal Jim Lawrence to

Miss Frances Schiller, sister of that promising, but ill fated, young inventor who had been numbered among the victims of the dreaded Tiger Shark.

The wedding ceremony was performed in the chapel attached to the Marine Barracks, and, although he himself had once fondly imagined that he might lead Frances to the altar, McGowan bore Jim no grudge on account of the girl's preference for the corporal, and took over the duties of best man with a heartiness characteristic of him.

The other event worthy of mention was one in which Colonel Bennett officiated as O.C. of the Marine Depot.

On a platform raised above the level of the magnificent parade ground, and in full view of the assembled officers and men under his command, he pinned to the tunics of Corporal Jim Lawrence and Sergeant McGowan the highest and most coveted of those decorations which the United States Admiralty can grant.

"For gallant and courageous service above and beyond the call of duty," Colonel Bennett announced in clear, ringing tones, "it is my pleasure to award to each of you in the name of a grateful Government—the Navy Cross."

THE END.

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The image shows a scientist in a laboratory setting, wearing a headpiece and looking at a device. To the right is a diagram of a radio station with several masts and a lattice structure.

Radio messages sent from shore stations or ships are sometimes called 'aerograms.' In the smaller picture you see a diagram of the famous Post Office Wireless Transmitting Station at Rugby—the hub of the Empire's radio system. It occupies a 900-acre site. There are 12 long-wave aerial masts, each of steel lattice work and 820 feet high (more than twice as high as St. Paul's); and 27 short-wave masts (varying in height from 120-180 feet). Note the screening arrangement of the masts.

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"THE CASE of the BLACK CAT"

(Continued from page 12)

a very tall man, but he was heavily built and very self-important. He did not seem to realise that he cut rather a comic figure as he hustled into the room carrying a basket in which a black cat clawed and complained violently; but some of the reporters laughed.

"Chief," he said, advancing to the desk and holding up the basket, "I've got something here that'll interest you. This is Clinker, the caretaker's cat. I checked up on that guy Mason, like you said, and I found out that late last night he took this cat to his secretary's apartment and left it there with her."

Burger's brown eyes gleamed.

"Get him on the wire," he said. "No—wait a minute. We'll go and see him."

He put on his hat and swept towards the door, ignoring the reporters' eager questions as to where the cat came in, and what Mason had to do with it.

"Holcomb," he turned to bark at the door, "see that that cat is locked up, and meet me downstairs. See you later, boys!"

With the sergeant he entered the Hamilton Building, and they burst into Perry's office—and Burger nearly sent Della flying as he flung wide the door of the inner room.

"Oh, do come in, gentlemen!" she said derisively, recovering her balance; and she would have gone out, but Burger caught hold of her arm.

"Wait a minute!" he rasped. "I want to talk to you, too! Now, listen, Mason!"

"Splendid work, Burger!" jeered Perry, "and let me be the first to congratulate you. I can see by your face that you've got it all solved!"

"Where's Douglas Keene?" the District Attorney bellowed at him.

"I wish I knew," said Perry. "You took the question right out of my mouth."

"Mason, you're up to your tricks again!"

"Della," said Perry innocently. "what does the gentleman mean?"

"Why did you take that cat to her apartment last night?"

"Why," began Della, "he didn't—"

"Now, there's no use lying!" the District Attorney shouted at her. "My men searched your apartment this morning, after you'd left. I have the cat in my office." He turned to Perry again. "Where did you get that cat, and why did you try to hide it?"

"Just a minute, Mr. Burger," protested Perry. "Can't a gentleman give a lady a cat without being browbeaten right here in his own office?"

"I'm not trying to browbeat you. I—er—"

"My 'phone's ringing," Perry pointed to the instrument on his desk. "Do you mind if my secretary answers?"

The District Attorney shook his head, and Della went to the telephone.

"Mason," stormed Burger, "you know where Douglas Keene is, and if you don't turn him over by noon I'll have you disbarred!"

"Mr. Mason," said Della, "it's your Aunt Effie."

"Oh, my Aunt Effie? Excuse me, won't you?" Perry took the telephone, July 3rd, 1937.

and the voice of Douglas Keene sounded in his left ear.

"When I got back I saw the papers," it said, "and I 'phoned Wilma. She said I should call Mr. Mason."

"Yes, I am very busy right now, dear," said Perry. "Yes, you see, the District Attorney is here with one of his great big detectives. You—er—you understand, don't you?"

"I get you, Mr. Mason," was the almost immediate response. "I'm at the corner of Tenth and Alameda, in a drug store. No cops in sight."

"Oh, that's awful, Aunt Effie!" said Perry in a sympathetic tone. "Why, yes, dear—of course. You stay right there and I'll come over to you."

He put down the telephone.

"Poor thing's had an accident," he said. "Trying to curl her hair with a curling-iron last night and burned herself badly. She's having hysterics. I'll have to go over and calm her down, and you'd better help me, Della. You don't mind, do you, gentlemen?"

He put on his hat and caught hold of Della's arm, and a few minutes later they were in a taxicab travelling along Hill Street in the direction of Tenth Street. Ninth Street was passed, and Della looked back.

"Burger's following you!" she exclaimed.

"Bless his heart," said Perry complacently, "of course he is!"

"You and your cats! You'll probably end up in gaol!"

"Lot of interesting people in gaol, Della."

Tenth Street was reached, and the cab turned into it. The drug store on the corner of Alameda Street loomed up on the right.

"You'd better hurry!" said Della. "They're close behind!"

"I know it," Perry signalled to the driver to stop outside the drug store, but he waited on the pavement till the District Attorney arrived in a squad car with Holcomb beside him.

"Hallo, Burger!" he said with a flip of his hand. "I thought you'd lost me for a minute! Just going in to get some medicine for my Aunt Effie. Oh, say, you'd better not double-park—you're apt to get a ticket."

He dived into the drug store, and Della, still in the taxicab, did her best to delay the District Attorney.

"He's so good to his relatives, Mr. Burger," she said. "You can't imagine."

Douglas Keene emerged from a telephone-box inside the drug store as Perry hastened towards it, and his face was white and drawn.

"Oh, Mr. Mason," he began agitatedly, "I—"

Perry gripped his arm.

"Hallo, George," he said to the proprietor of the place, "can I use your prescription-room?"

"Sure, Perry, help yourself," was the reply; and Perry bundled Douglas into a region of bottles and measures and pestles and mortars, where there was no one to overhear their conversation.

"I didn't do it, Mr. Mason," blurted Douglas. "I swear I didn't!"

"S-s-s-sh!" hissed Perry. "I know—I know. Tell me exactly what happened. Louise de Voc left a message at your rooming-house, didn't she?"

"Yes. She—she—she said she had something important to tell me. When I got to her place I—I found her dead on the floor."

"Anyone see you?"

"Yes, th—that's why I got panicky."

"Did you touch the body?"

"No." Douglas shivered.

"Now, don't lie to me! How did your suit get so bloody?"

"Why, I don't know. I—I—"

"Your landlord said you had a visitor yesterday. Who was it?"

"Oh, it must have been after I'd left! I went home and packed some things, and then I got scared they'd pin something on me, and I beat it."

"Listen, the District Attorney is outside, and I'm going to turn you over to him in a minute. Tell me—"

"But I didn't do it!" Douglas howled.

"That's up to me to prove! Will you relax, please, Keene? Take it easy, and tell me just this. You went to the Laxter house to get the cat. At what time did you leave?"

"Bout eleven."

"Were you in Ashton's room?"

"Yes."

"See anyone?"

"No one."

"And you took the cat with you—is that it?"

"Yes, I—I took him to Wilma's. But what's Clinker got to do with this ghastly business?"

"Clinker, my boy, is going to save your life!"

The District Attorney had entered the shop and had spoken to its proprietor. He strode into the prescription-room, and he glared at Perry, who was using a telephone on the bench in there.

"Well, what are you doing here?" he barked.

"Meet my client, Douglas Keene," said Perry calmly; and then, into the telephone: "Hallo! That the news editor of the 'Dispatch'? Do you want a scoop? This is Perry Mason speaking."

He glanced at the astounded District Attorney over his shoulder and saw that he was still staring at Douglas Keene.

"This is how it goes," he said. "While the police and the District Attorney's office were completely baffled as to the Laxter killings, Perry Mason, noted criminal lawyer, to-day—at noon—surrendered Douglas Keene, who will stand trial. That's all!"

"Douglas Keene," said the District Attorney harshly, "I arrest you—"

"Don't be so formal, Burger," Perry interrupted. "Just call him Aunt Effie!"

The Man Who Wasn't Dead

DOUGLAS KEENE was charged with the murder of Louise de

Voc instead of that murder of the caretaker, and the case came up for hearing at the Municipal Court a few days later. The District Attorney, in opening for the prosecution, explained that this preliminary hearing was to determine whether there were sufficient grounds to hold the prisoner on a charge of first-degree murder of the woman, and whether other charges should be preferred against him.

"In order to show motive," he stated, "it will be necessary for us to introduce evidence relating to the murder of Charles Ashton."

The judge, a lean-faced man of very stern appearance, inquired if there were any objections to this procedure on the part of the defence.

"We'll make our objections at the proper time," Perry Mason replied.

Detective-Sergeant Holcomb was called to the witness-stand and gave evidence concerning the manner in which he had found the dead body of the nurse. Asked if he had found anything at the scene of the crime, he did not mention the revolver, but spoke of

the broken crutch, which, he said, was covered with blood.

"How did the deceased meet her death?" asked the District Attorney.

"She'd been beaten over the head with some blunt object, and the skull was fractured," was the reply.

From ten o'clock in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon—except during an interval for luncheon—one witness after another was examined and cross-examined, while Douglas Keene sat with compressed lips at Perry Mason's table in the well of the court. Then Frank Oafley, asked by the District Attorney if anyone outside the immediate family knew of the Koltzdorf diamonds, replied that Douglas Keene knew about them.

"He told me he thought they might be concealed in the crutch," he added.

"Thank you," said Burger, and turned to Perry with an air of triumph. "Your witness!"

Perry walked over to the witness-stand.

"Mr. Oafley," he said, "your hands were pretty badly scratched that night you were digging for the diamonds, weren't they?"

"Yes," admitted Oafley. "There was a rose-hush near by—a very thorny one. The scratches were caused by the thorns."

"You're sure they weren't caused by a cat?"

"Of course not!" cried Oafley. "Ridiculous! Clinker wasn't there!"

"How did you know Clinker wasn't there? Did you look for him?"

For a moment Oafley seemed to be at a loss for words. Then:

"It's already been testified that Keene took the cat away!" he blurted.

Dr. Jacobs, the coroner, was questioned by Mason concerning his examination of the body taken from the grave of Peter Laxter, and gave it as his opinion that the man had been dead for many hours before the fire started.

"You made your examination at the request of the District Attorney, didn't you?" said Perry. "At my request, what further examination did you make?"

"I had X-ray photographs taken of the hip-bone."

"What did you find?"

"I found no evidence of any broken bones."

The doctor had just left the witness-stand when a Western Union messenger squeezed his way towards the well of the court and a telegram was handed to Perry. It had been sent off from Kansas City, and it ran:

"Man posing as Watson Clammert, driving 1935 Buick, arrested to-day. Car contains suitcase with million dollars currency.—Chief of Police, Kansas City."

Perry advanced towards the judge's bench, waving the telegram.

"Your Honour," he said, "I ask for an adjournment. I've just received news of an arrest that will blow this case wide open!"

The District Attorney sprang up to object. He contended that far too much time had been wasted already on irrelevant matters.

"The point is well taken," decided the judge. "Mr. Mason, has this person anything to do with the specific murder we are investigating? I refer to the murder of Louise de Voe, of course."

"Most decidedly!" declared Perry.

"Well, how much time do you want?"

"Until ten to-morrow morning, your Honour, I'll have the suspect brought here by plane."

The adjournment was granted, and the "mystery witness"—as the evening newspapers described the man arrested by the Kansas City Police—was conveyed in custody to Los Angeles by aeroplane, reached that city at five minutes to nine in the morning, and was rushed off to the court in a squad car.

At ten o'clock, when the judge took his seat on the bench, Perry created a sensation.

"The witness I am about to call, your Honour," he said, "can be very helpful. You see, he actually killed Louise de Voe! Call Watson Clammert!"

In a silence so complete that the ticking of the clock could be heard, the clerk of the court stood up and repeated the name, and the bailiff opened a door at the side of the well.

Douglas Keene gasped, and Frank Oafley and Sam Laxter started up from their seats at the District Attorney's table; for the white-haired old man who walked in at the doorway and crossed the well to the witness-stand was Peter Laxter, very much alive!

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He moved with only the slightest trace of a limp, and as he took his seat on the stand he bestowed a grim smile upon the grandchildren who had believed him to be dead and buried. Wilma, in one of the front seats beyond the well, clasped her hands together, her eyes wide with amazement.

A buzz of excited chatter was stilled by the judge, who rapped again and again on the bench with his gavel, and then Peter Laxter was sworn in his right name. Perry walked over to the witness-stand, enjoying his triumph, and looked up at the judge.

"Your Honour," he said, "before questioning this witness, who has been considered dead for quite a while, I think it will be helpful if I go back to the night of the fire in which he was supposed to have perished and explain the chain of events which brought us to this hearing."

The judge inclined his head, and Perry began a story which was to grip the attention and the imagination of all who listened to it.

"Mr. Peter Laxter was not the invalid he seemed," he began. "His hip had healed well enough to enable him to walk long before any of the events I am about to describe took place. He knew that one, or more, of his dear relatives was attempting to asphyxiate him, and he knew that they were planning to destroy the evidence by burning the house down.

"With the aid of Ashton, the caretaker, he substituted in his bed the body of a dead vagrant named Watson Clammert. This vagrant had been dead for twenty-four hours, and was in the city mortuary when the body was claimed by Ashton, who established himself as the dead man's half-brother. It was conveyed to Peter Laxter's bed-room in a chest.

"While Peter Laxter's bed-room was being filled with poisonous fumes, Ashton helped his master to escape in a car.

"Now, prior to his supposed death, Peter Laxter had sold stocks and bonds valued at over a million dollars. This money was placed in a safety deposit box under the name of Watson Clammert, but the Koltzdorf diamonds were hidden in the caretaker's crutch. Peter Laxter remained in hiding at the General Hospital for a while, under the name of Watson Clammert, visited at intervals by his faithful servant, then disappeared.

"Now we know that on the night of the twenty-third Douglas Keene went to the Laxter residence to get the cat, and that Ashton was not in the house. Keene left just after eleven with the cat, but Ashton's death occurred at ten-thirty. Where was Ashton?"

For a moment Perry paused dramatically, and he looked across at the two grandsons.

"Ashton," he said, "had gone to Louise de Voe's apartment-house. Peter Laxter was hidden in the shadows outside it, and saw him go in. Frank Oafley and Louise de Voe had just been married. Whether it was a love match, or whether they'd married so that they could not testify against each other, is immaterial. They got rid of the parson as quickly as they could, because they had an appointment with Ashton. They were convinced the diamonds were concealed in his crutch!

"The Reverend Thomas Stillwell came out from the building, got into his car, and had the little accident of which we've already heard. Meanwhile, up in Louise de Voe's apartment, Ashton had accused the two of contriving his employer's death, and very foolishly had boasted that the diamonds were in his crutch. The nurse caught hold of him, and Frank Oafley snatched away the crutch, knocked the caretaker down, and beat the life out of him.

"After that the crutch was broken in two, and the diamonds were shaken out of a hollow in its stem."

Perry looked up at the judge.

"That, your Honour," he said, "occurred at ten-thirty. The question now arises, how did the body of Ashton get back into his own room?"

"Quite simply! The apartment was on the second floor. Oafley, a powerful man, picked up the body of Ashton, lifted it out of the bath-room window, and carried it down the fire-escape and into his car. He drove back to the house, and at the back of it lowered the body on to Ashton's own bed, which was directly under the window.

"But where did the muddy cat tracks on the counterpane and body come from? Clinker had been taken away by Keene. The answer is that Oafley found a strange cat and made the tracks

himself. In doing so he was badly scratched, and he sent himself a telegram to furnish an alibi, and pretended to dig under a rosebush to explain the scratches."

Frank Oafley shifted uncomfortably in his seat at the District Attorney's table. He knew that scores of eyes were upon him.

"Now in the meantime," Perry went on. "Louise de Voe was nervously waiting for the return of her killer bridegroom. She heard the door-bell, and, putting the diamonds quickly into the top drawer of a bureau in the sitting-room, she opened the door—and was horrified to find herself face to face with the man she thought had perished in his bed!"

"Laxter wanted to know what had been done with the caretaker, and, seeing the broken crutch, he demanded the diamonds. The nurse backed away from him to the bureau, but not to get the diamonds she had placed there, but to get a gun! Peter Laxter saw the diamonds as she took the gun from the drawer. The broken crutch was in his hand, and as she turned to fire at him he struck at her with it.

"The gun fell from her hand, and she collapsed upon the floor with a broken skull. Her death, mark you, had been brought about in self-defence, but Peter Laxter was panic-stricken at what he had done, pocketed the diamonds, and hurried away. Is that right, Mr. Laxter?"

Peter Laxter nodded his head. "That's just how it happened," he said.

"We now come to my client, Douglas Keene," Perry resumed, "and his bloodstained suit. Some minutes after Peter Laxter's hasty departure, a visitor arrived for Miss de Voe. He knocked and rang, and getting no answer tried the door, which was unlocked. The visitor"—Perry flung out a hand—"was Sam Laxter, intent on having a little talk with Miss de Voe. You will remember that she had been trying to put the blame on him for his grandfather's death, and he wanted to put a stop to it.

"While he was in the apartment, horrified—no doubt—at finding her dead on the floor, Douglas Keene knocked at the door. Sam Laxter quickly hid in a cupboard, but did not quite close the door. Keene entered the room and saw the body, and his first impulse was to telephone the police, but he changed his mind and hurried from the flat.

"Sam Laxter then came out from his hiding-place. He, too, was afraid that he would be accused of this murder, and now he knew exactly where to throw the blame—and probably make it stick. He rushed out from the apartment-house, jumped into the open car which Ashton had left there, and drove to Douglas Keene's rooming-house. He cut himself with a penknife and put his own blood all over one of my client's suits!

"Now he had to find some alibi for those self-inflicted cuts; so on his way home he deliberately drove into a fire plug, smashed the car up a bit, and had all he wanted—in the shape of a broken wind-screen!"

Dramatically Perry walked away from the witness-stand to his table and put a hand on Douglas' shoulder.

"Your honour," he said, "I move for the dismissal of the charges against the defendant, Douglas Keene, and I request that Frank Oafley be held for the murder of Charles Ashton. For the death of Louise de Voe, Peter Laxter will plead self-defence—and I will defend him!"

July 2nd, 1937.

"Motion granted," said the judge without the slightest hesitation. "The case of the people versus Douglas Keene is dismissed!"

Frank Oafley was arrested in court; but Douglas Keene walked out from it a free man and a happy one, holding the arm of the girl he loved, and facing a whole battery of cameras on the steps of the building.

The District Attorney took old Peter Laxter off to his own office, but decided to charge him only with justifiable homicide, and permitted him to return to his own home. Perry Mason received the District Attorney's grudging congratulations with a grin, arranged to see his original client later in the day, and went off with Della to eat waffles at Wilma's shop in Ninth Street.

These two faced one another across a table in a recess, and a flustered woman Wilma had engaged to look after the customers in her absence served them. Wilma and Douglas were far too taken up with their own affairs to pay any attention to anyone else; they had decided to get married next day.

"I'll bet we'll have a chain of waffle shops in less than a couple of years," declared the excited young man.

Perry had been supplied with melted butter for his waffles, but Della's were unadorned.

"Don't I get any syrup?" she asked plaintively.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Della!" said Perry; and he lifted up his voice. "Service! Service, please!"

The woman help was busy on the other side of the shop, and though Douglas and Wilma were standing together at a counter only a few feet away they took no notice.

"Wonderful thing, this love!" remarked Perry.

Della shifted her feet.

"Just what are you trying to do, Mr. Mason?" she asked reprovingly.

"Do?" He gazed at her blankly.

"You're tickling my ankles!"

"I'm certainly not!"

She looked down under the table, and she burst out laughing.

"I thought it was you!" she said, and then she reached down and lifted the black cat up on to her lap.

(By permission of First National Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Ricardo Cortez and June Travis.)

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"RIDE, RANGER, RIDE!"

(Continued from page 18)

"Take the lead, Antry," was all the colonel's brief answer.

Tavibo cursed and raved when over the crest of a hill came the cavalry. It was too late to give his braves orders to gather together in a body and to try to overwhelm the cavalry by numbers.

The besieged settlers gave a whoop of joy at sight of the blue uniforms, and one of the late rangers was quick to recognise Antry on his famous horse.

"They're riding straight for us," the ranger told the leader of the train. "I know what he wants us to do. He wants us to move two of the schooners so that the cavalry can ride straight into the corral. We don't want to do it too soon or the Injuns may guess the move and try to stop Antry getting through."

"I'll get some of the men to stand by to shift those schooners," decided the leader. "They'll be under your orders."

"I'll signal Antry," the ranger cried.

The cavalry swept down on the Indians, who were disorganised by the unexpected advent of the white men. They cut a path clean through the circle. Antry glanced at the corral and saw two men waving their rifles and hats.

"Follow me, colonel," Antry shouted, and as he charged forward the two schooners were dragged away.

The cavalry rode through and did not lose a man, but Tavibo's braves had suffered heavily. The schooners were at once pushed back into place, the cavalry dismounted and rushed to take up positions, and renewed fire was poured on the attackers.

Behind some boxes the colonel, Gene Antry and Rufe Jones took cover and fired at the Indians as they flashed past on their horses.

"That's five," chuckled Rufe, reloading his gun. "Betcha I make it ten straight."

The colonel looked in horror at the scout. All his dreams of peace were being destroyed.

"But this is terrible—this is war!"

"But if we win this war then we'll have peace," answered Gene. "If only we could get that renegade Indian, Tavibo." Coolly he raised his long-barrelled pistol and fired.

"Good shooting, Gene," shouted Rufe, as a brave toppled from his horse. "This is just like the old days, ain't it, cunnel?"

Tavibo realised that he was wasting needless men and he signalled for a withdrawal. He must think out some plan of campaign. Perhaps it would be wise to make a surprise attack and try to break through. If he could once get his braves inside the corral he would make short work of the defenders.

Colonel Summerall was delighted when the Indians could be seen scurrying away to high ground.

"They're retreating, lieutenant—we've driven them off."

"Only to get their breath, cunnel." It was Rufe who replied. "Them Injuns will be back."

"I'm afraid Scout Jones is right," stated Gene.

"We seem to have lost a good many men." The colonel looked gloomy when Lieutenant Cameron came up to report that many of the wild shots of the Indians had found a mark and

that there were over thirty casualties in dead and wounded.

"Shall we be able to withstand another attack?" The colonel glanced at Antry and Scout Jones.

"Mebbo we won't have to if the rangers get here," Scout Jones stooped to peer through the wheels of a schooner.

"Rangers?" The colonel stared in amazement at Rufe and then suspiciously at Antry.

"I sent Frog to Buffalo Wells to tell Major Crosby to get here in all haste," reported Antry. "And if Frog hasn't fallen off his horse they should be here pretty soon."

Tavibo called a hurried council of his chiefs. For years he had been leading a double life. His father had been French and his mother a Comanche squaw. He had lived with white people, but all his sympathies were with the Indians; moreover, by serving the latter he hoped to make himself a very rich and powerful chief. He had learnt that the white soldiers were clever fighters, and he knew that if whites had been attacking their first object would be to break through the corral. Therefore, he ordered the braves to start once more the circle of death, whilst several bands would form up outside the circle ready to make a sudden swoop on the corral of schooners.

Tavibo's scheme met with a certain amount of success. In several places where there had been few casualties the braves were beaten off, but in weaker places they broke through. Inspired by fanatical hatred the braves attacked with reckless fury.

Lieutenant Cameron undoubtedly owed his life and his scalp to the bravery of Antry. Cameron was at one of the weaker posts, and four painted Redskins broke through. They tomahawked two of the defenders, but one fell to a shot from Cameron. The three rushed at him, and he managed to shoot one before being felled to the ground. A settler flung himself at one of the braves. The settler got his hands to the brave's throat and managed to throttle him slowly, but Cameron was on his back and only just conscious.

Out came the third brave's knife, and it was then that Gene, glancing round to see if he could help at any place where the defenders had been overcome, saw the predicament of Cameron. Gene raced to the rescue and flung himself forward to grip the brave's arm.

Gene twisted the Indian's arm and forced the fingers to open and drop the knife. A right-hand punch to the ribs surprised the Indian, and when his head came forward Gene lashed out with a left and right that settled the Indian. Gene picked up Cameron and carried him to the dip in the ground, where he left him in the hands of the women.

Gene saw that two Indians had broken through in another place and his pistol blazed, dropping one. The other, a hideous painted creature, pointed a pistol at him, but the ranger ducked and the bullet missed him. The brave whipped out a knife as Gene rushed at him.

The knife point went through Gene's sleeve and drew blood, but it did not stop the young ranger. His steel-like fingers gripped the Indian's wrist, and one of his legs went out, so that as the man was forced back he fell—that fall dragged Gene down as well, but the knife arm was twisted behind the Redskin's back. Thus he died by his own knife.

Gene stood up and was about to rush off to assist in the defence when some instinct made him pause. He knelt down and looked closely at the hideous painted face. But a yell made him look round.

"The rangers! The rangers!" came the cry.

Gene sprang to his feet and clambered up on the wheel of a schooner to get a better view. His heart thrilled as he saw a line of horsemen sweeping down on the corral.

The Indians had lost many men and had been losing heart because it was whispered that Tavibo had been killed. At any rate, he was not there to urge them on with his vehemence. The sight of another armed body of white men struck terror into their hearts. The circle broke and the braves turned their horses towards the hills. Those still trying to fight their way through the schooners turned and ran, and in most cases were shot down.

Major Crosby showed little mercy. The Indians had to be taught a lesson that would subdue them for many years to come. The rangers pursued the disorganised armies of Tavibo and routed them heavily. The braves were scattered, but thirty or forty were taken prisoner. Major Crosby gave the signal for the rangers to abandon the pursuit and to gallop back to the corral.

But Gene Antry had seen that Colonel Summerall made no further mistakes. The wounded were tended to, and the defence reorganised in case of another attack—not that Gene expected one. No one was allowed to leave the corral as many of the Indians lying out there

might not be dead and would be armed.

"Colonel," Gene touched the officer on the shoulder. "I've got something over here I'd like to show you. I think you'll be interested in this."

Gene led the colonel over to the Indian who had fallen on his own knife and died. The colonel stared down at the painted face and then glanced questioningly at the ranger.

"Is there anything peculiar about this Indian?" he asked.

"Don't you notice anything?" Gene grinned. "Don't you recognise him?"

"I've never seen the man before in my life," the colonel stated. "Doesn't look so much like the usual type. Is he a half-breed, Gene?"

"Yes, and one you have had plenty of dealings with in the past," the ranger answered. "Just watch."

Gene knelt beside the dead man and lifted the head, but no look of understanding appeared on the colonel's face until the ranger removed the feathered headdress. Then Gene rubbed some of the paint off the dead man's cheeks.

"Duval!" gasped the astounded colonel.

"Yes—or Tavibo, as the Indians call him."

Colonel Summerall was staring at Duval in bemused bewilderment when the fact that some of the schooners were being pulled away showed that the rangers had returned. Major Crosby was at their head, and close behind was Frog, who was proud of what he had done.

"Well, colonel, I'm glad to see you've still got your hair," the major said with ironic humour.

"Major, I want to apologise for the way I've acted," mumbled Colonel Summerall in subdued tones. "Texas does need the rangers."

"And I want to apologise for my attitude, colonel." Crosby jumped from his saddle and held out his hand. "Texas needs the cavalry, too."

"Danged if ye ain't both right," cried Rufe Jones, who had scant respect for his superiors, though he was a fearless fighter. "Together there ain't nothing we can't take care of. Cannel, I'll bet ye a new gun that treaty'll hold good now."

And there was much wisdom in Rufe's words, as they all knew. Both rangers and cavalymen shouted themselves hoarse as Colonel Summerall and Major Crosby gripped hands. Finally, the colonel glanced shamefacedly at Lieutenant Antry.

"I'm sorry, Gene, I guess I got you all wrong. Dixie stuck up for you all the time and she certainly was right."

It was Gene who held out his hand, and the older man gripped it gratefully.

Some months later, when there was peace and understanding between the white men and the Redskins, there was a wedding at Fort Adobe. Outside the church cavalry and rangers lined the path to the wicket gates. The rifles of the rangers were held up touching the swords of the cavalry. Down the arched aisle came Gene and Dixie, and as the carriage took them off for a happy honeymoon the rangers made the hills echo with their singing.

"Ride, ranger, ride,
From Red River to the sea
You have written history,
Ride, ranger, ride.
You're a loyal Texas son
And she needs you, every one,
Ride, ranger, ride.
For old rangers who are gone
You are pledged to carry on,
Ride, ranger, ride."

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Gene Antry and Monte Blue.)

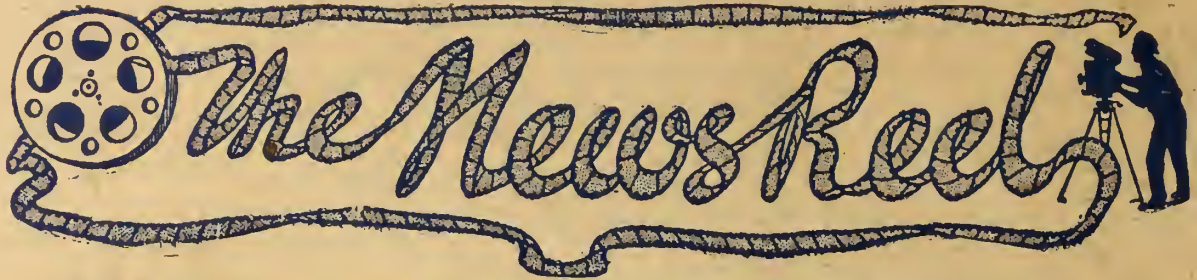
July 3rd. 1937.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE CASE OF THE BLACK CAT."—Perry Mason, Ricardo Cortez; Della Street, June Travis; Wilma Laster, Jane Bryan; Frank Oafley, Craig Reynolds; Douglas Keene, Carlyle Moore Jun.; Sam Laster, Gordon Elliott; Louise de Voe, Nedda Harrigan; Paul Drake, Garry Owen; Peter Laster, Harry Davonport; Charles Ashton, George Rosener; Dr. Jacobs, Gordon Hart; Bertrand Shuster, Clarence Wilson; District-Attorney Burger, Guy Usher; Mrs. Puley, Lotti Williams; Rev. Thomas Stillwell, Harry Hayden; Detective-Sergeant Holcomb, John Sheehan.

"RIDE, RANGER, RIDE!"—Gene, Gene Antry; Frog, Smiley Burnette; Dixie Summerall, Kay Hughes; Duval, Monte Blue; Lieutenant Cameron, George Lewis; Rufe Jones, Max Terhune; Colonel Summerall, Robert E. Homans; Major Crosby, Lloyd Whitlock.

"THE FIGHTING MARINES."—Corporal Jim Lawrence, Grant Withers; Sergeant McGowan, Adrian Morris; Frances Schiller, Ann Rutherford; Colonel Bennett, Robert Warwick; Sergeant Bob Schiller, George Lewis; Kota, Jason Robards; Captain Grayson, Pat O'Malley; Melcalf, Warner Richmond; Steinbeck, Frank Reicher; Douglas, Robert Frazer; Buchanan, Frank Glendon; Ivan, Richard Alexander; Pedro, Donald Reed; Miller, Tom London; Gibson, Max Wagner; Karlsson, Jim Corey; Pete, Ted Adams; Crowley, Stanley Blystone; Red, Milburn Stone; Captain Holmes, Lieutenant F. Adreon; Captain Henderson, Billy Arnold; Captain Drake, Lee Shumway.



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to **BOY'S CINEMA**, Room 199, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Unknown Star for £300,000 Film

An unknown player, Jon Hall, has been signed for the leading rôle in Samuel Goldwyn's £300,000 production, "The Hurricane." More than 150 actors received screen tests before Hall was selected.

Hall is a cousin of James Norman Hall, co-author of "The Hurricane," and is twenty-four years of age. He was born in Tahiti, possesses a magnificent physique and has distinguished himself as a swimmer and athlete. During the past two years he has appeared on the screen in minor rôles under the name of Lloyd Crane.

Goldwyn has also signed Dorothy Lamour to play "Marama," the native girl, opposite Hall, replacing Margo, who has withdrawn from the cast. Other featured players include Jerome Cowan, Raymond Massey, Walter Brennan and Barbara O'Neill. John Ford is directing.

Zanuck to Make "Hudson's Bay Company"

Planning an epic film about the outposts in the frozen North which made history during the pioneer days, Darryl F. Zanuck, vice-president in charge of production at 20th Century-Fox studios, has assigned Kenneth MacGowan as associate producer of "Hudson's Bay Company."

The picture, which Zanuck is scheduling as one of the studio's foremost productions for 1937, will weave into the background the story of the Hudson's Bay Company's far-flung operations in unknown wilds during the pre-revolutionary war days, and will strike the same epochal keynote as "Lloyd's of London," which depicted the rise of the famous insurance firm as set against the Battle of Trafalgar and other historic incidents.

Already working on a script for "Hudson's Bay Company" are Art

Arthur, Richard Collins and Michael Jacoby, all writers of numerous film hits in the past. Research experts also are assembling all available historic information about the company's famous trading ports.

Blow-up Specialist

For fourteen years now Art Brown has been specialising in explosions for motion-picture scenes. He can tell you to an ounce just how many pounds of dynamite will be required to blow out a shellhole ten feet in diameter and six feet deep. He can burst a load of shrapnel at any desired height.

At the moment Art is supervising the bombardment sequence of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "They Gave Him a Gun," on five hundred acres of Chatsworth land where once stood the farmhouses and terraced rice-field of "The Good Earth." And Art is in his element.

To-day he had to plant his dynamite in one hundred and twelve spots where shellholes were to form during the American advance. And he had to be sure that Spencer Tracy, Franchot Tone, and six hundred "extras" were in no danger.

First, Mr. Brown digs his hole. Then he plants in it from four to eight sticks of dynamite, depending on the desired effect. The hole is filled with sifted earth, wet down. Each hole is then marked with a numbered red sack, which photographs black and doesn't show up on the film. As long as Tracy, Tone, and the rest of the troops avoid the red sacks, as they are repeatedly instructed to do, they are in no danger.

Four keyboards operate the explosions, each key numbered to correspond with the numbers on the red sacks. At each keyboard sits one of Brown's assistants. On the side of a hill where he can see all the terrain

to be blown up Brown sits at a telephone, issuing his instructions to his four men. No charge is touched off unless he and his keyboard men can see that the troops are sufficiently far back, or in front, or to the side.

For the shrapnel bursts Brown manufactures his own bombs from a formula which he doesn't care to disclose. Like the chef who can tell you how to get the ingredients for a prize cake by adding "a pinch of this and a pinch of that," but can't give you the exact measurements, Brown has his own system, learned through experience.

The effect of machine-gun bullets is not obtained through having an expert machine-gunner shoot chips off a wall. A wire is planted in the wall with squibs attached to it at desired intervals. The squibs, none of which are copper-jacketed, because fragments of copper can cause serious injury, are fired from a keyboard as rapidly as possible to give the machine-gun effect.

In the sequence in "They Gave Him a Gun," in which Tracy and Tone take shelter behind a cemetery wall while advancing on a village, the aforementioned method was used. And it speaks well for Brown that W. S. Van Dyke, directing the picture, who makes a point of never taking a chance with an actor, has absolute faith in Brown's ability.

During fourteen years Brown has put his unique talents to use in practically every Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture which has shown any shooting, and has had no accidents. He doesn't care to discuss accidents which have occurred elsewhere, "because I can't afford to get jittery about this job. As far as I'm concerned, the cause of most accidents is carelessness. But I can't give any expert opinion, because I wasn't there when the accident occurred. I hope I never will be."



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At Dead of Night

THE hour is 2 a.m.; it is a foggy, chilly and filthy night. The whole of London seems to be sleeping, and the only sound: the dripping of water from the house-tops.

Down a street that during the day is a hive of industry comes a silent-running car. It pulls up at the kerb and two men get out, each carrying a bag. The driver remains at the wheel. "If I see a mark I'll flash me headlights," he told them.

An understanding grunt and the two men, collars turned up, hurry down the street, till they come to the side entrance of the lion of Wainwright Bros., diamond merchants. Months of scheming have obtained them a key to the lock. No one sees them enter. In the main office there is a huge safe, and to experts it is a simple matter to open and rifle the contents.

The burglars make little noise, and there is no warning from their driver. With a rich haul of diamonds they make good their escape, and only when they are hastening towards their car does a constable come round a corner and become suspicious.

"Hey, you!" the constable shouted, but he spoke in vain, because the car had roared away into the mist.

The constable had no proof, but he guessed something was wrong, and soon he found the open doors. A few minutes later, from a police-box, he was in touch with his sergeant.

"There's been a job done—27, William Street."

The police of London act swiftly, and in five minutes a police car was down at the warehouse of Wainwright Brothers. They had scarce noted the open safe when another police car arrived and Inspector Elford, from December 4th, 1937.

New Scotland Yard, was on the scene.

There are news-dogs that are on duty all night, ready to rush out after a story, because such things as fires, burglaries and murders often happen during the dark hours. These same men, or their brothers, hang around Scotland Yard, half asleep, yet ready to leap to their feet if there is work to be done. It was to these news-dogs Superintendent Marshall and Inspector Elford were talking less than an hour after the robbery.

"Inspector Elford has given you all he knows about the robbery," stated the superintendent. He was clean-cut, tall and aggressively capable. "The diamonds are worth roughly about five thousand pounds. There are one or two clues, and we hope to trace the burglars."

Perched casually on the edge of the superintendent's table was a curious-looking fellow. He wore an old mac and had a bowler hat on the side of his head. No one could call Joshua Collie good looking, but his eyes were sharp, shrewd and alert, and the wide forehead did not belie his intelligence.

"Don't you think it would be more interesting to trace the diamonds, superintendent?" he asked with a pronounced Scottish accent.

"What do you mean?"

"Just that you might land bigger game than a jewel thief if you could follow those diamonds to-night."

The superintendent frowned heavily at the reporter and announced to the inspector that "That would be all for the moment."

And when Collie said it would be interesting to follow the diamonds he was right. At four o'clock in the morning a powerful limousine stopped along a deserted part of the Embank-

ment, and from across the street one of the three burglars went across to the car. A muffled figure sat in the back of the car. A white hand appeared and took the silk handkerchief containing the diamonds, and the gems were quickly surveyed by means of a torch. The white hand passed the handkerchief and its valuable contents back to the burglar.

"Fifteen hundred, guv'nor," hissed the burglar.

On the steamed rear window the white hand reached over and threw the figures 800. The burglar began to argue, and the white hand wrote 600.

"But, guv'nor, I've got to split three ways with the boys. Can't you make it seven hundred?"

The white hand at once wrote "No."

"Then I won't do it. I know a man in the City who'll pay more than a thousand pounds for this lot," the burglar cried in hoarse tones. "Why —" The engine of the car awoke to life, and the window began to rise. "Here, wait a minute—wait a minute—I'll take the cash."

Out came the hand and took the handkerchief. A moment later a number of notes passed to the burglar, then with a roar the car driven by the Squeaker vanished along the Embankment.

In a side street the burglar met his two assistants.

"Six hundred quid," cried the driver, "Why do we have to deal with this dirty swine?"

"Because he knows we did the job," cried the man who had bargained with the Squeaker. "If we didn't sell he'd turn us over to the police."

"And six hundred quid is better than a cell in Pentonville," snarled the other burglar.

"Hasn't anybody ever tried to follow him?" asked the driver, who was new to London's underworld.

"Nobody who's alive to talk about it," he was told. "And he'll get away with this till the day he meets a man who knows him."

The three cheap crooks slunk away to their various haunts. Now, there are haunts that never seem to be asleep, and if they are, then it is during the day. One of the most fashionable and popular of these places was the Leopard Club.

A man, swarthy, slight of build and no more than thirty, sat at a table by himself. He smoked his cigarette jerkily, as if he were nervous, and from time to time he kept on glancing at his watch. It was just after four, and he had work to do before the dawn. The manager appeared, and with an oily smile announced that Miss Tamara would entertain the company. The man leaned eagerly forward and his eyes turned towards the stairs down which the star must come.

Tamara was a dark, very beautiful Russian. The revolution had driven her parents from the land of their birth, and with Tamara they had settled in Germany. The child had shown an amazing aptitude for dancing, and when she took up a stage career had won many hearts. Tamara had come to London and lost her heart to Larry Graeme.

The star could sing almost as well as she could dance, and Larry watched her entranced. It was for her sake that to-night he was going to take the biggest, rashest gamble of his life. Many times did Tamara glance across at Larry's table and give him a fleeting smile. When her act was finished he hastened to her dressing-room.

"Larry, I'm so happy to see you," Slim arms went round him and held

him close. "You'll have supper with me?"

"I can't stay, Tommie." Larry used his pet name for her. "Please don't look at me like that, darling, but this is big business. Big enough to end all our worries if it works."

"To-morrow night?"

He kissed her.

"Supper?" he asked.

Tamara nodded happily.

"Yes, and come early. Good luck, darling."

"I need it!" he said tensely, kissed her almost roughly, and then hastened from the room.

At a quarter to five a figure climbed through a window of an impressive mansion in Mayfair. Larry had been to this mansion on many occasions as a guest, now he was entering it in the dead of night as a burglar. By clever scheming he had learnt the combination of a small wall safe which contained some valuable pearls. He made no noise, and with fingers that were steady he opened up the safe. The mist and gloom had gone, and now a watery moon gave a ghostly light to the big room. When Larry got to the window he held up a long string of beautiful pearls, then with a jubilant chuckle he clambered out of the window. It was not till the morning that the theft was discovered, and curiously enough, one of the newshounds who failed to pick up the scoop was Collie. Field, the editor, was furious, especially as his reporter was usually first on a story. He was scowling at the "Bulletin," which had splash headings announcing "£50,000 Jewel Robbery—Mrs. Van Rissik's Jewels Stolen," when he turned to find his errant reporter beaming at him.

"That story has been on the street for two hours!" The editor flung down the paper. "Where've you been all night? I tried every place I could think, even your home."

"Was I not there?" mocked the reporter, who was the most independent in Fleet Street. "Have you seen the grand story in the 'Bulletin' about the jewel robbery?"

"I'm glad you like it, Mr. Collie," the editor said with bitter sarcasm. "But you're paid to cover crime stories, not read about 'em."

"But I've been working all night. Mr. Field, on a real story—about a certain man who buys stolen jewels and sometimes squeaks on the robber to the police."

"You've been chasing the Squeaker for months, Collie, but I can't print guesses." The editor spoke with growing impatience. "Right now I've got two million readers to please, and they'd like to know who stole the Van Rissik pearls."

Collie chuckled.

"Aye! So would Scotland Yard." He went to his desk still laughing in that maddening way that made his editor so furious.

The Down-and-out

THAT morning there was a parade of undesirables and suspects at New Scotland Yard, and Superintendent Marshall, accompanied by a sergeant, was looking over the unhealthy and dirty specimens of humanity parading before them.

"What've you brought me here for, guv'nor?" groaned, one unshaven ruffian. "I ain't done no jewel robbery."

"No?" instantly retorted the sergeant. "But not so long ago you did a five-year stretch for one."

If the sergeant was doubtful of any of these suspects he would hug the man out of the line and question him about his movements during the last twenty-four hours. The records of nearly every man the sergeant knew, and they



"Just a moment, sergeant," said Superintendent Marshall. "I'd like to talk to this man myself. Take him along to my office."

had been rounded up from haunts well known to the police.

"What do you know about the Van Rissik affair?" the sergeant suddenly demanded of a broad-shouldered fellow who kept his eyes studiously on the ground, as if ashamed to be there. Like the others, he was unshaven, but though ragged and down-at-heel, he seemed cleaner.

"Just a moment, sergeant." The superintendent shot out a restraining hand. "I'd like to talk to this man myself. Take him along to my office."

The man shot a quick glance at the superintendent, but the latter was seemingly interested in the rest of the parade.

"Come on!" gruffly ordered the sergeant.

The man was conducted to a large, well lighted, but rather bare room. The panelled walls, the large desk, the few severe chairs gave one the impression of a court. The door opened and in strode Marshall.

"I'm glad you recognised me, superintendent," the man said with a twisted grin.

The officer studied the ragged figure disapprovingly.

"I'm surprised I ever did," he stated tersely.

"You, Barrabal, one of the best men I ever had—picked up as a suspect in a jewel robbery!" He motioned to a chair. "What have you been doing with yourself?"

"It's a long story."

"Tell me."

"Well, my last assignment was in India—you know all about that," stated the one-time Yard man. "I started drinking and let you down—I think India rather got on my nerves, but that's no excuse. After that I went home to Canada. And now—" He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, here I am."

"Are you still drinking?"

Barrabal grimed.

"At the moment only by invitation."

"Why don't you give it up?"

"I tried that once for six months—it took me two years to get over it. How are things going with you, sir?"

The superintendent stood up and walked to the window.

"Not very good," he said over his shoulder. "I'm worried."

"Worried?"

"Yes!" The superintendent came back from the window and stood staring down at Barrabal, who faced him quite fearlessly. "What are you doing now?"

"Looking for a job."

"Tried the detective agencies?"

"I won't chase any lonesome husbands—not after ten years in the Yard."

The superintendent went back to his chair.

"You were a good detective. I've missed you badly." He paused and studied Barrabal closely for some moments. "As a matter of fact, I could give you a job right now, but there's no room here for a man who only wants to play."

An eager glint came into the tired eyes.

"I've taken a long time to learn that, sir," he said humbly.

"Barrabal, do you think you could cut out drinking if I were to give you another chance?"

"I'd cut out breathing for that."

"All right." The superintendent's mind was made up by that answer. "There's a man in this town who's been running us around in circles for months."

"You mean the Squeaker?"

"Yes. He's the cleverest criminal December 4th, 1937.

in London. He runs the underworld, and he's getting more dangerous every day. Now, if you were to get him—"

"Then I get my job back?"

"You can have the whole Yard!"

A rare smile appeared on the hard face, to vanish in a flash. "Only remember, there must be no more drinking."

When Barrabal walked out of the Yard he wore exactly the same clothes, and though he had money in his pockets he did not shave or make himself respectable. He headed towards the docks, and many a time he glanced covertly at public-houses, but resisted the temptation.

Late that night a car pulled up on the Embankment, and Larry Graeme walked across the road. Inside was a muffled figure only faintly discernible. Shrewd eyes stared at Larry.

"Are you looking for a valuable silk scarf?" It was the pass sentence he had been given.

A white hand wrote on the steamed side window "RISSIK."

"Right!" Larry glanced round and then fished out a handkerchief, which he half-opened to reveal the contents. "The Van Rissik pearls. They're worth fifty thousand, but you can have them for twenty thousand for a quick sale."

The Squeaker wrote on the window: "10,000."

"Ten thousand!" Larry said angrily. "Do you think I'm crazy? Why, you can sell them anywhere for twice what I'm asking."

The hand rubbed out the ten thousand and wrote twelve thousand.

"I'm not giving the stuff away!" Larry retorted.

The only answer of the Squeaker was to draw two definite lines under the twelve thousand.

"You can have it, but not at that price."

The Squeaker rubbed out all the writing and roared his engine to life. Now that the moisture was off the window Larry could see the driver more clearly. He jammed his face close against the window.

"I know who you are!" he cried hoarsely. "Why, you're—" He fell back as the car roared away. He stood there staring after the vanished car. His mind was a turmoil. He knew the Squeaker. What was this discovery worth to him?

Larry Graeme went back to his comfortable flat, for which he owed considerable rent, and pondered the matter. He gave a start when his flat bell rang shrilly. Knowing the methods of the Squeaker, he jumped at once to conclusions. Cautiously he walked to the door, and the hand in the pocket of his dinner suit held a gun. He decided that if it were the Squeaker he would come alone. Graeme grimed—now it would be his turn to name the terms. He unlocked the door and stood back.

A ragged, unshaven tramp lounged into the room.

"Hallo, Larry?"

"Who are you?"

Barrabal grimed.

"Is that a nice way to talk to an old friend?" He looked longingly at the whisky on a small table.

"Why, it's Barrabal!" gasped Graeme. "You've changed a bit. What do you want here?"

The detective took his eyes reluctantly away from the whisky.

"A little information," he said with just a slight touch of significance.

"Oh, so you're back with the Yard?"

"No, but I hope to be. I thought you might give me a helping hand."

"Why should I want to help a copper?" harshly demanded Graeme.

"Because you'll be helping yourself." Barrabal glanced at the whisky, then resolutely away. "Larry, I want to get back into the Yard, but I can't do it unless I get one man—the Squeaker!"

The eyes of Larry Graeme narrowed. "Well, what's that got to do with me?" he demanded harshly.

"I know the game you're in, and I know how you get rid of the stuff. Sooner or later you've got to sell to the Squeaker, and every person who's ever dealt with him has wound up behind the bars—or worse. I'd like to make a deal with you."

"You're talking to the wrong man, Barrabal. I don't know the Squeaker, and if I did I wouldn't talk." Larry had decided that giving information to Barrabal would be foolish, when he could demand thousands for his silence. "I'm not running any risks I don't have to," he added.

"Then you'd better keep away from the Squeaker. Guess I'll be going."

"Good-night! Thanks for the call!" Larry grinned mockingly. "And give my best to Superintendent Marshall."

Then Barrabal returned to dockland and sought out a certain humble public-house. He walked casually into the place, and nobody took any notice of him. He leaned against the bar and ordered a beer. Very slowly and cautiously the ex-detective glanced round until he found the man he sought sitting at a table in a corner, busily writing.

Very quietly he went across the room and took the vacant chair.

"Hallo, Collie! I'm Barrabal," he said as the other looked up.

There was surprise in the eyes of Joshua Collie, but pleasure as well. He held out his hand.

"Glad to see ye again, Barrabal. What are you doing here?"

"Looking for work."

"What's wrong with Scotland Yard?"

"Nothing's wrong with the Yard—that's why I'm here. Can you help me?"

"I'll try to."

"Good. Have a drink?"

"Thanks."

Barrabal pushed across the beer he had bought.

"Take it—I'm off the stuff." He leaned forward and lowered his voice. "I understand there's a man round here who goes out of his way to help people who are down and out. Doesn't object to beards, clothes, past reputations. As a matter of fact, they tell me he's particularly kind to men with criminal records. Who is he?"

"Mr. Frank Sutton. A very respectable business man."

"Where is he?"

"At A.G. Stedman & Co. He's their general manager."

"Could you give me a note to him?"

"I'll be glad to." A slow smile came to Collie's lips as he watched the unshaven man closely. Collie was a very cute reporter. "But you've no criminal record, Barrabal."

It was the other's turn to smile.

"I might have by to-night," was his answer.

The Good Samaritan

A fuzzy-haired girl sat at a table in the outer office of Stedman & Co.

She dealt with the phone and all inquiries, and also did a certain amount of secretarial work. She considered herself overworked, and on this fine morning was not in a very sweet temper.

"No, Mr. Stedman's not in," she snapped into the telephone. "I don't know when he'll be back. No, you won't be able to see him at all to-day. Well, I can't do anything about that."

Mr. Sutton hasn't any jobs. Oh, well, that's your worry."

"That wasn't very kind of you, Milly."

The girl looked round nervously.

"I'm sorry, Miss Stedman, but they're always pestering," she explained.

Carol Stedman could never be called beautiful, but she had pleasant features, a lovely skin, and a slender figure, added to which she dressed very well. Though the only daughter of rich and adoring parents, she was unspoiled. She was carrying a tray—it was a flag day in aid of a big hospital.

"Well, you've got a job and they haven't," Carol answered reprovingly. "But you ought to listen to what they've got to say."

"But you should see some of the people who come in here," argued Milly, a spot that wasn't make-up showing in her cheeks.

"But you can't judge people by their clothes, Milly." The kindly Carol shook her dainty head. "You've got to talk to them to find out what they're really like."

"Well, what would you like me to do, Miss Stedman?"

"Well, next time somebody asks for Mr. Sutton, see how nice you can be."

"Yes, Miss Stedman."

Milly smiled angrily as Carol walked across to Frank Sutton's room and went in, closing the door.

A few minutes later the swing-doors opened to admit the unshaven wreck of a man—Barrabal.

"Is Mr. Sutton in?"

"No. Not at the moment."

"I'll call back later, then."

"Oh, no!" Milly smiled in her honest manner. "Please don't go. I'm quite sure he'll be in very shortly. Would you care to wait?"

"Thank you. Shall I wait outside?"

"Oh, please go right into Mr. Sutton's office!"

"Thank you."

Milly saw him open the door and go in, shutting it behind him, then she held her sides with laughter. That ought to teach Miss Carol Stedman a lesson.

A young lady had been arranging the flowers in the luxurious office, and she had glauced round, expecting to see her fiancé. Instead she saw one of the most down-at-heel tramps she had ever seen.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" stammered Barrabal. "But the young lady outside asked me to wait in here. If she did the wrong thing, I'll—"

"No!" quickly spoke Carol, and smiled. "She did exactly what I told her to. Won't you sit down. Mr. Sutton won't be long."

"Are you his secretary?"

"Oh, we're friends."

"Oh, maybe you can tell me what I want to know! I'm Captain John Leslie. Has Mr. Sutton any jobs open?"

"No, I don't think so." She gave him a searching look. "Well, what sort of a job did you want?"

"Oh, I've done practically everything!"

"What, exactly?" Carol demanded, and took a chair close to the tattered wreck.

Barrabal, having tried many jobs since leaving the Yard, was able to talk about life on a freighter with a great deal of knowledge. He narrated some of his own adventures when seeking work in Canada in a manner that interested the girl immensely. She looked up with a start to find that they had been talking for nearly an hour. She murmured an excuse and went into the outer office. Milly just gaped at

Very quietly he went across the room and took the vacant chair.

"Hello, Collie. I'm Barrabal," he said, as the other looked up.



her—Miss Stedman was beyond comprehension.

"Where is Mr. Sutton, Milly?"

"I suppose he's still at lunch, miss," Milly answered. "His habits aren't regular. You never know when he's coming back. Now, last Friday—"

The swing-doors opened, and a very immaculate, good-looking young man entered. He smiled broadly to see Carol.

"Hallo, Carol! How long have you been waiting?"

"So far back I can't remember."

"Sorry, I was down at the dock. What can I do for you?"

Carol picked up the tray which she had deposited on a chair and the money-can.

"First of all, your good deed for the day."

"That's easy." Sutton placed a coin in the tin, and she pinned a flower to his lapel. "Anything else?" he asked, when she stood back to admire the effect.

"I want to ask you a question."

"Fire away."

All this while Carol was standing in such a way that she barred his way to his own office.

"Thanks!" she smiled at him. "Suppose, Frank, you'd been out of a job for months, absolutely broke, your clothes were shabby, and you—you couldn't even afford a shave. You'd still be the same Frank Sutton, wouldn't you?"

"Why, yes, of course, dear." He knitted his brows. "But what are you getting at?"

Carol smiled mysteriously and went to the door of his room.

"Frank, I want you to meet Captain Leslie."

"Well, I never!" gasped Milly when the door had closed. "What a cheek she's got."

Frank Sutton looked the tramp up and down. Not the first down and out Carol had befriended.

"Will you tell Mr. Sutton everything

you told me?" Carol looked at Barrabal, then turned to Sutton.

"Thank you, Frank, now I must get back to my flag-selling. Help him if you can."

"Excuse me a minute." Sutton indicated a seat to Barrabal. He followed Carol out of the room, closing the door. Milly pretended to work. "What is all this about?"

"You'll know when you've heard his story. He's managed shipping offices, captained ships, and been all over the world."

"But he looks like a tramp."

"He doesn't talk like one. You will try and give him a chance, won't you, Frank?"

"I'll try."

"You're a darling!" She laughed happily, and, standing on tiptoe, kissed him lightly on the lips. "See you for dinner."

Early that afternoon Joshua Collie's small son came running into his father's den.

"Daddy, daddy, there's an awful looking man at the door with a funny beard on his face."

"On his face?" Collie gave a chuckle. "Now, isn't that a peculiar place for a man to have a beard!" He pushed back his chair and went out into the hall. "Well, well, well, I didn't expect to see you so soon. Did you get a job?"

"I did," answered Barrabal. "That's why I dropped in to thank you."

"It was nothing. I thought Sutton would be the man for you." He took Barrabal's arm. "Come on in and sit down. Come and meet the boy."

The two men chatted idly about various matters of the day when the phone bell shrilled. Collie gave a nod, and his son rushed over to answer it. The boy started back in alarm. It sounded as if someone were being murdered.

"It's Mr. Field down at the newspaper," laughed Collie, and turned in December 4th, 1937.

his chair. "As soon as he stops talking, tell him I'll be down right away."

"Your friend seems a bit excited, doesn't he?"

Barrabal raised his eyebrows. "Oh, it's only the boss!" Collie chuckled. "You see, I promised him a story"—he glanced at Barrabal—"on the Squeaker. A thousand words, and I can't even think of one. You wouldn't know anything about the Squeaker, would you?"

"Well, only the talk down at the docks. You know you can't roll around in mud for six months without getting some dirt in your ear." Barrabal paused for a moment to look round the room. "You're a lucky fellow, Collie. Lovely home and a fine family. They'd miss you a lot if anything went wrong, wouldn't they?"

The laughter faded from the reporter's face. There was a warning note in Barrabal's voice.

"What d'you mean by that?" Collie asked tensely.

"Don't let your job drag you into something that you can't get out of," Barrabal got up and placed his hand on Collie's shoulder. The ex-detective's eyes were grave and serious. "The Squeaker moves in a different world from this, and a much more dangerous one. Good-night!"

Scotland Yard Warns Sutton

FRANK SUTTON was shown at five o'clock that day into the office of Inspector Elford.

"You sent for me, inspector?" Sutton stated.

"How do you do?" The inspector shook hands and pulled forward a chair. "We'd like you to help us."

Sutton nodded and took the proffered seat.

"Gladly," he agreed.

"Do you know a man called Frank Weston?"

Sutton pondered this for a moment.

"No, no, I'm afraid I don't."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite."

The inspector picked up his peaked helmet and stood up.

"I'm just going to check over his fingerprints," he stated. "Perhaps you'd like to come along, Mr. Sutton. You might find it interesting."

"I'd like to very much."

"Good." Elford opened the door for his visitor to pass. "Ever been in the Yard before?" he asked when they were crossing a quadrangle.

"No," Sutton said with an amused smile. "But I've always wanted to."

They went up some steps and along a corridor into a huge room that seemed to be filled with steel cabinets. A number of clerks were busy at desks. Elford waved his hand towards the walls and the cabinets.

"All the male fingerprints are filed here," he explained. "Women are in an adjoining room—about six million of them."

"I see."

"Nothing very romantic, but still we get results." The inspector glanced round and called curtly: "Rogers!"

"Yes, sir?"

A clerk got up from a desk and hurried forward.

From his pocket Elford produced a slip of paper. "Check that print for me, will you?" he requested.

"Very good, sir."

Rogers looked at the paper and at once went across to the wall, where he slid out a long steel drawer and began to run his fingers through the contents. Inspector Elford turned to Frank Sutton.

"You see a lot of our work lies now in preventing crime—shutting the door

December 4th, 1937.

before the horse is stolen," he remarked.

"I'll be glad to co-operate with you in any way I can, inspector."

"Thank you."

Rogers approached with a large card and handed it to the inspector.

"Here we have Mr. Weston's other names," he explained to his visitor. "Maybe you know one of them. George Frinton, Sir Charles Minter, Harry Stormer, and Captain John Leslie."

"Why, yes," Sutton exclaimed. "That's the name of the man I engaged only a few hours ago."

The inspector said "Ah!" in a knowing sort of way, and then added:

"He probably told you he was an ex-Canadian Army officer, a bit down on his luck, of course, and he has a batch of very impressive references."

"How on earth do you know?"

"Take a look at this."

The inspector handed Sutton the card and pointed. There was a picture of Barrabal, No. 7045, his various names, descriptions, and the record that he served two years in Montreal for forgery.

"My word, he did eighteen months at Pentonville for embezzlement," read out Sutton, running his finger down the record. "And three years at Parkhurst for receiving stolen property. Dangerous." He frowned thoughtfully and looked at the inspector. "But Leslie was sent to me by Joshua Collie. You know, the 'Post Courier' man. That's most peculiar."

"Collie's a most peculiar man." The inspector answered significantly. "He has contacts that even the police know nothing about."

"What would you like me to do?"

"We can't advise you, Mr. Sutton; we can only tell you the facts. Weston or Leslie or whatever he calls himself hasn't been through our hands for four years, and, of course, he may be going straight. On the other hand, he has had three convictions, and I should advise you to keep your eye on him."

"Thank you for warning me, inspector." Frank Sutton gave the officer a grateful glance. "I'll think it over. Good-day."

That evening Sutton called for Carol and took her to dinner at the Leopard Club. The girl was so happy because she had done very well with her flowers, and especially because she had obtained a job for Captain Leslie.

When Carol mentioned Leslie's name he lingered his chin and looked uncomfortable and embarrassed, so she asked him if anything were wrong.

"Well, I wasn't going to tell you this, Carol," he said at last. "But your Captain Leslie has a very bad criminal record. Scotland Yard sent for me this afternoon and told me all about it—aliases, prison sentences. I was never so surprised in my life."

"But are you sure it's the same Captain Leslie?" demanded Carol, who looked horrified by this information.

"My dear, I saw his photograph." Sutton gave a resigned shrug of his shoulders. "Don't know quite what to do about it. He seems a smart man to me. The police have nothing against him for the last four years. I've half a mind to take a chance on him. It's up to you, Carol, to give the deciding word."

Larry Graeme was at the Leopard Club that night, and Tamara was worried by his white, drawn face and restless manner.

"Tommy, if I decided to leave town very soon, will you come with me?"

"Yes, dear, of course." She gazed

at him anxiously. "Is anything the matter?"

"Oh, no, not a thing." His smile was forced. "I have a headache. I fear I shall have to go home early."

Tamara soothed him as best she could, but she was worried because she understood his moods. Something very serious was the matter, and in the end he would tell her.

After Frank Sutton had escorted Carol to her home he went back to his own house. Martin, his butler, was waiting up for him.

"Any packages for me?"

"I put them on your desk, sir."

"Thanks," Sutton smiled a little as he saw one parcel. He had an idea of its contents, but a flat package puzzled him, and he opened it first. It was a gramophone record. "Martin," he held it out to his perfect servant. "Put this record on, please. That'll be all to-night."

Martin opened a gramophone, put on the record, and, as the sound of a waltz filled the room, silently withdrew. The record went on for some while, then the music suddenly stopped and there came the sound of a voice.

"This is the man who tried to sell you the Van Rissik pearls on the Embankment. I hope you remember me as well as I remember you; in case you were thinking of mentioning our meeting, I don't think that would be a good idea for either of us. It would upset me very much; it would probably upset you."

Sutton switched off the record and began to open his letters and packages. One parcel contained a valuable necklace. He stared at it, then tossed it on to his desk. For some moments he stared at the gramophone, then, his mind made up, he walked over to a typewriter.

"To Superintendent Marshall,
Criminal Investigation Department,
New Scotland Yard.

"Find Larry Graeme, and you will find the Van Rissik pearls."

The missive was received by the superintendent the next morning.

"This is the fifteenth Squeaker note we've had, Elford."

"And in every case we've made an arrest," retorted the inspector.

"Yes, but the Squeaker isn't helping the Yard—he's giving us orders! He makes us arrest every crook who refuses to sell to him."

"And not one of them knows the Squeaker. Do you think Barrabal will have any luck, sir?"

"I hope so," muttered the superintendent. "I want you to go ahead on your own lines, but give him all the help you can." He gave a dry chuckle. "You and I have our suspicions, and I told Barrabal to follow it up in his own way."

The Popular Criminal

BARRABAL had never enjoyed anything so much in his life as the time spent changing himself from a tramp into a gentleman of means. A bath, a visit to a barber's, the purchase of several suits of clothes, the finding of comfortable lodgings and that glorious feeling of respectability all combined to make Barrabal hold up his head and walk with a slight swagger to take over his new duties with the firm of Stedman.

Milly did not recognise him.

"Who do you wish to see, sir?"

"Why, Mr. Sutton."

"Oh, Mr. Sutton's not in yet. You'll have to wait."

"Would you mind if I waited in that office?" Barrabal indicated a glass door on which his pseudo name was printed.

"I should think I would mind," cried Milly, not in a very sweet temper that morning. "That's Captain Leslie's office, our new traffic manager."

"Thank you." Barrabal laughed and walked over to the door. "Will you let me know when he comes in?"

Milly was astounded and was about to go after him to argue the point when she gave a gasp—she had just realised that this well-dressed man was the unshaven tramp.

Barrabal found that his room had an occupant. Carol Stedman was busy arranging some flowers.

"Good-morning, Miss Stedman."

"Good-morning." The girl glanced towards him, and his appearance even made her give a slight gasp.

"It's nice seeing you here this morning," Barrabal remarked, as he placed his hat on a stand. "You know yesterday I didn't have a chance to thank you for everything you did for me."

Carol stared fixedly, accusingly at him.

"Is your name Captain Leslie, or is it Weston or Harry Stormer or—"

"What do you mean?" he interrupted sharply.

"Why did you do it? Why did you lie to me? You could have told me the truth, it—it wouldn't have made any difference. I wanted to help you as I'd have helped anyone who was in trouble. I wanted to be your friend, and—and you made a fool of me."

Barrabal was deeply touched. The girl was so sincere and genuine. She stirred his heart strangely.

"Who told you about me?"

"Frank Sutton."

"Who told him?"

"Scotland Yard. The one place you haven't fooled."

"I see." Barrabal looked away as if ashamed. "You've gone to a lot of trouble to tell me this." Then he faced

her with an air of cynical amusement. "I suppose you've arranged for my dismissal?"

"I didn't think that would be necessary," Carol answered icily, and walked past him quickly as if she could not bear to be in the room with him.

When Barrabal came into the outer office a few minutes later he learned from Milly that Miss Stedman had left. Half an hour later Frank Sutton appeared, made no mention to Barrabal of what he had learnt from Scotland Yard, and, after a lengthy discussion on the traffic problem, announced that he would not be in during the afternoon. He had promised to go down to the Stedmans' house to a tennis party.

"I should like you to meet the Stedmans," Sutton stated. "So why not show up about four in time for tea. Charming people, the Stedmans, no stuck-up nonsense about them, and I know Carol will be pleased to see her protégée."

When Barrabal went out to lunch he heard a newsboy shouting about another Squeaker sensation. He bought a copy and read that Larry Graeme had been arrested on the top of a motor-bus.

"Larry Graeme has been arrested for the Van Rissik robbery. His imprisonment will not end the stolen jewellery racket in London. Only the capture of the Squeaker, who was behind Graeme's arrest and is behind organised crime in this city. Can Scotland Yard do the trick?"

Barrabal grinned because he was sure that this paragraph had been written by Joshua Callie. Then a frown took the place of the grin—what would happen when he went down that evening to the Stedmans? More than likely he would be told then that his services were no longer required, yet he had a strong idea that Sutton would do his best to keep Captain Leslie on the books of Stedman & Company.

Frank Sutton turned up at the Stedman house at Reigate about three, and watched Carol, most attractive in smart tennis attire, playing in a mixed doubles. Carol was not playing her best and threw away the last game by double-faulting.

"Hallo, Carol!" Frank cried when she came off the court. "You were off your game, my dear. You shouldn't have taken that trip to town this morning. Why did you go?"

"Nothing important."

"By the way, I've asked someone down this evening; I hope you don't mind?" Frank Sutton stated, watching the girl under half-closed eyes.

"Who is it?"

"Captain Leslie."

"Oh, you haven't—to this house?" Carol was indignant. "Oh, why did you ask him?"

"Well, I've been thinking about Leslie," he said thoughtfully. "He may have knocked about a bit, but—"

"Several bits in London and a bit in Montreal for two years," commented Carol sarcastically.

"That was some time ago. But he does understand shipping, and I could use him."

"Well, Scotland Yard seemed to think you could do without him; besides, you've got no right to take that risk with my father's business."

"You mean you want me to let him go?"

"Yes."

Sutton gave a resigned shrug. "Well, it was your idea to take him on, and now you want me to fire him. If it's going to be done, don't you think you should do it?"

"All right, I will!" snapped Carol. "I've played enough tennis, Frank, so I'm going to change."

Punctually to the dot, Barrabal arrived at Reigate and he was shown into a large drawing-room with a big conservatory. Through the latter he



"I'm tired, and I don't want to stick around here all night!" cried Sutton. "Why must I see this Inspector Barrabal? Who is he?"

could see some people playing tennis. "Good-afternoon, Captain Leslie." "Oh—good-afternoon!" he stammered, for he had not heard Carol come into the room.

"Sorry if I've kept you waiting." "Oh, that's quite all right," Barrabal answered with a bland smile. "I was just admiring your lovely home. I rather thought Mr. Sutton would be meeting me, though—"

"Mr. Sutton told me to talk to you," Carol interrupted coldly.

Barrabal decided that he was now going to be told that his services were no longer required, when suddenly a woman's voice was heard:

"Carol! Carol!"

"I'm here, mother."

A pleasant, elderly woman hurried into the big room.

"Have you seen my handbag? Oh, I—I beg your pardon."

"Mother, this is Captain Leslie," politely murmured her daughter.

"How do you do?" Mrs. Stedman held out her hand.

"How do you do?" replied Barrabal.

"Carol's told me so much about you."

"Not too much, I trust," he said with a sly glance at Carol.

"I simply told mother about some of the interesting places you've been to—South America, Egypt, Canada."

"Canada? Fascinating country," Mrs. Stedman said with a reminiscent smile. "Have you spent much time in Montreal?"

"Montreal?" Again he glanced at the girl. "I spent—that is, I was there for—"

"Two years, wasn't it?" Carol remarked pointedly.

"Two years exactly."

"I've the greatest affection for Montreal—that's where I met my husband, you know," gushed Mrs. Stedman. "Where did you live there?"

"Oh—er—I had a nice little place—overlooking the river." Barrabal was enjoying the conversation. "Nothing elaborate, but it was very quiet, especially at night."

"Carol," Mrs. Stedman turned eagerly to her daughter, "you must ask Captain Leslie over to dinner one night soon. I'm sure we've got so many mutual friends in Montreal to talk about. Now I must go and find my handbag." She smiled as she shook hands again. "Good-bye."

"It was kind of your mother to ask me to dinner," Barrabal remarked when they were alone.

"You're very good at making first impressions, aren't you, Captain Leslie?"

"Yes, and sometimes they last." Barrabal began to move towards the door. "Well—good-bye. Please tell Mr. Sutton I called and that I'll send the money for these clothes as soon as I get another job. And will you please accept my thanks?"

"What are you going to do?"

"Well, for one thing, I'm going to stop telling lies to charming ladies."

"I don't know why I went to the office this morning." A slight frown appeared on the smooth forehead. "I don't know why I'm talking to you now."

"You're talking to me because Mr. Sutton wants to keep me on," Barrabal said with his usual frankness. "And you don't."

"It's got nothing to do with me. This is my father's business. He's built it up for years. It wouldn't be fair to him. So I think—"

The conservatory door opened and December 4th, 1937.

Frank Sutton walked through into the room.

"Good-afternoon, Captain Leslie." He gave a slight nod and a smile.

"Miss Stedman been talking to you?"

"Yes—she has. I'm sorry, but—"

"Frank!" Carol interrupted sharply.

"What night next week is our party?"

"Wednesday." Sutton gave her a questioning look.

Carol ignored the look and gave Barrabal a smiling glance.

"You will be able to come, won't you?" There was a definite wish in her voice.

"I'll be delighted."

"You must stay and see the gardens." Carol laughed now. "You'll enjoy chatting to mother."

"Splendid! Splendid!" Sutton beamed at both of them. "I'm very glad, Leslie, as far as I'm concerned, I don't care what you've been as long as you can produce results. This is a great opportunity."

"And believe me, I'll make the most of it," Barrabal assured Carol, with his most earnest expression.

Barrabal made himself very affable at tea and delighted Mrs. Stedman. He returned to town well satisfied. He got through to Scotland Yard and asked if Graeme had made any statement. He learnt from Superintendent Marshall that Graeme was still undergoing cross-examination, but, so far, had kept his mouth very tightly shut.

Graeme's Escape

IN an office at Scotland Yard Larry Graeme sat in a chair. His black hair lay dankly over his forehead and his face was pasty white. Seated at the table were Inspector Elford and two of his plain-clothes men, whilst in the background was a uniformed policeman.

Larry Graeme had been searched and the pearls found. On being questioned he had told a story of the jewels being sent to him for disposal on the Continent, and that he had no idea who had sent him the pearls. Naturally the mystery gang would have followed his movements, and when he had realised the pearls, would have made themselves known. Larry's record was that of a one-time thief, and later suspected of being a fence. Naturally the police could not believe this story, but they could not shake him. It was Larry's hope that he would not get too long a sentence, so that he could deal with the man who had betrayed him.

Scotland Yard questioned him persistently, and from the time of his arrest they had not given him a moment's peace. He was worn out and exhausted, yet still stubborn.

"What time is it?" he asked.

The police made no answer. They were trying to break him down.

"Can I have a glass of water?" They might not have heard, for all the attention they gave him. "Listen, we've been here half the night. How long is this going on?"

Then did Inspector Elford repeat what he had been saying for hours:

"Until you tell us who the Squeaker is."

Graeme bowed his head in his hands.

"You're facing a fifteen years' sentence," stated Elford.

"And all because the Squeaker put you here," cried one of the plain-clothes men.

"You tell us who he is and we'll get him," promised the inspector.

"No thanks." Larry looked up, his face transformed into a vicious snarl.

"I'll settle that account myself."

"Not for fifteen years you won't," the inspector commented. "You talk

sense, and we may be able to help you."

Larry Graeme looked at the stolid officers of the law and then towards the policeman standing near the door.

"All right—I'll talk."

At once the officers came to life.

"Have a cigarette?" One offered a packet.

Larry took one, and it was the inspector who struck the match.

"Can I have that glass of water?" The inspector looked across the room.

"A glass of water for Mr. Graeme," he ordered.

Larry stood up and straightened his weary limbs. He yawned, but his half-closed eyes were alert. The policeman at the door poured out a glass of water, and Larry moved across the room to take it from him.

They thought that Graeme was all-in, and they had no idea that he was foxing them, a desperate plan in his mind.

Graeme took the water, drank it, and as he gave it back to the policeman suddenly gripped the latter's arm with his free hand. His wrists were very strong, and the policeman was pulled off his balance, stumbled over Graeme's outstretched foot and rolled to the floor.

Graeme hurled the glass at the inspector, and it caught the officer full in the chest, wounding him. The prisoner sprang to the door, flung it open and dashed out into the corridor.

By the time Elford and his men were outside the room Graeme had vanished down a corridor. A tinkle of glass gave them a clue, and they raced down to the second floor to find that he had smashed a window with a chair. It was a dozen men that swarmed out on to the roof in pursuit. Graeme went down a fire-escape. He had seen plans of Scotland Yard, and succeeded in getting into a building where a window overlooked a side street. It was a long drop, but Graeme was desperate, and he scrambled to his feet as the police rushed into the room.

All police were rushed out from Cannon Row, but by some miracle Larry Graeme made his escape.

What a tale Collie was able to tell the next morning in the "Post Courier." First Yard break for twenty years. London man hunt. Graeme eludes the net. What will the Squeaker do now? Collie described the phenomenal escape of Graeme and gave it as his opinion that Graeme was believed to have information concerning the notorious fence and police informer. The police were certain that Graeme had not managed to get away from London, as every street, every station and every airport was being watched.

It was by a private entrance, early some nights later, that Graeme entered the Leopard Club and crept upstairs without being seen. He listened outside Tamara's room, and very quietly opened the door. The girl was lying on a couch asleep—resting in readiness for the last cabaret of the session. Graeme locked the door then softly knelt down beside the couch. The long eyelids fluttered open, and she lay there for a moment perfectly still, then she started up.

"Larry!"

"Tommy, I've come to say good-bye." Graeme gripped her thin hands.

"You've seen the papers?" She nodded, searching his face with anxious eyes. "I should have told you about that before, but I was afraid to lose you."

"You can never lose me, Larry."

"I should have known that." Graeme buried his face against her shoulder.

"I should never have started this. I thought I could beat the game by pulling off one last job and getting away. I thought I could make a new start—live like a human being."
 "But you can—you can!" Tamara cried.

Graeme pushed himself away. "I'm a fugitive from justice, Tommy. Do you know what that means?" he demanded gloomily. "You can hide here till I've finished," she schemed desperately. "Then I might be able to help you."
 "I'm afraid not, Tommy. The police are after me." He started up as there came a rapping at the door.

"Yes?" Tamara asked fearfully. "You're on soon, Miss Tamara." It was the dresser. "Can I help you?"
 "No, thank you. I'll let you know." They waited till faint footsteps had died away.

"I asked a friend of mine to send a parcel here—did it come?"
 "A parcel? Oh, yes!" She pointed to a corner and watched him with worried expression as he hastened to get it. "What's in there, darling?"
 "Just a hat and coat." Graeme turned his back as he wrenched out a coat and fumbled in a pocket. Ah, there was the gun.

Tamara helped him into it. "Take me with you, Larry," she begged.
 "No, Tommy, it's too dangerous." His fingers, fumbling in a pocket, found a piece of paper. He took it out eagerly.

"SUTTON AT STEDMAN HOUSE, LITTLE GREEN, REIGATE, TONIGHT.—R."

Larry crammed it back into his pocket and pulled the wide-brimmed hat over his face.

"Must you go?" she whispered anxiously.

"It's an appointment I've got to keep with a man named Sutton," he said in harsh tones. "If anybody asks for me, you don't know where I am—you don't know anything about me."

"Won't I ever see you again?" Fearfully she clung to him.

"I hope so, Tommy." He drew her

into a close embrace. "But whatever happens, I love you."

"Take care of yourself, darling," she begged as she helped him out of the window on to the emergency fire-escape.

A last kiss, and then he was gone. When Tamara went down to sing to the patrons of the Leopard Club tears glistened in her eyes.

"He's gone, he was my only one. He's gone, he took away the sun. And left me sympathy. He's gone, the Lord alone knows where he's gone. And what is there to care for Since he's gone from me?"

The Squeaker at Bay

SOME hours before, a conference had taken place at Scotland Yard between Superintendent Marshall, Inspector Elford and Barrabal.

"You're quite sure Sutton will be at the party to-night?" Marshall asked.

"Well, it's part of his game, sir, and Graeme is desperate enough to follow him there," Barrabal answered.

"That means trouble for them and a great chance for you, Barrabal. You are sure you don't need any help?"

"No, sir."
 "Good!" The superintendent spoke curtly. "Keep your eyes and ears open and be prepared for anything."

"Right, sir." Barrabal donned a great coat over his dinner dress. "And thanks for the chance to handle this alone."

When Barrabal arrived at Stedman House he was greeted by Carol, who looked at him critically.

"I don't think I quite approve of your collar."

Barrabal laughed. "Sorry." He grinned down at the sweet face. "You didn't seem to

worry about my clothes the first time we met."

"Why do you arrive late for my party?" she asked, ignoring his remark.

"Business responsibilities," Barrabal suddenly pointed at three elderly guests. "Who are those distinguished looking gentlemen?"

"Ssssh!" she cautioned. "Friends of the family."

"Your daddy's?"

"No mummy's."

"Mummy's!" he remarked, and with a laugh led her towards the ball-room.

"It will be best if we dance," whispered Carol. "Mother has some friends from Montreal that she has invited especially to meet you."

As they were about to dance, a waiter appeared with a tray laden full of drinks. Instinctively he reached out and took a glass, then he remembered and quickly put it back again. Resolutely he put his arms round Carol and waltzed on to the floor.

Through the gardens a figure walked stealthily. The coat-collar was turned up and the hat pulled down. It came to the windows of the ball-room and cautiously peered through. Seeing no sign of Sutton, the figure moved towards the next window.

Frank Sutton, coming up the garden path from a side gate, saw that figure silhouetted by the lighted window and stealthily darted towards a bush.

Carol found that her partner danced easily, but he seemed pre-occupied. All the while his gaze seemed to be more interested in the dancers. At the end of the second encore he piloted her through open french windows on to a terrace.

"Don't you like dancing?"

"Very much, but no,—er—at the moment." His eyes were searching the gardens.

"Very much, but no,—er—at the moment." His eyes were searching the gardens.

"Very much, but no,—er—at the moment." His eyes were searching the gardens.



"That's Jack Mayne—he'll be out next month," Barrabal told Sutton. "He'd shoot the Squeaker on sight if he knew who he was!"

"Are you worried about anything?" Carol asked.

"Yes—yes, I'm afraid I am."

"Something I've done?"

"No! No! I'm terribly happy about you." He stared down into the bluest of eyes. "As a matter of fact, I—"

"I'm so glad," she whispered, and her slim fingers crept up the lapels of his dinner jacket.

"You're grand—grand!" Barrabal's voice was husky as his arms went round her, and when she stood on tiptoe, her face uplifted, he just had to kiss her.

"Oh, we should go inside." Carol freed herself from his embrace. She was in love with a criminal, and she thought desperately for some means to get away so she could think what this meant. "There are hundreds of people—guests, newspaper men—"

"Suppose you go and talk to them, and I'll join you later."

"All right." She leaned forward swiftly and kissed him, and then, with a gay laugh, sped towards the windows, where she paused. "But not too much later."

But Barrabal had gone, striding swiftly among the trees. He must banish all thoughts of Carol from his mind until the Squeaker had been captured.

Frank Sutton gripped the revolver in his pocket and stealthily stalked the shadow, which he knew must be Larry Graeme. The Squeaker was determined to remove this menace to his security from his path.

Taking advantage of bushes, trees and beds of flowers, he drew nearer and nearer, and his hand viciously clutched at the hidden gun.

But Graeme had heard a slight sound and he was alert for danger. Without looking round, he walked on and was able to gain the cover afforded by the corner of the house. Here he crouched, tense and with a gun held ready.

Thinking that Graeme was unaware of danger, Sutton strode over the grass plot, but he became very cautious as he approached the corner. Graeme might be round the corner, peering in at a window, and he must not blunder into the man's arms. He must creep to the corner, and if Graeme's back was towards him, he would shoot his enemy down.

Sutton peered round the corner and saw no sight of his quarry. Thinking that Graeme had gone on round the house, he stepped forward to follow, and it was then that Graeme, who had flattened himself against the wall and camouflaged himself with the ivy, jumped out of cover.

"Good-evening, Mr. Sutton."

"Hallo, Graeme."

"We're going to take a little walk."

"Where?" Sutton demanded, his finger on the trigger of the gun concealed in his overcoat pocket.

"To a police station," Graeme rapped out. "I came here to-night to kill you, but I've changed my mind."

"If you turn me in they'll get you, too."

"They've got me," was the answer. "I'll do fifteen years, but you'll do life."

"Don't be a fool, Graeme." Sutton began to edge round so that the gun covered his enemy. "I can get you out of the country to-night."

"Life in a prison, full of men who know you and hate you." Graeme laughed mockingly. "How will you like that, Sutton?"

"Listen! I'll give you all the money December 4th, 1937.

you want. Anything. You'll get everything that's coming to you. I'll give it you right now." All the while he had been turning, and as he finished he fired through his coat.

The bullet caught Graeme in the stomach. His gun slid from his hand and he clutched at the fatal wound. The agony made him bend double, whilst the Squeaker watched, ready to blaze off again. Graeme groaned once and then sprawled full length on the stones.

Putting on gloves, the Squeaker vigorously wiped the gun he had used before throwing it into some bushes, then he darted round the back of the house, heading for the main entrance.

Barrabal heard that single shot and for a moment was unable to tell the exact direction. He raced forward and almost stumbled over the still figure. His torch flashed and he muttered fiercely under his breath when he saw that it was Larry Graeme.

Inspector Elford had posted men in the grounds and he had heard that single shot. He came tearing across the lawn to find Barrabal bending over the body, searching the pockets and transferring some of the contents to his own pockets.

Collie, the news-hound, had been put

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



SPENCER TRACY

—IN—

"BIG CITY"

Racketeers dominate the Comet Cab Company and try by fights and accidents to drive the Independents off the streets. A garage is blown up and a man shot. His sister is suspected as an accessory, and the law plans to deport her as an alien, but her husband and his friends have other ideas—culminating in a terrific battle between the rival factors at the docks.

"THE GO-GETTER"

Suffering from a limp which he scorns to acknowledge a handicap, dogged Bill Austin prevails upon old Cappy Ricks to give him a job as a lumber salesman. He makes more than good and against almost overwhelming odds, qualifies for the managementship of the Shanghai branch of the business—only to encounter fresh obstacles because he wants to marry Cappy's daughter and take her with him. A great yarn, starring George Brent.

Also

Another grand episode of the fighting serial:

"WILD WEST DAYS"

Starring John Mack Brown.

wise by Elford that there might be trouble down at the Stedman mansion, and, together with a number of police, was present when the body of Graeme was taken away in an ambulance shortly afterwards. He got through on the 'phone to his paper.

"Graeme had been linked to the Squeaker case before his escape from Scotland Yard," he reported. "Inspector Elford and several policemen began questioning the guests and servants at the Stedman house shortly after ten o'clock. Late this evening the police appear to have narrowed their case down to a single suspect."

And that suspect was Barrabal.

The inspector had suggested that it would be best for Barrabal if he went back and joined the guests. Superintendent Marshall had given certain instructions if such an emergency arose. In the house, Elford strode up to Barrabal and touched him on the shoulder.

"Captain Leslie, you're under arrest."

"For what?" demanded Barrabal, knowing he had to play a part.

"Murder!"

Elford had requested, after interviewing some of the guests and servants, that Captain Leslie, Frank Sutton and Carol go to one of the many rooms. A policeman had been posted outside the door. The idea was to save the ineognito of Barrabal and allay the suspicions of Sutton.

Carol was much upset when Elford ordered the arrest of Leslie, and she demanded to know the reason. It was Sutton, well pleased that no one had questioned him, that answered.

"Because, I'm afraid, there's nothing else the police can do in the circumstances."

"But you've no proof against him," Carol stormed at the inspector. "Nobody saw him do anything."

"You're only making things difficult for the inspector, Carol," cried Sutton. "I'd like to help Leslie, too, but, after all, Scotland Yard have a job to do."

Carol swung round on him.

"Are they going to do it whether they're right or wrong?" she cried indignantly. "Whether a man's innocent or guilty. Are they interested in justice, or merely making an arrest?"

"Wait a minute, Carol," Sutton spoke as if to a wayward child. "Let's be fair to the police. Leslie, unfortunately, has a bad record. He admits knowing Larry Graeme, and papers were found on him that could have been taken only from the body. You said yourself that he disappeared into the garden shortly before the killing."

"But that doesn't prove anything," Carol gazed at Barrabal, who was sitting with his head in his hands.

"The murderer must have come from the house," patiently spoke Inspector Elford. "Otherwise you would have seen him, since you came along the drive." He was looking at the Squeaker. "Isn't that so, Mr. Sutton?"

"Yes."

Barrabal looked up and said in weary tones:

"Can't we get along now, inspector?"

"We can."

When Barrabal stood up a policeman stepped forward and snapped handcuffs on his wrists.

"Have you nothing to say? No explanation? Nothing?" Carol stood in front of the arrested man.

"There's nothing I can say."

"Then you did it?" She recoiled as if he were some loathsome creature.

(Continued on page 24)

Joe Baldwin, going to the apartments of a woman who is blackmailing him, stops in the doorway and borrows a match from a stranger. Later the woman is found murdered and Baldwin is accused of the crime. He escapes, and a friendly taxi-driver hides him, and with the help of a girl teacher at an orphanage he tries to find the man who gave him the match. They eliminate the suspects to eleven, then to three, and— A thrilling story, starring Onslow Stevens and Helen Mack



“YOU CAN'T BUY LUCK”

The Mascot That Wasn't!

JOE BALDWIN sat in the pouring rain in his box at the Kentucky Derby and watched his horse, Sarcasm, lose by a big margin. He was dismayed; he couldn't understand it. Sarcasm was famous for his victories on a wet track. Conditions were ideal for him to-day—yet he had lost!

On his way back to New York, sitting with set face in his big car, Joe reviewed his philanthropies. Nothing seemed wrong there. Joe Baldwin was wealthy, generous, and very superstitious. He denied the latter, saying that his particular form of superstition—the donating to charity of large sums—was merely a form of insurance against bad luck, so that his horses would always win.

To his friends' gibes he returned his enigmatic smile, and saw his theory fulfilled by the romping home of his entries as easy winners. His tall figure was always to be seen at big meetings, his inscrutable face rarely showing any excitement. Anyone with a hard-luck story could be certain of getting something out of him if one of his horses was due to race.

Yet something had gone wrong this time, although his luck insurance seemed in order. Why, he had just given his pet mascot, Jean Jason, that dark and exotic gold-digger, enough money to ensure her a grand holiday on the Riviera. She had said her health was giving the doctor concern. Joe, having no illusions about her, had rung the doctor himself and found she was in perfect health, and had, in fact, suggested the trip herself. Still, Joe gave her the money, for he sincerely believed

she brought him luck. As she herself once said to Paul Vinette, the artist, who had his share of Joe's donation: "I'm his luck token, his rabbit-foot, four-leaved clover and horse-shoe all rolled into one! He spends money on me, I cheer for him, his horses win—and he spends more money on me!"

Joe's mind went back to the evening when he had seen her off on the boat for Europe. She had feigned illness, much to his secret amusement. After all, this would bring him luck again. Her good-bye was fond, but even Joe didn't know that the man who had brazenly asked him for a light outside her cabin was Paul Vinette, who was sharing the trip with her.

The process was simple: when he was short of money, she just bought one of his etchings with the cash given her by Joe Baldwin, and everybody was satisfied. Privately they had a good laugh at Joe, but they kept their association secret, for it would never do to have their source of wealth drying up.

Joe dismissed Jean Jason from his mind, but it wasn't until he was in his New York home, discussing the scratching of Sarcasm from the next big race, the Preakness Handicap, that a chance remark made by his trainer, Ben, put him on the right track.

"Scratch him?" Ben was aghast. "Listen, boss, it's your horse and your money—but that baby could win the Preakness on crutches! I know horses, I've spent my life with them since I ran away from the Orphans' Home—"

The Orphans' Home! Into Joe's mind flashed a reason for the failure of Sarcasm. He remembered the call

he had made at the orphanage in Kentucky with his sister, when she and her husband, on the way to the Derby, had gone there to choose a child for adoption. Having nothing to do, Joe had hung around reading his racing paper.

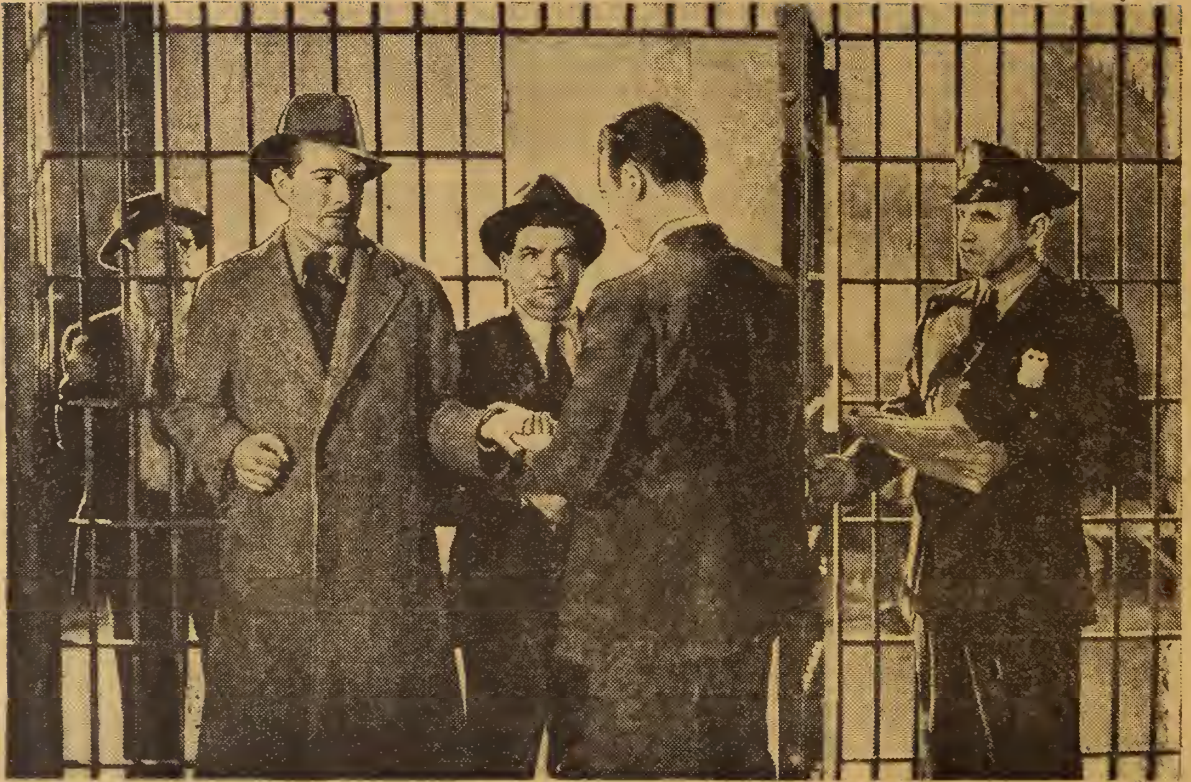
He remembered now! The children had been erecting a maypole, ready for the outdoor fête next day, and praying for fine weather. He had wished for a wet day, and said so, much to the surprise of Betty McKay, the assistant there. Betty McKay was small and dark, with great luminous black eyes aglow with life. But Joe hadn't noticed that aspect of her during a sharp exchange of words, and for her part she had wondered how any man could be so self-confident and selfish.

Well, he had had his wish! It had rained. The children, woebegone, had spent the day indoors, and Joe equally woebegone, had watched his horse lose! That was it—his attitude to their party had brought him bad luck! Calling Spike, his chauffeur, and Rivers, his dignified butler, he set off straight away for Kentucky. Some time later he was down at the orphanage, talking to Miss King, the superintendent, and Betty McKay.

"What possible objection can you have?" he asked. "The kids would enjoy a party, wouldn't they?"

"I doubt it," said Betty coldly. "Why do you say that, Betty?" Miss King exclaimed. "I think Mr. Baldwin is making a very generous offer."

"And I'm sure there must be a catch to the very generous offer," said Betty.



Joe was ordered to put out his left hand to be handcuffed to another prisoner.

"All right," said Joe, striding to and fro in the neat office, "I'll tell you. Those kids heard me ask for rain on Derby Day. Every last one of them had it in for me, and my horse lost the Derby!"

"It's a superstition?" asked Miss King.

"You can call it a superstition if you like," Joe shrugged. "But anyway, I want those kids to change their minds about me before the Preakness next Saturday."

"Well," gasped Betty, "that's one reason I never thought of!"

"Now can I do what I want?" Joe smiled.

"As long as you've explained, it's all right with me," Betty shrugged.

"And I've no objection," said Miss King.

"Splendid! I'll arrange everything and check it with you later."

Joe did the thing thoroughly. The flabbergasted Spike was given money and told to get all the things necessary for a party—a real blow-out. Spike was given full control, much to that perky young man's amazement and horror. However, the chauffeur got Rivers on the 'phone and ordered him to find entertainers.

"I want you to round up some acrobats, some jugglers, and dogs that can do tricks, and anything else you can find that kids would like. Put them on the train to-night for Louisville. So-long, Laughing Water!"

Rivers made a round of the theatrical agents, and did nolly. Spike rounded up three very tough pals of his, and they found themselves roped in to help look after the children, hand the food round, tell stories, and, in fact, make themselves generally useful.

When Joe Baldwin strolled into the decorated hall where the party was being held, he found things going with a bang. The jugglers, the acrobats, the performing dogs were going over

very well. Soon, to his own surprise, he found himself enjoying it as much as the youngsters. By the time the meal was laid and being tucked into, he had forgotten all about his reason for giving the party, and losing himself in the general gaiety. Later, when the wreckage was being cleared up, he met Betty.

"Well," she smiled, "you've squared yourself with the children."

"Squared myself?" he said, puzzled. "Oh, yes! You know, I'd forgotten about that!"

"You're strange," said Betty softly. He smiled. They had become friends.

He was getting very interested in this girl, so much so that he lingered in this beautiful Kentucky countryside long after Sarcasm, who was in great form, won the Preakness at record speed. Whether the jinx had been laid or not Joe didn't know. Betty didn't care. Seated one evening in the arbour in the orphanage grounds, she tried to draw him out, to find out something about this strange man. She found a hidden warmth. Joe Baldwin was human. It was in his own drawing way that he proposed to her. He didn't believe in beating about the bush.

But there came a time when he had to return to New York on business, and he learned that Jean Jason was back and asking for him unceasingly. He prepared himself for an awkward interview, having told Betty before he left what he was going to do.

"I'm going to see Jean Jason," he said. "Then, when I come back, we'll set a date."

"You don't think she'll make any trouble?"

"Of course not! I've too much luck insurance now, with you and the whole orphanage pulling for me!"

"Joe," she said pleadingly, "I do wish you'd get over that!"

"What d'you want me to do?" he laughed. "Stop doing things for people?"

"Of course not! I want you to know the real pleasure of doing things for people just for the sake of doing them. Oh, it's different from being generous for just what you yourself get out of it!"

"What difference does it make," he smiled, "as long as I do them?"

"A lot of difference." "Oh, I don't get it," he exclaimed, rising. "Come on, let's dance."

"I Killed Jean Jason!"

JOE found Jean Jason awaiting him in her luxurious apartment at the Renrad Arms. She was elusive; he was calm.

"How was your trip?" he asked.

"Not nearly the fun I thought it would be," she said caressingly. "I missed you too much. Were you lonesome for me?"

"Well," he hedged, "I've been rather busy. Jean We won't be seeing much of each other from now on."

"Really?" she said coolly. "Do I know her?"

Baldwin laughed and explained. She was disbelieving at first, but realised he was serious when she chipped him about getting married and living in the little suburban home.

"What about little Jean?" she asked bluntly.

"Little Jean," smiled Joe, handing her a cheque, "goes right on cheering for me and my horses."

"No sale, Joe," she said calmly, looking at the cheque as he turned away. "If I keep on being your luck insurance, you'll have to multiply this by four!"

"But I can't, Jean!"

"It's your fault," she told him. "You taught me to like expensive things."

She was calculating. Cold, he saw, as

he considered a while. She would be dangerous if her demand were not met. "I might double it," he said slowly. "But that's the limit."

"All right," she nodded. "For old times' sake!" As it would take a day or two to get that much ready cash together, he promised to see her on Saturday at eight, and left her smiling triumphantly. She was all ready to receive him on the appointed evening, more carefully made up than usual, dressed more alluringly than usual. When the door-bell rang, she went eagerly to open it, then stepped back with a little gasp.

It was not Joe, but Paul Vinette. Agitatedly she asked him to go away, fearing Joe would arrive any moment. He, knowing a cheque was expected, intended to be on hand in case she tried to double-cross him.

"You know I wouldn't double-cross you!" she protested. "You'd double-cross yourself for that much money," he said calmly. "You don't get rid of me so easily. I'm going to be hiding right in there!"

He started towards the bed-room; she pulled him back. "If you must stay, hide in the kitchen!"

Suspiciously he looked at her. "Why not in there?" She started to make excuses, but he ignored her, went in and stopped short, whistling gently, his expression menacing. Trunks and suitcases, partly packed, littered the floor.

"Going to run out on me, eh?" Lazily he strolled to a chair, sat down and lit a cigarette. "I'm going to stay here until Mr. Baldwin arrives."

Desperately she went into the bedroom, and when she came back he taunted. Her expression had changed, was now hard and dangerous. Unwaveringly she pointed a little automatic at him.

"Get up out of that chair!" Eyes staring, he hunched forward, hands gripping the arms of the chair till his knuckles showed white. Slowly she came towards him, her eyes narrowing.

"Jean, Jean, darling!" he stammered. "Be careful!" "Hurry up!" she said through clenched teeth.

"But — but — you don't understand, dear." He was watching for a chance. "I — I was only trying —"

"Get your coat!" "You win," said Paul, and suddenly leaped at her. The gun flew from her hand. Together they fell to the floor, grabbing for it. There was a struggle, a sharp report. Presently Paul rose, panting. Dazed, he looked down at her. Jean Jason was dead!

He got his hat and coat, and, leaving her lying there, went downstairs. He was standing in the shadow of the porch when Joe Baldwin arrived. Nervously he lit a cigarette.

"Hold that light, please," said Joe

pleasantly as he came up the steps. Only for a brief moment in the flaring light did he glimpse the artist's face. "Here, keep them," said Paul Vinette, handing him the box, and watched with a slight grin as Baldwin, thanking him, ran up the steps. As soon as the racehorse owner was inside, Paul, his brain seething with an idea, ran for the nearest call-box. "Police headquarters?" he said. "This is Joe Baldwin speaking. I've just killed Jean Jason in the Renrad Arms!"

Only the love of Betty Mackay sustained Joe Baldwin in the next few days. The case made a sensation in the papers—"Gambler Held for Murder!" they shouted, and, later, "Baldwin Indicted for Slaying!"

Wooden-faced, he sat in the court on the day of his trial, and listened to the circumstantial evidence piling up from witness after witness. The porter at the Renrad Arms had seen him entering at eight o'clock. The desk sergeant who had received the phone call described it. The detectives who had investigated described finding Joe in the apartment, searching him, and discovering the cheque for fifty thousand dollars. The gun which had killed Jean Jason was traced by the serial number to have been bought by Joe. On the stand he battled this evidence.

"I did go to the apartment that night to give her the fifty thousand I'd promised her. As for the gun, several apartments near hers were burgled last October, and she asked me to buy a weapon for her. I didn't make that call to headquarters. I didn't kill Jean Jason!"

He went on to testify that he hadn't needed matches to find his way in the apartment, because all the lights were on. He had been there only a minute or two when the police arrived.

"Not long enough," suggested the District Attorney. "to phone her quarters and smoke a couple of cigarettes while you changed your mind about confessing?"

"No," declared Joe decisively. Triumphant the District Attorney dismissed him and recalled the detective. It was proved that the matches found in the apartment came from the packet found on Joe when he was searched.

"I asked a man for a light," he exclaimed. "He gave me a packet of matches. It must have been he who left the burnt matches in the apartment!"

But after the formidable array of evidence the truth seemed slight even to Joe. It was with no visible emotion that he heard the jury declare him guilty. Betty stood by him. She was the first to come and see him in his cell.

"If only," she said desperately. "there was some way of finding the man who gave you those matches!"

"I'd know him if I saw him," he said dispiritedly. "But I can't look for him while I'm here. No, I tell you, luck's turned against me."

"Luck!" she exclaimed scornfully. "Nonsense, Joe. I know you're innocent. I'll find another lawyer."

"No, there's nothing you can do, honey."

"Don't give up hope, Joe," she cried. "I'll do something!"

The Eleven Suspects

BUT Joe Baldwin had little hope that Betty would be able to do anything. He must get out, find that man for whose crime he was facing death. It was on a misty night that he was preparing to leave the cells and go to the prison where he would await execution. Two by two, the criminals were taken out to the police van.

Joe's turn came next. He was ordered to put out his left hand to be



"You know my record, Brent," urged Joe. "Bring him here so that I can see him. You've got to give me a break!"

handcuffed to another prisoner. Suddenly he acted. His right fist swung, knocking the policeman off his feet, and the other prisoner fell on top of him.

Heart in his mouth, Joe ran for the door and flung it open, knocking flying another policeman who was guarding it outside. He was free! Dodging the people gathered round the door, he darted behind a car and tore up the street, followed by shouts and the shrilling of police whistles.

Revolvers cracked. He heard bullets whistling overhead. Still he ran on, not daring to slacken his pace. A dark side turning offered refuge. Up it he tore, sprinting between high walls and round a corner. The sounds of pursuit had died down. He had shaken them off.

There was only one place he could think of to go. Nearby was a small garage, owned and run by a young chap to whom he had lent a sum of money recently when he was in danger of having his taxis seized for debt. The garage was empty when Joe arrived there, but he hid and waited patiently. Some time later he heard the whine of a car, and when it stopped and the driver got out, he stepped out from hiding.

"Frank!" he called.

Frank Brent turned with a start.

"Joe!"

"You've got to help me," said Joe urgently. "I'm in a jam."

"Yeah, I know," Frank nodded.

"The extras are on the street already—

"Baldwin Makes Spectacular Escape!"

"I need some money," said Joe.

"Enough to hide out."

Frank Brent grinned. He wouldn't hear of Joe's seeking another hiding-place, with all the police in the city looking for him.

"You're staying with me," he declared and, in spite of Joe's protests that he'd get himself into trouble, took him to his quarters. "Not much like your home, Joe, but it'll do for a hide-out."

"If the police find me here," said Joe desperately, "you'll get a ten-year stretch!"

"Didn't you come through for me?" said Frank Brent easily.

"No, I didn't!" snapped Joe. "I came through for myself. I didn't give that for you. I never cared a hoot for anyone I helped," he added bitterly. "I did it for luck, but I see things differently now and I'm getting out."

"Just a minute!" Frank pushed him into a chair. "You did a great thing for me. Maybe you helped yourself by doing it, but that didn't change what you did. Now don't do me out of helping you, because I want to. Take it easy. I'll fix some coffee."

It was as they were discussing the case later that Joe suddenly got an idea when he was taking a light from Frank. His eyes narrowed as the flaring match brought back memories. He thumped the table excitedly. They had been discussing the man who had given him the light outside the apartment building. Joe had a tantalising idea that he had seen him somewhere before. Now he knew.

"The boat!" he exclaimed. "Now I know where I saw him!"

Quickly he went on to explain, telling Frank of the scene on the night Jean and the man had gone abroad together. The chances were that they had come back together.

"If we could get the passenger lists from those two boats, and find which names appeared on each—"

"I'll get those lists in the morning," Frank declared.

"No, not you," rapped Joe. "Jean's name appears on both. If anyone in the steamship office got suspicious you'd be December 4th, 1937.

followed and the police would come here. Betty—she can get them!"

"But it's a cinch they'll be trailing her!"

"Of course. But," suggested Joe, "if she happens to take your cab, and happens to leave the lists in it—"

"Betty it is!" grinned Frank.

Sitting impatiently in the little room next day, smoking cigarette after cigarette, Joe was beginning to wonder if something had happened, when Frank returned. Joe jumped up in pleased surprise, for with him was Betty. She had made Frank bring her there after she had got the lists, and they had taken all the afternoon dodging the two detectives who were trailing her in the hope that she would lead to the hidden Joe.

"And the chances he took in traffic!" she exclaimed, smiling.

"Look at the chance he's taking in hiding me here," said Joe quietly.

"Well, he's taught me what it means to do something unselfishly."

"Cut it out!" said Frank uncomfortably, and they got to work on the lists. After hours of patient work, checking, re-checking, they narrowed the list of duplicated names to eleven.

"Now," sighed Joe, "I've got to go out and find these men and get a look at each of them."

"That's too risky," remonstrated Betty. "Tell me what he looks like and I'll see if he matches any of these."

"Well," Joe concentrated, "I can only give you a general idea—thirty or thirty-two, close to my height, slender, a small moustache. And he had dark eyes."

Betty was weary and footsore by the time she had found the eleven men, and by various pretexts spoken to them for a while and studied them. Had she but known it, she was talking to the man himself when she called on Paul Vinette, the artist, and talked to him about buying one of his etchings.

"It's exactly what I've been looking for," she mused, "if it will fit over my fireplace."

"It is a bit large," he agreed.

"I'll measure the space," she said, preparing to go, "and come back to-morrow."

In Brent's cab, she told him the result of her inquiries.

"Well, you've seen them all," he remarked.

"Yes, and only three of them fit the description."

"I'll have Joe pick you up in the morning," he declared. "Then you can point these three out for him."

Meanwhile, the police had not been idle. Betty's comings and goings had puzzled them. The keen-faced Lieutenant Bond pored over the steamship lists, and noted the fact that Jean Jason's name appeared on both.

"Whatever this McKay is up to," said McGrath, his assistant, "Baldwin is back of it."

"You're right," snapped Bond. "I guess we'd better have a little chat with her."

Thus it was to Joe's dismay as, wearing dark glasses, he sat in Brent's cab outside a big building, waiting for Betty, he saw her stopped by two detectives as she approached the cab. Nervously he stared to the front. As soon as Betty knew they were police she tried to get Joe out of it.

"You can go, driver," she said calmly.

"No, you don't," said the detective, not unkindly. "Get in, Lieutenant Bond wants to talk to you. Police headquarters," he added to Joe's back.

Now that he had got over the first

shock, Joe found a certain grim humour in the situation. What would the detectives say if they knew they were being driven to headquarters by the very man they were seeking! He drew up outside the building and waited while Betty was taken inside. His heart went out to her. It would be a nasty ordeal. He hoped she kept her head. To while away the time he bought a newspaper from a boy who was yelling all about the escaped murderer.

He was ready when she came hurrying out. Her interview had not been so terrible. Bond had been very kind, but it had been a game of bluff. He knew very well that she was aware of Joe's hiding-place. He had warned her that she was heading for trouble, aiding and abetting a fugitive from justice. She only smiled and asked permission to go. Although he admired her courage, he set a man to follow her when she came out.

"He's sure I know where you're hiding," she told Joe as they drove away.

"He must be," he replied grimly. "We're being followed. No, don't look around."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "What are we going to do?"

"Lose that car," he said quietly, "and then run down those three men before anyone sees this."

He handed the newspaper back to her and she gave an exclamation of dismay. Under the headline, "Fugitive Still At Large" were pictures of herself and Joe.

They worked quickly after that. Two of the men were brought by Betty to the doors of the establishments in which they worked, so that Joe, in his cab by the side-walk, could identify them. Both were passed.

"There's only one name left on the list, isn't there?" he asked, as wearily he got into the cab.

"Only one," she agreed. "So it must be the man."

"Unless we've figured the whole thing wrong," he said dispiritedly. "Well, what's the name?"

"Paul Vinette," she said.

To the artist's apartments they drove, and she went up, leaving Joe outside in the cab once more. Had she only known it, the newspaper had already done the damage. Even as she rang, Paul Vinette was just getting his bags out preparatory to packing, for one look at her picture in the paper was enough to make him decide that things were getting too hot.

"Good-morning," said Betty, when he calmly opened the door. "I've come for the etching."

"So the space over the fireplace is large enough, eh," he smiled, with a note of irony.

"Yes, you said fifty dollars," When he nodded she added, her heart pounding: "Would you mind very much carrying it to my cab?"

"No, not at all," he replied, to her relief "I'll wrap it up."

"You needn't bother!" she exclaimed hurriedly, but with a smile he was gone upstairs with the etching. His movements were swift when out of her sight.

He looked out of the window and smiled grimly. Even with the dark glasses he could recognise the man at the wheel of the cab. Eyes glinting, he went to the telephone, and once more Paul Vinette put the police on the trail of Joe Baldwin.

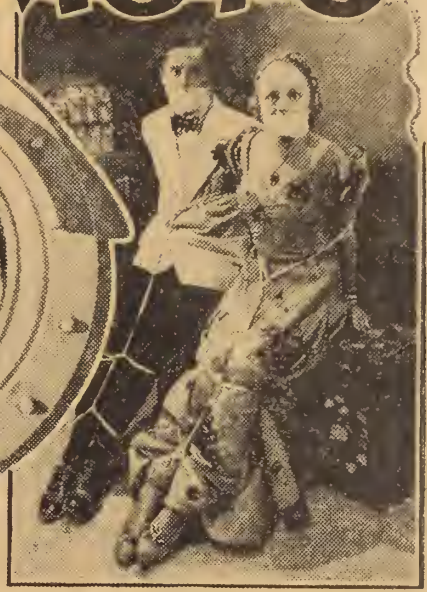
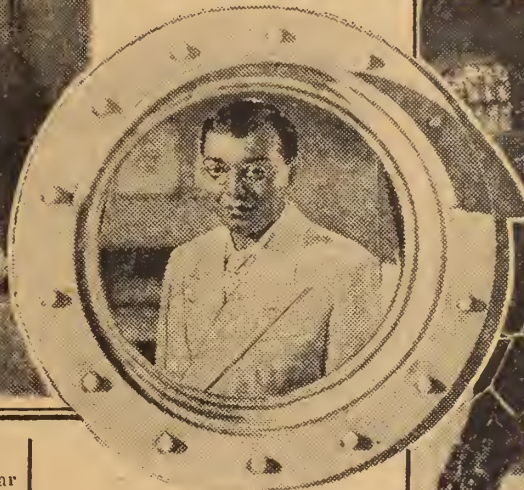
He took his time over wrapping the picture. Police sirens shrilled outside. Agitatedly Betty ran to the window below. Even as Joe, warned by the

(Continued on page 27)

Diamond smugglers are using a certain steamship line to transport contraband. The son of the owner is sent with a confidential letter to Shanghai and becomes involved with a mysterious Jap, a beautiful girl and a villainous Russian in a strange adventure.

Starring Peter Lorre

"THINK FAST, MR. MOTO"



Chinese New Year's Day

THE night of the Chinese New Year in Chinatown, in San Francisco. Processions of grotesquely clad figures wearing huge masks, fireworks, the clash of cymbals, and the high-pitched shoutings of the many thousands of Chinese who inhabit this part of the great city.

Bells clanging, boys and girls dancing and laughing and making whoopee. Large policemen parading the streets and not seeing any more than they wished to see.

One officer of the law had to stop. A small, insinuating little pedlar persisted in offering his wares to all and sundry. He had a rug and a sack of oddments over one shoulder, and, although dirty and shabby, he had an engaging smile under his scrubby little beard.

"Listen, Wung Hi Foo, or whatever your name is. No trading on New Year's Day," said the policeman. "Can't you see all the shops are shut? I've told you twice already—third time's unlucky!"

The little Chink gave him an upward glance, then nodded his head.

"I go, illustrious sir. This one sorry."

The policeman watched him shuffle away into the crowd, then passed on. The pedlar made a way into a side street, his glance darting right and left at the noisy crowd. He suddenly pulled up at a curio shop from which a merry-maker was just emerging.

This man had on a monstrous head-piece shaped like an overgrown turnip. His long, white tunic and Chinese trousers made him quite ridiculous, and the pedlar stared as he watched the masked man fumbling with the shop door-key.

"Can I assist you, sir?" he asked politely.

The masked man jerked out the key from the lock and ran off into the crowd without troubling to reply. The pedlar tried the shop door—the handle turned, the latch lifted, and the door gave to his push. He entered.

The shop was a deep, narrow one, and seemed empty. But as the pedlar padded softly alongside a counter, a tall European suddenly rose up from behind it.

"What are you doing here?" came the sharp demand. "The shop is closed."

"The door was open, so this humble person ventured to enter. He is interested in curios. That is a very beautiful banner of pictured silk in your window."

"The standard of the Chinese tiger," snapped the shopman. "He bites and scratches!"

"So?" The slanting, brown eyes gazed up innocently. "You are interested in strange things. Let this poor person show you a treasure." He dived into his sack and brought out a small, brass figure. "A netsuke from a great Japanese collector."

"I don't trade to-day. Get out!"

"But look, honourable gentleman. See, the head screws off, and underneath, in secret place hidden, is this jewel." A gem flashed under the shop lights, and the shopman's hard eyes, catching the gleams from it, changed swiftly. "A diamond from the Romanoff crown."

"Probably only cut glass." The gem changed hands, and the big shopman put up his jeweller's eyeglass, scrutinising the stone. "I'll give you a hundred dollars—and chance where you stole it."

The little, cringing pedlar wailed:

"But it is worth twenty thousand dollars!" He plucked at his stubby beard. "It matters not how this one comes to possess it—I sell it to you for five thousand dollars, because you ask no questions. Verily it is a gift."

The diamond was hastily passed back. The large policeman had trailed the pedlar.

"At it again?" He strode up to the little man, who had dropped his sack. "This is the third time!"

The pedlar caught at the great hand stretched out to grab him. He pulled hand and arm across his chest, got the policeman clear off his feet by a ju-jitsu trick, and flung him right over the counter into the shopman as the latter leapt to assist the law. The shopman was staggered for a moment or so, but came at the small beggar, who, ready for him, snatched him into the same embrace, hurled him up, and banged him down flat on his own curio-littered counter. A sharp crack of his head on some brassware as he fell put him out for the count.

The pedlar gathered up his sack, draped the Persian rug over it; then, without hurrying, took a cat-like departure.

On Board the Marco Polo

A BOISTEROUS party of young folk were being shown by a steward into the cabin allotted to Mr. Bob Hitchings, son of the wealthy owner of the Hitchings Steamships, trading between San Francisco and the East. Naturally, the best cabin on the Marco Polo had been reserved for the young gentleman, and he and his friends were celebrating his departure for Shanghai with much noise and champagne. The steward, sharp-featured and wiry, extolled the comforts of the suite.

"Everything you want, sir, I fancy. And I'm here, name of Henry Carson, to serve you morning, noon, and night."

"Good man," spluttered Mr. Bob, slightly flushed and rather excited.

December 4th, 1937.

"Have some champagne? Let everyone have champagne—pailsful of it!"

Great cheering followed. The noise became so great that the door of the opposite suite opened and a small, dapper Japanese gentleman emerged. He gazed smilingly through gold-rimmed spectacles at the hilarious crowd across the passage.

The steward whispered in a lull to his young master:

"Your father, sir, is here. In your bed-room. Wants to see you. Alone."

Bob Hitchings put down his glass and hiccupped a little as he called:

"Excuse me, boys and girls—back in a minute."

He went into the bed-room to face his father, a tall, up-standing man with grave face lighted by humorous, blue eyes.

"Bob."

"Yessir?"

"Sober?"

"Fairly so, sir."

Bob sat down on the bed and tried to get his good-looking face into proper expression.

"Son, I expect big things of you. You are to take over the Shanghai office eventually, but for the next year you'll work with our representative, Joe Wilkie. Here is a very confidential letter for him which I give to you in secrecy. That's why I'm here. Don't leave this letter about."

"Okay, sir." Bob took the long, narrow envelope and slipped it into his breast-pocket. "Dad, I won't disgrace you. To-day I'm a little—well, slightly

"Quite so." Mr. Hitchings' eyes twinkled. "Well, good-bye once more. I know you'll be a credit to the Hitchings' line and carry it to further successes." His voice shook a little as he finished.

The old fellow led the way back to the cabin.

"Glad to see you, folks—but forgive my hurrying away." He almost bumped into the small, smiling Japanese in the passage as he turned to go towards the stairway. "Sorry!"

"My fault, please. I was not looking." The voice was soft and smooth, the cleanly shaven face was expressive of all kindness. "It is pleasing to watch young persons when they are happy."

"Go in and join them," spoke Hitchings over his shoulder. "My son Robert is going to Shanghai—he's a good boy."

"Thank you." The Japanese entered the cabin, beaming right and left. "I am Hiroshi Moto, if you please. I also go to Shanghai."

"Have a drink?" Bob gripped Mr. Moto's soft hand. "Pleased to have your company. These are my friends, but no time to introduce 'em. What's yours?"

"Some fruit juice, if you please. Not champagne—I do not drink when I go to sea."

The steward broke in. "Ship's bell ringing, ladies and gents. All visitors ashore."

In much laughter and confusion the party broke up. Mr. Moto and Bob were left smiling at each other in the passage between their suites.

"I will not now intrude," said Mr. Moto. "If you wish company any time, my cabin is opposite." He added, with a little gesture: "And we have same steward, I think?"

"Carson?" Bob nodded. "Carson's been with the line a long while. Reliable and—and all that." He pressed a hand to his forehead. "Bit of a headache—hopo to see a lot of you, Mr. Moto, later on."

December 4th, 1937.

"Gloria"

NEXT day Bob's headache still persisted. Mr. Moto was most sympathetic.

"Come with me to the bar," he invited. "There I make you very pleasing 'morning-after' cocktail."

He made Bob drink an extraordinary concoction of mint and sugar and raw spirit. The youngster pulled a wry face over the edge of the long glass tumbler, but presently began to cheer up.

"Gee, I'm better!"

"If you please," smiled Moto. "Now we take the little promenade along deck."

A friendship grew up quickly between them. Moto never asked questions, but had a knack of making Bob talk.

"The gov'nor's worrying about the smuggling that's going on," Bob told Moto when they were chatting in the smoke-room. "Some blokes are using us to get diamonds and other things through the Customs. There's a receiver in San Francisco."

"Sure!" agreed Mr. Moto. "But you go first to Shanghai?"

"To see what's being done there by Wilkie, our representative. I have a letter for him—" Bob checked himself. "A tip from the gov'nor, I guess. The line would be heavily fined if smuggling were traced to us, whether we were innocent or not."

"Yes," again agreed the Japanese. "Your Mister Wilkie good fellow, eh?"

"Oh, sure!" Bob answered. "I know him well—he comes over every year on furlough. You travelling on business, too?"

"For health," replied Mr. Moto. "Sea air very good. I do a few parlour tricks," he added modestly. "With the cards. You wish a fine hand at nap? Watch me, please."

He snapped his fingers and immediately had the ace of clubs between thumb and forefinger. Another gesture—and the king was there. Then, with a jerk of his wrist, the hand was complete—ace, king, queen, jack, ten.

"Show me how you do it," cried Bob. "Gee, it's marvellous!"

"Some little practice," smiled Moto. "Also the ju-jitsu—I do him. Useful sometimes."

Days passed and they entered Honolulu, where new passengers came aboard. A very pretty girl, garlanded after the Honolulu fashion with a necklet of flowers, attracted Bob's prompt attention. While he was talking to her, Mr. Moto crept up behind them with a Kodak and took an unbeknown snap of the girl.

She seemed foreign, although her English was perfect. She told them that the native dock officials had insisted on giving her the floral necklet.

"I'm going to Shanghai," she told Bob in answer to his question. "Excuse me now, I must see if my baggage is all aboard."

Bob found out from Steward Carson that she was a Miss Gloria Danton and that she had engaged an expensive suite. She did not appear on deck until the next day.

Bob fell head over heels in love with her and, despite one or two rebuffs, managed to draw her into deck games and dancing, rather neglecting Mr. Moto.

"Who is the little man?" Gloria asked him one night.

"Just an acquaintance on board," Bob told her.

"He has a beautiful ring on his little finger—a royal diamond," said the girl.

"Has he?" Bob hadn't noticed.

"Let's go on deck—it's a lovely night." He asked her to marry him when, presently, they stood together under the moon, the great ship throbbing her way onward.

"Three days ago you didn't even know me," she answered. "Who am I—who are you?"

"Oh, I'm Bob Hitchings," he answered quickly. "My father owns this ship and the rest of the Hitchings fleet." He took her hand in his; her fingers were trembling a little. "And you, you'll be my wife—and we'll live happy ever afterwards!"

She shook her head.

"I may be all sorts of a designing person. No, Bob, we'll stay friends."

She turned abruptly from him.

"Let's go down; I'm chilly." Mr. Moto was prowling around the ship. He saw the young couple saying good-night outside Gloria's cabin. He stayed in hiding, watching them. While he was hidden he became aware of Carson, the steward, also peeping from a cabin doorway near by. Mr. Moto shrank farther into the shadows. The cabin was Bob's.

Mr. Moto watched Carson close the door; whereupon the little Japanese gentleman crept up to it. Bob and Gloria were thinking only of themselves. Mr. Moto silently opened the cabin door and caught Carson by Bob's locker with a letter in his hand.

"Thank you," purred Mr. Moto. "I take that letter."

Carson drew back with a snarl, the long envelope in a hand sharply thrust behind his back.

"Stand clear, you sneaking rat!" he whispered tensely. "I knew you the moment I saw you."

"So?" Mr. Moto gently breathed.

"All the same, I take the letter."

"Get out of here!" Mr. Moto still smiled. "You wear big head mask at the New Year," he stated. "But I recognise walk of your legs. You are working with that jeweller. So—you give me that letter."

Carson fired and the Jap dropped to the floor. There was little noise; the gun had a silencer. The steward regarded Mr. Moto's spread-out body for a long moment; then he began to sidle towards it.

Mr. Moto's hand caught his ankle. Carson was suddenly gripped in a ju-jitsu throw. He was flung upward in a wild whirling of legs and arms against the hard teak ceiling and, as his head crashed into it, bounded from there to the floor. Carson lay still and the Jap kicked the pistol out of the way.

But when he went to snatch at the letter, Carson was all alive again. A desperate struggle in deathly silence followed—a hopeless struggle for the steward. He was thrown again; this time with such violence that the fight was finished. Mr. Moto picked up the feebly jerking body and, held high above his sleek head, he ran with it along the corridor to the open deck. He flung Carson clear of the liner into the deep blackness of the sea.

The splash of the body's fall was unheard in the wash of the great ship as it raced onward. Mr. Moto smoothed down his coal-black hair and adjusted his dark coat; put straight his tie and went back to the cabin, where he secured the steward's silenced pistol and the letter which Hitchings senior had entrusted to his son—still saying good-night to Miss Gloria Danton at her cabin door.

Wilkie Draws Blank

A NEW steward called Bob to his bath next morning.

"Carson sick?" Bob asked.

"We can't find him, sir. We are afraid he must have fallen overboard."

"But he's a good sailor."

"Lifts his elbow, sir, if you take my meaning," said the new man. "He's been warned once or twice."

A sudden thought came to Bob. He waited until the man had gone, then hastened to feel for his father's letter in his day-suit breast-pocket. It was there—and he blew a long breath of relief.

When he came on deck he found the Marco Polo had already docked in the harbour at Shanghai. Mr. Moto was finishing his breakfast.

"Make port while we sleeping," he said. "Very fast ship—good timing. Some people already gone."

"I shan't hurry," Bob decided. "I'm going ashore with Miss Danton."

"I think she leave early," doubted Moto. "Very pleasing lady. But always in great hurry."

"I haven't noticed it," Bob laughed a little self-consciously. "I—she's going to marry me, Moto. I had to tell someone, I'm so happy."

Mr. Moto looked grave. "She run away, Mr. Hitchings. Perhaps there is reason?"

But Bob didn't wait. He dashed off to Gloria's suite. It was true. She had already left the ship.

He came back to see Moto tipping the new steward and expressing much concern that Carson should be missing.

"She's gone, Moto! Left no address," Bob burst in. "You know Shanghai—you must help me find her!"

"Shanghai big city," Moto eyed Bob through slightly slanting gold spectacles. "Maybe good she is gone?"

"I must find her," Bob spoke desperately.

Mr. Moto nodded, saying again: "Very pleasing lady."

Bob had to be busy getting ashore, where he was met by the firm's agent Wilkie, a pale man, rather sharp-featured. He scarcely listened to Bob's chatter about Gloria.

"A White Russian, I guess," he checked him. "Heaps of 'em in Shanghai. They're refugees from Moscow. Let's get along to my office—I've engaged a suite for you in the same building. Your father cabled me."

When they were alone in Wilkie's private office Bob handed over the confidential letter. Wilkie tore it open and drew out—a sheet of blank paper!

"What's this?" he asked frowningly. Whilst they were staring, the 'phone buzzed. Wilkie caught up the receiver.

"Long distance." He listened. "It's your father. Yes, Mr. Hitchings—he's here. Just given me your note. It's a blank sheet. I'll let him speak to you—"



Mr. Moto flung Carson clear of the liner into the deep blackness of the sea.

He passed the 'phone to Bob, who heard his dad's urgent voice.

"That you, son? Wilkie says the letter was blank. Someone has tampered with it. Now listen, and get this—diamond smuggling, on a large scale, is being done through us. Us—get me?" The receiver crackled angrily. "My letter was to warn Wilkie to check up on everyone in the firm. The stones are being sent in under some very clever cover—maybe in tea samples—can't talk now, someone may be tapping the line. Keep both eyes open. 'Bye!'"

Bob told the agent, who looked down his thin nose.

"It's impossible," he declared. "I check everything this end." He rubbed his chin, deep in thought. "Tell you what—there's our up-river station. You go there at once and do a bit of sleuthing."

"I'll go to-morrow," Bob agreed. "To-day I'll find Gloria."

In the telephone exchange down below Mr. Moto was chatting with a Chinese operator, a pretty child. He had listened-in to the call unperceived. Now he rose up, smiling.

"Will honourable young lady favour this one with company to-night?" he asked. "Some very agreeable restaurant—perhaps lady can give address?"

The girl nodded her dark head. "I shall be pleased, sir. Here is a good place."

She hastily scribbled Chinese letters on her pad, tore off the sheet and gave it to him. Mr. Moto translated mentally:

"Meet you International Club seven. Present procedure through Adram's in the bazaar."

"Gracious thanks, honourable lady," Moto murmured, taking his leave.

That evening a note was thrust under Bob's bed-room door.

He picked it up wonderingly. Written in block letters, he read:

"She whom you seek is at the Club International."

There was no signature.

Mr. Moto Writes a Poem

MR. MOTO had spent his afternoon in the bazaar, keeping his rickshaw waiting whilst he made purchases here and there. He stopped presently at a curio shop bearing the sign "Adram's." He entered. A bearded Hebraic person stepped out from a small back-room where Moto glimpsed, as the door opened, some men engaged with a lot of little gay labelled bottles set on the table in front of them.

"Interested in silk banneret in window," smiled Mr. Moto.

"Flag of an ancient order, sir," came the slow, soft answer. "It presents the Chinese tiger."

"I will buy this," said Mr. Moto, taking up a small soapstone figure. "You have old rings, perhaps, to break up? I collect coloured stones and old gold, also diamonds. This one has commission from very rich gentleman."

He handed a ten-dollar note to Mr. Adram.

"No change, if you please. That is, I understand, present procedure?"

Sad brown eyes studied the glinting, gold-rimmed spectacles of Mr. Moto.

"I do not understand you, sir. I am sorry." Adram raked money out of the till. "Three dollars fifty cents American, for the figurine—real Tanagra. Your change, sir—six-fifty dollars."

Mr. Moto smiled, thanked him—and came away.

Mr. Adram bowed him out of the shop and watched him depart in the rickshaw, making a secret sign to one of the rimmers. On the way out of the bazaar a street fight occurred and a Chinaman drew a gun on his assailant. His shot missed, but very nearly caught Mr. Moto.

On the way to the International Club that evening Wilkie steered his car slap into a rickshaw. An accident was just avoided—Mr. Moto had jumped out of the rickshaw in time. He listened smilingly to Wilkie's apologies.

"Second time this one in accident to-day. Perhaps third one more unlucky." He gave a cry of pleasure. Bob had alighted from the car. "Happy accident! We meet again!" He turned towards a second rickshaw in which a pretty Chinese girl was bending forward to see what had happened. "Mr. Bob Hitchings—Miss Liu. Pleased to make you acquainted." "This is Mr. Wilkie." Bob introduced the agent as he grinned at the girl. "Mr. Moto, whom I met on the Marco Polo. We're going to the International Club."

"So also this person and Miss Liu. We go together, yes? I think rickshaw broken."

At the International Night Club, a tall, wiry-moustached, fattish man met them in the hall.

"I'm Nicholas Marloff. I run this show. I'll get you a good table."

Mr. Moto talked in his cheery way and Miss Liu was very pretty. The dinner was quite a success, but there was no sign of Gloria. The walls of the dance-hall were hung with kake-monos and flags. Mr. Moto drew attention to one flag.

"Ancient order Chinese tiger," he told them. "Very interesting."

Presently the orchestra struck into the opening bars of a song. A girl entered from the artistes' room, singing the air and carrying a small loose bouquet of flowers. She came to Bob's table and stopped, a beautiful statue of surprise. "I've found you, you see," said Bob in triumph.

People were watching. Gloria whispered: "Come to my room." Then went on with her song, tossing the little scattered blossoms here and there.

After she had gone and the applause

had died down, Bob rose from the table. "Excuse me, will you?" he said to the others.

Moto laid a plump hand on his arm. "Advise discreet behaviour," he murmured.

But when Bob was in Gloria's dressing-room across the passage there was little discretion. He caught Gloria to him.

"We're going to get married—nothing shall stop us, dearest. I love you and you love me."

For a moment she resisted him, then gave in.

"Forgive me. I was told to spy on you. They cabled me at Honolulu."

Two of the attendants had followed Bob into the room. They seized his arms. Nicholas Marloff stood in the doorway.

"Put them in the cell—both," he ordered. "Quickly—quietly. I'll deal with them later."

He disappeared just as Bob freed himself with a jerk and hit out. But the thugs were wily; one of them dropped to the floor and wound sinewy arms around Bob's legs. The youngster toppled over and, next instant, was in their power.

"Look after the girl, Blake," spoke one of the pair. "If she starts anything knock her out."

Marloff went back to the dance-hall where Moto was building a castle of matches on the table, Lela Liu and Wilkie looking on. As Marloff came to them, Wilkie knocked over the glass on which the castle rested.

"Oh, sorry!" he cried. Marloff added: "What a pity!"

He stood there with hanging-down arms.

"You are clever, sir." He met Moto's spectacled glance with stolid face. "Care for a game of cards?"

"Yes, if you please," said Mr. Moto. He was writing on the back of the menu as he answered. "A little poem Japanese," he explained. "It is of

seventeen syllables—very difficult."

He tossed the menu amid the fallen matches and rose to follow Marloff to the gaming-room. "Please dance with Mr. Wilkie," he told the Chinese girl.

She nodded. She picked up the menu. "Call police if not returned in ten minutes," she read. She smiled into Wilkie's inquiring eyes. "My friend very foolish. Writes admiration praising me."

Mr. Moto Thinks Fast

THEY played the simple game of cutting the pack for the highest card. No matter what Marloff cut, Moto was always one pip better. "Confounded luck," Marloff growled. "Let us leave this play of children," said Moto. He produced a small folded paper from his breast-pocket and unfolded it. Marloff, standing up, saw several large unset diamonds. "From jewels of the Russian Czar," whispered the Jap.

"Cut glass," Marloff spoke as the San Francisco jeweller had done. But he knew at a glance that the stones were real. "What's your game?" he asked darkly.

"This person desiring to sell such things in United States. You know way to do so, yes?" Moto insinuated.

Marloff regarded the upturned innocent-looking spectacles.

"I'd want seventy per cent of the sales."

"This person agrees fifty per cent," Moto purred.

"Come along to my downstairs office," Marloff led the way, Moto meekly following him.

On the way they passed an iron door where the gangster Blake was on guard. At a sign from Marloff, Blake opened the door and revealed Bob and Gloria gagged and trussed hands and feet in a cell-like room. Marloff studied Moto's reactions.

(Continued on page 23)



The Jap gripped Wilkie's fingers and, like a conjuring trick, clapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists. December 4th, 1937.

Into the bad lands of Arizona rode four staunch comrades of the Range, destined to match their wits and their prowess against an organisation of criminals who stopped at nothing to gain their own ends. A smashing serial drama of high adventure among Renegades and Redskins beyond the Rio Grande, starring John Mack Brown



EPISODE 10—

“The Circle of Doom”

Read This First

Learning that their friend Larry Munro and his sister Lucy are in trouble, Kentucky Wade and his three partners, Trigger Benton, Dude Hansford and Mike Morales, leave New Mexico for Paradise Valley, Arizona.

There they discover that Larry has located a rich deposit of platinum, and is being threatened by an organisation of crooks who are out to dominate the valley. It is an organisation secretly headed by Matt Keeler, owner of a newspaper in the nearby town of Brimstone, and in a brush with some of Keeler's men Larry is wounded.

Kentucky and Dude Hansford pick up the trail of two of the gang, but become trapped in a fire that sweeps through the thickets of a box canyon.

Dude falls and wrenches his ankle, and even as Kentucky is helping him to rise, a blazing tree plunges towards them!

(Now Read On)

The Deserted Shack

WITH a hoarse cry Kentucky stumbled aside, dragging his friend with him, and only a second or two after they had quit the spot where they had been standing, the blazing tree-trunk crashed to earth with a resounding shock.

The ground trembled under the feet of Dude and Kentucky, but the falling bole had missed them by several yards, and they were lucky enough to escape being pinned under its outspread branches, though burning twigs and foliage swept their heads and shoulders.

They still had to contend with the fire that was raging through the thickets all around them, however, and with

Dude crippled by a twisted ankle, and Kentucky overburdened by the effort of supporting him, they could never have won their way clear of the canyon if they had not blundered upon a wide but shallow stream that meandered through the underbush.

That stream enabled them to push onward without running the gauntlet of a welter of flames. True, the smoke of the conflagration rolled over them in dense, suffocating clouds, and an intense heat played fiercely against them. Yet they managed to keep going, Kentucky helping Dude along with him in resolute fashion, and at last they reeled out of the canyon's mouth and turned their backs on the inferno through which they had struggled.

Thirty or forty paces beyond the entrance of the ravine the two of them collapsed, and for a brief interval lay gasping on the sloping bank of the stream they had followed. Then Kentucky roused himself and crawled up to some rocks on the rim of the bank, and as he looked out across the plain before him he saw two riderless horses some little distance away.

One was his own palomino and the other was Dude's sorrel. They, too, had escaped from the canyon of death, and, trembling with fright, were now standing near a copse of oak trees.

They were not the only living creatures in view, for Steve Claggett and his accomplice were still in the offing, and, riding southward, were casting backward glances in the direction of the canyon.

Kentucky espied them and, realising that they could not possibly see him lying there among the rocks, he decided not to show himself, but waited until

they had disappeared over a low divide in the landscape. Then he climbed to his feet and walked quietly towards his palomino and Dude's sorrel.

Coming up with the horses, he took hold of their reins and led them to the spot where he had left Dude, and after hoisting the latter on to his brone, he swung himself astride his own saddle.

“I saw Claggett and that other fellow high-tailing it over the prairie,” he told Dude. “But it was no use taking after them because they had too big a start. Besides, I suddenly figured it might pay us to lie low.”

“Why, Kentucky?”

There was a thoughtful expression on the ex-deputy's handsome face.

“Unless I miss my guess,” he said, “Claggett and the man who was with him were responsible for firing the brush in the canyon, Dude, and no doubt they think we've both been burned to death. Well, let 'em keep on thinking that. We may stand a better chance of getting the low-down on the whole gang if the word goes around that we've cashed in. We can sort of root around quietly, and maybe find out plenty.”

“Not a bad idea, Kentucky,” Dude conceded. “But where do we go from here—back to the Circle B? Lucy and the others will be wonderin' what's happened to us.”

Kentucky shook his head.

“We'd better not go there while it's daylight if we aim to play 'possum,” he declared. “We might run across somebody on the way, and the news would get about that we were alive and kicking. No, Dude, we'll have to hide out until after dark, and I think I know the very place. Do you remember that cabin we passed near the Indian trail?”

December 4th, 1937.

"The one that looked as if it had been deserted for years? Sure, I remember it. It oughta make a good cache right enough."

The two of them being agreed on this score, they set out at a brisk trot for the dwelling in question, and on reaching it some ten or fifteen minutes later, they concealed their ponies in a lean-to built against the shack. Then they went in through the front door of the abode.

There were one or two holes in the roof, and such crude furniture as the cabin contained was thick with grime and dust. In a corner stood a number of barrels which proved on examination to be gunpowder kegs, each being stuffed full of explosive material.

"Some prospector probably lived here at one time," Dude commented, as he sat on a rickety stool and watched Kentucky investigating the barrels. "I guess the Redskins murdered him. He took a chance, livin' so close to the trail that leads to their village."

"If the Redskins got him they must have bushwhacked him at a fair distance from this cabin," Kentucky replied. "What's more, they certainly never came across the homestead or they would have taken away the gunpowder."

Dude nodded.

"You're right," he said. "When you come to think of it, the shack's fairly well hidden in a fold o' the hills. We wouldn't have seen it ourselves if we hadn't struck across from the trail and tried to head off Claggett and his side-kicker. Well, I hope the Injuns don't happen across it while we're here, that's all."

"We'll light out quick enough if they show up," Kentucky answered, "and if we have to run for it I'll back either of our ponies against any Redskin cayase. But, say, let me take a look at that ankle of yours."

Dude's injured ankle was badly swollen. There was a spring of ice-cold water near the shack, however, and after Kentucky had treated the sprain with a kerchief soaked in that water the inflammation died down appreciably.

"Okay," Dude said then. "It feels a heap better already."

He pulled on his sock and boot again, and after a short silence broached the subject of the two rogues who had decoyed them into the box canyon and set the brush afire.

"Hey, Kentucky," he asked, "you didn't recognise that fellow who was with Steve Claggett, did you?"

No, Kentucky had not been able to recognise the man. He did not know that the gangster in question was the half-breed who called himself Buckskin. And he did not know that at that very moment Buckskin was riding back towards the Indian encampment of Red Hackett, having seen Claggett safely to the Driscoll ranch, where the latter intended to keep under cover.

Arrived at the tepee village where his elderly kinsman held sway, the half-breed took charge of the wagon which had contained the guns that had been handed over to the Indians. Then, hitching his mustang to the tail of the vehicle, he clambered on to the driving-seat and made tracks for Brimstone, waving farewell to a crowd of braves and squaws who assembled to see him off.

En route to the town he passed within a mile of the cabin where Dude and Kentucky were located. But the clip-clop of hoofs and the creak of wagon-wheels did not carry to the ears of the two friends, and they were as oblivious of Buckskin's proximity as he was of theirs.

The half-breed drove on, and, arriving December 4th, 1937.

in Brimstone later that same afternoon, he pulled up behind Braden's store.

Braden, dealer in firearms, came out through the back door of his premises as Buckskin drew the wagon team to a halt.

"Well," the storekeeper inquired, "did you have a good trip?"

"I'll say I had a good trip," Buckskin rejoined. "Braden, I've got news that the boss will be powerful glad to hear. Kentucky Wade won't bother anybody no more."

Braden shot a startled glance at him. "How come?" he demanded.

"Well," drawled Buckskin, "he an' one of his pals kinda got tangled up in a brushwood fire that cleaned out a box canyon 'way in the hills. Their horses broke away from 'em and cut loose into the clear. But Kentucky an' his pardner, they didn't make it, poor fellers."

He grinned smugly. Yet the expression on his swarthy features would not have been so complacent had he known that a boy who chanced to be loitering around the corner of Braden's store had heard every word, a boy who was known to the inhabitants of Brimstone as the Mouth Organ Kid.

On Buckskin's Trail

NIGHT had fallen, and, in the living-room of the Circle D ranch-house, Lucy Munro and Mike Morales and Trigger Benton were looking at one another uneasily.

"I don't like it," Trigger said all at once. "Dude an' Kentucky ought to have showed up long ago. I'm gonna ride over to Brimstone an' find out what's happened to 'em."

Mike Morales hitched his gun-belt. "That ees good idea, Treeger," he declared. "I go weeth you."

"No, amigo," Benton told the Mexican. "Somebody's gotta stay here, what with all the cowpokes bein' in town on the spree. We can't leave Larry with nobody to protect him but Miss Lucy and Wong, the Chinese cook."

He had scarcely spoken the words when the Oriental to whom he had referred came through from a back room in which Larry Muuro had been put to bed.

"Missy," Wong reported to Lucy, "plenty men ride this way lickety-split. I think mebbe they are cow-hands back ffrom town."

He was right. Amid a clatter of hoofs and a jangling of harness the punchers of the Circle D outfit descended upon a corral at the rear of the ranch-house. Then, after an interval of a minute or two, one of them came round to the front of the dwelling and tapped on the living-room door.

He was a man by the name of Connell, and as Lucy admitted him she saw that his features wore an expression of gravity. Obviously, he had bad news, but, standing just inside the threshold and shifting his weight from one foot to the other, he did not seem to know how to begin.

"Ma'm," he blurted at last, "I got something to say that's gonna upset you an' Kentucky Wade's friends here. Me an' the boys, we heard a rumour goin' around town that he and Dude Hanford had got caught in a brush fire. I dunno who was responsible for the story, but it—it appears they was trapped by this fire in a box canyon out among the hills, and they—they was burned to death."

Mike Morales was just in time to catch Lucy as she swayed back in a half-faint. As for Trigger Benton, he had started to his feet with every vestige of colour drained from his leathery countenance, and for several seconds he

stood staring at Connell in horror. Then he found his voice.

"I don't believe it!" he jerked out. "Dude and Kentucky were too range wise to get themselves trapped in any canyon fire! Connell, somebody bushwhacked them, then set fire to the brush to cover up the killing and spread this rumour around town—"

And then he stopped short, for ere he could say more two figures loomed up in the doorway behind Connell, and a hoarse cry of relief broke from Trigger Benton as he recognised Kentucky Wade and Dude Hanford.

It was a cry that was echoed by the other occupants of the room, and Lucy, recovering herself, ran forward spontaneously and clung to the younger of the two newcomers.

"Dude!" she sobbed. "Thank Heaven you're alive! Oh, Dude, Connell and the boys heard in town that you and Kentucky had been wiped out in a brush fire!"

"Yeah, so we gathered from the fellers over at the corral," Dude observed.

Connell drew a long breath.

"I'm sure glad it wasn't true," he said fervently.

"An' I knew it wasn't true," Trigger Benton struck in. "I figured there was something phoney about that rumour."

"It wasn't as phoney as you think, Trig," Kentucky remarked. "We were trapped in a canyon fire all right, but we managed to get out."

He went on to relate all that had happened, and when he had finished his narrative Trigger eyed him keenly.

"So now, Kentucky," he said, "you an' Dude are gonna keep under cover so as you'll stand a better chance of nobblin' the gang Steve Claggett belongs to."

"Exactly," came the rejoinder. "They're liable to get careless if they think two of us are out of the way. In fact, I've been thinking it would be all to the good if you and Mike didn't seem to be around either. You could go into town and make out you were leaving. Keeler would be the man to approach. He'd probably publish the news in his paper that you were clearing out."

"Mebbe we take Senor Keeler into our confidence, huh?" Mike Morales suggested. "He seems one verree good man."

Kentucky considered for a moment, and then shook his head.

"No, we won't take anybody into our confidence," he decided. "When there are too many folks in on a secret, that secret has a habit of leaking out. Which reminds me, Connell, you keep it under your hat about Dude and I being alive, and tell the boys to do the same."

Lucy interrupted, assuring Kentucky that he could depend on the ranch hands, and after some further discussion the two men who were supposed to have perished in the brushwood fire prepared to take their leave.

"Dude and I will go back to that deserted cabin," Kentucky said, "and you and Mike will join us there later, Trig. You can't miss the place if you follow the directions we've given you."

Dude and Kentucky departed, and shortly after they had gone Mike Morales and Trigger Benton also left the Circle D ranch, setting forth on the Brimstone trail.

It was pretty late when Trigger and the Mexican reached town, and, not expecting to find Matt Keeler at his office, but imagining he might be located at the Silver Dollar, they drew rein at the veranda of the saloon, dismounted from their broncs and tied the animals to the hitch-rail.

Sure enough Keeler was in the bar-

room, and, with Mike at his heels, Trigger singled him out and addressed him respectfully.

"I reckon you remember us, Mr. Keeler," he said, little dreaming that he was talking to the real head of the gang which was endeavouring to gain a strangle-hold on Paradise Valley.

The owner and editor of the "Brimstone News" answered him in sober accents.

"Why, yes, of course. You're friends of Kentucky Wade. You know, I can't tell you how sorry I was to hear about Kentucky and that young fellow Hanford. A tragic business—a tragic business."

Both Trigger and Mike assumed an expression of deep mournfulness.

"That's what we came in to see you about, Mr. Keeler," the former groaned. "You bein' a newspaper man, we figured maybe you'd heard some o' the details. We thought maybe you could tell us where we could find what's left of pore Dude an' Kentucky."

"Si, senior," Mike interposed. "We want to put up som' leetle monument to—what you call 'commemorate' them—before we go away from thees valley."

A queer glint seemed to flicker in Matt Keeler's eyes.

"You're leaving Paradise Valley?" he asked.

"Yeah, we ain't got no heart to stay here, Mr. Keeler," Trig Benton explained disconsolately, "after what's happened to our pals."

"I understand how you feel," the newspaper man said with a spurious kindness. "As to the locality where pore Wade and Hanford met their deaths, I'm told it's out by Rimrock Mountain. You take an old Indian trail that leads north-east of Brimstone here—"

He proceeded to detail the route to the box canyon where Kentucky and Dude were supposed to have met their doom, and when they had received the unnecessary directions from him, Mike and Trigger thanked him and made their exit from the saloon.

Outside in the street Trigger exchanged a glance with the Mexican.

"I hated foolin' a nice guy like Keeler," he stated, "but it had to be done. Let's hope he mentions in his paper that we've pulled our freight."

"Eef he doesn't," Mike commented, "et weel get around just the same. There was one or two hombres nearby that seem' centerested in our conversation weeth Keeler. But lees'n, Treeger, you know som'theeng? You are one verce fine actor. When you talk about Dude and Kentucky being dead I almost want to cry."

Trigger smirked self approvingly.

"Reckon I did pretty good, huh?"

"Good! Why, you are the most grandest *mentidoso* I have ever known!"

"Thanks, Mike," Trigger rejoined with considerable gratification. "Mighty nice of you to hand out the bouquets. Matter of fact, I thought you ought've looked more sorrowful-like, but I guess we can't all be born actors. Say, what was that Spanish compliment you paid me jest now—*mentidoso*? What's it mean, anyway?"

"Eet means a beeg liar."

Trigger darted a glance at Mike's grinning face and promptly took a swipe at him, but the Mexican skipped clear, and was chuckling over his friend's discomfiture, when all at once he saw someone beckoning to him from an alley-way alongside the saloon.

A boy was standing there in the shadows, and as Mike called Trigger's attention to the lad, the two men approached the alley inquisitively.

They recognised the boy as the Mouth Organ Kid, that youngster who was a familiar figure in Brimstone with the harmonica which he played in the hopes of picking up a few dimes from passers-by.

"What's on your mind, son?" Trigger asked him.

The Kid beckoned them deeper into the alley, and then spoke in a low voice.

"You're friends of Kentucky Wade an' Dudo Hanford, ain't yuh?" he said.

"All right, I got somethin' to tell yuh. Do you know a man named Buckskin?"

"Buckskin?" Trigger echoed.

"Yeah, you mean that half-breed."

"The same," the Kid answered.

"Well, he's the one that brung the news about Kentucky an' Dude. I heard him tell Braden, the storekeeper, an' the way he talked didn't sound good. He said 'the boss'—whoever that might be—would be glad to hear about it."

"I ducked outa the way a minute after," the lad went on, "because I thought he might catch no listenin', and that Buckskin is an ugly customer. I was gonna tell the sheriff, but he's outa town, an' I didn't like to say anything to anybody else. It's hard to figure which are the honest folks around here and which ain't."

Mike and Trigger had listened to him with sharpening interest, and now the Mexican spoke.

"Treeg, he jerked, "thees hombre Buckskin must have been the fellow who was weeth Steve Claggett. Remember, Kentucky and Dude told us when they got back to the Circle D ranch to-night that they—"

He checked himself, but the Mouth Organ Kid fastened on to the slip he had made.

"What's that?" he breathed. "Kentucky an' Dude were at the Circle D to-night? Then they—they ain't dead a-tall?"

"I deed not mean for you to know that," Mike granted sheepishly. "Nawbody cen town ces supposed to know that."

The Kid looked at the Mexican with the astuteness characteristic of a street arab.

"I get it. Kentucky an' Dude wanna flo low. Okay, mister, I'll keep my mouth shut."

"I know you will," Trigger cut in. "Dude and Kentucky told us about you, and from what they said I reckon we can depend on you. But this guy Braden—where can we locate him?"

"You won't be able to locate him to-night," the Kid replied. "I saw him get aboard the stage-coach this evenin', and heard him say he had business in Yuma. He'll be back, though, I guess."

"And thees Buckskin?" Mike Morales queried.

"He ain't in town neither, mister. I spotted him leavin' about ten minutes ago. Headed north-east, he was—on the Injun trail."

Trigger gripped Mike by the arm and swung round.

"Come on," he rapped out. "Maybe we can catch up with that half-breed. If we do we'll make him talk and tell us who his 'boss' is."

They hastened out of the alley, and the Mouth Organ Kid heard them mount up and ride away. Then he himself began to move towards the street, but before he had taken a couple of steps there was a scuffle of feet behind him and someone caught him by the shoulder in a vice-like clutch.

He wheeled to find himself in the grasp of Doc Hardy, owner of the Silver Dollar Saloon.

"Just a minute, you little runt," Hardy grated. "What have you been up to? What were you telling those two men?"

"Which two men?"

"Don't stall!" Doc Hardy snarled. "I heard Benton say something about catchin' up with a half-breed and makin' him talk. Who did they mean? Buckskin?"

The Kid gritted his teeth.

"I ain't sayin'," he retorted, and then, with a sudden jump, he tore himself free, taking to his heels and sprinting out of the alley like a stag in full flight.



The gangster tottered back, and, pouncing on him, Kentucky caught hold of him with one hand and hit him with the other.

Hardy blundered after him, cursing, but as he stumbled out into the main thoroughfare of the town he saw the lad turning off down a side-street fifty or sixty yards away and realised the futility of pursuing so nimble a quarry.

Instead he hurried round the veranda of his saloon and entered the bar-room, and as he discerned Matt Keeler, he strode towards him and drew him aside.

"Matt," he whispered, "Benton and that Mexican are up to something. I happened along the alley and spotted 'em with the Mouth Organ Kid. I couldn't get much of their talk, but I heard Benton say he an' Morales were gonna catch up with 'that half-breed' and make him spill the works. They must've meant Buckskin, for I don't know any other half-breed around this town."

Keeler's face had tightened. "What are you telling me this for?" he bit out. "You know what to do. Send some of the boys after Benton and Morales. Go on, get busy! Baldy is in the back room with Jake, Red and Slim. Send them!"

Hardy made tracks for a door in the far wall and disappeared beyond it, and less than thirty seconds afterwards four men issued from the apartment on to which that door opened—four men who filed quickly across the bar-room, shoved their way out through the swing doors and strode towards the hitch-rail.

Their horses were tied up there, and, casting loose the reins, they mounted in hot haste.

"Which way, Baldy?" one of them rasped.

"The Indian trail," came the terse reply. "Buckskin was goin' out to Red Hatchet's camp."

Brimstone's frame buildings echoed the drumming of hoofs as the four men spurred through the town. Then, pounding forth on to the open range, the ruffianly quartet turned their broncs north-east and urged them over the mesquite grass at full stretch.

The Beleaguered Cabin

LIKE the gangsters who had been dispatched to overtake them, Trigger Benton and Mike Morales were covering the ground at a rapid pace, yet they were a good many miles from Brimstone ere they sighted the figure of Buckskin away ahead of them.

Meanwhile, however, the rogue known as Baldy and his three accomplices had been gradually making up on them, for their horses were fresher than those ridden by Mike and Trigger, and even as the two friends espied their quarry they themselves were seen by the four pursuers in the rear.

A blatter of gunplay rent the quiet of the hills. It was the first intimation of danger that Trigger and Mike received, and as they looked round and saw the men who had started out after them from Brimstone they drew rein abruptly. Then they swerved aside into a clutter of rocks, and, dismounting to take cover, they plucked out their forty-fives and opened fire on the gangsters.

Farther along the trail, Buckskin had also heard the volley that had been discharged by Baldy and his associates, and had pulled up with a jerk. But Trigger Benton and Mike Morales had no eyes for him now. Their attention was concentrated on the foes who had blazed at them so unexpectedly.

Trigger and the Mexican pumped lead at the advancing crooks, and, though they drew no blood, the whistle of their shots served to arrest the headlong approach of the four gunmen.

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The men sawed on the reins of their ponies, brought the animals to a standstill and dived from their saddles in quest of shelter. A few seconds later they were trading lead with Mike and Trigger at long range, and the heavy blasts of their revolvers challenged the smashing reports of the weapons handled by the two riders whom they had surprised.

Baldy and his companions had taken up a position on a stretch of ground matted by patches of scrub, and between their vantage-point and the rocks where Trigger and Mike had gone to cover the air hummed with the vicious flight of bullets. Yet none of those slugs took effect, and it seemed as if the duel might proceed fruitlessly enough until the combatants had run out of ammunition.

Crouching amidst the scrub, Baldy addressed his comrades sourly.

"This ain't gettin' us nowhere," he growled. "Why don't Buckskin take a hand and see if he can draw them two hombres' fire? That might help us some."

Buckskin was hovering uncertainly away along the trail, however, and made no attempt to play any part in the affair.

"We oughta stayed on our hosses an' rushed Benton and the Greaser," one of Baldy's companions declared. "How about mountin' up again and tryin' it?"

"And get picked off like jack-rabbits?" Baldy countered. "No, Red, we gotta use strategy. Say, supposin' you an' Slim sneak off and try to work behind Benton and Morales, while Jake and me keep pluggin' away at 'em from here."

Red and Slim were willing to essay that manoeuvre, and, with the other two rogues maintaining a steady fire on the rocks, they began to effect a detour that would fetch them up in the rear of Trigger and Mike.

Their object was to take Mike and Trigger unawares and let them have it in the back—a murderous plan which depended for its success upon the secrecy with which the killers might carry out their flanking movement. But, unfortunately for the two gangsters concerned, their intended victims caught a glimpse of them circling through the scrub, and Trigger promptly appointed himself to the job of turning the tables on them.

"Keep shootin', Mike," he ordered. "an' make it look as if we're both slingin' lead. I'll handle those birds if they're aimin' to jump us from behind."

He crept back through the rocks and settled himself in the shadow of one of the largest boulders, and he had not been waiting there long when Red and Slim passed within a few feet of him.

They were picking their way cautiously through the tumbled blocks of stone, and Trigger let them go by before starting up from his hiding-place and training his six-gun on them.

"Drop your hardware, boys," he said evenly, "or sure as Fate I'll drop you!"

The gangsters seemed to become paralysed. Then, without turning their heads, they let their revolvers fall to the ground, and even as they did so Trigger heard Mike Morales raise a sudden shout of exultation.

Driving his prisoners forward, Trigger joined the Mexican and found him capering on the edge of the rocks in a high state of excitement. Then he saw two horsemen issuing from a narrow gulch between a line of foothills a little to the south of the trail.

"Treeger!" Mike ejaculated. "Et

ces Dude and Kentucky! We are near that cabin they told us about, of course. Kentucky—Dude," he added in a resounding yell, "get those hombres over there!"

Baldy and Jake had scrambled to their feet and were running to their horses in a panic. But at the sound of Mike's voice, Dude and Kentucky spurred towards them, and, coming up with the rogues ere they could fork their saddles, they ordered them to stay where they were.

The two gunmen offered no resistance. They were still armed, but in their desire to escape they had allowed Kentucky and Dude to get the drop on them, and at a brusque command they discarded their revolvers. Then plainly dumbfounded by the presence of two men whom they had believed to be dead, they obeyed Kentucky as he instructed them to head for the boulders where Mike, Trigger and the other captives were standing.

Kentucky "rode herd" on Jake and Baldy, while Dude brought along the four horses belonging to the crooks, and in another minute or so they had joined the group over at the rocks.

"Heard the shooting from the cabin where we're hiding out," Kentucky said to Mike and Trigger laconically. "What's it all about, anyway?"

Trigger related how he and Mike had encountered the Mouth Organ Kid, and how, as a result of that encounter, they had set out to track down Buckskin.

"Then, just as we elapped eyes on the half-breed," he went on, "these here rats came on the scene. They're all in the same gang that's been making trouble for Larry Munro, I guess."

"There's not much doubt of that, but I don't see any sign of that fellow Buckskin," Kentucky said, gazing up the trail. "Reckon he must have sheered off when he saw how things were going."

Kentucky was wrong. Buckskin was still in the vicinity, but had concealed himself in a copse of trees, and from the darkness of that spinney he watched his foes till, after a brief consultation, they moved off with their prisoners.

They made for the foothills from which Dude and Kentucky had galloped, and, having given them a considerable start, Buckskin rode after them until he saw them file into a verdant valley.

The cabin which Dude and Kentucky had taken over was situated in this valley, but while they were still some way from it they and their two comrades dismounted and compelled their prisoners to do the same. Then the horses were haltered, the gangsters' ponies as well as the broncs owned by their captors, and, the animals being left to graze on a rich strip of pasture, the men who had climbed down from them tramped across to the shack.

They were ignorant of the fact that they had been followed. As they entered the cabin, in which a kerosene lamp was burning dimly, they had no idea that Buckskin was turning away from the head of the valley to take a course that would lead him towards the village of his Navajo kinsman, Chief Red Hatchet.

Inside the cabin, Kentucky and his friends bound their prisoners hand and foot and began to demand information from them, but soon found that the crooks were not disposed to be enlightening. For they would give no response to the interrogations which were launched at them, and after wasting a good deal of breath, their questioners reached the limits of their patience.

"Look here," Kentucky broke out at last, "you men had better open up, or I'm liable to get plenty tough with you."

Baldy spoke. He had regained something of his courage, and there was an insolent expression on his face.

"Is that so?" he sneered. "Well, if I wasn't hog-tied and you didn't have that gun in your hand I'd show you just how tough I can be."

Kentucky looked down at him in silence for a moment. Then he laid aside his revolver and addressed the gangster quietly.

"I kinda like that idea," he said. "Trigger, untie this man."

Baldy was released, and rose to his feet, whereupon Kentucky spoke again.

"Trig, you and Dude and Mike stick your irons back in your holsters," he directed, "and don't draw 'em unless this fellow tries to grab the six-shooter I've set aside. I'm giving him a chance to make good his boast, and, whichever way the fight goes, I don't want any of you to interfere until one or the other of us has had enough."

His friends returned their forty-fives to the leather sheaths they were wearing on their hips, and Kentucky faced round towards Baldy again—just in time to see the rogue getting off to a flying start and running forward to aim a savage punch.

Kentucky tried to put up his hands to defend himself, but was too late. That punch caught him flush in the mouth and sent him spinning away, so that he cannoned against the door of the cabin and slammed it shut with the impact of his body.

He was quick to recover himself, however, and as Baldy rushed in at him to follow up his advantage, he ripped loose an upper-cut that took the man under the chin and rocked him from head to heels.

The gangster tottered back, and, pouncing on him, Kentucky caught hold of him with one hand and hit him with the other. It was a blow that might have knocked the wits and the valour out of any of Baldy's three accomplices, but to give him his due, Baldy was a formidable specimen. A man of powerful physique, he had not dissipated his stamina in bar-room carousals, being fairly temperate, and he was almost as fit as his opponent.

Wrenching away, he shook off the effects of the two successive blows. Kentucky had landed, and in retaliation he launched an attack that few could have resisted. Yet Kentucky stood up to it, and for the next ten minutes the pair of combatants battled like titans for the mastery.

Slowly but surely Kentucky gained the upper hand, till Baldy was taking terrific punishment. Nevertheless, the crook fought on as long as he was able to raise an arm, and when in the end he collapsed under a barrage of rights and lefts his ugly countenance was swollen almost out of recognition.

"Okay," he moaned as he lay huddled on the floor, "you win. I—I know when I've had enough."

Kentucky stepped back from him. "You do?" he panted. "All right—if you've had enough, start talking. Who's the boss of your gang? Who's the brains behind the—"

He never finished the sentence, for at that instant the inmates of the cabin heard their horses whinnying as if in alarm—heard the brones scattering across the pasture until they were brought up short by their tightening stake-ropes.

Something had startled the animals, Kentucky realised, and, wheeling from the crumpled form of Baldy, he made



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for the door of the shack and tugged it open. And as that door swung wide on its hinges he saw a cloud of befeathered horsemen sweeping into the valley—a war party of Navajo Indians, headed by an individual attired in the clothes of a paleface.

The latter was Buckskin, and he had not found it necessary to ride to the Indian village, for while he had still been a fair distance from it he had run across a strong band of braves, returning from a hunting trip in which they had sampled the new rifles supplied to them by Keeler's organisation.

Buckskin was now leading these braves in an assault upon the cabin occupied by Kentucky and his party, and at sight of the hostile cavalcade of warriors the ex-deputy slammed and barred the door of the dwelling.

"Indians!" he shouted. "Get to the windows, boys!"

Apart from the lean to, the cabin was a one-room structure, but it had an aperture in each wall, and, Kentucky having doused the lamp and snatched up his gun, the four friends posted themselves so as to cover all approaches to the shack, for the oncoming Redskins were swerving with the clear intention of circling it.

Rifles spat flame, and the desultory crackle of the first dozen shots swelled into a steady fusillade as the Indians ringed the cabin and poured in a ruthless fire while they galloped around it. Bullets thudded into the stout timbers of the outer walls, or wheeped through the windows to sear their way across the dwelling's interior.

Again and again some yelling foeman was seen to plunge from his mount, and, heavily outnumbered though they were, Kentucky and his friends told themselves grimly that if they could keep up so effective a resistance they might drive off the besiegers yet.

But all at once several of the warriors swung out of the attackers' formation and made for a clump of small trees, and when they rode back to rejoin their comrades a few minutes later each was carrying aloft a blazing torch—a fragment of wood lopped from a bough and set alight.

It was plain what they meant to do, and as the torch-bearers broke through the circle of braves who were galloping round the cabin and shooting at the windows, Kentucky and his companions tried to pick them off.

Two of them fell to the defenders' revolvers, but the others got close enough to hurl their flambeaus at the roof of the shack, and the inmates of the building heard the thump of the burning brands dropping on to the timbers overhead.

One of the torches slithered off again, yet the rest remained lodged on the roof, and lay there with the flames from them eating into the rotten, worm-eaten wood till the men inside the dwelling could see the red-and-yellow tongues of fire darting between the crevices and licking at the undermost surface of the laths.

A feeling of despair gripped Kentucky Wade and his three friends. They had no means of stemming that fire, and they had only the choice of two equally fatal courses—either to charge out into the open and die before the rifles of the Indians, or to perish in a blaze that would ultimately reach those gunpowder barrels in the corner and blow the shack and its occupants to smithereens.

(To be continued in another high-tension episode next week. A New Universal picture, distributed throughout the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring John Mack Brown.)

December 4th, 1937.

"THE SQUEAKER"

(Continued from page 10)

The inspector gave a signal to the policeman, and with bowed head Barrabal was led away.

A Last Chance

INSPECTOR ELFORD took his prisoner to the superintendent's-room and the handcuffs were removed.

"Well, it's worked so far—that fake arrest certainly made Sutton talk." Barrabal rubbed his wrists. "Who've you got watching the house?"

"Collins and Bateson—both good men," said Elford.

"Fine! A pity those papers we found on Graeme aren't of any importance." Barrabal relaxed into the superintendent's chair. "What we need is a definite link between Sutton and Graeme." He sprang up as the door opened and the superintendent appeared. "Good-evening, sir."

Superintendent Marshall scowled fiercely, and the sight of Barrabal using his chair did not soften his temper.

"You've let me down, Barrabal!" he cried. "A man was killed to-night right under your nose, because you were off dancing with a girl. You've let someone get away with a cold-blooded murder."

"Sutton is the murderer, and he isn't getting away with it."

"Then why didn't you bring him in?"

"Because we couldn't have held him for one minute on the evidence we had. Sutton's known as a respectable business man, and he's almost engaged to a very fine girl. Unless we had a perfect case, his solicitor would make Scotland Yard look ridiculous. Sutton's no ordinary crook."

"But this is not good enough," cried the superintendent. "I'm not satisfied, Barrabal. You were told to watch that house, and yet you were having a darned good time instead of—"

"One moment, sir," interrupted Barrabal. "Suppose I could break this case for you to-night?"

Marshall was amazed.

"Impossible! How do you imagine you could do that?" he said in less harsh tones.

"Let me have Elford for two hours and I'll show you."

"What are you going to do?"

"First of all I'm going to talk to Larry Graeme's girl. I think she knows something. If she doesn't, I have another plan to make Sutton talk."

"All right!" growled Superintendent Marshall. "But you've got to do it to-night."

"I will—or my name isn't Inspector Barrabal."

"Inspector Barrabal?" Marshall gaped at him, then grinned. "Very well, that's a deal. I'll appoint you an inspector right away, but if you want to stay with the Yard you must get the Squeaker to-night!"

Naturally the party at the Stedman house had broken up, and though the guests had gone, many of the household were still up. Frank Sutton had stayed many nights at the house, and one room was regarded almost as his own. He even had several changes of clothes here, though they were mostly light suits or sports attire. After the arrest of Captain Leslie he went to December 4th, 1937.

this room after telling Carol not to go to bed as he wished to talk to her. He made several telephone calls before seeking Carol, who had retired to her own private sitting-room.

"Well, I'm all ready to go," Sutton announced. "I've packed the few things I've got here and they'll have to do. I've secured reservations, and I suggest we leave to-night, motor to Southampton, and—"

"I'm not running away, Frank. I told you that some while ago."

"It's not running away," he said irritably. "It's the only sensible thing to do. By to-morrow this place will be overrun with newspaper-men and policemen—you won't have a moment's peace."

"That doesn't worry me."

"They'll drag you into court—get you up in front of a lot of people—ask you all sorts of questions. What possible good can you do by staying?"

"I may be able to help Captain Leslie."

"He's not worth helping. Carol," he argued. "He's just killed a man—the police proved that."

"With your assistance," Carol looked at him with something akin to contempt. "I don't believe he could harm anybody."

"You'll tell me next you're in love with him," he sneered.

"I am!" Carol answered without hesitation.

"Why—you can't be!" Sutton cried.

"A murderer! Why, it's—"

The telephone-bell shrilled.

Carol answered the call.

"Hallo—yes, yes, he's here—wait a minute." She put her hand over the mouthpiece. "It's Scotland Yard—for you."

"Scotland Yard?" Sutton muttered shakily, and took the phone from the girl. "Hallo—yes, it's Frank Sutton speaking. Come down to-night. Well, I'm very sorry, Inspector Elford, but I'm terribly tired—would to-morrow do?"

"You can't do that, Frank," dramatically cried Carol. "You'll be out of the country by to-morrow."

Sutton glanced angrily at the girl.

"I've had enough excitement to-night," he whispered hoarsely. "And quite enough of policemen."

"But you must go!" she insisted. "You've talked a lot about your duty as a citizen, and how you would like to help Captain Leslie."

"All right," Sutton had been thinking. If he refused to go to the Yard to-night suspicions might be aroused if it were found that he had gone to the Continent. "Very well, inspector," he said in cordial tones. "I'll be down in about an hour."

"And I'm going with you," stated Carol.

Tamara proved a disappointment to Barrabal. He went with Elford to the Leopard Club and they were taken to her dressing-room. Directly she saw them the girl seemed to guess that something was wrong. She admitted Graeme had been to see her that night, but, remembering his warning, she would say nothing more. She kept on asking why they had come to see her, and finally Barrabal told her.

"I want to get the man who killed Larry," Barrabal rasped out. "So you've got to tell me where he went."

Tamara put a hand to her forehead and collapsed in a heap. As time was urgent they took her down to a car and whisked her back to the Yard, where a nurse took charge of her. Tamara came out of the faint, and was willing to talk, but the shock seemed to have numbed her brain. She knew

Graeme had been going to meet some man, but could not remember the name. An orderly informed Barrabal that Carol Stedman and Frank Sutton were in the waiting-room.

Sutton was kept waiting—on purpose. He became very restless and impatient. A policeman informed him that Inspector Barrabal wished to ask him a few questions and would he mind waiting?

"I'm tired, and I don't want to stick around here all night," irritably cried Sutton. "Why must I see this Inspector Barrabal? Who is he?"

"Criminal Investigation, sir."

"Why can't I see Inspector Elford?"

The policeman said he would make inquiries and came back in a few minutes to request Mr. Sutton to come this way, and would Miss Stedman please remain in the waiting-room.

Sutton was shown into Inspector Elford's room.

"You know I want to help the police, inspector, but I'm a very busy man," Sutton stated. "I've told you everything I know. Why have I got to see Barrabal?"

"He's in charge of the case, Mr. Sutton."

"He knows all about Leslie, doesn't he?"

"All about him."

"Then what can he possibly want with me?"

"You'd better ask him for yourself." The inspector turned his head. "Ah, here he is now!"

It was a big shock for Sutton when Barrabal came into the room and grinned at him mockingly, but the Squeaker quickly recovered his wits. He sensed danger at once, and was on the alert.

"I hope you will forgive my little deception," Barrabal said in friendly tones. "You see, it's all in the day's work."

"May one inquire the reason for the disguise?" Sutton asked calmly.

"I was on a case down at the docks, looking for a man they call the Squeaker."

"I've heard of him," Sutton said with an air of interest. "He's a chap who buys stolen property, isn't he? You have a name for that sort?"

"A fence, Mr. Sutton."

"Yes, a fence. But what's that got to do with this murder case?"

"Nothing, except that the Squeaker killed Larry Graeme."

"Really?" Sutton raised his eyebrows. "How do you know?"

"Because Graeme told his girl he was out to get him."

"Did he say who the Squeaker was?" Sutton seemed amused. "I see by your faces, gentlemen, that he did not tell his girl. A very great pity, but he appears not to have trusted her. It's a great shame that no one witnessed the shooting, because now you can't arrest anybody, can you?" He smiled slyly at Barrabal. "Well, I don't suppose I'll be seeing you at the office to-morrow."

"No, I don't think you will." Barrabal was equally cool and affable.

"But before you go, Mr. Sutton, I should just like to show you how we handle a murder investigation."

"You should go along, Mr. Sutton," gruffly remarked Inspector Elford. "It might be a new experience for you."

The Master Trick

FRANK SUTTON was conducted into a huge room, where there was little except a winding staircase coming down from a gallery. Two seats were brought, and Inspector Elford quietly withdrew. The lights in the ceiling became dim, and then a greyish light

(Continued on page 26)

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"THE SQUEAKER"

(Continued from page 24)

was shone on the stairs. A warder appeared at the top of the stairs with a man in convict's garb. The convict began to descend the steel stairs.

"That's Lon Perrigan," Barrabal told Sutton. "He's doing three years in Pentonville. The Squeaker put him there." Another warder appeared at an open door with a convict. Another prisoner came slowly down the stairs. "Jack Mayne—he'll be out next month. He'd shoot the Squeaker on sight if he knew who he was. See that big, surly fellow coming down now—that's Tom Hand. He wouldn't meet the Squeaker's price—we got the usual note."

"What note's that?" Sutton asked. "Oh, you wouldn't know about that!" Barrabal answered, and pointed. "Here comes Harry Black. His wife committed suicide when the Squeaker double-crossed him."

"Can't we go now? I'm tired." Sutton pushed back his chair. "There are several more," quietly spoke Barrabal. "Men whom the Squeaker betrayed. This big man has been insane once—always he imagines himself strangling the Squeaker. When he is freed in two months' time it will be his one and only aim in life."

"Look here," cried Sutton, "I've had just about all I can stand of this."

"Larry Graeme had more than he could stand."

"What's that got to do with me?" "You were at the party where the murder occurred."

"Yes, and so were seventy other people," Sutton's voice was shrill. "And they were there before I even arrived."

"Yes, but you said yourself that

Larry Graeme must have been shot after you reached the house."

"Are you trying to pin something on me?"

"There's nothing I can pin on you, is there?" viciously spoke Barrabal.

"Then I'll be going."

"Come this way, Mr. Sutton." Barrabal opened a door for his visitor, and after walking down innumerable passages for the purpose of setting Sutton's nerves even more on edge, they came to a door. "In here, please."

Frank Sutton found himself in a darkened room—the only light being a watery gleam from the moon that came through barred windows.

"What else do you want?" Sutton demanded shrilly.

"I'd like to have a statement before you leave."

"I'm not doing anything until I've seen my solicitor." Sutton gazed fearfully round. "Why don't you turn on some light?"

"Sorry, but the lights don't work!" harshly spoke Barrabal.

"You've no right to hold me here!" screamed Sutton, perspiration pouring down his face. "I demand that—"

There was a click and the door opened. The light from the passage revealed three figures, the superintendent, Elford, and a policeman. With a gasp of relief Sutton moved towards them. "I want to make a complaint against this man," he managed to stammer out. "He's been trying to intimidate me—to implicate me in a murder I know nothing about."

"Why don't you tell Superintendent Marshall about yourself, Mr. Sutton," cried Barrabal before his chief could reply. "Tell him how that job of yours is a blind—a cover up for the biggest fence racket in London."

"You can't talk to me like that!" Sutton shouted.

"Tell him why you hire ex-convicts, so that you can frame them on their records when you get yourself in a tight spot—the way you tried to frame me."

Barrabal was merciless. "Tell him about Larry Graeme—how you squeaked on him when he wouldn't sell to you, how you saw him at the house, and all the time you carried in your hand this gun."

"I never saw it before," stuttered Sutton, staring with horror at the gun he had flung into the bushes.

"Tell him how you followed Graeme round the house, through the garden, and then shot him. You killed Larry Graeme because he knew who you were, and you were afraid."

"You're mad! I never knew Larry Graeme—I wouldn't know him if I saw him."

"You wouldn't?" Barrabal's voice was mocking. His hand went out and gripped a cord, whilst his other hand touched a switch. A bright light threw a beam on dark curtains. Barrabal gripped Sutton and spun him round to face the curtains. "Then look!"

He jerked the cord. The curtains rolled back, and there on a stretcher lay the ghastly figure of Larry Graeme.

Frank Sutton gave a yell of fright, and, white as death, sagged back against the wall, his eyes staring and his whole body shaking.

"I—I had to kill him!" The words came slowly from quivering lips. "He recognised me that night. I sent a note, but he escaped. I was a-afraid he might g-get me." His hands went over his face to shut out the figure of the man he had shot. "I had to kill him—"

Joshua Collic was given the scoop, and his story was all over the front page. His final paragraph was a typical Collic surprise item.

"Not only has the capture of the Squeaker led to the reinstatement of Inspector Barrabal of Scotland Yard, but this reporter strongly suspects a romantic conclusion to the case."

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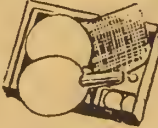


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"YOU CAN'T BUY LUCK"

(Continued from page 14)

noise, tried to get out of the cab, two men leaped from the police car and he was caught.

She knew then that Paul Vinette suspected something. Quickly she looked around. An ashtray caught her attention. With hurried fingers she picked up a cigarette stub with her handkerchief, and when Paul Vinette, smiling, came downstairs with the wrapped cellophane she had gone.

Third Degree

JOE had already told the full story to Bond, who listened sympathetically, when Betty burst in.

"I was waiting for—for my friend to bring out the last one, Vinette, when you caught me."

"Tough luck, if you're telling the truth," Bond muttered, studying him reflectively.

"I am," said Joe, with a quietness that carried conviction.

"We've found him, the man who murdered Jean Jason!" interrupted Betty excitedly. "I'm certain of it. Look! I picked this cigarette-stub up in Vinette's studio after he had handled it. It must have his fingerprints on it. Couldn't you check it with the ones found in Miss Jason's apartment?"

"Well," said Bond dubiously, "we've identified every print we found in her place, either as Miss Jason's, the servant's, or Baldwin's."

"Did you find any on the cigarette-stubs in the ashtrays?" asked Joe.

"None that we could raise. Some of the cigarettes were burned to ashes. The prints on the others were blurred. I'm afraid there's nothing we can do, Miss McKay."

"You've got to do something," Betty said desperately. "He's suspicious, and might disappear."

"Lieutenant," said Joe suddenly, "Vinette doesn't know those prints were useless. If you told him this cigarette-stub—the one that Betty took from his studio—was found in Jean's apartment, maybe you could bluff him into a confession."

Bond pointed out that they had nothing on Vinette for which they could pull him in; that Joe, not having seen him, wasn't even sure he was the man, and that accusing him on the off-chance might bring serious trouble to his own department.

"You know my record, Bond," urged Joe. "Bring him here so that I can see him. You've got to give me a break!"

"It'll mean our jobs," put in McGrath, "if—"

"It'll mean Joe's life if you don't," said Betty spiritedly.

"I'll take a chance," snapped Bond. He handed the stub to McGrath. "Mac, plant this. Miss McKay, you come with me. You can point out this Vinette for me."

Paul Vinette was picked up just in the nick of time. He was drawing away in his roadster when the police car containing Betty and Lieutenant Bond forced him into the kerb. Trying to put a bold front on it, he was taken to the police headquarters.

In a side room, Joe and Betty and Bond looked through a partly opened door at the anxiously waiting artist.

"That's him!" whispered Joe.

"You're sure?" Bond questioned.

"I'd stake my life on it!"

"That's just what you're doing," said

Bond grimly, and, leaving them watching, he joined McGrath and Paul Vinette in his own office.

"I still don't know why you want to detain me," the artist was saying. "I admit I was speeding. Can't I post bail, and—"

"Just why were you in such a hurry, Mr. Vinette?" interrupted the lieutenant.

"I told you that on the way down here," Vinette looked at him belligerently. "I was trying to catch the noon train."

"That's funny," said Bond. "It looked more like you were running away."

"That's ridiculous!" Vinette plucked at his moustache as Bond sat down. "I didn't even know I was being followed, and I still don't know what you want."

"Well, I'll tell you," Bond leaned forward, his keen eyes fixed on Vinette's. "I just want to ask you a couple of questions. For example, did you know Jean Jason?"

"No," Vinette's eyes shifted. "I don't believe I do."

"That's not an answer," snapped McGrath, behind him. "Either you knew her, or you didn't!"

"Well, I meet a number of people. It might have been that I was introduced to the young lady at a party."

"Well"—Bond picked up a photograph and gave it to him—"perhaps this will refresh your memory."

"No," Vinette studied it. "I never saw her before."

"I suppose you've read about the Jason murder case?" asked Bond, taking the photo back and quietly handing it to McGrath.

"I saw the headlines, yes," Vinette was too worried now, too eager to appear composed, to notice McGrath leaving the office. "But I didn't pay much attention to them."

"Too lurid for your tastes?" asked Bond ironically.

"Well," Vinette laughed nervously. "A trifle."

"When were you last at the Renrad Arms?" snapped Bond suddenly.

Vinette almost gave himself away.

"Renrad Arms?" he replied, fighting to control his voice. "I don't believe I've ever been there."

"No?" murmured Bond, and took the

photograph that McGrath brought back at that moment.

"Here you are, John," his assistant said. "Identicals."

"Say, what's this all about, anyway?" Vinette was getting fidgety.

"I'll show you," said Bond grimly. "On the night Jean Jason was murdered you were seen leaving the Renrad Arms."

"That's impossible! I was at home all evening."

"Really? In an ashtray in that apartment we found a cigarette-stub. There is the paper from that stub. We developed a fingerprint on it. McGrath just checked it against the prints you left on that photograph. Now, are you certain you were never in the Renrad Arms, and that you didn't know Jean Jason?"

To the delight of the watching Betty and Joe, the artist fell into the trap.

"Well," he said hesitantly, looking round like a hunted animal, "I guess I should have told you the truth. I did know her, and I did go to her apartment, but not the night she was killed. It was the day before."

With a glance at each other the two officers fired accusations at him.

"You're lying! You killed her!"

"I didn't! I didn't! I tell you I wasn't there that night!"

"You used her gun! You left fingerprints on it! On the trigger! They match these!"

"That's impossible!" Vinette was breaking fast under the inexorable questioning. "I wasn't near the apartment that night!"

"You were seen. You gave a man a light. In front of the building—"

"Now I understand!" he shouted.

"Baldwin's trying to pin this on me!"

"Well, if you weren't there," said Bond menacingly, icily, "how did you know it was Baldwin we were mentioning?"

"Why—why— I just guessed it," he stammered, aghast at his mistake.

"Why, you just said it was Baldwin who—"

"McGrath said a man," said Bond icily.

"I didn't even know Baldwin!" screamed Vinette. "I only knew his name from the newspapers! He was jealous," he blubbered. "Jealous, I tell you. I wasn't near his place, not that night. I was at home in my studio—" He broke off and passed his hand nervously over his face. "All right," he gulped, "I did it!" And with a rush of words told the detectives how the crime had been committed.

Bond and McGrath heaved deep breaths and looked at one another. White-faced, trembling, Paul Vinette was taken to the cells.

The papers had a new sensation the next day, and they told it in glaring headlines—"Baldwin Innocent! Killer Confesses!"

Not long after, Joe Baldwin and Betty McKay were leaving for an air trip.

"I got yo' bags all aboard, Mr. Baldwin," grinned the negro porter at the airport. "I sho' hopes Sarcasm wins that Santa Anita handieap, suh!"

"Say"—Joe handed him a big tip—"pray for one of those Californian fogs, will you?"

"Mr. Baldwin!" exclaimed Betty severely.

He grinned.

"A little rain will be good for the orange crop. Come on, Mrs. Baldwin!"

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Onslow Stevens and Helen Mack.)

December 4th, 1937.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE SQUEAKER"—Barrabal, Edmund Lowe; Frank Sutton, Sebastian Shaw; Carol Stedman, Ann Todd; Tamara, Tamara Desni; Larry Graeme, Robert Newton; Inspector Elford, Allan Jeaycs; Joshua Collie, Alastair Sim; Superintendent Marshall, Stewart Rome; Mrs. Stedman, Mabel Terry-Lewis; Mr. Field, Gordon McLeod.

"YOU CAN'T BUY LUCK"—

Joe Baldwin, Onslow Stevens; Betty McKay, Helen Mack; Brent, Paul Guilfoyle; Jean Jason, Maxine Jennings; Paul Vinette, Vinton Haworth; Spike, Murray Alper; Lieutenant Bond, Frank M. Thomas; Ben, Dudley Clements; McGrath, Richard Lane.

"THINK FAST, MR. MOTO"—

Mr. Moto, Peter Lorre; Gloria Danton, Virginia Field; Bob Hitchings, Thomas Beck; Nicolas Marloff, Sig Rumann; Joseph Wilkie, Murray Kinnell; Carson, John Rogers; Lela Liu, Lotus Long; Muggs Blake, George Cooper; Adam, J. Carrol Naish.

"THINK FAST, MR. MOTO"

(Continued from page 18)

The Jap nodded. "It was necessary." He considered for a moment. "The boy you will keep for ransom—his father is rich. But the girl—" He snapped his fingers. "Slit her throat and drop her in river." Blake slammed to the iron door, and Marloff led on into a room where a secret roulette-table was littered with coins.

They played awhile. Nearly half an hour passed. Lela had made several abortive attempts to enter the 'phone-box in the hall. A sailor was there, chattering endlessly. At last she got in and managed to ring through to the Chinese police headquarters. She had just spoken when the box door was gently opened. A hard, round point touched between her shoulders; a gentle, hissing sound was lost in the closed privacy of the box. The girl dropped the 'phone and crumpled up on the floor.

"Fainted!" muttered Mr. Wilkie, who, following her from the dance floor, was prompt to run forward and carry her into the reception office. He passed her over to the woman there, then hurried downstairs to the roulette-room. Mr. Moto was standing by the door, his white-coated back to him when Wilkie opened it. He was holding up Marloff with a gun. "Why, Mr. Moto!" cried Wilkie in surprise. "What's all this?"

He knocked up the Jap's outstretched arm, and the revolver clattered to the floor. Wilkie then became aware of a bearded, Hebraic man standing behind Marloff. A shot rang out. Mr. Moto fell sideways, a black, scorched mark showing on his white coat just below the heart.

Marloff growled: "Adram, you've saved me the trouble." He snatched up Moto's pistol and stooped over him. "Not quite dead? A pity."

Mr. Moto gasped painfully: "Gentleman knows when he is beaten. Please finish quick." He feebly put his left hand to his temple. "Here, if you please."

"Don't worry," Marloff gritted.

"This time luck's against you, stool pigeon!"

He was pressing the muzzle of the gun to the Jap's forehead when a foot shot up into his stomach. His hand was gripped in pudgy fingers that closed like a vice. He was lifted high with the foot and hurled like a stone from a catapult right across the room, falling with a crash on to the bearded Adram.

Mr. Moto sprang to his feet, revolver once more in his grasp.

"Mr. Wilkie, take gun from Adram," Moto ordered. "Quick, if you please!"

Wilkie, ashy grey, obeyed. Marloff's arms were high above his head. "Search also that one."

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Wilkie, Adram's pistol in hand, stepped up to Marloff. A second report snapped out, and Marloff, with a grunt of surprise, fell face forward, clawing at the carpet with his fingers.

"The—gun went off," Wilkie stammered.

"Everything all right, Mr. Wilkie," came Moto's quiet voice. "That odd head of smugglings. I think now police have come."

A big Chinese officer entered with a squad of his men. They had Bob and Gloria with them. They grabbed Adram and another of his kind who came creeping in the room. The big officer spoke gruffly to Moto. "Miss Liu is not hurt too much. I have sent her to police hospital."

Moto's sallow face had flashed at mention of the Chinese girl. But he was still calm. He held out both hands to Wilkie.

"Admiring presence of mind," he said.

Wilkie's hand came forward to shake Moto's. The Jap gripped Wilkie's fingers, and, like a conjuring trick, clapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

"You killed poor Mr. Marloff"—Moto's voice was quite unemotional—"because you think he betray you. You make attempt to kill Miss Liu, my friend, for same reason. You act with poor Mr. Marloff in the smugglings. It is very sad."

"You're in the police!"

Bob stared at the little Jap as he clutched at Gloria's hand. She cried in alarm:

"And—Oh, you're wounded!"

The black, scorched ring showed sinisterly on the white coat.

Mr. Moto smiled at them kindly.

"Beneath is bullets waistcoat. See!"

He threw open his dress jacket.

"Necessary sometimes. I am not police, if you please. This humble person managing director Heroshima & Company, Fifth Avenue, in New York, dealers of diamonds, precious stones, jade, all things very beautiful and rare of fine quality. Smugglings not good for honourable Messrs. Heroshima's affairs." He beamed round at them all through his gold-rimmed spectacles. "So this one take steps to prevent smugglings. That is all!"

(By permission of 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation, Ltd.; starring Peter Lorre as Mr. Moto.)

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FILM STORIES

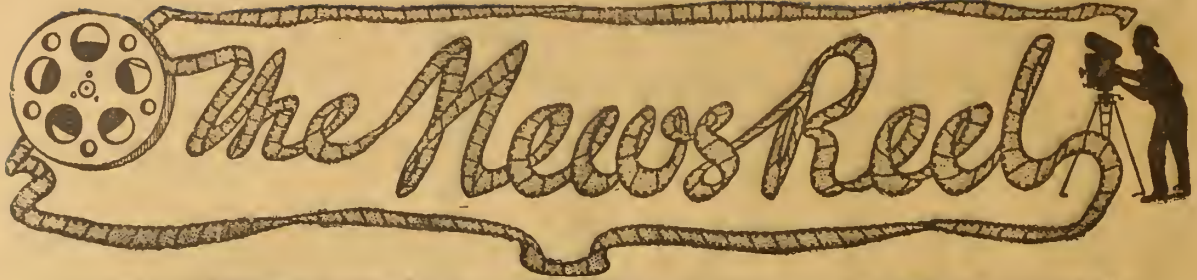
No. 955. EVERY TUESDAY April 2nd, 1938. **2^D**

*Mystery
Thrills & Romance*

"WEST OF SHANGHAI"

Starring
BORIS KARLOFF





The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 211, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

What a Life!

Porter Hall, who has been playing roles in two pictures at the same time, recently found himself Hollywood's busiest actor.

He wears a beard in "Bulldog Drummond's Peril" and is clean shaven in "Dangerous To Know." The result is he has been constantly on the jump.

So far, during the production of these two Paramount pictures, he has put on and taken off his whiskers no fewer than twenty times, and it requires one hour and ten minutes in the make-up department for every change!

Ohio Town Built for New Film

With fifty trucks bringing in building materials, machinery and equipment over the "Rim of the World" road, a force of one hundred men constructed an Ohio town, of the period just preceding the Civil War, on the shores of Lake Arrowhead. Tons of material were transported to the site, 6,000 feet above sea level, for the village, used as chief location set for "Of Human Hearts," Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, starring Walter Huston, with James Stewart and Beulah Bondi.

The location was one of the most extensive of the year. Several hundred extras, as well as all the principals, were at the lake for more than two weeks to complete all exteriors. During the location trip the town was remodelled to show a lapse of years. Clarence Brown is directing the new picture, a dramatic story of the sacrifice of the itinerant preacher and his wife for a son who forgets, until his feet are set on the right path, at the close of the Civil War, by Abraham Lincoln. It is based on the fiction story by Honore Willis Morrow.

Players include Charles Coburn, distinguished New York stage actor, brought West for his first screen rôle, Guy Kilbee, Charley Grapewin, Ann Rutherford, Ted Healy, and Leatrice Joy Gilbert, daughter of John Gilbert and Leatrice Joy, who is making her screen debut in the production.

Your Pencil

I feel sure that all readers have been collecting the tokens which have appeared week by week since the scheme was announced in the February 26th issue. It is a grand pencil, and I strongly advise all those who have collected tokens to take careful note of the announcement on page 25.

World's Largest Correspondence Bureau

The world's largest correspondence bureau is going full blast again.

Overhardened postmen daily pour thousands of letters from fans to their April 2nd, 1938.

favourite film stars into the studios and private offices of the players.

A check-up of those stars who handle their post with private staffs reveals that the present flow of fan mail into Hollywood is the largest since 1929.

Last year, Bing Crosby mailed over 175,000 autographed photographs of himself to fans. This year he will mail more than 200,000 photographs, if the present rate is maintained for the rest of the year.

Crosby has offices away from the studio, and consequently maintains his own letter bureau instead of making use of the studio facilities at Paramount. His fan mail this year is so large that he employs three stenographers and a clerk.

The screening of his recent Paramount picture, "Double Or Nothing," and his return to work, after a holiday, in "Doctor Rhythm," has maintained his fan mail at its high level.

The Crosby records are borne out by those of other stars. For example, the return of W. C. Fields to work in "The Big Broadcast of 1938," has sent his mail soaring.

The normal upward trend in fan mail is said to be from January until September and October; there is a slump during these last two months. Then fan mail picks up again in November, only to go into another slump until after the Christmas holidays, when everyone is busy with shopping and New Year celebrations.

Make-up Miracles

It's easier to make a purse out of a sow's ear than to make a Chinaman out of an Englishman.

But in Hollywood anything is possible, and so Boris Karloff, who was born William Henry Pratt, became an Oriental.

It took Percy Westmore and his assistant, Ray Lopez, two weeks to work out the make-up that Boris Karloff wears in "West of Shanghai." The preliminary work was the hardest part of it, and after the two make-up men had worked it out, the rest was comparatively easy. Karloff had to spend only three hours each day in the make-up department during the filming of the picture.

To begin with, Karloff's eyebrows and part of his hair were shaved off. His eyelashes were removed and the back of his neck was shaved round, like a cattleman's haircut. The space between the eyes was built up and the shape of the eyes was changed to almond.

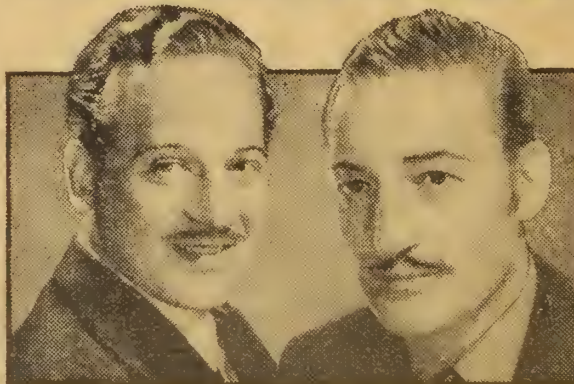
The cheekbones were high-lighted to make them more prominent. Westmore and Lopez experimented with Karloff's cheekbones for several days before they hit upon the high-lighting. They tried building them up, but this didn't work, for every time Karloff smiled the built-up cheekbones cracked.

The wig was next. Karloff's hair is fine, and brown in colour. That's all right for an Englishman, but Chinese have straight, black, coarse hair, so a wig was necessary, and that's what Karloff wears in the film. He also wears a black, wiry moustache. Finally he was painted a nice yellow, as though suffering from a permanent case of jaundice.

Karloff says the make-up for "West of Shanghai" was harder to apply than the one he wore in "Frankenstein," but it was less uncomfortable. It was a bit hard on the eyes, but

(Continued on page 25)

NEXT WEEK'S THREE LONG COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



MELVYN DOUGLAS and WARREN WILLIAM

IN

"ARSENE LUPIN RETURNS"

An American detective goes to France to act as guard for some valuable jewels. They vanish from a wall safe in an old chateau, and the name of Arsene Lupin, a notorious criminal whom the police believe to be dead, is written across the safe. A thrilling mystery yarn

"BULLDOG DRUMMOND COMES BACK"

On the eve of his marriage, Captain Hugh Drummond finds that his fiancée has been spirited away by enemies. If Drummond follows certain clues, she will be safe; but if he brings Scotland Yard into it, she will be killed. A gripping drama, starring John Barrymore and John Howard

"HOPALONG RIDES AGAIN"

The famous Westerner is detailed to take a thousand head of cattle to Fort Hastings, and as the contract has to be filled within ten days, he takes a short cut over the dangerous Black Buttes trail, where he becomes involved in a desperate struggle with a band of ruthless rustlers. Starring William Boyd

Also

Another episode of the fighting serial: "RADIO PATROL," Starring Grant Withers.

An oilfield has been discovered by Jim Hallet in North China, and he has borrowed money to develop it, but is unable to carry on for lack of funds. Two unscrupulous American financiers plan to acquire the concession, but General Wu Yen Fang, a Chinese war lord, has taken possession of the territory by the time they reach the nearest village—and Fang has his own way of dealing with troublesome people. An absorbing melodrama, starring Boris Karloff, with Beverly Roberts, Ricardo Cortez and Gordon Oliver



The Night Train from Peiping

A LONG train was standing at the main departure platform of the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway, in Peiping, and, according to a huge board near the booking-office, it was due to start upon its journey at half-past seven, and, according to a clock on a wall above the board, the time was seven-twenty-six.

In spite of the fact that the passengers of various nationalities who streamed past the barrier had a full four minutes in which to find their seats, a Chinese porter on the platform kept shouting monotonously in Mandarin:

"The train is leaving! The train is leaving! Hurry! The train is leaving!"

A tall, clean-shaven man of rather a Latin type, though actually an American, walked up to the Chinese ticket-collector at the gate of the barrier, carrying a leather portfolio under his left arm and a suitcase in his right hand.

He was a handsome man in his own dark fashion, with a pair of very quick brown eyes which could express everything or nothing, as their owner willed. A slouch hat was upon his head, and he was wearing a heavy rainproof.

"I understand this train isn't leaving on time," he said.

"That's right, sir," replied the ticket-collector in perfectly good English. "We are waiting for a distinguished passenger, General Chou Fu Shan."

"Well, I'm Gordon Creed." A

paper was exhibited. "I have a reservation in coach three, compartment seven."

A yellow-skinned conductor, who had been standing within earshot, walked over and looked at the ticket.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Creed," he said in English as perfect as that of his colleague. "Compartment seven has been taken for General Chou Fu Shan. The entire compartment."

"I made my reservation yesterday," complained Creed, "and I paid for it."

"I can't help it, sir. This is a Government order."

"Well, can't you find me a seat somewhere?"

"Not in first-class. There might be something in second."

Creed laughed scornfully.

"I'm not in the habit of travelling second," he said. "I insist that you find a seat for me."

"I will do my best, sir," promised the conductor.

A Chinaman, dressed all in black, with a tight-fitting black cap upon his head, was leaning against the inside of the barrier, seemingly immersed in a newspaper; but a pair of beady brown eyes glanced over the top of the paper at Creed as he walked discontentedly towards the train.

Abruptly a voice called out, "Gordon!" and Creed turned about as a man nearly as tall as himself, but lean of face and middle-aged, came running up to him, exclaiming as he arrived:

"I've been looking for you!" "Hallo, Harry!" Creed said in obvious surprise. "What are you doing here? Anything wrong?"

"No," was the reply, "but it's a lucky thing they held the train, or I'd have missed you."

"What's up?" Henry Hemingway fished a folded sheet of paper from a pocket.

"This letter came right after you left the office," he said. "It's a confidential report on the Jim Hallet oil property. The Discovery Field is worth millions, but Hallet is broke and he can't operate it."

"Humm!" Creed put down the suitcase to thrust the letter into one of his own pockets. "I'll check up on that when I get there."

"The situation is made to order for us," exulted Hemingway. "Hallet needs cash. I stopped at the bank and got fifty thousand."

Creed accepted a wad of notes as calmly as he had accepted the letter.

"Good idea," he approved. "I'll make him an offer for a quarter interest—just enough to keep operations going."

"Good luck to you!" said Hemingway.

"Good luck to all of us," laughed Creed, and he boarded the train just as cries of excitement rang out beyond the barrier and a Chinese officer in khaki shouted to the crowd that gathered there to get out of the way.

Creed stopped and looked round on

the top of the steps of the coach he had been about to enter.

"That's General Fu Shan," he said to Hemingway with a nod of his head. "That's the fellow who grabbed my reservation!"

A military escort had lined up at the barrier, saluting General Chou Fu Shan as he walked past the bowing ticket-collector—a fine figure of a soldier who might have passed for a British officer but for the saffron hue of his skin and the slant of his eyes. A little clipped moustache decorated his upper lip in approved British style; an adjutant walked beside him.

The top-hatted stationmaster hurried towards him, bowed, and fell into step.

"Pardon, your Excellency," he said obsequiously. "May we have your honourable permission to depart?"

"We will leave immediately," Fu Shan replied.

"I wonder why he's going north?" remarked Creed, watching the very erect general as the stationmaster piloted him and the adjutant across the platform to the steps of the third coach.

"I don't know," returned Hemingway. "Must be trouble brewing."

Creed waved a hand and disappeared into the corridor of the coach he had selected at random. General Chou Fu Shan reached the steps of the one reserved for him—and then a commotion arose at the gate as a full-faced and full-bodied American dashed up to it with a girl who was wearing a fur coat and a little felt hat and who looked a mere slip of a thing beside him.

"Hurry, father!" cried the girl, as a whistle whistled. "That's the starting signal!"

"You're sure that's the train for the north?" panted the man.

"Of course it is!" she replied impatiently. "Come on!"

A conductor shouted to them, and they raced across the platform, followed by a Chinese porter carrying their luggage and perspiring freely. The luggage was deposited hastily in the gangway of a coach, the two passengers scrambled up the steps past the conductor, and the porter stared blankly at a button in the palm of his right hand.

"Why do you give me this money?" he asked in Mandarin; but the man who had bestowed the button instead of a coin had vanished inside the coach with the girl.

Railway servants shouted, the gate of the barrier was closed with a clang, and the Chinaman in black dropped the paper he had been pretending to read, streaked across to the last coach, and swung himself up on to the steps as the train began to move out from the station into the darkness of the night.

He fitted along a corridor, making no sound in his hish—*or* heeled shoes—and a slant-eyed conductor who followed opened the door of a third-class compartment for him without a word.

He seated himself beside an elderly and spectacled yellow man, and he regarded covertly two other compatriots on the opposite seat; then, turning sideways, he took from the front of his long gown a fan and from the fan removed a long, thin-bladed dagger with a handle of ivory shaped like a tiger.

He opened the fan, and, behind it, slipped the naked dagger inside the left sleeve of his gown.

The Knife of the White Tiger

AFTER Peiping Station, with its network of lines, had been left behind, Creed made his way along several corridors to coach three, April 2nd, 1938.

and outside the open door of compartment seven he encountered the conductor who had promised to do his best.

"Did you find a seat for me?" he inquired.

"I'm sorry, sir," was the reply. "Every seat is taken."

"All right, then," said Creed calmly. "I'll sit in number seven."

"Impossible!" cried the conductor, barring his way. "This is the compartment of General Chou Fu Shan!"

"Well, what of it?" Creed flung out a hand. "He can't use all those seats—and besides, I paid for one of them!"

"Sorry, sir. Nothing can be done."

"Now look—"

General Chou Fu Shan, alone in the compartment with seven vacant seats, appeared suddenly in the doorway.

"Just a moment, please," he interrupted. "Did this gentleman have a seat reserved in my compartment?"

"Yes, Excellency," admitted the conductor, whisking off his cap.

"Then he shall have it!"

"But, Excellency—"

"The matter is settled!" Fu Shan smiled slightly at Creed and stood aside for him to enter.

"I don't like to intrude, general," said Creed, "but—er—"

"Nonsense! Come in!"

"You're very kind." Creed stepped into the compartment, but remained standing.

"Please sit down," urged the general, and resumed his own corner seat by the door with his back to the engine.

The baffled conductor closed the door and went off with the intruder's suitcase, and the intruder took off his hat and rain-proof, stowed them on a rack, together with his portfolio, and sat facing his benefactor.

"I'm Gordon Creed," he said, "of the International Oil Company. I'll be leaving the train in the morning at Ting Fou."

"I daresay we shall not disturb each other," returned Fu Shan politely. "I will have my dinner brought to me presently. And—er—after my dinner I shall sleep very soundly."

He unfastened the collar of his tunic and settled back against the cushions, and Creed began to read a newspaper he had bought at the station.

The big American and his daughter, meanwhile, had been conducted to seats they had reserved in coach ten.

"What time do we arrive at Ting Fou?" the girl inquired of their guide as she took off her fur coat.

"At seven in da momini," was the reply.

"Will the train be on time?" asked the man, whose name was Myron Galt and who looked almost as gross a figure without his overcoat as with it.

"He'll be satisfied if it's on the track," laughed the girl, because no answer was forthcoming from the stolid conductor.

"Can we arrange for overland transportation from that point?" Galt questioned.

"Yes, sir." The yellow man seemed to come to life again. "Pack trains and guides may be engaged at Ting Fou. Are you going far?"

"To the town of Sha Ho Shan, and from there to an oilfield back in the hills."

"What time is dinner served in the restaurant car?" asked the girl.

"The service will be late to-night," the conductor informed her, clipping the tickets her father had produced and returning them. "General Chou Fu Shan is on the train and he might dine first."

"Dine first?" she echoed with a grimace. "Well, I hope he doesn't go

on a sit-down strike in there—I'm hungry!"

General Chou Fu Shan had dinner served in his compartment upon a table erected for the purpose, and Creed read. Instead of coffee at the end of the meal, the general drank tea. He smoked a cigarette with the tea, and he spread a map upon the table and studied it.

"I see," remarked Creed, looking up from his paper, "that the rebel army of General Wu Yen Fang occupied Ku Chou yesterday, and that he calls himself the 'White Tiger of the North.'"

"Fang is a plague of locusts to the North," said Fu Shan emphatically, "and like the locust he can only be fought with fire. Fang's days are numbered."

Creed did not pursue the subject. The general's presence on the train was explained; he was on his way to deal with Fang, a self-styled war lord and a bandit.

"I think I'll go and have a meal myself, now," he said; and he went off to find the restaurant car.

Myron Galt and his not quite beautiful daughter were seated at a table, studying the menu, when he entered the car and exchanged greetings with two acquaintances near the doorway. Galt looked round, and he said to the Chinese attendant who was waiting for an order:

"Steward, I know the gentleman who has just entered. Ask him if he'd care to sit here."

"Who is he?" asked the girl after the steward had gone.

"Gordon Creed of International Oil. I want to find out where he's going, so be nice to him."

"That won't be difficult," said she; and then Creed walked up to the table and Galt rose from his chair.

"Well, this is a pleasant surprise," said the newcomer. "How are you, Mr. Galt?"

"Fine, thank you." Galt indicated the girl. "This is my daughter Lola. Mr. Gordon Creed, my dear."

The two men became seated side by side, and Creed said with a smile for Lola:

"Well, I had resigned myself to a dull evening and a very bad train. But I see that Fate has been kind to me."

"Travelling far, Mr. Creed?" asked Galt.

"I'll be leaving the train in the morning at Ting Fou."

Lola repeated the name as though in surprise.

"Well, that's a coincidence!" exclaimed her father.

"That's where we're going," said she. "Really?" Creed raised his dark brows. "I suppose you'll be leaving by mule train?"

"Of course."

"Good! Then we can all travel together."

"Oh, how nice!" cried Lola. "How far north are you going, Mr. Creed?"

"Sha Ho Shan."

Lola laughed, and he asked her why she laughed.

"Well, that's where we're going!"

"You wouldn't, by any chance, be on your way to make a deal with Jim Hallet, would you?" inquired Galt.

"Jim Hallet?" Creed's face was a mask.

"Yes. Hallet's Discovery Oilfield is near Sha Ho Shan, you know."

"I'm going to see my wife," said Creed. "She's an apprentice missionary in the Medical Mission in Sha Ho Shan."

"Oh!" Lola looked disappointed. "You have a wife?"

"Yes," said Creed, "but we've been separated for years. That's the reason

for my journey. You aren't by any chance going to see Jim Hallet, are you, Mr. Galt?"

Under his keen gaze Galt found it difficult to evade a direct answer.

"Why, I—er—I—I—" he stammered.

The steward bent over them.

"May I have your order, please?"

"What?" Galt was very glad of the interruption. "Oh, yes, of course—yes, to be sure."

While he was studying the menu again, Creed talked to the bright, but rather hard-eyed, girl. Her blonde hair had a reddish tinge; her mouth was a trifle too large.

"I'm travelling in distinguished company," he informed her. "I'm sharing a compartment with a very famous Chinese general."

"How thrilling!" she breathed. "Will you introduce us?"

"Of course," said he.

The dishes Galt ordered were served without any undue delay and proved quite appetising. The three lingered over coffee and liqueurs, and then Creed led the way along the corridors to coach three, compartment seven.

The Chinaman who had concealed a naked dagger in the left sleeve of his gown was in the corridor as they entered it, but immediately flitted into the lavatory. Creed opened the door of the compartment and pulled back a curtain that screened its glass panel. General Chou Fu Shan was in his corner and his eyes were closed.

"He's sound asleep," whispered Creed.

"We'd better not disturb him," said Lola, gazing with interest at the lined, yet peaceful, face; and then one brown eye was opened, and the general said:

"Not quite asleep, dear lady, but I expect to be very soon."

"I'm sorry we troubled you, general," apologised Creed.

The general opened his other eye and rose to bow.

"Please do not speak of it," he said.

"My friends, here, wanted to meet you," Creed explained. "This is Miss Galt, and this is her father, Mr. Myron Galt, of Peiping—General Chou Fu Shan."

"How d'you do?" murmured daughter and father in unison.

"Delighted," declared Fu Shan.

"Won't you come in?"

"I'm afraid you'd rather finish your nap," said Creed. But the general insisted upon their entering the compartment and did not sit down till they were seated.

"I always sleep much better when I have company," he stated then.

"I hope you intend that as a compliment, general," flattered Lola.

"A very great compliment," he assured her gravely. "I only sleep in the presence of those I trust."

"But surely you're safe with so many soldiers to guard you! The train seems to be half-full of them."

"Soldiers are a calamity," he sighed. "I trust them only when my eyes are open, and I need rest badly—I have much work to do. Please make yourselves comfortable. I am very much at peace."

He rested the back of his head against the linen-covered cushion again and his eyelids drooped and closed. The train clattered through a rocky gorge out into open, but almost invisible, country, and Creed offered cigarettes to his companions as the general began to snore.

"Doesn't he sound a little flat to you?" asked Lola impishly.

"S-s-sh!" Creed held a lighter to her cigarette, and presently the three were smoking. He turned to Galt. "How long have you known Jim Hallet?" he asked abruptly.

"Oh, not too long," was the non-committal reply.

"Why don't you two stop fencing with one another?" Lola intervened. "It's quite evident that you're both in-

terested in the Discovery Oilfield, and I'm sure Mr. Creed will be delighted to know that my father owns it!"

"Owus it?" exclaimed Creed. "How do you mean?"

"I will own it," said Galt, "when I take possession. You see, I loaned Jim the money to buy the property and develop it, but now his note's overdue. He'll have to give it up."

"Unless," suggested Creed smoothly, "he can find the money to pay for it."

"He won't find it."

"I wouldn't be too sure about that, Mr. Galt."

The Chinaman who had vanished into the lavatory had stolen out from it again and was reaching up to a fuse-box at the end of the coach. With startling suddenness the whole coach was plunged into pitch darkness.

"Good heavens," gasped Lola, "what's wrong now?"

"Nothing serious, Miss Galt," Creed reassured her. "Probably a short circuit."

Cries rang out from various parts of the coach; footsteps sounded in the corridor; the door of the compartment was opened, the curtains flung back, and some Chinese soldiers looked in at the motionless form of the general with the aid of an electric torch one of them carried.

"Nothing to worry about," said Galt as the soldiers moved off along the corridor.

"Those men were just as worried as I was," shivered Lola. "Anything can happen in China!"

The lights of the coach shone brilliantly again as suddenly as they had failed, and Creed said cheerfully:

"It didn't seem to annoy General Fu Shan. He slept right through our little excitement."

Lola, who was sitting next to the general, looked closely into the yellow face.

"But, look, he's not breathing!" she



"You were right," said Creed to Lola in a horrified voice. "I'm afraid this means trouble for us!"

cried. "His eyes are open and glassy! Something did happen, I know it!"

Creed leaned forward in alarm.

"General Fu Shan!" he shouted. "General! General Fu Shan!"

He shook a limp arm, and as he did so the general's head fell to his knees.

Lola gave vent to a piercing scream, and almost immediately the conductor appeared in the doorway with a soldier on either side of him. Ejaculating something in Mandarin, the conductor stooped and picked up from the floor a long thin-bladed dagger with a handle of ivory shaped like a tiger.

"Where did this come from?" he demanded in his own language, examining the handle. "The knife of the White Tiger! The spies of General Wu Yen Fang!"

"You were right," said Creed to Lola in a horrified voice. "I'm afraid this means trouble for us!"

Across the Desert

UNTIL nearly half-past seven next morning, when the train arrived at Ting Fou, the three Americans were kept prisoners in the compartment, guarded by four soldiers; and to add to the horror of the night the dead body of General Chou Fu Shan remained in the corner seat, covered with a martial cloak.

Myron Galt sat with an arm round his weeping daughter, who got no sleep at all; but Creed had at least six hours slumber, and was wakened by the jerk with which the train came to a standstill a full minute before the soldier on his right clamped a hand upon his arm.

The three prisoners were marched out from Ting Fou station and along narrow streets to the headquarters of the Military Governor, a building of brick facing a courtyard inside a high wall, and in a big and very scantily furnished room they were lined up facing a table at which the Governor, General Mu, and two officers were seated. The train conductor was present.

A junior officer read the charge in Mandarin, and General Mu stood up, holding the dagger in his right hand.

"You admit," he said slowly, and speaking English with manifest difficulty, "that during the time you were in the compartment with General Chou Fu Shan no one else entered it, and that he was killed with this knife, and yet you insist you know nothing of how he was killed."

"But, general," faltered Lola, "surely you don't suspect us of killing him?"

"That's ridiculous!" cried her father. "General Mu is not accusing you," rebuked the officer who was acting as clerk. "He is seeking information which will lead us to the killer."

"Information which you have so far refused to give," added the general sternly.

"But we've told everything that we know," protested Creed.

"You say you know nothing?" asked the junior officer.

"But that is not possible!" rapped the general, stabbing some papers on the desk with the dagger. "The man was killed before your eyes!"

"But he wasn't killed before our eyes!" cried Lola. "He was killed in the dark—the lights went out for a moment!"

"We had nothing against the general," said Galt defensively. "We didn't even know him. Why should we kill General Chou Fu Shan?"

"That is exactly what I am trying to find out," returned Mu. "He was on his way to fight Wu Yen Fang. Fang has foreign spies in his employ."

"But we're not spies!" stormed Creed.

April 2nd, 1938.

"You've no right to keep us here any longer!"

The blade of the dagger was pointed in his direction, and the general said ominously:

"You are now in the military province of Shanhaikwan. As Military Governor of this province it is my duty to execute you if I see fit."

"Execute us?" Galt's flabby face went a sickly white.

"Exactly! And unless you tell me what you know I shall order you before a firing-squad at once!"

Creed compressed his lips; Lola shuddered. And then a commotion arose out in the courtyard, and abruptly two Chinese soldiers burst into the room with the black-robed Chinaman a prisoner between them, and one of the soldiers cried in his own language:

"General Mu, we have got the killer!"

The general stared at the captive, whose face was void of expression.

"Did you kill General Chou Fu Shan?" he demanded in Mandarin.

"Yes," was the defiant reply. "It was great to kill him!"

"Execute him!"

The soldiers marched the imperturbable yellow man out from the room and the general threw down the dagger.

"Sorry to cause you this trouble," he said in English to the three who stood facing him. "We have found the murderer."

"I'm certainly glad you found him," said Galt fervently.

Lola turned to Creed.

"What are they going to do with him?" she asked tremulously.

A volley of rifle fire, somewhere outside the building, made her jump.

"They're going to bury him," said Creed.

With a feeling that they themselves had escaped death only by a miracle the three walked out from the military post, soon afterwards, and at an alleged hotel near the railway station had breakfast together.

Their luggage, which had been confiscated, was returned to them at the hotel, and General Mu sent one of the members of his staff to help them make arrangements for a mule train to convey them across fifty odd miles of waste land, mainly desert, to Sha Ho Shan.

The mules carried the luggage and provisions for the journey, and were driven by coolies; the passengers, their slant-eyed guide, and three armed guards rode horses, and when night came the whole party camped among the sand dunes beneath bright stars and a new moon.

On the second day Creed rode beside Lola, behind the mules, and Galt followed. Galt was saddle-sore, and at intervals emitted a grunt of discomfort.

"How're you doing, dad?" Lola looked round to inquire.

"Not too well," admitted her parent with a grimace. "This horse makes me seasick."

"I wish I had a bottle of smelling-salts," she lamented.

"You're not going to faint?"

"No, but I'm afraid that mule is!"

About half an hour later the guide cried out from the front of the train:

"Stop! Bandits!"

Away in the distance, from the general direction of some hills that had become visible at dawn, two horsemen were galloping across the sand. The whole train was stopped, and the three armed guards trained their rifles on the approaching horsemen. But no other riders were anywhere to be seen in the barren landscape, and as the two drew near Lola cried out in a very relieved voice:

"It's Jim Hallet!"

The guards lowered their rifles at sight of a young and particularly handsome white man, who signed to his yellow-skinned companion to stop, dismounted, and walked over to the train. He was taller than Creed and considerably younger, and he looked a fine figure of health and vigour in a leather jumper, riding-breeches, and high-laced boots. His strong, clean-shaven face was tanned by sun and wind, his grey eyes were honest, and his jaw suggested a dogged nature.

"Hallo!" hailed Galt.

"Well!" exclaimed Jim Hallet, and he swept off his hat. "I could tell this was a white man's mule train, but I had no idea I'd find you people in it. I was tending some sheep belonging to the Mission. How are you, Lola? You're looking fit."

"So are you, Jim," responded Lola.

"Mr. Galt, how are you?"

"Well," said Galt, descending clumsily from his mount, "I could be better. You know Creed of International Oil, don't you?"

Creed swung himself down from the saddle and shook hands.

"I think I do," said Jim, without any great enthusiasm. "Met you at the Shensi Club in Peiping."

"That's right," confirmed Creed. "Glad to see you, Hallet."

The yellow man who had ridden with Jim Hallet turned back towards the hills and a patch of grass beneath them upon which a flock of sheep were grazing.

"You people shouldn't have come here," said Jim with a shake of his head. "Didn't you know there was fighting in this province?"

"Well," said Creed, "we had no idea of it until we reached Ting Fou. We were held there for a military investigation."

"General Fu Shan," explained Lola, "was assassinated on the train, and we were there when it happened."

"So Fang has knocked off another enemy!" commented Jim wryly. "It's his army that's fighting in this province now. We'd better get to the Medical Mission as soon as we can. Come along!"

The horses were remounted, and the whole train moved on again. Jim rode in front, and Creed caught up with him.

"Hallet," he said, "if it's capital you need to operate your oil wells we might make a deal."

"Capital's the one thing I need most," Jim confessed frankly.

"Well, I'm prepared to make you a cash offer. When can I look at the property?"

"As soon as the war is over."

"War?" Creed's brows ascended.

"Right now," said Jim, "my oil-fields are completely overrun by Fang's handits."

Creed's jaw dropped ever so slightly. "Well, I don't think my company would be interested," he said.

"No?" Jim bestowed an amused side-glance upon him. "I didn't think so, either. Excuse me."

He turned his horse and joined Myron Galt and Lola.

"Well, are you getting tired?" he asked.

"We'll be glad to get there," said Lola.

The grass and the sheep were only a little way ahead, and under the hills to the left the walls of a town that was really nothing much more than a village had become distinguishable. Sha Ho Shan was at hand.

"Well, Jim," said Galt, "why haven't I heard from you?"

"As a matter of fact," responded that young man rather dolefully, "I was going to Peiping to see you."

"Broke again, Jim?" suggested Lola. "Completely."

"Don't forget your first note's already overdue," said Galt. "I know it!"

Lola decided that it was time to change the subject.

"Is that the town?" she asked, pointing a gloved hand.

"Yeah, that's Sha Ho Shan," replied Jim. "But I don't know that I'd call it a town."

Jim Makes a Mistake

THE gates of Sha Ho Shan were open, and the riders and the mules and the coolies passed under an archway set in a tower that formed part of the encircling wall of baked mud.

Excited Chinese men, women and children clustered in the narrow street beyond the archway to point at the strangers and to jabber in their own dialect concerning them; but Jim led the way into a congested market-place, noisy with the quacking of ducks in crates and the shouts of vendors at their stalls.

The crowd followed, but on the northern side of the market-place a wooden gate was opened as Jim reached it, and the whole party entered a courtyard shut off from the region of stalls by a wall.

A brick building, two stories high and of considerable extent, flanked this courtyard, and the double doors of the main entrance were open.

From the front step a bare-headed man of about fifty-five, dressed sombrely in a black lounge suit, descended to meet the visitors. He was Dr. Abernathy, a man of distinguished appearance who might have been a clergyman or a physician, and he was in charge of the Mission.

"How d'you do, doctor?" said Creed, who seemed to recognise him. "I'm Gordon Creed."

A girl looked down into the courtyard from an upper window—a girl no older than Lola but of altogether a different type. She saw Creed, and she withdrew her head in haste.

"This is Miss Galt," said Creed.

Abernathy bowed. Jim, who had dismounted, introduced Myron Galt.

"Well, friends," said the doctor, "I welcome you all to the Mission, but I'm afraid these poor walls won't be much protection against Fang and his soldiers."

"Fang," said Creed, "is a blood-thirsty devil!"

"I've been laughing at devils all my life," returned the doctor with a smile. "Come with me and I'll show you where you're to sleep. Your rooms may not be comfortable, but they'll be clean. At least, there will be no vermin in them."

"Not until the bandits get here!" remarked Creed dryly.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Lola. "That's a jolly thought!"

The mules were unpacked, the luggage was carried into the building, and Galt and Creed settled with their guide—who was in haste to start back for Ting Fou with his men, his mules, and his horses.

The rooms of the Mission proved to be far better appointed than Dr. Abernathy had led his guests to suppose. A large living-room, which opened out of the main hall, was particularly attractive with its Chinese furniture, rugs and screens; the bed-rooms were airy and adequately furnished.



"Ve'y nice." Fang looked again into Jim's face. "Me not want see him die, too."

Jim Hallet did not accompany the party on their tour of inspection, but went out into the courtyard again because his Tartar companion had just ambled into it.

"The ponies don't amount to much, Pao," he said, "but I'd hate to have Fang get them. Hide them out somewhere."

"Yes, sir," nodded the yellow man; and he led his own mount and his employer's out at the gate, presumably to put them away in some place likely to be overlooked by any warlike invaders.

The girl who had peeped from an upper window ran out from the building, dressed very simply in a plain black frock with a little white collar.

"Jim!" she called. "Jim!"

Jim, who had been watching his servant cross the market-place, turned about.

"Jane!" he exclaimed, and joined her. "Why weren't you in the welcoming committee? Don't you know that your husband, the eminent Mr. Creed, is here?"

"Yes," she said, with very patent loathing for the "eminent" Mr. Creed, "I saw him."

"He came to see me," said Jim, "about my oil property. Say, does he know you're in the Mission?"

"His attorneys do. They wrote me here."

"Well, I'm glad he came. Now you can tell him you're going to divorce him and marry me!"

But Jane Creed shook her golden head.

"No, I can't, Jim," she said definitely. "We settled that once before."

"You thought we did," he amended. "Oh, here comes your husband now!"

Creed had just sauntered out from the Mission, and he advanced with a cryptic smile on his lips and an extended hand.

"Well, how nice, Jane," he said in

his smooth way. "This is a pleasant surprise."

Jane ignored the hand.

"You knew I was here, Gordon," she said frigidly.

"But I didn't know what a thrill it would be to see you again," he declared, tilting his head at her. "Shouldn't I kiss you?"

"No, I don't think that's necessary."

"H'mm!" Creed turned to Jim.

"Why didn't you tell me you knew my wife, Hallet?" he asked.

"I didn't think that was necessary, either," Jim replied stiffly.

"When did you meet her? Before or after our separation?"

"After."

"Attractive, isn't she?" Creed looked at his beautiful young wife again, and he said sarcastically to her: "So you're a missionary, eh? A young goppler, harvesting souls in the vineyard. Well, is Jim your first convert?"

"Yeah, I'm converted," Jim answered for her, "but I'm still sinner enough to take a poke at guys that kid me about it!"

He walked away into the building, and Jane followed. Creed strolled towards the gate and reached it just as one of the Chinese servants of the Mission was closing it.

By this time the mule train was well on its way across the sand to the south of Sha Ho Shan, but towards the walled village from the north an open touring car was travelling at moderate speed, and behind the car galloped fully a hundred armed yellow men, the one in front bearing aloft a blue flag emblazoned with a white tiger. A few of the men were in uniforms, the rest were dressed in a variety of styles.

They formed the "army" of General Wu Yen Fang, and Fang was sitting in the back of the touring car with a youngish Chinaman beside him, and another Oriental was at the wheel.

Fang was distinctly ugly, even for a Chinaman. His face was lean and lined, his heavy-lidded brown eyes seemed to be set at different angles, and his moustache resembled a couple of miniature rats' tails. He was wearing a khaki uniform and a military coat with an astrakhan collar. The young officer on his right was typically Chinese, but almost handsome by comparison.

About a quarter of a mile from the gates of Sha Ho Shan, Fang turned to his companion, and in very halting English he said:

"Let Captain Nui ride village. Say General Wu Yen Fang has come. All who oppose will of Fang we fix—most dang quick."

"Yes, Excellency."

The officer, upon whom Fang had bestowed the rank of captain but whom he invariably addressed as "Mr." Cheng, turned and beckoned to a tubby little yellow man riding behind the bearer of the flag, and the man spurred forward to the side of the car. His face was fat, his lips were thick, and he had a scar on his left cheek which in no way improved his appearance.

Cheng gave him Fang's orders, and he in turn bellowed to the soldiers. The car came to a standstill, and the "army" swept past it.

"Most dang best army in China, Mr. Cheng," said Fang contentedly.

"Yes, Excellency," responded Cheng.

In under the archway of the tower that formed part of the wall galloped Captain Nui with the flag-bearer, and the frightened inhabitants of the village scurried in all directions at sight of him and the soldiers who galloped after him.

It was not long before the marketplace resounded with shouts and the lamentations of stall-holders whose wares were being trampled by the horses of the invaders, and Jim ran out from the Mission to look over the wall of the courtyard.

Jane and Dr. Abernathy joined him: Myron Galt appeared. Creed sped round the building from a garden at the back of the building, and Chinese servants huddled in a corner.

"What is it, Jim?" asked Jane anxiously.

"It's Fang's advance guard," Jim replied, dropping from a tree he had climbed.

"I'm afraid this is it, gentlemen," said Abernathy. "You'd better go in, Mrs. Creed, and reassure our patients."

Jane went back into the Mission, and he instructed a trembling native to open the gate.

"What're you going to do about it?" demanded Creed, as the gate was unbarred and opened.

"Let them in," was the quiet reply. "There's nothing else we can do."

"We have a number of men here. Why don't we do something to defend the place?"

"You can't fight China, Mr. Creed." Abernathy shook his head. "Let's go into the house."

Gunfire sounded in the distance, and then in at the open gateway rode Captain Nui and the flag-bearer and nearly a score of Fang's soldiers.

"Halt the horses!" bellowed the tubby little captain in Kalmuk, and he waved a hand imperiously at the group of white people. "Everybody go in the house!"

"He wants us to go in the house," translated the doctor. "Please obey him."

They entered the hall, and Creed immediately made for a window that overlooked the courtyard; but Galt explained nervously:

"Better keep away from there!"

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Jane descended the stairs at the foot of which he was standing.

"I'm Mrs. Creed," she said. "Try not to act afraid. We mustn't lose face before them."

The repulsive little Nui stalked into the hall, and two of the soldiers stood between the open doors with rifles in their hands.

"Everybody stand in line!" shouted Nui.

"He wants you to line up here," Abernathy explained. "Please do as he tells you."

The five became lined up below the staircase, but he himself stood a little apart. Nui walked over to Galt, looked him up and down and uttered a harsh command.

"What does he want?" asked Galt, who did not understand Kalmuk.

"Your wrist-watch," replied the doctor. "Give it to him."

"It cost two hundred dollars," protested Galt; but Nui rapped out at him again, and Abernathy said urgently:

"Please give it to him."

The wrist-watch was unfastened and handed over. Nui turned to Lola, who was standing next to her father.

"Don't touch me!" she screamed.

"Don't do that, I beg of you," said Abernathy.

"I'm not afraid of him!" she shrilled.

"It's not a question of fear, child. I know these people. The man's simply curious about you. He won't hurt you."

Captain Nui's repulsive face was very near to Lola's and his breath was unpleasant. She closed her eyes, repressing a shiver, but opened them again as he made some laughing comment.

"What did he say about me?" she asked.

"He gave you a name," replied the doctor, "that's all. 'Small dragon.'"

"Well, tell him I've got a name for him, too!" she cried indignantly. "You—"

Captain Nui laughed and touched the make-up on her lips. He said something, and again Abernathy translated.

"He says that General Fang has graciously ordered that we're not to be harmed for the time being."

"Huh!" scoffed Jim. "Well, isn't that sweet of the general?"

Captain Nui scowled at him and caught hold of Jane's left hand.

"White as snow," he said in Kalmuk—and put a hand to the golden curls upon her head.

Jim, who was standing next to her, gave him a punch in the jaw that sent him floundering backwards.

"Please, Jim!" cried the doctor.

Nui recovered his balance, mouthed at his assailant, and barked a command.

"He wants you to go out with the soldiers," said the doctor.

The two soldiers stepped forward, and Jim went out between them into the courtyard and disappeared.

"What will they do to him?" asked Jane, in an agonised voice, as Captain Nui turned to follow.

But that was a question the doctor was not prepared to answer.

Fang Remembers a Friend

FOR a minute that seemed infinitely longer than a minute those that remained in the hall gazed fearfully at one another, and then there came a sound of hoof-beats in the courtyard and the voice of Nui rang out.

No shot followed, but into the hall walked the self-styled General Wu Yen Fang, and behind him walked Mr.

Cheng and Captain Nui. Two soldiers halted in the doorway.

"How do you do?" said Fang, addressing the startled group. "I am Fang. I speak mos' dang bad English, but I t'ink I make you understand."

"We understand, general," bowed Abernathy. "We're your prisoners."

"No," Fang spread his gloved hands. "I your guest. But please not to leave the town. It not nice make Fang mad. The missionary is who?"

"I am Dr. Abernathy," replied the doctor.

Fang nodded.

"I have heard of you," he said. "You bring to poor of China not only new God, but cure for pain. These people missionary, too?"

The doctor indicated Jane.

"Mrs. Creed is my assistant. The others are my guests—Americans."

"Ah!" Fang eyed the four in turn. "From wonderful glate country. Our Mr. Cheng is learn fix people in America." He waved a hand towards the tall young Chinaman. "Is body-guard—most excellent big shot. Is learn take people for ride."

Lola stared at the inscrutable young Chinaman.

"A Chinese gangster!" she remarked.

"One of the best," confirmed Cheng without even a ghost of a smile.

"Now Mr. Cheng fix people for me," said Fang, and he moved closer to Jane and Lola. "Oh, only two woman, eh? This one—not so good."

"What's the matter with me?" bridled Lola.

"Hair like straw—eye like flog—have wide mouth of fish."

"Well, you're no geranium yourself!"

Cheng drew a six-shooter from the holster attached to his belt and Abernathy became alarmed.

"Please, Miss Galt, be careful!" he cried.

But Fang motioned to his bodyguard to put away the weapon.

"Not yet, Mr. Cheng," he said. "By'n by we fix, maybe. Not yet—I'm hung'y."

"You shall be served, Excellency," said the doctor.

"No can eat your food. Have cooks my own." Fang walked over to the open door of the living-room. "My boys fix this room for me," he decided. "Now please to leave."

In the living-room he eyed with disfavour a framed text on a wall above a lacquered table: "Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward Men." He unfastened his sword and flung it on the table, and he called for Cheng.

Half a hour later he sat down to a meal of Chinese dishes, prepared in the kitchen of the Mission by some of his men with food filched from the market-place, and consumed wine taken from a café in the village. By this time he had changed out of his uniform into a black silk san—or jacket—and patterned koo that looked more like a skirt than trousers. A tight-fitting cap was on his head and slippers were on his feet.

Cheng stood in the background while he fed; Captain Nui acted as messenger, and two of the soldiers waited upon him. After he had finished the meal he smoked a cigarette, and he had flung the end of the cigarette into a bowl when Jane entered the room. "Captain Nui said you wanted me," she faltered.

"Captain Nui right," nodded Fang, rising to his feet and studying her with his odd eyes. "Velly nice. I like. How old you are?"

"Twenty-three," she told him. "Oh, too bad. That mos' dang old! How much you—er—" He turned to his silent bodyguard. "How you say that, Mr. Cheng?"

"How much do you weigh?" suggested Cheng.

"Yes. How much you weigh?"

"I don't think that's any of your business, general." Jane found sufficient courage to rebuke.

"I no care," shrugged Fang. "What name you got?"

"Jane Creed."

"Shane—Shane— No can say it! I give you mo' better name, maybe, bye'n bye. You like me, ch?"

"How can I like anyone who has killed thousands of people?" she countered.

He smiled at that.

"Too many people in China," he said. "I kill only man—only bad man. When I killed bad man I feel good. I have did good deed."

"And who decides whether a man is good or bad?" she asked.

"I do!" He puffed out his chest. "I am Fang!"

He pointed to a chair with fretted sides and back.

"Please to sit," he said with a bow. "East meets West. How you do? Velly nice."

Jane sank down into the chair, and he sat facing her across the table at which he had fed.

"You go, now, Mr. Cheng, I t'ink," he said. "Not wish be disturb."

Cheng went out into the hall and closed the door, and as he did so Creed strode up to him.

"Will you tell General Fang me like speak to him at once?" he said. "You savvy?"

Cheng, with much dignity, retorted: "It isn't necessary to speak pidgin-

English. I speak the language quite as fluently as you do."

"You tell General Fang I'd like to see him at once!" snapped Creed.

"Impossible! The general is entertaining Mrs. Creed. I'd advise you to move on, please."

Creed made to pass him, but out came the six-gun, and he changed his mind.

Lola and her father had emerged from another room in time to hear the rebuff, and they walked out into the courtyard with Creed.

"Are you going to let your wife stay in there with that horrible brigand?" asked Lola.

"What can I do?" shrugged Creed. "I can't fight an entire army. It's too bad they got Hallet—he likes being a hero."

"What have they done with Jim?" "He's under guard in the mule-house," her father replied. "Here, what are you going to do?"

"Help him to get out of there," she said determinedly.

"Lola, you'll get us all into trouble!"

"Well, Jim's man enough to try to get us out of trouble," she returned with a toss of her head, and she went off round the building to a long row of stables at the back of it.

Soldiers on duty in the courtyard and at the gate paid no attention to the movements of the white people because they had received their instructions, and there were no soldiers in the garden. But Pao was at the door of one of the stables, and she saw him unlock and open it.

Jim immediately came out from the gloom of his prison, and he had a six-gun in his hand.

Lola ran to him.

"Jim!" she cried.

"Hallo!" said Jim. "Where's Jane?"

"Fang has her in the living-room."

"Come on, Pao!" Jim raced towards the house with his servant.

He reached a side door, but a soldier there recognised him and shouted, and though he knocked the soldier aside and dived into a corridor that led to the hall, other soldiers heard, and the hall was full of them when he looked out from the corridor into it.

"Run, Pao!" he said breathlessly. "It's no use! Don't get caught!"

Pao streaked behind a curtain a fraction of a second before Fang's men closed in upon his master and wrested the gun away from him. A few moments later Cheng knocked on the door of the living-room, and Fang came out, followed by Jane.

"Forgive me, Excellency," said Cheng, holding on to Jim's right arm. "This prisoner escaped. They captured him as he was trying to reach this room."

Fang looked into Jim's set face, his own expressing no emotion.

"So you like kill me, my friend?" he inquired.

"Gladly," replied Jim, "if necessary."

"To save lady?"

"You guessed it."

"Shall I fix him, Excellency?" asked Cheng.

"Not yet, Mr. Cheng. Bye'n bye we fix, maybe. Too bad we got kill him."

"Oh, no, general!" implored Jane, and Fang turned to her.

"You not want see him die?" he questioned.

"No!" she shuddered.

"Velly nice." Fang looked again into Jim's face. "Me not want see him die, too. You not member so good, my friend!"

"I don't know what you mean, general," said Jim, astonished by the complete change in the brigand's manner.



Cheng caught hold of the girl's wrist in a grip that hurt; but Fang looked at her in a more kindly way than he had ever done before.

"Look!" Fang pointed to his own unattractive face. "One time poor coolie chased by General Mu's soldier. You hid him till soldier all gone."

"Yes," Jim nodded. "Well?"
"Where was bullet in that coolie? Tell me that."
"He had three slugs in his left shoulder."

"Ah, you 'member." Fang seemed quite pleased. "Then what you do?"
"I dug 'em out and patched him up as well as I could, but he sneaked away one night when I was asleep. He was an ungrateful son-of-a-gun!"

"Son-a-na-gun?" Fang repeated the scornful term with relish if not with accuracy. "That was name you give him, son-a-na-gun?"

"What's the idea?" asked Jim. "Is he a relation of yours?"
"No." Fang shook his head. "No 'lation. He is me! I am him! Now you know me?"

"Well, I'll take your word for it." (Cheng let go of Jim's arm.)

"So we don't fix him, Excellency?" he said in a disappointed voice.

"Fix him?" roared Fang. "Fix my friend who save my life when it is almost finish? You t'ink the great Fang have no gratitude in his heart? For that should fix you, Mr. Cheng!"

Jane's face became radiant, and Fang noticed the circumstance.

"This your woman?" he inquired.

"Well, no," replied Jim uncomfortably. "but I—I'm interested in her."

"'Tis all right," said Fang with a magnificent gesture, "I give her to you." He clapped his hands and shouted: "Hua Mei! Hua Mei! Liqueur!"

A Chinese girl appeared from the kitchen, bowed, and retreated.

"My friend!" said Fang affectionately.

"Tell me," said Jim, "how did a coolie so soon become the great General Fang?"

"Is easy," Fang waved the soldiers away and motioned to Cheng to stand back. "I leave you. Joia other army. Most dang soon I'm great Fang!"

"But how did you manage it so quickly?" asked Jane.

Fang spread his hands, palms upwards.

"One day the captain is killed," he said. "I become captain. Next day the major. I am major. Bye'n bye the colonel. I become colonel. I kill the colonel myself."

"And now you're a war lord!" said Jane.

"Ah, it is beeg life! I make you with me, my friend Jim—I make you general quick, eh?"

"No, thanks." Jim shook his head most emphatically. "Not for me."

"I so 'fraid for that," sighed Fang; and then the girl Hua Mei returned with two glasses of wine on a tray. "Come, we drink!"

He handed one of the glasses to Jim and took the other.

"Gambel!" he toasted. "To me!"

"To you?" laughed Jim.

"Of course. I am Fang!"

The glasses were drained and restored to the tray; Hua Mei flitted away.

"Now tell what you do here," said Fang.

"Well," said Jim, "I've been operating the Discovery Oilfield, but I had to quit."

"All money gone?"

"That's it! Mr. Galt—the elderly man from Peiping—holds my note for fifty thousand dollars."

"He came collect?"

"Yeah, but I couldn't pay him."
"Too bad! Other man is what?"
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"Gordon Creed."
"Creed?" Fang looked at Jane.
"He your husband?"
"Yes," she admitted, "but we—we're separated."

"He is bad man?"
Jane made no response to that question, and Jim said slowly:

"She'll never tell you, general."
Fang looked from one to the other.

"My friend here is good man," he said. "Why not take him?"

"I'm not divorced yet," Jane replied.
"And she doesn't believe in divorce," added Jim, none too happily.

Fang, with his Oriental ideas, was very plainly puzzled.

"She has husband who is bad man," he said. "Sho want my friend who is good man, but no take him. Ve'y strange." He patted Jim on the shoulder.

"My friend, you got plenty trouble."
"Plenty!" confirmed Jim.

"All right, in morning we fix."

The Way of a Brigand

GENERAL FANG retired to the living-room he had taken for his own use, and nobody in the Mission saw any more of him that night except Cheng. A staircase ascended from the living-room to a balcony, and a bed-room opened out of the balcony. He slept in the bed-room; but Cheng reclined upon a couch near the foot of the stairs.

Sentries mounted guard in the courtyard and in the streets of the village. Captain Nui took possession of the hall after the other people in the Mission had ascended to their rooms.

Jane, still dressed, knocked on a door at the end of a long corridor, and the voice of Lola called out in alarm:

"Who's there?"
"Jane Creed," Jane called back.

"May I come in for a minute?"

"Why yes, of course," Lola replied with a sigh of relief, and she opened the door.

"I—I just want to thank you for what you did to-night," Jane said gratefully to her. "Jim told me you tried to set him free."

"All I did was to warn him," Lola, who was in pyjamas, slipped back into bed, because the night air was cold. Jane closed the door and sat beside her.

"Why did you come to Sha Ho Shan?" she ventured to ask after a while.

"Well—er—my father had business here."

"Is that the only reason?"
Lola sighed.

"Perhaps I had other ideas," she said.

"About Jim?"
The girl nodded, and she said:

"I didn't know until this evening that he was in love with you."

"Well, I'm afraid that can't make any difference," said Jane sadly.

"There never can be anything between Jim and me."

"That still doesn't help me," lamented Lola. "But thanks just the same."

Next morning, after breakfast, Dr. Abernathy, Jim, Jane, Myron Galt and his daughter and Creed all became assembled in the spacious living-room. Cheng mounted the stairs to the balcony and Galt said nervously to the doctor:

"What do you suppose they want with us now?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"They say the general ordered us to be brought here."

"Perhaps," suggested Creed with grim humour, "they're preparing for

an execution." He turned maliciously to Jim. "It wouldn't be yours, by any chance?"

"Sorry to disappoint you, Creed," returned Jim curtly.

Cheng reached the door of Fang's bed-room and tapped on it, and immediately the door was opened and Fang stepped forth in the uniform of an officer, with three metal stars upon each of his shoulder straps and a whole row of medals on his chest.

"His Excellency General Fang!" proclaimed Cheng, and Fang stepped to the rail of the balcony and looked down.

"How you do?" he said. "Very nice day."

He descended the stairs, Cheng close behind him, and he advanced towards the group of six.

"How are you this morning, general?" inquired Jim.

"How you do?" Fang gave him a smile and looked at Jane. "You ve'y beautiful even in daytime," he said appreciatively. "But I give you to him."

"Just a minute, general!" exclaimed Creed. "Let me set you straight. You can't give her to anybody. She happens to be my wife."

"Is too bad," said Fang. "But not to get excite about."

"Well, I promise you I will get excited about it!" Creed retorted heatedly.

"Mr. Cheng!"

"Excellency?" Cheng moved forward, his right hand on the butt of his gun.

"You shall shoot first one to intellupt me."

"Very good, Excellency."

"Please to sit," Fang motioned to chairs, and they all became seated about the room.

"I begin with you, Dr. Missioner. You are good for poor China. I not intellupt your work."

"Thank you very much, general." Abernathy rose and went out from the room, and Fang stood before Lola;

"I don't want you," he said with a flip of his hand. "Not like woman who is tough guy."

Lola went out, and he faced her father.

"Who are you?"

"Myron Galt of Peiping," Galt replied.

"Are you rich man?"

"I wouldn't say that exactly."

The brown eyes that did not match became fierce.

"I have way make people say truth!" threatened their owner.

"Well," stammered Galt, "what I mean to say is—er—that I—I have enough money to live comfortably, and"

"Vo'y nice, ve'y nice. How you make money?"

"I'm a financier."

"That is what, Mr. Cheng?"

"A financier," replied Cheng instantly, "is one who loans money, Excellency, and charges very high interest. In the great, excellent country of America he would be called a 'loan shark.'"

"Oh!" nodded Fang. "Mo know shark. Huh! Make good soup. You loan money my friend Jim oilfield?"

"Yes," Galt admitted.

"No can pay."

"Well, that's too bad. In that case I'll have to take possession of the field and operate it myself."

"Why you no lend him more money so ho operate field? You get money back."

"The field is mine now, and I intend to hold on to it."

Fang tilted his head.

"I think maybe not," he said

ominously. "Fang number one man this province."
 "Oh, I'll do the right thing by Hallet," said Galt hastily. "When I take possession I'll give him a nice fat bonus."
 "What is that—fat bonus—Mr. Cheng?" inquired Fang without looking round at his bodyguard.
 "An extra dividend, Excellency," was the reply. "A profit beyond that which is agreed upon."
 "How fat that bonus?" demanded Fang.
 "Oh, say five hundred dollars." Galt glanced across at Jim, tight-lipped and silent. "That's fair, isn't it?"
 "You like money too much, Mr. Galt," rapped Fang. "Velly solly for you." He strode over to Creed. "You come here buy interest oilfield?"
 "That's right," confirmed Creed.
 "How much you pay?"
 "I offer him fifty thousand dollars for a quarter interest."
 "You got that money here?"
 Creed did not hesitate.
 "Why, of course not," he declared. "I never carry that amount with me."
 "Please not lie," rebuked Fang. "People do business China oilfield always cash. Mr. Loan Fish!"
 Galt rose.
 "You mean me, general?" he asked with a feeble grin.
 "You got my frien' note, fifty thousan' dollar?"
 "Right here!" Galt patted the breast-pocket of his coat.
 Fang turned to Creed, and Creed walked over. "You got fifty thousan' dollar, Mr. Cleed. I want it!"
 "I won't submit to being robbed!" Creed exploded. "My Government—"
 "I not rob," Fang interrupted masterfully. "You give, I take. Give!"
 "Absolutely not!"
 "Mr. Cheng."
 Out came Cheng's gun, and Creed changed his mind. He took out a wallet, and from the wallet produced a thick wad of notes.
 "I no touch," said Fang, as the notes were offered. "To him!"

Galt took the notes readily enough.
 "Why, thank you, general," he murmured. "I didn't expect this."
 "Mr. Loan Fish," said Fang curtly, "you got fifty thousan' dollar. Give me my frien' note."
 "Oh, but I can't do that!" cried Galt, with a complete change of tone and expression. "You just stole this money from Mr. Creed!"
 "Mr. Cheng!"
 The invaluable Cheng jabbed the barrel of his gun between the ribs of the indiscreet American, and a folded sheet of paper was very promptly forthcoming. Fang opened it, showed it to Jim, saw by his face that it was indeed his promissory note, and offered it to him.
 "Now, my friend," he said, "you are indeed all fix."
 But Jim protested that he could not take the note—that it wouldn't be legal to do so.
 "Mclican people ve'y strange," remarked Fang, and with that he tore the note to shreds. "Now is legal!"
 He tossed the fragments of paper into the air and held out a hand to Galt.
 "Give me money, please!" he commanded.
 "The fifty thousand?" gulped Galt.
 "You want it back?"
 "You been paid," nodded Fang.
 "Yes, but— Oh, this is an outrage! I won't stand for it!"
 "Mr. Cheng!"
 Galt fished out the wad of notes he had pocketed, and Fang handed them to Cheng.
 "To Dr. Missioner," he said, "for poor people China."
 Cheng went out from the room with the notes, but almost immediately returned with them still in his hand and Abernathy beside him.
 "I can't accept this money," protested the doctor.
 "Not even for poor China?"
 "No, general."
 "No? Then I take!" Fang received the notes and stowed them in a pocket of his tunic. "I am most dang poor people China. Now, please to

leave everyone 'cept Mr. Loan Fish, Mr. Cleed."
 Cheng closed the door on those who went out into the hall and stood stolidly with his back to it. Fang motioned to Creed and Galt, and became seated with them at a round table with an inlaid top.
 "Fang is number one man here," he said significantly. "General Mu yesterday—to-day is mc. That is China. Discovery oilfield is rich."
 "I think I understand, general," said Creed. "You will grant a concession to operate the oilfield to the man who offers the most money—is that right?"
 "I am poor man."
 "Well," said Galt, "I'll give you ten thousand."
 "I am ve'y poor man!"
 "I'll give you fifty thousand," offered Creed.
 "Fifty-one," said Galt, and was rewarded with a scowl that caused him hurriedly to increase his bid to a hundred thousand.
 "One hundred and fifty!" snapped Creed.
 "A hundred and seventy-five!" retorted Galt.
 "One ninety!"
 "Two hundred thousand!" Galt glared at his competitor.
 "Is enough," said Fang, banging his fist upon the table.
 "Enough?" Galt stared at him in jubilant astonishment.
 "Too much!" Fang sat back in his chair with a disconcerting grin. "I no take cheque, and I no dang fool! You t'ink I let you go get two hundred t'ousan' dollar? Two hundred t'ousan' soldiers, maybe!"
 "Well, what was the idea of the auction in the first place?" asked Galt blankly.
 "I wish see how much you worth hold for ransom."
 "Ransom?" gasped Galt.
 "Ransom?" echoed Creed in consternation. "How much ransom?"
 "Just what you have bid. Two hundred t'ousan' dollar you, Mr. Loan Fish. One hundred ninety t'ousan' you, Mr. Cleed."



Fang went to Captain Nul—and at the same moment Cheng drew his gun from its holster. "He is ready," Fang said.

"But, general," began Creed, "we—" "Show out, Mr. Cheng," interrupted Fang. "Yes, Excellency." Cheng advanced with his gun, and the two unhappy men rose meekly and departed. "I am good business man, Mr. Cheng?" inquired Fang, after they had gone and the door was shut. "You are the grandfather of wisdom, Excellency," bowed his bodyguard.

Revolt!

FROM the living-room Creed and Myron Galt crossed the hall into the courtyard, rivalry forgotten in their joint misfortune. "This is a fine mess!" growled Galt. "Wait a minute!" Creed caught sight of Captain Nui standing at the entrance to a brick-walled passage between the main building of the Mission and an annex in which ailing natives were treated. "I think I see a way out of this!"

He turned towards the ugly little officer.

"Captain!" he called.

"He doesn't understand a word of English," said Galt, keeping pace with him.

"He'll understand this language," returned Creed, and he fished a handful of Chinese money from the pocket of his riding-breeches and shouted in Mandarin: "Come here!"

Nui heard, understood, and hurried forward. Jim, who had just emerged from the annex with Jane and the doctor, was in the little officer's way, and he bellowed something in Kalmuk, pushed him aside, and followed Creed and Galt round the building into the garden behind it.

"What did he say?" asked Jane.

"He threatened Jim," Abernathy replied. "It is very fortunate for you, Jim, that Fang has befriended you. I don't like the fellow at all—a treacherous dog, I should say."

The three walked on along the courtyard to the gate, and they found Lola there watching a procession of white-robed natives who were following a shrouded bier across the market-place.

"What's that?" she asked curiously.

"That's a funeral," Jim replied.

"The funeral of a merchant who refused to pay tribute to Fang," added the doctor gravely. "I'm afraid there'll be others before he leaves here."

"Jim," said Jane with a sigh, "at least you can trust Fang."

"Not for a minute!" he replied to her dismay, and she appealed to Abernathy.

"Don't you think we can depend on Fang's gratitude to Jim?" she asked.

"No telling what he'll do," said the doctor.

"That fat-faced little captain is the man to worry about!" asserted Lola.

"Possibly," the doctor admitted. "He has power among the men all right. I'd feel better if I knew that General Mu was on the march in this direction."

"If only we could get word to him!" said Jane.

Jim went over to Pao, who was standing on the other side of the gateway.

"Where did you hide the horses, Pao?" he asked.

"Last night with Ku Ting," replied the yellow man. "In his place behind the wall outside the town."

"I want you to ride to General Mu and tell him Fang is here."

"But since Fang arrived," protested the servant, "the town gates are closed and guarded, master."

Jim looked out at the long possession April 2nd, 1938.

of white-robed figures. Many had passed, but there were more to come.

"The cemetery is outside the wall, isn't it?" he said.

"Yes, master," nodded Pao.

"Then there's your chance! Get something white over you and join the mourners. Hop to it, Pao!"

The yellow man flitted away into the Mission and presently returned with a white robe similar to the robes worn by the mourners of the dead merchant. There were no soldiers in the courtyard, and behind the gate he enveloped himself in the hooded garment.

As the tail-end of the procession passed he joined it, and no one paid any attention to him except those who watched from the courtyard.

The market-place was left behind, the long narrow street that led to the archway in the tower seemed endless at so slow a pace; but at last the open gates and the soldiers of Fang who were on duty at them were passed, and then Pao gathered up the robe and ran to a shed-like structure under the wall of the village, and a few minutes later came galloping out from it on a horse.

Across the desert he rode, in the general direction of Ting Fou, but his task proved to be an easier one than he had expected, for General Mu had left his headquarters the day before with a considerable number of troops, bent on capturing Fang, and he was encamped upon the desert no more than twenty miles from Sha Ho Shan.

Pao was halted by a sentry on the outskirts of the camp, and declared frantically that he had information for General Mu concerning Fang the bandit. He was taken to the general, who was in his tent.

"You have information regarding Wu Yen Fang?" questioned Mu.

Pao did not understand Mandarin, and he said in English:

"Fang has captured village of Sha Ho Shan. Some foreigners are in danger there."

General Mu summoned an officer.

"We ride to Sha Ho Shan at once!" he barked. "Take your orders!"

Not very long after Pao had escaped from the village, Myron Galt found his daughter in her bed-room at the Mission, and he said to her:

"Lola, I don't want you to leave this room under any condition. Creed has bribed Captain Nui to start a revolt against Fang!"

"Then Creed's a fool!" she cried.

"No," said her father. "Fang was going to hold us for ransom. Creed knows what he's doing."

"But you don't!" she stormed. "If Nui gets the upper hand he's sure to kill Jim!"

A Chinaman in the uniform of a lieutenant opened the door and strode unceremoniously into the room, guided to it by a yellow-skinned servant of the Mission named Chan.

He rapped an order in Kalmuk, and Galt looked past him to the servant.

"What did he say?" he asked.

"General Fang wants you, master," Chan translated.

Galt walked towards the door, and Lola would have accompanied him, but the officer barred her way and blared at her in his own tongue.

"No, no, missy," said Chan urgently. "No want you. Mo' better you stay."

So Galt went off with the officer to the stairs, and Lola remained in her room.

An hour passed, and then suddenly a look-out in the tower above the wall of the village shouted down to Fang's men at the gates:

"Open! Open! Someone is coming!"

It was one of Fang's numerous spies who galloped up to the archway on a horse covered with sweat and dust, and as the gates were opened for him he cried out that General Mu and his men were advancing upon the village.

He rode on to the Mission with two of the soldiers, and he was conducted into Fang's presence.

Fang was in the living-room, and all his "guests" were there except the despised Lola. Cheng would have dismissed them, but Fang told them to stay.

"So General Mu comes to capture me, eh?" he said to the spy in Kalmuk.

"Yes," was the reply. "That fellow that rode away—we couldn't shoot him, and we couldn't catch him, so I followed. He came from here. When I saw him on the horse I knew him. He is servant of that man."

Fang beat down the hand that pointed to Jim.

"Enough!" he snapped. But after the spy had gone out from the room he looked strangely at Jim, and he asked sharply:

"Where your Tartar servant? Where he go?"

"He was watching a funeral," said Jim evasively. "That was the last I saw of him."

"You not know he have horse behind wall?"

"Which wall?"

"Why don't you stop playing dumb?" roared Creed. "You'll only antagonise the general."

"Please!" Fang waved Creed away.

"You send him for help?"

"Yes," confessed Jim.

"You not trust me?"

"As far as I'm concerned, yes. But I'm not so sure about the others—Creed and Galt."

"Mr. Creed no good fric' for you," said Fang.

The repulsive Captain Nui had entered the hall with half-a-dozen of the soldiers under his command, and at that moment he burst into the room with them.

"What do you want?" demanded Fang; and Cheng whipped out his six-shooter.

"Your gun is no use to you!" cried the tubby little officer with scorn. "You see the soldiers?"

He strode over to the table at which Fang was standing, and he flung out a hand.

"I've come for this man," he said, indicating Jim. "Are you going to turn him over to me for execution? If not, the soldiers will revolt against you!"

He spoke in his own dialect, but his meaning was all too clear, and Jane clung to Jim in terror.

Fang put his hands behind his back and regarded his insubordinate officer thoughtfully.

"Most disfortunate situation," he said slowly. "Make plenty trouble me, my friend, for blow you striko Captain Nui. No lose face, but Nui insist you die."

"But, general, you're not going to permit that?" shrilled Jane.

"Speak mos' dang bad English," said Fang. "Think maybo Mr. Cheng explain what happen?"

Cheng, without moving, responded:

"Captain Nui has incited the men to revolt. Unless permitted to settle his blood feud with Mr. Hallett there will be much trouble."

"But, general," protested Dr. Abernathy, "you can't let them execute your friend!"

"You said yourself he saved your life!" cried Jane. "Why don't you do something?"

(Continued on page 25)

Gene Autry is the foreman of a ranch owned by young Sandra Knight. The girl blunders badly by buying a flock of sheep, and rouses the ire of the local cattlemen, and a crook frames Gene in order to obtain possession of the Knight ranch, but the singing cowboy escapes from prison and put things right with smashing fists and blazing six-guns



SPRINGTIME in the ROCKIES

Sheep—the Cattlemen's Menace

DAN MORGAN was as wiry as he was tough. His clothes, his waistcoat and his striped trousers were old and dirty, his chin was bristly and his hair uncut. His weather-tanned features seemed to be twisted constantly into a scowl. A hard, fierce man with a queer sense of justice. But he was a worker, and by hard labour had established a paying ranch. He was talking to his foreman, Tracy, when the clatter of hoofs made them look round. A tall youth with a foolish, ugly face was riding towards them on an ancient stallion.

"Hey, Mr. Morgan, sheep!"
 At once the ranch-owner stiffened.
 "Where?" he demanded.
 "Thorpe's ranch."
 "Tell the other ranchers."
 "Yes, sir," cried Bub Bailey, a grin of gloating anticipation on his face. His half-witted nature thrived on stirring up strife.

Bub came eventually to a ranch situated in a valley. The house inside was surrounded by trees, and there was a shaded drive. A board at the gate announced that it was the "KNIGHT RANCH."

The time was late afternoon, and most of the heavy work of the day was at an end. Gene Autry, the singing cowboy and champion of so many rodeos, was sitting on a bench under a huge tree, whilst a number of cowboys were sprawled on the grass. Most evenings the happy ranch hands would gather on the grass in front of the large bungalow to have a sing-song. A big, fat-faced, comical fellow was strum-

ming on a guitar and grinning his appreciation. Frog Millhouse thought Gene was a dandy singer.

"Give me a pony and the open prairie
 And let me ride till my days are done.

Give me a saddle and a herd of cattle;
 Let me go roping 'near a blazing sun—"

"Sheep!" yelled Bub, and when the cowboys paid him no attention jumped from his horse and rushed forward, yelling "Sheep!"

"Don't you know no better'n to interrupt a concert?" cried Frog.

"Well, I was just tryin' to tell you that Jed Thorpe's bringin' in a carload of sheep."

The smile vanished from Gene's handsome, sun-tanned face.

"Are you sure, Bub?"

"Sure I'm sure!" the boy answered. "Morgan and the other cattlemen are on their way over to his place now."

"Get your horses, boys!" Gene rapped out. "That hot-headed, quick-tempered Morgan is likely to get mad and shoot somebody."

The foreman of the Knight Ranch was quite correct in his surmises. When Morgan had collected a bunch of cattlemen, who were almost as fanatical as himself, he headed for Thorpe's ranch. Their furious banging on the door of the ranch-house was answered at last by Thorpe himself. Thorpe was a fugitive, pasty-looking fellow with a slight cast in one eye. Behind him was Briggs, who had a share in the ranch; he was large and had the same eun-

ning expression in his small, beady eyes. "So you thought you'd turn sheep-herder, huh?" shouted Morgan.

"Why, no, of course not!" Thorpe eyed Morgan apprehensively. "There ain't any sheep on this ranch. Why, you can see for yourself."

"You tried bringing sheep here once before." Morgan slid from his horse and stepped forward, his jaw aggressive. "You're lying!" He leaned forward and whisked the paper protruding from Thorpe's shirt pocket. "So you did lie, and this bill of sale proves it—you're expecting a carload of sheep."

"Too bad he won't be here to receive 'em!" Foreman Tracy called out. "Let's give the skunk a neck-tie party."

They were dragging the yelling Thorpe towards a tree when Gene, Frog and half a dozen of the Knight cowboys rode up.

"What's going on here?"

"Thorpe's raising sheep!" Morgan shouted.

"Where are they?" Gene glanced round.

"You keep out of this, Autry!" shouted Morgan. "You've got nothing to lose, but we ranchers stand a chance to lose everything if sheep come in—you're only a foreman."

"I'm just as much against sheep as you are, but I'm against murder," Gene answered, and turned to the prisoner. "You oughta know better than raise sheep in a cattle country."

"I got a right to earn a living, ain't I?"

"You've no right to ruin the range,
 April 2nd, 1935.

and we're not letting you. Better think of something, mister."

"The sheep are on their way here by rail." Thorpe became fearful of his fate. "But I'll ship 'em back."

"All right, fellas, I guess that settles it," said Antry, with a satisfied nod.

"Not as far as I'm concerned it doesn't!" raved Morgan. "You mind your own business, Antry, and stick to your singing."

"Not a bad idea. Maybe a little song would kind of cool you off. How about it, Morgan?"

"I'm no canary!" shouted Morgan, and vaulted into his saddle. "I ain't through with this, and later—"

There was the roar of a gun, and Morgan's sombrero was whisked off his head by a bullet from Gene's gun.

"Say, are you crazy?" yelled Morgan, staring fearfully at the gun which was pointed at his chest.

"Don't be selfish with that fine haritone," smiled Gene. "I'm doing the ordering around here now, and a song might help that nasty, ornery nature of yours. So sing, fella, sing!"

When Antry spoke so softly and with that slight mocking smile it was as well to go warily. Those cattlemen knew Gene and his reputation as a rider and a gunman.

"When it's Springtime in the Rockies I'll be coming back to you," quavered the unwilling Morgan. "Little sweetheart of the mountains with your bonny eyes of blue."

"Come on—everybody sing!" ordered Gene.

Thus a situation that might have ended in tragedy became one of comedy. Everyone sang lustily:

"Once again I'll say I love you,
While the birds sing all the day.
When it's Springtime in the Rockies,
In the Rockies far away—"

"Well, Gene, that trick sure turned the tide," chuckled Frog as the cowboys and cattlemen began to disperse.

"It's hard to sing and be mean at the same time," laughed Gene.

"That old Gene's got a lot of tricks up his sleeve, boys," Frog said to the cowboys still remaining. "Did I ever tell you the time he turned a royal flush into a ranch?"

"No, what ranch was that?" someone asked.

"The Poker Ranch—it lies right over yonder."

"A fine place for raising a bunch of rocks," a man sang out.

"Yeah, I've been thinking about selling if I can get my price," Gene grinned. "Do I hear any offers?" They shook their heads. "In that case I'll have to give it back to the State."

"Well, you might as well," muttered Frog. "The Injuns wouldn't have it."

Singing Gene Antry and the hands of the Knight Ranch rode home. In front of the house was a large truck, and several weighty parcels and packages were being unloaded by Logan, the carrier from the railroad.

"Where's this stuff from, Jim?" Gene asked.

"Chicago, I guess—that's what the labels say."

"Well, I'll be hung for a horse thief!" gasped Frog, who was a person full of curiosity. "Listen to what it says on this cartage slip. Soil-testing equipment, encyclopedia, chemicals and poisons. Say, who sent all this junk?"

"That's easy—our lady boss," answered Gene. "She's been to an agricultural college. Any message with them, Jim?"

"Oh, yeah, I nearly forgot. Here's an express letter from Chicago."

April 2nd, 1933.

"That's what I was afraid of." Gene handed the letter to his friend. "Go ahead and read it, Frog—I feel kinda scared."

Frog opened the letter and cleared his throat. The cowhands gathered round.

"Dear Mr. Antry, since inheriting the Knight Ranch from my late uncle I have been preparing to take over its operation by making an intensive study of the science of animal husbandry—"

Frog looked up. "It don't sound decent to me."

"She means she's taking up animal raising—go on."

"While I'm not criticising your management," Frog read out and scowled. "Well, she'd better not—why, you sent more money from this place than she ever got before." He turned again to the letter. "I feel that the application of modern scientific methods will make a marked difference to the profits. Am arriving on the afternoon train on Tuesday."

"Gosh, that's to-morrow," gasped Gene. "Anything else?"

"Just 'Sincerely yours, Sandra Knight—bah!'"

"What?"

"Bah—that's what it says after her name."

"That's Bachelor of Animal Husbandry, doll!" chuckled Gene.

Sandra and Her Friends

SANDRA brought three of her classmates—Miss Snow, Miss Hilton and Miss Parker. They were seldom known by these names, being referred to as Jane, Peggy and Silly. Naturally, they had all got diplomas from the Colby Agricultural Hall for Animal Husbandry. Now, Sandra was a dark-haired and very attractive young woman; moreover, she was keenly interested in making a career for herself. Her friends had taken up husbandry as a hobby, in fact obtaining good husbands for themselves was much more in their line. They accompanied Sandra not because they wished to work like Trojans on a ranch, but to have a good time. They were pleasant, attractive girls, and their only crime was that they were inclined to giggle.

"By the way, Sandra," remarked Peggy, when their train was nearing its destination, "what's this foreman of yours like?"

"Oh, I've never seen him, but I can imagine. A long, lanky weather-beaten old fellow with a droopy moustache."

"Did you wire him to meet you?" questioned Jane.

"No, but I wrote him that I was arriving to-day."

There was great excitement among the girls when the guard came along to say that a few minutes' time would see them at their destination. They imagined they would find cowboys all over the place, but so far they had only seen one from the train and he had not seemed quite the romantic figure that they had imagined.

A funny sort of shack was the station master's office. There were no sort of platform or waiting-rooms. There were one or two dusty-looking cowboys, but what interested the girls most was a pen full of sheep—the property of Thorpe.

The four girls collected their luggage and clambered down from the train, and as the pen was right opposite them they had to go and look at the creatures.

"Aren't they sweet?" simpered Silly.

"Girls, here's our chance to put our knowledge to practical use," cried Sandra. "Now, what would you say was wrong with these sheep?"

"They seem rather skinny," said Silly.

"The owner will lose all his profit marketing them so early," Sandra remarked after the manner of an expert. "They should be allowed to graze for at least two months. Why, even their fleeces hasn't reached its full length."

Thorpe and Briggs had come to the rail-head to say good-bye to the sheep, which had been such a loss to them. Still, it was no good trying to keep sheep when there were hot heads like Morgan about the district. Briggs had suggested going to law, but Thorpe reckoned the only thing to do was to get rid of the sheep. They were standing near the pen when Sandra and her friends approached. They doffed their slouch hats.

"Are either of you Mr. Antry?" Sandra inquired.

"Why, no," Briggs shook his head. "Were you expecting him?"

"Yes, I was."

"I reckon he'll be along soon," Briggs came closer and motioned towards the pen. "I couldn't help but overhear what you were saying. It's a mighty unusual thing for young ladies to know so much about live stock."

Sandra explained that they all obtained their degrees at college for animal husbandry, and that they were now out in the West to make use of their learning. Modestly Sandra stated that modern scientific methods should double the profit of the Knight Ranch. Briggs called forward Thorpe and the two men were most courteous. They were sure that the college education of the girls would put old timers like themselves very much in the shade.

"Well, I bet you could take these sheep right now and make a handsome profit out of them," Thorpe said with a smirk.

"Say, that's an idea," cried his friend Briggs. "Why don't you try it, Miss Knight? We couldn't do any good with them, and I know Thorpe here would be agreeable to selling at less than what he gave for them."

Frog Millhouse having stopped at least four times on the way to the railroad to talk to people that he knew did not arrive on time. He halted the ancient and battered Ford car at the precise moment that Thorpe and Briggs concluded the sale of the sheep and a truck for the transportation of the animals. After much inquiry, Frog found out which was Sandra Knight.

"I'm Frog Millhouse," he announced, a smile all over his fat face. "Gene couldn't come. He was tied down to the ranch so he sent me. Right here's our car!"

"Thank you." Sandra looked at the car disdainfully. "Well, girls, you'd better get in." She turned to Frog. "You'd better load the truck." She indicated the empty truck.

"With your luggage?"

"No—the sheep."

"Sheep!" gasped Frog. "But you can't—why, you don't—"

"I've just bought them," Sandra interrupted sharply. "I've made arrangements to use that truck. You can drive it and I'll take the car."

There was no help for it, but to get the sheep on the truck. Frog glanced apprehensively around, but now that the one train of the day had gone everybody had departed about their business or gone to sleep under the few trees. Frog kept his hat well pulled down over his face as he drove the truck away from the station. What in goodness' name was Gene going to say?

Gene had decided to ride round the Knight Ranch to see that everything was satisfactory for the coming of the

new owner. Satisfied, he went across to another ranch to discuss a sale of cattle, and was cantering down a gentle incline towards the road when Sandra appeared in the Ford. The car did not slow for the main reason that Sandra found the foot brake did not seem to function. Gene's horse reared up in the air and the car seemed to flash under the animal's hoofs.

"Slow down!" raged Gene. "Where do you think you are—in the city?"

In the dust kicked up he did not recognize the old ranch car, but he recognized his friend Millhouse when he came down the slope in the truck. Gene flung up his hands as a signal and Frog brought the truck to a stop.

"What are you doing with those sheep?" demanded Austry. "Are you out of your mind?"

"Well, I ain't, but I'm getting that way fast." Frog stared malevolently at his charges. "You know that rat Briggs went and palmed these sheep off on your lady boss."

"Why didn't you stop her?"

Frog shook his head.

"Well, she don't stop easy," was his remark.

"Where is she?"

Frog pointed to the cloud of dust.

"There she goes, cowboy."

Gene gave his horse a dig and off he went like the wind. The girls were vastly thrilled by the sight of the galloping horsemen and urged Sandra to make it a race. At any rate, the girl had to stop the old Form, or else smash through a gate.

"Well, what is this—are we playing games?" she demanded when Gene reined in his horse.

"I'm sorry if I seemed rude back there by shouting at you." Gene doffed his sombrero. "But I thought for a moment the car was going to strike Champion. I'm Gene Austry—your foreman."

"How do you do?" Sandra was slightly mollified. "These are my class mates and they're spending the summer with me. Miss Snow, Miss Hilton and Miss Parker."

"How do you do?" Gene gave them a cursory glance and then looked anxiously at his new boss. "About those sheep you've just bought—you can't keep them."

"I'd like to know why not?" cried Sandra, her eyes flashing.

"Because this isn't sheep country."

"Well, I see plenty of grass—sheep eat grass, don't they?"

"Yes, and they eat the roots, too, and grass can't grow without roots." Gene snapped out, losing his patience. "That's why they don't allow folk to raise sheep around here."

"I'll raise whatever I like on my own ranch," Sandra answered just as abruptly. "And I don't want to discuss the matter any further." She pointed. "Will you open that gate, please, and tell me which of those tracks—trails I take."

Gene slid from the saddle and opened the gate.

"Take the trail to the left," he said.

The truck came lumbering up as the Ford moved away.

"Hey, that ain't the right way," Frog called out.

"Pipe down, idiot!" tersely cried Gene. "They mustn't hear you."

"But that ain't the way to the ranch."

"I know it. Follow the car, and when you get there play up to all I say," Gene ordered. "Now get going."

After a while the road down which Gene had guided the girls became little more than a track. They looked back and saw the truck following them, so they went on and the going became very rough. On every side was rocky, barren foot-hills, stunted trees and occasional patches of grass. At last they came to a sort of amphitheatre with a small shack. They pulled up the car, and a moment later Frog appeared with the truck. Along the trail at a leisurely canter came Gene.

"Welcome home, Miss Knight."

"Home?" Sandra stared at the shack with its dusty windows and air of neglect. "But this is awful."

"Come to think about it, it does look a bit dingy," agreed Gene. "Maybe a coat of paint would help it."

"A fine manager you are." Sandra was very angry. "You might have spent some of that money you sent me for improvements."

Gene apologized and explained that they had been terribly busy with the cattle, and that they had had no time to use the shack the last few weeks. Sandra demanded to know what had become of the equipment she had had sent out. He said he had had it stored but would get it over as soon as possible. Would they step inside? The interior of the shack was festooned with cobwebs and dust was everywhere; the chairs and tables were broken down things, whilst the bunks and beds sent out clouds of dust when touched.

Gene and Frog fixed up the sheep in a corral and returned to see how Sandra was getting on in his shack—for this was the Poker Ranch. He found

them busy with some old brushes and brooms tidying the place up.

"Let's me and you resign before them ranchers find them sheep," suggested Frog.

"Stop worrying. One night here will be plenty. They'll be grabbing the first train East in the morning," Gene grinned. "Listen, Frog, and I'll tell you what we're going to do."

The girls got the place reasonably clean, and they were so tired from their exertions that they decided to turn in. Silly took an upper bunk which promptly collapsed and deposited the girl on the floor. In the midst of the confusion Gene showed up.

"It isn't your fault she wasn't killed," Sandra accused. "The way you have let this place go to wrack and ruin is a disgrace—say, what are you doing here, anyway?"

"I thought you'd feel safer if you had this." Gene held out a rifle.

"But there's nothing to be afraid of—is there?"

"No, nothing, only the wolves and coyotes."

"Wolves?" the girls gasped.

"Yeah, but they're not likely to break in unless they're hungry." Gene placed the gun on a table. "Oh, another thing. If you should find a snake coiled beside you, don't disturb it and make it mad. They only come in to keep warm, and they won't bother you if you don't bother them. Guess I'd better be going. Good-night."

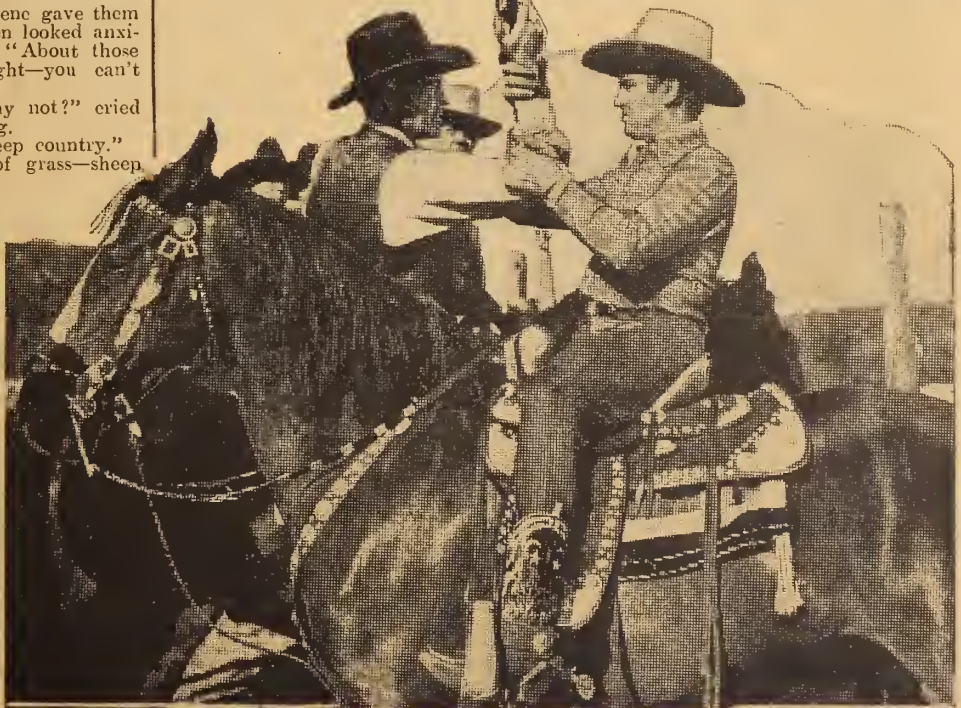
"Where do you and Frog sleep?" asked Sandra.

"We roll up in our blankets and sleep out in the brush—unless, of course, you'd feel safer if we slept on the porch."

"No, thank you, we'll get along all right," haughtily answered Sandra. "Good-night."

"Pleasant dreams!" mocked Gene.

When Gene thought the girls would be in bed and thinking of turning out the light he tossed a can full of pebbles on to the roof. It made an awful clatter. From some trees Frog made a



As Morgan raised his gun, Gene spurred his horse alongside and grabbed hold of the cattleman's gun-arm.

superb imitation of the call of a coyote, ending with the dismal howl of a wolf. Then came yells for Gene, and the girls begged him to sleep the night on the porch.

The foreman felt suddenly sorry for the trick. Maybe it was the gratitude in Sandra's eyes when he assured her that the coyotes would stay away whilst he was there. In the morning Gene took Sandra for a ride round the barren ridges of Poker Ranch to seek out some pasture for the sheep.

"Sheep would starve on this range." The girl stared round at the uninviting scene. "But I don't understand it. The man who sold me the sheep said I had plenty of grazing land."

"Aw, he was just trying to make a sale."

"Yes, I suppose he was." Sandra gave a nod of her head. "I can't think how you've ever made any profit out of this ranch."

"Oh, we've got along somehow," Gene replied, and hoped she wouldn't ask any more questions. "Hey, not that way, Miss Sandra." He had awakened to the fact that the girl was cauterizing the horse he had procured for her down a slope towards the Knight Ranch.

"Oh, what a beautiful place." Sandra reined in her horse, as she saw the big ranch house between the great trees. "Who does it belong to?"

"An Easterner—doesn't even know what it looks like."

"If that place were mine I'd never want to leave it. Lets go over and take a look at it."

Gene decided that the situation was becoming awkward. Moreover, he did not like deceiving this charming girl.

"It's kinda hard to explain about the ranch, but—"

"I'm sure it is, Gene." Her smile was friendly now. "Now that I've seen what you had to contend with I think it's marvellous what you've done. No wonder you didn't often use that shack."

"Thanks—thanks," Gene grinned nervously. "Most of the profits have been made from cattle, and I think it would be wise to stick with them. Why not let me sell the sheep?"

The smile went slowly from the girl's face and a stubborn expression took its place.

"Perhaps the manager of this ranch would lease me some grazing land for the sheep."

"Not a chance, Miss Sandra, he's against sheep."

"Not if I ask him nicely." Sandra urged her horse into a trot. "I'm going to find him."

A number of Gene's cowboys were grouped round the bunk house, and they straightened up when they saw the girl and their foreman.

"Morning, Gene," shouted one of the older boys. "Any orders?"

"Nothing to-day, thanks," quickly answered Gene, trying to give them warning glances to be quiet. "Mighty fine neighbours these boys." He grinned at Sandra. "They take my orders into the store every day."

The cowboys stared at each other—what was Gene talking about and who was this girl?

"Pardon me, but could you tell me where we could find the manager?" Sandra requested of an elderly cowhand.

"The which?"

"The manager of this ranch."

"No, ma'am, I can't." The cowboy could see Gene shaking his head.

"Good-bye, boys," shouted Gene. "Guess we oughta be getting along," he hinted to Sandra. "They've got plenty to do."

Gene gave a sigh of relief when he April 2nd, 1938.

had got the girl away from the Knight Ranch, but they hadn't gone half a mile when down the road came a cloud of dust. Gene saw it was Frog, and guessed that for his pal to go so fast meant trouble. With a murmur of apology he galloped forward to hear the worst.

"What's wrong?"

"You know that kid, Bub?" Frog panted out. "Well, he came snooping around. Reckon he's used your old ranch for a playground—he went and spotted them sheep."

"Are the girls there?"

"Nope. They've gone off for a walk round the place."

"Okay, I'll fix this." Gene turned his horse and dashed back to the girl. "Something came up at the ranch unexpectedly, and I've got to get back. Your friends have gone for an exploration. I reckon if you took the trail we took you should meet them."

"All right, I'll go join them," answered the unsuspecting Sandra, but she did wonder what the nature of the business at the ranch could be that Gene should gallop off so madly.

Twenty-four Hours' Warning

AS he galloped with Frog along the dusty trail Gene learnt how the inquisitive Bub had come nosing around and spotted the sheep. Frog had done his best to persuade the lad to say nothing, but the mischief-maker was all out for trouble. Frog felt certain that it would be Morgan who would cause trouble.

Frog was right in his surmise. They reached the old ranch in time to see Bub leading half a dozen horsemen towards a small stretch of pasture where Frog had corralled the sheep. Most of the cattlemen had drawn their guns but spun round at the sound of horses' hoofs.

"Hey, Antry, you're just in time!" sneered Morgan. "Pretty smart on your part getting Thorpe to promise not to take those sheep so you could buy 'em cheap."

"I didn't buy 'em!" shouted Gene.

"No? Well, what are they doing on your ranch?"

"I'll get 'em off of here to-morrow," promised Gene, hating to have to eat humble pie to a man like Morgan.

"Well, we ain't taking any chances of a double-cross," was the sneering reply. "So we'll save you the trouble. Boys, start shooting."

As Morgan raised his revolver Gene Antry spurred his horse alongside and grabbed hold of Morgan's gun-arm. The two men rolled from the saddle to the ground. Frog whipped out his guns in defence of his friend, but it was not necessary.

"Let 'em fight it out alone!" a cattleman shouted.

Gene managed to twist Morgan's hand in such a way that the man had to let go of his gun. Morgan rolled free, and, getting to his feet first, crashed his fist into Gene's face as the latter struggled to his knees. That enraged Gene, who was one of the straightest of fighters, and when Morgan rushed again he swung his legs up and caught the attacker a nasty blow in the chest. Gene catapulted Morgan away, jumped to his own feet and waited for Morgan to rise. Morgan looked round for his gun, saw it and made for it, but Frog Millhouse got there first.

Morgan at once rushed at Frog and knocked him down, but before he could get his hands to the gun Gene was on the scene. Morgan stopped a punch on the point that made him see stars. Cursing, he abandoned his grip of Frog

and rushed at Gene, who hit him just twice to lay him flat on his back.

"Now, get on your horse and get out of here!" Gene raged.

The battered Morgan scowled, but backed away before those clenched fists.

It was Harris, the elderly man who had suggested that Morgan and Gene fight it out, who laid down the law now.

"You'll have to get rid of those sheep, Gene," he stated. "And inside of twenty-four hours. I give you my word they won't be touched till then, but I should advise you, Gene, not to heed this warning."

"All right, I'll have 'em away. I give you my word," Gene promised.

"Your word don't mean anything!" sneered Morgan, now safely in the saddle.

"We're not here to settle personal grievances, Morgan," Harris said sternly. "Now, let's get going."

"Twenty-four hours—that doesn't give us much time," Gene said, as he walked into the ranch-house. "Why you holding your arm? Did you get hurt?"

"Oh, it ain't much."

There was a first-aid case in the house, and Frog had a nasty cut in his arm where he had fallen on some sharp stones. Gene bathed the place with iodine and made Frog yell.

"Don't that stuff hurt! And look at my arm now—why, I might have some disease like smallpox."

"Smallpox—you've got it!" Gene's eyes lit up. "I'm sure it'll work."

"Am I crazy, or are you?" demanded Frog.

"You've given me an idea of how to get rid of those sheep!" cried Gene. "We got to get busy before those girls get back."

Sandra had failed to find her friends, and had so lost sense of direction that she was glad to see the road again. There she encountered a buggy with Thorpe and Briggs in it. They wished her good-morning and asked what she was doing round here.

"Just looking over my ranch," Sandra gave a regretful smile. "It's hardly what I expected—it's so shabby and run down."

"That's strange," Thorpe frowned in bewilderment. "I understood Gene had been making a lot of improvements lately."

"Well, I don't see any, do you?" Sandra stared at the barren hillocks.

"Or that pasture land you spoke of either, Mr. Briggs."

"Why, but, Miss Knight, this isn't —" Thorpe broke off because his friend had kicked him.

"It certainly isn't the place it used to be." Briggs winked covertly at Thorpe.

"Of course, I haven't been here for some time, but I suppose the droughts and the dust storms have worked havoc. What you need is a smaller place that you could cultivate more intensely. Have you ever thought about selling?"

"No, I haven't, but I'm afraid I wouldn't get much for it."

"Well, I'd be willing to pay five thousand dollars cash for it right now."

"Five thousand dollars." Sandra was astounded. "Well, I'd like to think it over and let you know."

"Why, that ranch ain't worth fifty dollars," muttered Thorpe, when the girl was out of hearing. "Have you gone soft?"

"How much is the Knight Ranch worth?"

"A hundred thousand or more."

"Well, that's the only ranch she has a legal right to sell—now do you get it?"

Thorpe's loose mouth sagged open.

"You mean she thinks she's selling this, when she's really selling her own ranch?"

"Sure, she'll never recognise the legal description of the ranch on the deed," answered Briggs.

"Say, that's the slickest landgrab I ever heard of!" cried Thorpe. "But what about Gene and Frog—they won't let her do it?"

"I reckon Gene has been kidding her for reasons of his own, and we must step in first." Briggs fingered his chin. "We'll have to figure out some way to keep them from interfering."

Frog Opens His Mouth Too Wide

SANDRA rode back to the ranch, and on the porch she found her three girl friends very exhausted from a strenuous walk. Gene appeared to say that the sheep didn't look too grand and he'd like Miss Sandra to bring her animal husbandry knowledge to bear on them.

"Why, their mouths are all red!" cried Sandra.

"And so are their hoofs," pointed out Gene.

Jane had brought out a large "doctor" book, and she looked up the matter.

"Here we are!" she cried. "The membranes of the mouth become swollen and discoloured, livid blotches appear on lips and skin, and red lines on the hoofs." She opened her eyes wide with horror. "What do you think it is?"

"I can guess!" shrilled Silly. "Foot and mouth disease."

"And the whole flock is affected," added Peggy. "They'll have to be destroyed."

"We feared as much, Miss Sandra," Gene said gloomily. "If you'll go on up to the house we'll take care of it."

"That was like taking candy from a kid," chuckled Frog, as the girls disappeared inside the house.

"Yes, but it was all for their own good. I tell you what we'll do. We'll take 'em to the dance in town to-night."

"You can't do that," argued Frog.

"Somebody'll tell 'em they're on the wrong ranch."

"I intend to tell Sandra the truth before we get there," Gene spoke with confidence. "Now, you take the sheep into town, get rid of 'em, ship 'em anywhere you like, and I'll see you at the dance later."

It was getting dark when Frog drove the truck with the sheep towards town, and he was jogging along when who should he encounter but Thorpe and Briggs in their buggy.

"Where you going with them sheep?" Thorpe demanded.

"I'm going to town. I'm gonna sell 'em."

"Has Miss Knight changed her mind about raising sheep?" demanded Briggs.

"No, but Gene and I changed it for her," Frog guffawed. The joke was so good that there would be no harm in passing it on. "We went and put red goo all over them sheep's noses and all over their hoofs so that she'd think they had the hoof and mouth disease."

"Ha, ha, ha! Pretty clever!" Briggs held his sides; but the laughter was forced, for he was thinking hard. He regained his breath. "Frog, I'll take those sheep off your hands. I've got an out-of-town customer who can use 'em."

"That's fine!" Frog beamed. "But you mustn't let Miss Knight know, because she's got to think they're destroyed. And where do you want 'em delivered? I'd kinda like to go to that dance to-night."

"I'll take 'em right now!" Briggs cried with hearty cordiality. "And we'll lend you a horse, so that you won't miss the fun. One horse is all we really need for the buggy. When you bring back my horse we can go into the matter of sale."

"Well, gee, Mr. Briggs, you're a swell guy!" cried the astonished and delighted Frog.

Thorpe and Briggs winked slyly at each other. Not very far along the trail they came to some fine pasture land. Here the two men turned the sheep loose.

"Morgan will sure see red when he finds Autry's sheep on his range!" cried Thorpe, rubbing his thin hands together in glee.

Faked Gun-play

GENE picked out the most presentable of the boys from the Knight Ranch, and with the four girls went in a big wagon to the dance. Sandra sat on the box seat next to Gene, and her three girl friends whispered that they scented a romance.

"Sandra, there's something I want to tell you—about the ranch."

"Oh, this is a fine time to talk business," Sandra protested.

"Well, it's important."

She screwed up her small nose and laughed provokingly.

"And I, sir, don't want to hear it."

The wagon pulled up before the town hall, outside which was a large cloth banner displaying the information that this was a "PIONEERS' DAY DANCE." There was dancing for a while, and then the master of ceremonies announced that Mr. Millhouse had just arrived and would oblige with a comic song.

Everybody was happy, and there was no hint of impending trouble. Gene was sorry that Sandra had given him no chance to explain, but he could explain everything on the way home.

But trouble was brewing because Briggs had made it his business to go to the Morgan Ranch. The sour, hot-headed Morgan had no time for dances, and was sitting round a fire with Tracy and drinking heavily.

"Just saw a flock of sheep on your land, Morgan," stated Briggs. "I didn't know that you turned out to be a sheep-herder."

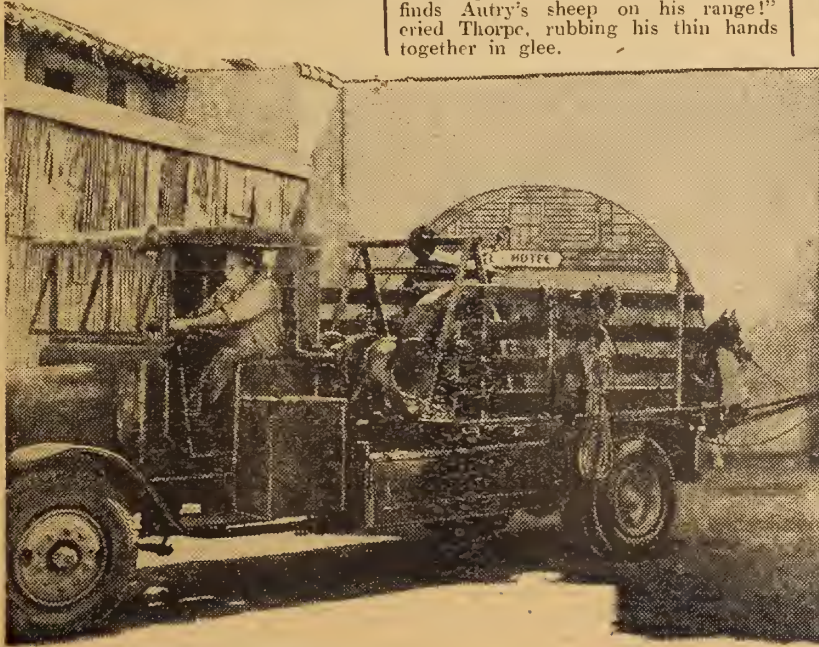
"On my land?" Morgan jumped to his feet.

"Yeah!"

"So that's the way Autry got rid of 'em." Morgan buckled on his gun-belt. "You don't suppose he's gonna be at the town dance to-night, do you?"

"It's very likely."

Briggs got into his buggy and drove furiously into town. Arriving at the



Frog gave the signal and the truck slowly moved forward.



dance, he sought out Sandra, and was fortunate to find her for the moment unattached.

"May I have this dance, Miss Knight?"

"Certainly."

Briggs danced round the room several times, and then guided his partner out of the crowd.

"I don't want to butt in, Miss Knight, but I think those boys played an awful mean trick on you."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, about those sheep—I bought them ^{back}."

"But they were diseased."

"No, they're perfectly healthy," Briggs said with an ominous shake of his head. "The boys just painted them up to make them look that way. I imagine it was their idea of a joke—they seemed to think it was very funny."

One can imagine how angry Sandra was at this news. She decided there and then that Gene Autry was nothing more than a smiling, double-crossing adventurer. The M.C. announced before Sandra could find Autry that the cowboy would sing:

"Stars may come

And stars may go,

Way up in the heavenly blue

But of all the stars that shine to-night
None shines as bright as you."

And though Gene sang the song with his eyes constantly glancing towards Sandra, he was a little puzzled by the fact that the girl did not smile. She looked exceedingly forbidding, and he wondered if anything could have gone wrong. The song over, he walked off the platform to deafening applause.

"Very funny, aren't you? Anything for a laugh!" Sandra confronted him with blazing eyes and crimson cheeks.

"What's the matter?"

"You must have had a good time laughing over the way you fooled me!"

"You mean—about the sheep?"

"So you admit it."

"Yes, but—"

"Never mind!" she interrupted fiercely. "And you needn't bother returning to the ranch to-night, Mr. Autry, for we can get along without you!" She turned to her smirking companion. "Mr. Briggs, will you take me home?"

"Gladly!"

"Wait a minute, Sandra—you don't understand!" cried Gene.

But with head held high the girl walked away, and Gene would have gone after her if Thorpe hadn't stepped forward to play his part.

"Gene, got your gun with you?"

"Of course not."

"You'd better take this one—Morgan's out looking for you."

"Yes, but—" Gene muttered in surprise.

"There's no time to argue, Gene. He's coming in for a showdown."

"All right," Gene said, taking the gun.

Thorpe smiled to himself. Besides the five live shells there was one fired shell. Soon he would have his revenge on Morgan, whom he loathed for stopping him bringing in sheep, and Autry, whom he envied for his popularity.

"Look out!" Thorpe clutched at Gene's arm. "Here he is!"

A silence fell on the crowd when they saw Morgan, his ugly features twisted into a sneer of hatred, standing in the door with a six-gun in his hand. No one was carrying a gun, and with the women everybody stood back to give the man passage—they knew Morgan was a killer. Morgan stalked up to
April 2nd, 1933.

Gene and stared at him with gloating satisfaction.

"Autry, I'm gonna give you something that you've had coming to you for a long time."

The two guns came up simultaneously, but Autry did not fire but jumped to one side. It was his intention to try to get to hand grips with this madman and wrest the gun away. There was a roar of two explosions. Morgan dropped his gun and toppled forward to crash to the floor.

Naturally, the sheriff was at the dance, and with a deputy he took charge. He looked accusingly at Gene.

"I didn't fire my gun, sheriff."

The sheriff took the gun, broke it and took out the shell that had been fired.

"This doesn't back up your story, Gene," the sheriff stated. "It looks like a case of self-defence, but I'll have to put you under arrest."

Frog Millhouse, perplexed and worried—somehow he felt that he had something to do with this—came to Gene to see if he could do anything.

"Check the bullet that hit Morgan and let me know," Gene whispered.

Another disturbance was caused by the arrival of Tracy, who, when he heard Autry had shot Morgan, wanted to kill the young foreman. He had to be forcibly restrained.

Frog managed to have a look at the bullet-wound on Morgan before the unconseious rancher was carried away. He went outside to think what he should do, and overheard the sheriff speaking to his deputy.

"Go out and arrest Frog Millhouse—he may be mixed up in this."

Frog made himself scarce, but when the town was quiet he made his way by devious twists and turns to the gaol, where there was only one cell. He went close to the bars and whistled a tune that was a signal Gene would know. Then he caught hold of the bars and drew himself up. Gene, who had been lying on a rough bed, was on his feet.

"Gene, I can't go and see the sheriff about that bullet," he whispered. "Because he's after me, too—what'll I do now?"

"Get back to the ranch and look after the girls," ordered Gene. "Try and square things with Sandra."

"All right, leave it to me," replied Frog, and hastened away.

Briggs had taken full advantage of seeing Sandra back to the Poker Ranch. What was the use of a place like this to a girl like Sandra? All the boys mistrusted Autry, and she would be well advised to sell and get back to the city where she belonged.

"I'll take your offer," Sandra said as she bade him good-night. "I might as well sell—I'm going back East as fast as the train will take me."

"I'll have the deed drawn up and the cheque here first thing in the morning," Briggs assured her.

At the Thorpe Ranch he found his confederate waiting for him, and heard that Autry was safely behind bars and likely to stay there.

"We've got to work fast to get the deed signed and recorded before anybody gets wise."

Thorpe chuckled gleefully.

"With Gene in gaol and Frog hiding out, I don't know who's gonna stop us."

Gaol-break

PEGGY, Silly and Jane came back to the ranch to find Sandra packing.

"You're a fine one, running out on us," complained Jane. "What are you packing for?"

"We're leaving to-morrow, and you'd better start packing, too!" was the curt answer.

After a lot of argument the girls started to pack. Suddenly Peggy held up a hand for silence and asked if she had heard a noise outside.

"Gosh, it's spooky round here," shivered Jane.

"I'm not scared," cried Silly, and from a shelf took down the rifle that Gene had brought them that first night. Clutching the rifle, she stalked out on to the porch, and saw a figure squatting down in a corner. "Stand up, you!" she ordered. "Get your hands in the air."

Frog Millhouse stumbled into the shack.

"So it's you?" Sandra said, hands on hips. "What are you doing here?"

"Well, Gene sent me out here to protect you."

"How thoughtful," Sandra laughed scornfully. "Well, you can both look for new jobs. I'm selling the ranch to-morrow."

"Ranch—you're selling!" stammered Frog. "Not this ranch?"

"Naturally."

"But, Miss Sandra, you can't—"

"And why not?"

Frog was nonplussed.

"Well, Gene wouldn't like it," was all he could think of to say.

"Am I supposed to turn down five thousand dollars because Gene wouldn't like it?" Sandra demanded, and then pointed a hand at the doer. "Get out of here!"

Frog tried to argue, but the four girls seized him and flung him outside and bolted the door. The girls eventually went to bed, but they did not sleep very well.

Gene was lying in his cell, trying to figure out what had happened, when he heard that familiar whistle. Dawn was breaking as he scrambled to his feet.

"Why aren't you with the girls?"

"Well, they went and run mo off," Frog called from the window. "Say, did you know Sandra's leaving to-day, and she's gonna sell your ranch?"

"If she does she's a smart girl," Gene said with a laugh.

"Well, I should say she is. She's getting five thousand dollars for it."

"Five thousand dollars?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hold on here." Now Gene was worried. He paced up and down his cell. He stopped suddenly. "Why, the only ranch she's got a right to sell is her own. Who made that offer?"

"Well, I ain't sure, but Briggs was out there last night."

"Of course he was—the snake in the grass!" cried Gene. "Hurry up and get me out of here."

Tracy was as much a firebrand as Morgan, whom he had regarded as almost akin to a hero. The shooting had aroused him to fanatical fury, and in the early hours of the morning he called together the cattlemen who had supported Morgan so enthusiastically in stopping the importation of sheep.

"Listen, men, Morgan is dying—murdered by Gene Autry," he raved at them. "Autry tried to bring sheep into this country, but Morgan wouldn't let him. Morgan was out to protect our interests, and Autry was out to get him. Are we going to stand by and see Autry get away with this?"

"No!" went up a chorus of protests, and at the head of a dozen or more crazy cattlemen Tracy raced towards the town gaol.

Gene did not know of this animosity. He had been one of the most popular

foreman in the district for years, but where cattle and sheep are concerned opinions can change over night. He would have pooh-pooled the idea that men with whom he had fraternised would want to lynch him.

Meanwhile, Frog Millhouse was wondering how he could rescue Gene. All very well for a fellow to demand that he be got out of gaol, but when one hadn't the key and there were iron bars over the window, it was asking a lot, yet if Gene asked for the impossible it had to be achieved some way or other. With a pickaxe one could have broken a hole through the age-old walls of the ancient gaol, but that would take too long. Desperately he stared round.

Across the street an old store was being pulled down to allow for bigger premises. Parked outside was a lorry, and Frog's eyes lit up as he saw in bold lettering:

"BOONEVILLE WRECKING COMPANY."

On the lorry was a heavy crane.

A discordant yelling made Frog dart behind a tree. He saw Tracy and a number of men rushing down the street. It flashed to his brain that they were going to see the sheriff, and the fact that they carried a rope was ominous. Frog knew he had got to act quickly. He sped across the street.

"Say, mister, how'd you like to make five bucks?" he demanded of the truck driver.

"Doing what?" suspiciously demanded the man.

"I want you to pull down that wall yonder."

The man had no idea, being a stranger to the town, that the wall was part of the gaol.

"Does look a bit rickety. Is it dangerous?"

"Yeah, I want it pulled down to build a fresh one," lied Frog. "It's

dangerous 'cause I've loosened some of the bricks. You see, my truck with its tackle ain't got here yet, and this is a rush job." He took out some money. "I'll make it six bucks."

"I can always use six bucks," said the fellow. "Hop in!"

The truck was driven the hundred yards or so down the street to the gaol, and the driver rubbed his chin.

"Guess we can pull it out with this." He pointed to the crane and the cable. He backed the truck and then got out again. Leisurely he took out a grappling iron and a hefty length of cable.

Frog could hear the shouting up the street, and was scared stiff that Tracy and the cattlemen would take the law into their own hands and charge down on the gaol. He had got the grappling iron fixed to the prison bars when he heard:

"We want Antry! We want Antry!"

Luckily the roaring of the engine killed the sound for the truck driver. Frog gave the signal for him to get going. The driver slowly moved forward and just before the cable tightened speeded up.

The grappling iron whisked out the iron bars as if they were mere sticks, and also took away a large part of the wall, leaving a gaping hole through which Gene scrambled.

Tracy, with a protesting sheriff, were on their way to the gaol when they heard the sound of falling bricks. They arrived in time to see the whole of the gaol-house collapse in clouds of dust. It was Tracy who saw Gene making for Frog's horse.

"It's Gene!" he shouted. "Plug the skunk!"

Gene leapt to the saddle, but he knew that he had a slim chance of getting away from the guns of the cattlemen. But there were two people on his side. The sheriff, who believed in Gene's innocence and was determined that there should be a fair trial, and his friend, Frog. Without thought of his own

danger, Frog rushed forward waving his hat at the cattlemen as a signal that they must not fire.

Two bullets from Tracy whined close to Gene before Frog grabbed the gun from the cattlemen. The ruse enabled Gene to make good his escape.

"Gene's probably headed for his own ranch!" cried the sheriff. "We'll get him there. Lock Frog Millhouse up."

"Whereabout, sheriff?" a deputy questioned. "The gaol's kinda draughty."

"Then bring him along."

The truck driver just stood there gaping. He had just arrived from the east and had thought till then that the west was sleepy. In about two minutes he had seen enough to last him a lifetime. He took one look at the wreck of the prison and decided it would be best to get out of town as soon as possible.

Frog, locked to a deputy's wrist by handcuffs, went in the sheriff's car. Down the street behind the posse of cattlemen went the sheriff and a cloud of distant dust Frog knew would be his friend. The sheriff speeded past the horsemen.

Gene took a short cut over a hill, and the sheriff had to keep to the road, but the old car was fast, and they got round this hill before the cowboy. The sheriff pulled up his ear right in the path of the oncoming horseman and signalled for Gene to stop.

But Gene dare not be captured. He drove Champion straight at the car, and when the sheriff ducked down the horse rose gracefully into the air in a spectacular jump.

The deputy whipped out his gun, but Frog hit the man with his sombrero and kicked the sheriff. In the confusion he managed to take the key from the ignition and pretended to throw it out of the car.

"Get out and help find that key!" shouted the angry sheriff.



"I had to get out to stop you selling your very valuable ranch for about a hundredth part of what it's worth!" cried Gene and snatched the cheque from the startled girl.

As they were searching the posse of cattlemen came charging past.

"That mob's out to get Antry!" raved the exasperated sheriff. "Thanks to you they'll more than likely get him. I was trying to protect him."

"Oh, well, in that case," Frog straightened his back and opened his hand. "Here's the key. Come on, let's go!"

The Deed is Signed

At a table sat Sandra, whilst in the background were grouped her three friends—all looking very discontented at having to leave. Briggs and Thorpe were fawning round the girl, and watching her anxiously as she scanned the deed that the two rascals had drawn up so cunningly.

When Sandra started to turn over the page they looked at each other nervously.

"I can assure you, Miss Knight, that that deed is quite in order," murmured Briggs. "Everything is set down very clearly. A lot of the names are boundaries, which you would know nothing about as you are a comparative stranger to this district."

"I back that up, Miss Knight," added Thorpe. "These bills of sale have to be long-winded to be legal." He laughed at his attempt at joking.

"Are you sure this describes the property correctly?" Sandra said uncertainly. "I don't like signing anything I haven't read properly."

"I can assure you there's nothing to worry 'your pretty head about." Briggs' hand shook slightly as he held out a pen. "Sit down, Miss Knight, and sign on this line. There's always a lot of business in town, and this deed should be handed in at the earliest possible moment."

"Well, I suppose I had better sign." Sandra took the pen and sat down at a table. "Which line do I sign on?"

"This one," both men cried together.

Sandra dipped her pen in the ink and hesitated again. She was going away and she would never see Gene again. She knew that was going to make her very unhappy. She must banish this double-crossing rogue out of her heart. Probably in time she would forget. Yet it would be hard. It would have been so easy to have been happy out here under the sun and in this glorious air. Her three friends did not want to go, and that made her feel miserable.

Sandra seemed to see the document through a haze.

"Sign here," urged Briggs.

The girl, making up her mind, signed her name bodily. Briggs snatched it up and peered at it, then from his pocket he produced a cheque for five thousand dollars.

"Are you quite satisfied, Miss Knight?" asked Thorpe.

"I suppose so," gloomily answered Sandra, staring at the cheque.

"Good-day, Miss Knight. Good-day, ladies," Briggs clutched at his companion's arm.

"Good day, Miss Knight," Thorpe cried.

The two men hastened to the door, almost falling over themselves to get out. They clattered down the wooden steps of the veranda and ran to their car. They piled themselves inside and slammed the door. Speedily they drove away.

"Well, that's that," murmured Sandra. "Guess I'm sorry to leave."

Meanwhile, Gene was leading the posse a fine dance. He could make the ranch before the pursuit, but he wanted

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a few minutes clear, so he headed towards a valley, with the cattlemen like a pack of ravaging wolves in close pursuit. In the valley was a big fence that separated his ranch from the Knight property, and it was very high. Gene jumped that fence like a bird, but it was too high for the cattlemen. The young foreman was over the hill and out of sight by the time the cursing Tracey had managed to open the gate.

The four girls was just finishing their packing when they heard the clutter of hoofs. Unceremoniously the door was burst open.

"Did you sell?" yelled Gene.

"Why, of course," cried Sandra, and held up the cheque. "Why aren't you in prison?"

"Because I had to get out to stop you selling your very valuable ranch for about a hundredth part of what it's worth." Gene snatched the cheque from her hands. "Was that Briggs and Thorpe that just left here?"

"Yes," cried Sandra. "But—" "I've got to stop 'em before they get to the county seat!" cried Gene. "See you later."

"I like that young man," Silly said as they watched him ride away and saw him leap a fence like a swallow. "He's a go-getter."

"But why did he steal that cheque?" cried Sandra.

"I don't think he did steal it," opined Jane. "And I don't believe Gene shot Morgan. Most of the boys I met at the dance had a big opinion of Gene."

"In my opinion he's a straight-shooter," said Silly, brandishing the rifle. "I'd like anybody to say different."

"Maybe his fat friend Frog's on the level," hopefully murmured Peggy, who had a soft spot for that yodelling Romeo. "And one thing I am sure about is that I don't like Briggs or Thorpe."

"Oh, girls," wailed Sandra. "I think we've misjudged Gene. I wish—" she broke off as a posse of cattlemen appeared. "Oh, I wonder what they want."

"Have you seen Antry?" demanded Tracey.

"No!" the girls shouted in unison. "He's been around here. We know —" Tracey jerked up as he saw the rifle.

"You get to blazes outa here!" ordered Silly.

"We've seen him," a cattleman shouted. "Come on, men!"

The whole posse vanished among the hills. A minute later the sheriff appeared on the scene, and the girls learnt with horror that the cattlemen were out to lynch Gene.

In the Nick of Time

BRIGGS and Thorpe had gone some distance when they heard the sound of shooting, and looked round apprehensively.

"They're after us!" cried the cowardly Thorpe.

"No, you sap. They're after Gene," retorted Briggs. "I wonder how he got free?"

"Stop wondering and step on the gas," shrieked Thorpe. "They may be after Gene, but he's after us. Get going!"

Gene Antry outdistanced his pursuers, but he could not hope to overtake the car, but the twists and turns of the trail enabled him to take short cuts. A water splash helped him considerably, so that as the overheated car chugged into town Gene was not more than two hundred yards behind, and his noble horse was showing no signs of flagging.

Gene was holding his rope in his hands.

Briggs had to slow down and stop the engine by the town hall, and the seconds used were valuable to Gene. The cowboy reined in his horse as Briggs and Thorpe, side by side, ran towards the main entrance. A rope snaked through the air, and it landed over their heads. Steel-like hands drew the rope taut, and as Champion moved forward at his master's orders the two rogues were jerked off their feet.

"Like a flash Gene was out of the saddle and, holding the rope taut, stepped towards his prostrate prisoners. In Briggs' hand was the deed that Sandra had signed.

"Gunme that!" raged Gene, and wrenched it away.

"That's mine!" screamed Briggs.

Gene's only answer was to tear the document into small pieces.

Tracey and the cattlemen came clattering into town. By now they had ridden off a great deal of their fanatical rage. Moreover, they sensed that there was something mysterious about the whole affair that needed explaining, and when they saw Gene standing over two roped men they just drew rein and waited for some sort of explanation.

A roar and another car was on the scene. Out piled the sheriff, his deputy and Frog.

The cattlemen began to close in and Gene, a contemptuous grin on his face, made no attempt to escape.

"You want me for shooting Morgan," he said clearly. "Well, I didn't shoot him."

"And he's right, men!" The sheriff raised his hands for attention. "One of my deputies rode out to report that the hospital have rung through to say that Morgan's conscious and better. Morgan says he saw who shot him. It was Thorpe."

Those fiery cattlemen felt very small at the injustice they had done.

Tracey got down from his horse, and with head bowed stepped forward, then he looked shamefaced at the foreman.

"I'm right sorry, Gene."

"That's all right, Tracey." Gene took the outstretched hand. "I'd go a long way myself to keep this country from being ruined by sheep."

When Briggs and Thorpe had been locked up in the strongest room the sheriff could find Gene and Frog rode back to the Poker Ranch. There was a lot of explaining that had to be done.

At any rate, the girls did not go East by the next train. In fact, they all moved down to the Knight Ranch, where the cowboys gave them a rousing reception. In the evening there was a kind of celebration party, and afterwards Frog and Gene and the girls did some singing.

"When it's Springtime in the Rockies I'm coming back to you.

Little sweetheart of the mountains

With you bonny eyes of blue.

Once again I'll say I love you

While the birds sing all the day."

Sang Gene with his eyes turned to Sandra, who was blushing and laughing.

"When it's Springtime in the Rockies, Oh, in the Rockies far away."

Frog and the cowboys bellowed the chorus. Peggy whispered in his ear that she could hear the sound of wedding bells.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Gene Antry, Smiley Burnette and Polly Rowles.)

The formula of an invention calculated to revolutionise modern warfare—that was the secret which cost one man his life and involved others in a network of deadly intrigue.

A smashing serial-drama packed with thrills, starring Grant Withers



"Radio Patrol"

Read This First

Pat O'Hara and Sam Maloney, Los Angeles radio cops, are summoned to the Wellington Steel Works, where John Adams is demonstrating a metal which he has invented and which is known as flexible steel.

The police have received an anonymous warning stating that an attempt is to be made on the life of Adams, with whose small son Pinky the two radio patrolmen are acquainted.

The warning proves genuine, for before Pat O'Hara and Maloney can reach the steel works Adams is murdered, and the formula of his invention disappears mysteriously.

A man named Selkirk is arrested on suspicion, and in the course of an investigation Pat O'Hara becomes friendly with Selkirk's sister Molly, who persuades him her brother is innocent.

Later, though admitting he took the formula, Selkirk declares that he did so to prevent it falling into the hands of Adams' murderer. He adds that in his opinion the culprit may be one of two men—Harrison, head of a steel company which rivals the Wellington Plant—or Tahata, agent of an Asiatic government—and he requests permission to visit the scene of the crime and test a theory he has evolved.

Selkirk is shot dead ere he can put that theory to the test, and later the Adams' formula comes into the possession of his sister Molly, who is accompanied by Pat O'Hara to the city dump, where Pinky is at present living.

It is Molly's intention to hand over the formula to Pinky, but she and Pat are set upon by Harrison and two of the latter's accomplices, and Pat, knocked senseless, falls in the shadow

of a boiler-engine that suddenly explodes owing to an excess of steam-pressure.

Now Read On

Flight

WITH the echoes of the explosion ringing in their ears, Pinky Adams and Molly Selkirk wheeled round and saw the prostrate figure of Pat O'Hara lying motionless near the wrecked boiler-engine. At the same time they beheld the two men known as Dorgan and Clegg running down the road in their own direction, obviously intent on making good their escape with Harrison.

Dorgan and Clegg passed Molly and her youthful companion without paying any heed to them, and they came up with Harrison as the latter was talking urgently to the cab-driver who had brought Pat O'Hara and Molly to the scene.

It was clear that Harrison was endeavouring to persuade the taximan to drive him away from the city dump. But Dorgan and Clegg apparently reminded the steel magnate that there was no need to rely on the cab as a means of transport, for they led him to a commodious shed higher up the road and presently the three of them were issuing from that shed in a powerful car that had been concealed there.

As for Pinky and Molly, they were torn between their concern for

O'Hara and a desire to follow the crooks, and they were still hovering on the road in an uncertain fashion when they perceived a sleek grey form pursuing the departing automobile.

It was the form of Pinky's wolf-hound Irish, recovered from the blow which Dorgan had dealt him earlier on, and, overtaking the car before it could gather speed, the dog leapt on to a luggage-carrier at the back of the vehicle and managed to gain a foothold there.

He was still crouching on that carrier when the auto swung out of sight, and, exchanging a significant glance, Pinky and Molly lost no time in making for the huddled body of Pat and examining the plain-clothes officer to discover the extent of his injuries.

There was an ugly bruise on his head where the blackjack wielded by Dorgan had struck him. Yet so far as Pinky Adams and Molly Selkirk could tell he was otherwise unhurt, and when he recovered consciousness some ten minutes later he corroborated their impression that the explosion had caused him no harm, for when they asked him how he felt he complained of nothing but a violent headache.

To his two friends it seemed miraculous that he had come off unscathed so far as the bursting of the boiler-engine was concerned. But the truth was, it was lucky for him that he had been lying senseless on the ground when the blast had occurred, for the flying fragments of metal that had been hurled far and wide had passed high above his prostrate figure.

Owing to the throbbing in his head, however, it was some little time ere he could collect his wits and remember all that had taken place. Then, as he recalled the events which had preceded

EPISODE 10—

"A Bargain With Death"

the stunning blow he had received, he struggled to his feet and spoke to Molly Selkirk in a terse voice.

"The formula!" he panted. "Did Harrison get away with it?"

"Yes," the girl answered heavily, "he got away with it—he and the two men who were with him. They made off in a roadster."

"But Irish is on the luggage-carrier of that roadster," Pinky Adams struck in, "and from what I know of him he'll stick there till those crooks get to their destination—wherever that may be. You see, Pat, one of those men hit him with a life-preserver before you and Molly showed up, and though he's usually docile enough, Irish never forgets or forgives anybody that ill-treats him. He'll probably go for the guy that struck him as soon as the car stops."

"If he does, he's liable to get himself laid out for keeps," Pat murmured, whereupon an anxious expression dawned on Pinky's features.

"Gee, Pat, you're right!" the lad faltered. "I—I hadn't thought of that. Pat, what are we gonna do? If anything happened to Irish I'd never get over it."

Pat clapped a hand on the boy's shoulder.

"You and Molly give me the details of that roadster," he said, "and I'll call up police headquarters on the nearest 'phone and have 'em broadcast a description to all patrols. Then maybe those crooks will be picked up before Irish can come to any harm."

Neither Pinky nor Molly could give him many particulars regarding the car in which Harrison and his confederates had made their getaway. But Pat figured that the presence of a dog on its luggage-carrier would render that vehicle noticeable, and he was soon in communication with headquarters, using the telephone installed in the office of old man Crockett the junk merchant, for that worthy had not locked up his premises when he had left the dump some time previously.

Pat having made his report to headquarters, Molly informed him that now she had seen where the orphaned Pinky was living she felt that the boy ought to be in more congenial surroundings, and suggested that he should make his home with her for the time being. And though he had been happy enough at the dump, Pinky was persuaded to accept Molly's hospitality when Pat supported the girl's proposal, so that presently the three of them were walking down the road to the ramshackle abode the lad had hitherto occupied.

Here the boy packed his most prized belongings into a small case. Then, in company with Pat and Molly, he made his way to the taxicab which had fetched the girl and the police officer from town.

The driver looked at them askance as they approached. He was probably somewhat ashamed at failing to lend a hand in the fight that had taken place, for Pat had made no secret of the fact that he was a plain-clothes police-officer when he had engaged the fellow's services. However, Pat did not reproach the man for his chicken-heartedness, merely giving him Molly's address and telling him to drive there as fast as he could.

Half an hour afterwards the former radio cop was bidding "good-bye" to Molly and Pinky outside the city apartment house in which the girl's flat was located. Then he instructed the taximan to convey him to police headquarters, and on arriving there he paid

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off the cab-driver and hurried to the wireless-room.

He found Sam Maloney there, and after an exchange of greetings Sam referred to those agents of Tahata who had been so neatly tricked when they had attempted to shadow Pat and Molly.

"I led 'em right to headquarters, Pat," he said, "an' it was only when they moved past that they realised you an' Molly Selkirk weren't in the police car any longer. They accelerated like blazes then, an' the last I saw of 'em they were headed east."

Pat looked at him ruefully.

"Yeah, we got rid of Tahata's mob all right," he muttered. "But a lot of good it did Molly and me. You've heard what happened down at the dump, of course?"

"Sure," Sam rejoined, "and I've been waitin' here in the hopes of hearin' that Harrison an' the guys with him have been picked up."

He glanced at an officer who was seated at a short-wave radio set. It was this officer's duty to relay instructions to patrols and to deal with all incoming reports, and about twenty minutes after Pat O'Hara had joined Sam Maloney the man at the wireless set received a message relating to Pinky Adams' wolfhound, which Pat had described in detail when he had telephoned headquarters from the city dump.

It was a message to the effect that a patrol had found the dog wandering in a distressed condition along an out-of-town highway known as the Coldwater Road, and there being no trace of the auto on whose luggage-carrier it had been riding, the animal had been taken to a veterinary surgeon living on the outskirts of the city.

The address of that surgeon was given in the report, and not long afterwards Pat O'Hara and his comrade Sam Maloney were driving thither.

Sure enough, the dog that had been left there in the veterinary surgeon's care was Irish, and on Pat and Sam identifying the wolfhound the medical man told them that an examination had revealed abrasions on the animal's body which were undoubtedly due to heavy and brutal kicks. The creature now seemed to have recovered from its ill-treatment, however, and the surgeon offered no objection when Pat suggested that he and Sam should take charge of Irish.

When the two police officers had returned to their car with the animal, Pat instructed Sam to drive out to the Coldwater Road, and then, on reaching that highway, he ordered his friend to bring the automobile to a standstill.

The moment Sam had done so, Pat opened the door nearest to him and turned Irish loose, whereupon his colleague looked at him blankly.

"What's the idea, pardner?" he queried.

Pat was climbing out of the car, and he glanced smilingly at Sam as the latter encroached after him.

"Pinky claims that this pooch of his has more intelligence than a lot of human beings, Sam," he declared, "and this is where we test the truth of that statement."

The other's rubicund face betrayed perplexity.

"How come?"

"Well," Pat replied, "Irish was laid out down at the dump by a clout over the head, and from what Pinky told me he certainly didn't get any kicks there."

"Go on."

"That indicates to me," Pat continued, "that Irish stuck with Harrison

and those other rats until they came to their destination—and got the kicks then. As soon as those crooks' car stopped he probably tried to tackle the man who had crowned him earlier on, and no doubt he was booted out of it for his pains.

"And now," he added, "we're going to give Irish the opportunity of leading us to the spot where those skunks went to cover, see?"

While he had been speaking the wolfhound had moved a little way from the police auto, and presently it paused and looked back at the car and the two plain-clothes men who were standing beside it. Then it padded forward again for a few yards, stopped once more to throw another glance in the direction of Pat and Sam, and finally resumed its progress along the road.

It was clear that Irish was inviting them to accompany him, and Pat gripped Sam by the lapels of the coat exultantly.

"It seems like Pinky Adams was right about his dog's intelligence," he said. "That wolfhound is asking us to follow him, or I'm a Dutchman. Come on, buddy, get in behind that wheel and we'll drive after him slowly."

The Spy

A TELEPHONE was ringing insistently in the office once tenanted by the president of the Harrison Iron and Steel Works. It was not the telephone which W. H. Harrison had been accustomed to use in the normal course of business, but an auxiliary instrument attached to a private wire.

Harrison's sanctum was vacant at the moment. But next door to the apartment was the laboratory occupied by Stevens, the company president's chief research chemist and right-hand man, and before very long Stevens came through from the laboratory to answer the call.

Mechanically he picked up the receiver of the 'phone whose bell was ringing, and as mechanically he spoke into the mouthpiece.

"Hallo?" he queried.

A man's voice reached his ear, a voice that he had no difficulty in identifying.

"I want to talk to Stevens."

The research chemist's eyes dilated.

"Harrison!" he blurted. "Say, I was beginning to wonder if the police had caught up with you. Yes, yes, this is Stevens speaking. Where are you, anyway?"

"At my shooting-box in the hills," came the reply. "I'm up here with Clegg and Dorgan. And listen, Stevens, I've got the formula—the Adams formula. I grabbed it from the Selkirk girl."

The scientist drew in his breath.

"You've got the Adams formula?" he reiterated. "Well, that's fine, Harrison. But you're not kidding yourself that your shooting-box is a safe hide-out, are you? Why, the police are bound to check up eventually on all the property you own, and they'll send a—"

Harrison cut in on him.

"I know, I know!" he snapped. "But I'm not staying here any longer than I can help. I intend to head for the border at the earliest possible moment."

There was a pause, and then the president of the Harrison Steel Company went on speaking.

"You'd better pull out with me, Stevens," he said. "But before you leave the office I want you to get hold of some negotiable bonds belonging to

me. They're in the safe there, and you know the combination of that safe."

"Yes, Harrison," Stevens answered huskily. "I know the combination."

"Then get busy. You'll find the bonds in a satchel. Bring them out here as soon as possible."

"Sure, Harrison. I won't waste any time. Let's see, that shooting-box of yours is in Diablo Canyon, isn't it?"

"That's right," Stevens' employer answered, "and your best route is via the Coldwater Road. I'll expect you within the hour."

Stevens hung up, and, as he did so, a man who had been listening at the door of the office tip-toed across an outer room and made a stealthy exit. He was a man who held an unimportant post in the Harrison Steel Works, but who was actually in the pay of Tahata—a man who had been detailed to keep the Asiatic informed regarding any developments at the premises of that concern—and, after quitting the vantage point from which he had heard the conversation of the unsuspecting Stevens, he left the company's offices and repaired to a public 'phone booth not far from the site they occupied.

Fifteen seconds after he had entered that call-box he was in communication with the Oriental to whom he was secretly allied, and, in his private suite at the Hotel Cairo, Tahata listened to his agent's report with earnest attention. Then, having received that report, the Asiatic crossed to the door of a room that adjoined the one in which he had answered his hiring's 'phone call.

Zutta, his secretary, was in that room, and Tahata spoke to him tersely.

"Is Franklyn in the hotel?" he demanded.

"Yes, master. I believe he is."

"Then bring him to me at once," Tahata instructed.

Zutta hurried off to do his bidding, and returned in a little while with that individual who seemed to be a complete slave to Tahata's will.

The Eastern diplomat stepped towards Franklyn as the latter appeared in company with Zutta, and his penetrating eyes searched the expressionless, trance-like face of the man whom his secretary had fetched into his presence.

"Franklyn," he said, "you failed me in your allotted task of keeping a watch on Molly Selkirk. Nevertheless, I have it on the authority of another of my agents that we need no longer concern ourselves with the Selkirk girl, because the Adams formula, which means so much to me, has changed hands."

Franklyn's features remained impassive, but Zutta craned forward with a look of eager inquiry on his swarthy countenance.

"The formula has changed hands, master?" he echoed. "Then who possesses it now?"

Tahata responded to the question without removing his gaze from Franklyn.

"Harrison possesses it now," he announced deliberately. "Harrison, president of the Steel Company that bears his name—Harrison, whom the police are seeking to arrest on a charge of attempted murder."

Zutta moistened his lips.

"Then if we can find out where Harrison is before the police can get to him—"

He was interrupted by the other Asiatic.

"I know where Harrison is, Zutta," Tahata declared, still focusing his attention on Franklyn. "My informant overheard a conversation between our friend Harrison and his chief research chemist, Stevens. In the course of that conversation it came out that Harrison was hiding in a shooting-box that he owns

up in the hills. Stevens is to join him there with some negotiable bonds. Those bonds, I may add, are of no interest to me. The point is, Harrison apparently told Stevens that he had secured the Adams formula."

He paused, and then addressed himself to Franklyn.

"Harrison's shooting-box is situated in a ravine known as Diablo Canyon," he observed. "My informant could not tell me precisely where Diablo Canyon is, and I am not familiar with the hill-country myself. But it seems that the Coldwater Road passes close to the spot in question, and it will be your duty to see that some of my men are sent to that road for the purpose of trailing Stevens, who is known to several of them by sight. As for yourself, you will travel there separately and see that no mistakes are made. I want that formula—do you understand?"

Franklyn bowed his head submissively.

"Your commands will be obeyed," he rejoined, and, turning on his heel, he strode from the room.

The Hide-out

BACK at the office where, unbeknown to him, his telephone conversation with his chief had been overheard by a furtive cavedropper, Stevens was kneeling before a safe which he had opened and was searching for the bonds that Harrison had mentioned.

He located them. As Harrison had said, they were reposing in a satchel, and, after satisfying himself as to the contents of that satchel, Stevens thrust the leather receptacle under his arm and hurried from the office.

A minute or two later he was driving through the city's streets in a small car that he possessed, but, though he travelled at a rapid pace where traffic conditions allowed, it took him fully half an hour to gain the outskirts of town and pick up the Coldwater Road.

It was as he opened up along this highway that a big tonner swung out of a side-road and proceeded to follow him. That tonner was occupied by a group of men in the employ of Tahata, but, since the individual in control of it was careful not to press after Stevens too closely, the research chemist failed to apprehend that he was being trailed, and pushed on for mile after mile without suspecting that circumstance.

He had left the city far behind him when, turning a bend, he espied a closed car ahead of him. It was moving very slowly, and ordinarily Stevens would have paid little attention to it, but as he was overtaking it he noticed that a sleek, silver-grey wolfhound was trotting in front of it, and, struck by the oddness of this, he glanced curiously at the inmates of the saloon car in passing by.

Next instant he was cranking his foot hard down on the accelerator. For the occupants of that slow-moving automobile were Pat O'Hara and Sam Maloney, and, although the latter was a stranger to Stevens, the research chemist had seen the other police officer during a visit Pat had once paid to the Harrison Steel Works.

Neither Pat nor Sam showed any interest in Stevens as he came abreast of them and forged past them, for they were too intent on keeping track of Irish to observe other users of the road. They were equally oblivious, too, of the open touring-car which swept by them shortly after Stevens had disappeared round a curve about a couple of hundred yards farther along the highway.

Not much more than a stone's throw beyond that curve, Stevens braked sharply and turned on to a secondary road which branched off through a country of rolling hills, and only a few minutes afterwards he was driving into a ravine where a timbered hunting-lodge was situated.

It was the shooting-box owned by



Pat gripped Sam by the lapels of the coat exultantly. "It seems like Pinky Adams was right about his dog's intelligence," he said. "That wolfhound is asking us to follow him, or I'm a Dutchman."

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Harrison... and, drawing up in front of it with a screeching of brakes, Stevens scrambled out of his automobile and ran to the door of the dwelling.

The door was opened from within even as he was approaching it, and Harrison, Clegg and Dorgan appeared on the threshold.

"You didn't waste any time getting here, Stevens," Harrison said to the chemist, in a tone of satisfaction.

Stevens' responso was delivered in breathless accents.

"No," he panted, "and it's just as well. Back on the Coldwater Road I passed that guy O'Hara. He was in a car with a feller that I imagine to be another police officer. They were tailing a dog—a wolfhound—and they may be headed this way."

Consternation had dawned on the faces of Harrison, Dorgan and Clegg.

"A wolfhound!" the first-named ejaculated. "I'll say they're headed this way! That brute got aboard the roadster that brought us here, and attacked Dorgan as soon as we stepped out. We booted it down the road, and thought no more about it. But I'd have brained the cur if I'd ever imagined it would bring the police here!"

Stevens pursed his lips.

"It's too late now to talk about what you should have done," he jerked. "We've got to get out of here, Harrison, and we've got to get out quick. I've left the engine of my car running, and the bonds are in a satchel on the back seat."

"We won't use your car, Stevens," Harrison answered tensely. "The roadster is parked in the garage at the side of the lodge, and we'll make our getaway in it, because it's a whole lot faster than your outfit. Look, you pick up those bonds and put this formula in the satchel with 'em. Clegg, you hurry round and get the roadster started up."

Clegg darted off to obey his command. Meanwhile, Harrison had withdrawn a folded document from his pocket and handed it to Stevens. It was the vital formula that had cost John Adams his life—the formula for the manufacture of flexible steel—and on receiving it Stevens sped to his auto to collect the satchel containing the bonds and to place the precious document in that receptacle before joining Clegg at the garage.

As for Harrison, he took Dorgan by the arm and ducked back into the interior of the hunting-lodge with him.

"We're going to make this trip fully armed," the steel magnate said. "If O'Hara and that other officer try to chase us, we'll fight it out with 'em."

There was no lack of guns and ammunition in the shooting-box, and in less than a minute Harrison and Dorgan were re-emerging from the dwelling, their pockets stuffed with cartridges, firearms in their hands. And as they sallied forth they saw Clegg driving the roadster from the garage—saw Stevens hastening towards that auto from his own car, with the satchel containing the bonds and the formula held tightly under one arm.

Stevens piled in beside Clegg. By that time Harrison and Dorgan were starting for the roadster as well. But they were never destined to reach it, for all at once a big tourer raked into view and swung between them and their objective.

It was the tourer occupied by Tahata's agents, and, every one of them grasping a revolver, they blundered out of the vehicle to prevent Harrison's escape.

"No yuh don't!" one of them said to the steel magnate. "Stand where you

are; an' pass over that formula. We know you've got it!"

Harrison glanced in the direction of the roadster. It had come to a halt only a yard or two clear of the garage, and Clegg and Stevens were gaping anxiously towards their employer and Dorgan and the group of newcomers. Then all at once Harrison made a desperate attempt to dodge past Tahata's underlings, and Dorgan followed suit.

That concerted bid to gain the roadster sealed the doom of the two of them, for there was a blatter of gun-play, and, each recoiling as a leaden slug ripped through his body, Dorgan and Harrison slumped to the ground—the former dying instantaneously, his chief uttering a long, drawn-out moan before the life went out of him like the dwindling flame of a spent candle.

Over in the roadster, Clegg was spurred into frantic activity by the dual murder he and Stevens had witnessed, and, with the awe-stricken scientist cowering at his side, he worked clutch-pedal, gear-lever and accelerator to send the car roaring on to the canyon road, where he swung sharp to the right and drove for the far end of the ravine.

Tahata's men made no attempt to challenge the flight of Clegg and Stevens. Their business was concerned with Harrison—or at least they believed it was, not knowing that the formula had changed hands. It was only when they had searched the steel magnate's body, and Dorgan's as well, that they guessed the paper which they were seeking was in the departing roadster.

"Those birds in that two-seater must have the formula!" one of the murderous ruffians shouted then. "Come on, you guys, let's get after 'em!"

They packed into the tourer, and it was soon on the move. Yet even as it was storming away in pursuit of the vehicle that held Clegg and Stevens, another automobile entered the canyon—the automobile containing Pat O'Hara and Sam Maloney.

Irish was still trotting ahead of the police car, but at sight of the two crumpled bodies lying in front of the hunting-lodge Sam thrust his foot on the accelerator and put on a spurt that carried the auto past the wolfhound, and the plain-clothes' men had reached the scene of the murder and were stooping over the victim when Pinky's dog came up.

"Neither Harrison nor this fellow with him will ever talk, Sam," Pat said grimly, as he straightened from a cursory examination of the bodies. "But somebody is going to."

He glanced down the canyon trail, on which tourer and roadster were still in view. Then, gathering Irish in his arms, he climbed back into the police car, summoning his comrade to the steering-wheel at the same time.

"After those other outfits, Sam!" he rapped out. "And step on it!"

In another moment the police car was pulling away from the hunting-lodge, and, though the trail through the ravine was scarred with ruts and pot-holes, Sam drove the automobile along it in head-long style. Nevertheless, the pace set by Clegg and equalled by the man at the wheel of the tourer was no less furious, and the police car did not gain an inch until all at once the vehicle in which Tahata's men were travelling executed a sudden swerve that carried it off the road.

Almost simultaneously the echoes of a sharp report came up the ravine and reached the ears of Sam Maloney and Pat O'Hara, and an instant afterwards the latter observed that one of the tourer's rear tyres had become flat.

"Those fellows are ditched, Sam,"

he ejaculated, "and unless they scatter we'll grab every mother's son of 'em."

The rogues did not scatter. True, they observed the approach of Pat and Sam, but, seeing the two detectives for the first time, they mistook them for ordinary civilians, and one of the gangsters uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"We're in luck's way!" he jerked. "Here's a coupla guys in a fast-lookin' car, an' we're gonna take that car away from 'em so we can chase after the fellers in the roadster. Keep your gats outa sight, boys, an' leave the rest to me."

The speaker set his companions an example by thrusting his revolver into his pocket. Then he moved out into the middle of the trail and waved to Sam and Pat, appealing to them to stop and never dreaming that they had every intention of pulling up in any ease.

Sam brought his car to a halt within a yard or two of the gangster, who then came round to the side of the machine.

"I'd like to borrow your sedan, friend," the crook told Sam. "Me and my buddies are plain-clothes officers, and we're after the birds in that roadster. They're wanted for murder."

Sam looked at the ruffian narrowly, then fired a question at him.

"You got your detective's badge with you?" he asked.

"Now listen, pardner," the other retorted urgently, "this is no time for formalities. Can't you see the men in that roadster are getting away from us?"

The impostor's accomplices were closing in, but on resorting to violence if the inmates of the sedan proved unwilling to surrender the automobile to them. But ere the discussion could proceed further, Sam and Pat plucked out their Service revolvers and covered them.

"Plain-clothes officers, eh?" Pat said to their spokesman. "Feller, you've tried out a bluff on the wrong parties, for my pal and I happen to be plain-clothes officers ourselves, and I reckon none of you rats ever saw the inside of a police station unless it was from the wrong side of a cell door."

The crooks had recoiled, and it was in a thoroughly discomfited fashion that they now raised their hands, that sign of surrender being accelerated as the two detectives motioned upwards with the barrels of their guns. Then Pat addressed himself to his comrade.

"I want you and Irish to stay here and keep these men company, Sam," he announced. "I'm going to see if I can run that other car down."

Sam alighted from the police auto, and, after thrusting Irish out after him, Pat took up a position behind the steering column and drove off down the road in the hope of overtaking the vehicle which the tourer had been following.

It was still in sight, but had cleared the canyon, and, pursuing it determinedly, Pat saw it swing right at a fork about a quarter of a mile beyond the ravine.

That circumstance convinced him that the fugitives in the roadster were none too familiar with the trails in that section of the countryside. He himself happened to know that the route which they had now taken was a mere loopway that joined up with the other branch a mile or two farther on after executing a somewhat lengthy detour.

Coming to the fork, Pat turned left along the more direct course and

blazed along it in a smother of dust until he gained that point where the trails met again, and here he lodged his car across the road so as to block it completely. Then he descended from the police automobile and posted himself on the blind side of it.

A couple of minutes later the machine occupied by Clegg and Stevens stormed into view round a bend in the loopway, and as he found that the road ahead of him was barred, Clegg involuntarily stamped his foot on the brake.

It seemed, indeed, that he had no alternative but to draw up, for if the hill-trails themselves were of a crude and uneven surface, the ground on either side of them was far rougher in character, and in many places was nothing but treacherous morass even in times of drought.

Yet all of a sudden Clegg elected to take the chance of swerving aside and making a circuit that would fetch him beyond the obstructing car if fortune favoured him.

Removing his foot from the brake, he veered off the road, and next second he and Stevens were being thrown against each other as the two-seater rocked wildly over the broken terrain. But Clegg managed to keep the auto on its four wheels, and succeeded in rounding the police car safely, though he could not attain any speed in doing so, and at one stage came near to hemming the vehicle in a patch of swamp.

He picked up the road again about fifty yards past the police car. In the meantime, however, Pat O'Hara was sprinting along the trail as fast as his legs would carry him, and even as Clegg regained that trail and started to accelerate the plain-clothes officer hounded on to the running-board.

"Pull up!" he roared at Clegg, and with the words he levelled his revolver threateningly in an attempt to overawe the fellow.

He reckoned without Stevens—Stevens, who knocked up his hand and aimed a savage blow at him. It was a blow that must have hurled Pat from the running-board had it connected, but somehow he warded it off, and then, tumbling in upon the research chemist, he grappled with him furiously.

He lost possession of his six-shooter in that brief struggle, the gun falling to the floor of the car, which was rapidly gathering speed. But he had soon dealt with Stevens, a short-arm jolt to the point of the chin scattering the scientist's wits so that the man slumped down in a heap.

In another instant Pat was lunging towards Clegg, but even as he was in the act of tackling that worthy the roadster swept round a sharp curve in the trail, and all at once the driver of the vehicle and the police-officer who was about to come to grips with him realised that both of them—and the unconscious Stevens as well—were on the verge of disaster.

Immediately beyond the bend the ground fell steeply away from the right-hand side of the trail into a deep gulch, while on the left-hand side of the trail a rock-strewn acclivity rose abruptly to a height of several hundred feet. And, close to the bend, some miniature landslide had cast a number of great boulders on to the terrace-like roadway—boulders that loomed now in the very path of the onrushing car!

(To be continued in another smashing episode next week. A New Universal picture, distributed throughout the United Kingdom and Eire by General Film Distributors, Limited, starring Grant Withers.)

"WEST OF SHANGHAI"

(Continued from page 12)

"What can I do?" shrugged Fang. "Captain Nui have all soldier. If say no, we all get fix mos' dang quick!"

Unnoticed by the others, and ignored by the soldiers, Lola had entered the room in time to hear what Cheng had said. She darted forward, and she cried out:

"General, it was Creed who bribed this man to start the revolt!"

Creed gave her a murderous look that betrayed his guilt more plainly than words, and Fang said:

"So Mr. Cleed start this trouble?"

"Why not?" gritted Creed. "You were going to hold me for ransom."

Captain Nui waxed impatient.

"Don't talk so much!" he rapped in his native tongue. "Are you going to turn this man over to me?"

Fang turned to Jim.

"I am sorry, my friend," he said.

"In little while you die. But I not let you die alone. I come watch."

"Thanks," returned Jim grimly.

"That'll be a big help."

"I am Fang!"

CAPTAIN NUI issued instructions, and two of the soldiers marched Jim out from the room while the others remained near the door. Nui himself went out, and Creed was about to follow when Fang caught hold of his arm.

"One moment, please, Mr. Cleed," he said. "I like make conference. Ve'y private."

Special Announcement

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Your pencils are waiting. This week gift token No. 6 appears and readers who started collecting tokens from No. 1 will be able to complete their Gift Vouchers which together with cash remittance should be sent in immediately. Do not delay. All pencils will be sent out in strict rotation and if you want yours quickly you must apply AT ONCE.

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Cobb's Court, Broadway,
London, E.C.4.

He led the American across the hall into a small room, and Cheng silently followed. The door was closed, and Fang seated himself in a chair and looked up into his betrayer's face.

"No hard feelings, I hope?" said Creed uneasily.

"Hard feelings?"

"Why, yes—er—I hope you're not angry at me. You see, you sort of had me on the spot, and—er—well, I had to do a little double-crossing."

"Double—" Fang stumbled over the word. "What that mean, Mr. Cheng?"

"To double-cross a friend," expounded Cheng, "is to betray him, Excellency."

"Oh! How you get Captain Nui double-cross me?"

"Well, you can do almost anything with money." Creed achieved a mirthless little laugh. "You know that, general."

"Wisdom fall from your lips," nodded Fang. "You know, maybe, Captain Nui ask life of Mr. Hallet?"

"I'm sorry for Hallet?" shrugged Creed, "but that's his look-out. And besides, he's in love with my wife."

"You love your woman?"

"Well," hedged Creed, "he'll never get her, will he? Let's get back to business, general. You know, you and I could make a much better deal than the one I made with Captain Nui."

"You mean we double-cross him, too?" inquired Fang.

"Why not? You're in this racket to make money, aren't you?"

Fang sat back in his chair. "You ve'y smart man, Mr. Cleed," he said. "I give you mos' bes' deal anybody. You go leave here now, and it not cost no money."

"What's the catch?" Creed asked suspiciously.

"Is no catch," was the quiet reply. "Is easy. I just go kill you."

Cheng drew his gun, and Creed tried to conceal his fear with a very wry grin.

"You must be joking, general," he said.

"Do I look like joker?" demanded Fang. "Do Mr. Cheng look like joker?"

Creed drew a long and quivering breath.

"General, what would you gain by doing this?" he asked.

"Alive you no good," Fang replied.

"Dead you ve'y good—make two people happy."

"You mean you want to kill me so that my wife can marry Hallet?"

"Is best way, I think."

"Well, if that's what's worrying you, general, I can arrange it. I'll give her a divorce. He can have her."

Fang's brows ascended.

"Have seen man not fight for his money," he said. "Have seen man not fight for his life. Not before have seen man not fight for his woman."

"Whenever you're ready, Excellency," said Cheng.

"But, general, if—if it's money you want," stuttered Creed, "why, I—I'll give you plenty of money. Anything that you want."

"It not that I no want money," returned Fang. "Is that I no want you." He took out his own gun and levelled it. "I do this myself, Mr. Cheng."

"Well, at least fight fair!" cried Creed hoarsely. "You—you both have guns. Give me a chance!"

"But if I give you gun you maybe shoot me," said Fang. "You think I am dang fool?"

Creed made a frantic dash for the door, but Fang's gun blazed and he reeled sideways and thudded to the floor.

There he lay for some little time after the two had gone out from the room; but he was not dead, and Chan found him there, with a wound in his left shoulder, and fetched brandy and raised him up and held a glass of the spirit to his lips.

Chan was still ministering to him when Fang walked out from the building with Cheng. Jane and Lola and Galt and Abernathy were standing by a creper-covered screen between the courtyard and the garden, and Jane called out imploringly:

"General!"

"Please, Miss Jane!" rebuked Cheng. But Fang walked over to her, and she said with tears in her voice:

"You're not going to let them do this to him? There must be something you can do to save him!"

"It makes me ve'y sad," Fang assured her.

"If it's money you want," cried Lola, "I'll make my father give you every dollar he has!"

Cheng caught hold of the girl's wrist in a grip that hurt; the doctor put a restraining hand upon her shoulder; but Fang looked at her in a move kindly way than he had ever done before.

"Oh!" he said slowly. "So you love my friend Jim, too? Two women love him. Must be ve'y good man!"

He walked past the group and past the screen into the garden, and Cheng followed him. Jim was standing with his back to a wall, faced by a firing-squad, and Captain Nui was standing beside the firing-squad.

"Very good-looking boy, eh?" he said evilly in his own language. "Be sure to shoot straight. Attention!"

Cheng remained motionless just behind the repulsive little officer. Fang walked over to Jim.

"You feel all right?" he asked.

"What do you think?" Jim retorted.

"I t'ink, my friend, you not lose face." Fang produced a silver cigarette-case from his pocket and opened it. "Cigarette?"

"You want to make it a good show, eh?" said Jim bitterly. "With all the trimmings."

"Is velly good cigarette." Fang took one from the case and put it between his own lips, then took a lighter from his pocket. "Look! I kill two man get this. It make fire." He tried to ignite the lighter, but failed. "Some time! Son-o-ma-gum!" He tried again, and this time the lighter flared. "Ah! Is velly nice."

He lit the cigarette, puffed at it, and put away the lighter.

"You want dlink?"

"No, thanks."

"Me, I want dlink when I die. Gambei! You all leady now?"

"I'm ready," gritted Jim.

"Me, I am leady, too." Fang, with the lighted cigarette in one hand and the case in the other, turned about and went to Captain Nui—and at the same moment Cheng drew his gun from its holster.

"He is ready," Fang said in Kalmuk. Nui roared orders, and the members of the firing-squad loaded their rifles and held them to their shoulders.

"Fire!"

Five rifles and one six-gun spat flame and bullets simultaneously; but the rifle bullets went over the wall—and Captain Nui fell forward on his face with the bullet from the six-gun in his left lung.

Cheng put away his smoking weapon and took command of the firing-squad and of the other soldiers in the garden, ordering them all to attention. Fang went back to Jim, who was wiping his forehead with his hand.

"You feel all right?" he asked.

April 2nd, 1938.

"I have felt worse," Jim replied rather shakily.

"You t'ink I let you die? Huh!"

"I don't know yet how you put it over."

"Is easy." Fang struck an attitude. "I am Fang!"

At that moment the quiet of the garden was shattered by the din of gunfire all round the village, and one of Fang's men came flying past the side of the Mission to announce breathlessly that General Mu's soldiers were at the gates.

"All men to gate!" cried Fang. "General Mu at gate of town with soldier."

Cheng repeated the command in Kalmuk and in Ningpo, and the soldiers ran off in disorder to defend the gates and to fire at the enemy from the tower and from the wall. Fang, with the lighted cigarette still in his hand, said wryly to Jim:

"Your servant cook plenty trouble for me, but is all light. I am Fang!"

The Last Toast

GENERAL MU and his forces had encircled the village before advancing to attack, but the defenders had the advantage till machine-guns were brought into play. From the high wall they fired down at the Government troops, and they worked havoc with the extended ranks of horsemen.

A dozen of Mu's men were wounded to every rebel that was shot and fell from the wall, and the attackers fell back to make room for the machine-guns. The top of the high wall thereupon became a place on which no man could live, and scores of Fang's men who elambered ladders pitched from them immediately they showed themselves.

The gates were attacked, but the gates held till a tree hastily cut down was used as a battering-ram, and even then there were many casualties before Mu's men fought their way into the narrow street, only to encounter barricade after barricade, and every barricade a veritable hornets' nest.

Out of the street into the marketplace the invaders progressed by slow degrees, and Fang and Cheng fell back before them with the remnant of Fang's "army" to the gateway of the Mission. There another barricade of crates and boxes and broken stalls was built with feverish haste, and from be-

hind it the doomed "army" blazed away at the inevitable victors.

Jim, meanwhile, had returned to the hall of the Mission with Jane and Lola and Galt and Abernathy, all of them—with the possible exception of Galt—rejoicing at his escape from what had seemed to be certain death. Lola immediately went off to her room; Galt, frightened almost out of his wits by the battle that was raging in the village, sought refuge in a cellar. The doctor disappeared to look after his patients, and Jim and Jane were left together.

They were about to follow the doctor when Chan ran out from the room in which he had been attending to Creed, crying:

"Mr. Creed ve'y bad hurt! He tell me to ask you come quick!"

Jim went straight to the room and found Creed lying back in a chair, coatless and with his collar and shirt unfastened. His eyes were closed, and the left shoulder of his shirt was stained with blood that was still wet.

Jane, who had rushed to get a first-aid outfit, appeared a few moments afterwards, and she was opening the case upon a table when Creed opened his eyes and suddenly rose to his feet.

"Chan said you were hurt!" she exclaimed, shrinking away from him as he advanced towards her.

"Yes," said Creed, "I was watching the fighting from the yard and a—stray bullet hit me."

"What is it, a flesh wound?" asked Jim.

"Seems to be. It knocked me out for a few minutes."

The sound of many shots reached their ears. The defenders out in the courtyard were suffering badly.

"Is enough, I t'ink," Fang said to Cheng. "We go in Mission."

Jane nerved herself to step nearer to the husband she loathed.

"Hold still, will you?" she said, and took from the first-aid case a pair of scissors with which to cut away the shirt over the wound.

Creed glared at her with bloodshot eyes, and Jim was filled with misgiving. "Take it easy, Creed," he said gruffly.

"You don't care whether I'm living or dead!" snarled Creed. "It's him you love!"

"Gordon!" screamed Jane, and she dropped the scissors and sprang in front of Jim as Creed whipped an ugly automatic from his hip-pocket and levelled it.

"You listen to me!" he roared. "I stopped a bullet on account o' you, Hallet. Well, now you're gonna stop one. And we'll call it an accident!"

Fang looked in at the open doorway, and a gun was in his hand.

"How many times I got kill you, Mr. Creed?" he asked disgustedly, and his gun jetted flame.

Creed collapsed with a bullet in his heart, and the automatic fell as he fell.

"General!" cried Jim in a horrified voice.

"Is my mistake," said Fang quietly. "Should let Mr. Cheng fix him first time."

Into the hall burst a soldier from the courtyard, dripping blood from a wound in his leg.

"General!" he blurted in Kalmuk. "General Mu's soldiers are in the gate."

Fang looked dolefully at Cheng, who was standing beside him.

"Is too bad," he lamented. "Soldier are beaten—am caught in trap."

"We won't let 'em take you alive, Excellency!" howled the faithful captain. "We'll barricade the house!"

(Continued on page 28)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WEST OF SHANGHAI"—*Wu Yen Fang, Boris Karloff; Jane Creed, Beverly Roberts; Gordon Creed, Ricardo Cortez; Jim Hallet, Gordon Oliver; Lola Galt, Sheila Bromley; General Chou Fu Shan, Vladimir Sokoloff; Dr. Abernathy, Gordon Hart; Mr. Cheng, Richard Loo; Myron Galt, Douglas Wood; Captain Nui, Chester Gan; Henry Hemingway, Selmer Jackson; Pao, James B. Leong; General Mu, Tetsu Komai; Conductor, Maurice Lui; Hua Mei, Mia Ichioaka; Chan, Luke Chan.*

"SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES"—*Gene Autry, Himself; Frog Millhouse, Smiley Burnette; Sandra Knight, Polly Rowles; Silly Sylvia Parker, Ula Love; Peggy Snow, Ruth Bacon; Jane Hilton, Jane Hunt; Morgan, George Chesboro; Briggs, Alan Bridge; Tracy, Tom London; Thorpe, Edward Hearn; Bub, William Hole; Sheriff, Edmund Cobb; Harris, Fred Burns.*



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"WEST OF SHANGHAI"
(Continued from page 26)

"Is too late." Fang raised a restraining hand. "Guns smash house, kill my friend. No, no. Tell General Mu Fang is finish."

"Excellency!"
"I let you die with me." Fang offered his gun by its barrel. "What more you want?"

Cheng bowed his head.
"I shall do as you say, Excellency," he murmured, and he took the gun and went out from the hall.

"General Mu will execute you!" exclaimed Jim.

"Yes, my friend," nodded Fang quite calmly, "with ve'y great pleasure."

General Mu was in possession of the village, and there was joy amongst its native inhabitants. Most of the survivors of Fang's "army" were shot out of hand, but Cheng was in custody when the general himself arrived at the Mission—and so was Fang.

Cheng was denied the privilege of dying with his leader. At a very informal sort of court-martial, held in the living-room, it was decided by General Mu that he should be taken to Ting Fou, where there was a prison.

Fang's fate was exactly what he had expected. He was taken out into the garden to face a firing squad from the wall against which Jim had stood some hours earlier. Jim asked for permission to be present, and permission was granted. General Mu went with him.

"Are you ready, Wu Yen Fang?" asked the general gruffly, and in English.

"One moment, please." Fang beckoned to Jim, and Jim went miserably over to him. "He's too big lully. You feel all light?"

"No, general, I don't," Jim replied. "It's my fault all this is happening to you."

"Not your fault." Fang shook his head. "Is fortune of war."

"I'd give my right arm if I could help you like you helped me!"

"I tink maybe you need light arm." Fang fished out his cigarette-case. "Is more best you keep, eh?" He opened the case. "Cigarette?"

"Thanks." Jim hadn't the heart to reject a cigarette, though he did not feel in the least like smoking.

"Souvenir you, my friend." The cigarette-case was pressed into his hand after Fang had helped himself, and Fang took out the lighter.

"Nice fire machine," he said, without a tremor in his voice, and tried to ignite it. "Not so good." He tried again. "Ah, ve'y nice!"

The lighter flamed, and with it he lit first Jim's cigarette and then his own.

"For you, too," he said, and Jim accepted the lighter. "You dlink my health, huh?"

Jim looked at General Mu, and General Mu spoke to an orderly. Two glasses of wine were brought out from the Mission on a tray by Chan, and Fang handed one to Jim and took one for himself.

"Happy journey, general," said Jim in a voice that choked.

"Gambel!" toasted Fang.

They drank the wine, and they threw the glasses upon the ground so that they were smashed to pieces.

"Are you ready, Wu Yen Fang?" General Mu asked again, and this time Fang nodded.

A junior officer rapped orders. The firing squad became divided into two ranks of five men, and the men in the front rank knelt. The rifles were loaded, the men took aim—and Fang blew a smoke ring from his lips just as a volley rang out and he became riddled with bullets.

General Mu walked back with Jim to the hall of the Mission, and in the hall Jane and Lola were in tears, and the doctor and Galt were trying to comfort them.

"So sorry," said the general to Abernathy, "but it is necessary for all foreign women to leave as soon as possible."

"Very well, general," Abernathy responded. "These ladies are leaving in the morning."

"It is better so," said Mu.

Next morning, not long after sunrise, a mule train set out from Sha Ho Shan across the desert in the direction of Ting Fou; and one of General Mu's soldiers led the way on horseback, and behind him rode Myron Galt with his daughter, and behind them Jim rode beside Jane.

(By permission of First National Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Boris Karloff, with Beverly Roberts, Ricardo Cortez and Gordon Oliver.)

The News Reels

(Continued from page 2)

otherwise it felt quite natural; except for the fact that the stretching of the eyelids to make them almond-shaped caused a pressure on the eyeball by the lower lid and the pressure distorted his vision. As a matter of fact, during the first two or three days Karloff got the reputation of being "high hat."

He could see a visitor to the set or in the café or out on the lot, but the visual distortion was sufficient to blur and change the facial outlines. As a result, many persons he knows were not greeted with that smile of recognition most people in pictures expect from a star before they speak to him.

His assistant was the still photographer attached to the unit, a man named Bert Sixe. The camera expert was always on hand with the company, and knowing most of Karloff's friends by sight, he informed the actor when one approached.

Finally, word spread about the reason why the star failed to recognise friends, in the hope that any who hadn't been told in person would hear about it and understand. The reason Karloff took so much trouble wasn't on his own account, but because he dislikes to hurt anyone's feelings.

Casting Bureau for Horses

Actors and actresses are not the only ones in Hollywood who find film jobs through casting bureaus. Horses have a casting bureau of their own.

The equine employment agency is operated at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios by Fred Gilman, horse casting director. At a few hours' notice he can supply any breed or kind of horse demanded for film work.

Gilman's biggest job was to supply the hundreds of horses for "The Girl of the Golden West," which has a California setting of 1850.

A white saddle horse was required for Jeanette MacDonald, but she supplied her own mount, White Lady. Leo Carrillo also rides his own spirited pinto, Suisun. All other horses had to be rented.

Aside from established stables, horses are also rented from racing stables, farmers, riding clubs and Society debutantes.

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L. Jackson

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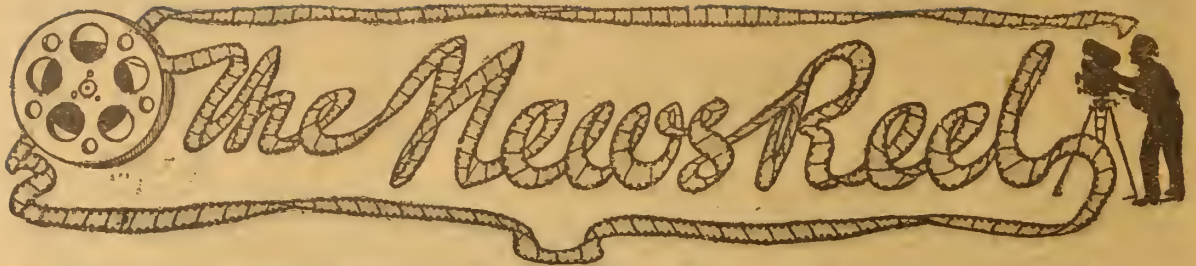
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The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 150, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Directors' "Shock Absorbers"

In law schools they tell of a great lawyer who had a habit of fingering a certain coat button while speaking. One day a young opponent surreptitiously snipped the button off. The famous man missed it when he arose to address the jury, became flustered, made a fool of himself, and lost the case.

Hollywood is full of important "props" like that, and an old observer sometimes wonders what would happen if one suddenly turned up missing in a tense moment.

There is, for instance, Fritz Lang's monoco. The precise Austrian producer-director of Paramount's "You And Me," starring Sylvia Sydney and George Raft, has never been seen without it. During a scene he screws it into one eye or holds it in his hand, nervously polishing the glass with his thumb.

"It's a shock absorber," he explains. "Some men use chewing gum, others cigars or cigarettes to absorb nervous tension. I use my monoco."

Ernst Lubitsch and Henry Hathaway belong to the cigar school. Lubitsch always has one in his mouth during a "take," and can roll it from one cheek to the other, without using his hands. Hathaway, now directing "Spawn Of The North," employs a cigar as a conductor does a baton, agitating it violently to call forth a crescendo emotion from his players, or moving it delicately to the pianissimo of a love scene.

Cecil B. DeMille always has a pocket full of foreign gold coins, and holds one in his hand as he watches his actors do a scene. It is said that by watching the coin you can tell what he thinks of the acting. If he strokes it like a "feeling piece" of Chinese jade, he is satisfied; if he keeps rotating it, he thinks the scene is terrible.

James Hogan chews gum or matches. Wesley Ruggles keeps thumbing through the pages of his script, and on more than one occasion has ruined a "take" by making too much noise flopping the pages.

Mitchell Leisen lights one cigarette right after another, Robert Florey hugs his pipe bowl, Theodore Reed always has a pencil in his hand, and Frank Lloyd plunges his hands deep into his pockets and stands there with clenched fists.

Cowboys of Texas are Dudes of Range, Buck Jones States

Speaking as one tenderfoot to another, did you ever know that cowpunchers can spot which part of the country another cowboy comes from just by his "git-up"—the cut of his range garb and the way he wears the various items?

For instance, a Texas cowboy wears a different shaped ten-gallon headpiece than a California cowboy, and dents or rolls it differently.

Buck Jones, top flight Western star of the screen, for years a real range cowboy is the authority—and a good August 26th, 1938.

one—for this revelation on the significance of cowboy dudes.

Adding to this interesting Western lore, the screen star stated that the cowboys of Wyoming, Texas, Idaho, Colorado, and California all wear their bluejean levis or overalls turned up at different lengths. The Texas cowboy rolls his the highest. Buck attributes this to the fact that the Panhandle cowpoke is notoriously swank and dandish about his apparel.

"They usually go in for the most expensive hand-tooled boots, and wanting to show them off they turn their levis

up higher than any other American cowpuncher," explained Buck.

From hat to boots the apparel of the cowboy varies with the traditions of the range he comes from, Buck averred. The California cowman even knots and wears his neckerchief at a different angle than any other. As to hats—some turn the brims of their hats full down in front as in Colorado—some wear the brim up saucer-fashion all around, and others, as among California range men, affect the brim rolled to a hard point in the front.

Chaparros or chaps worn by all cowboys on round-ups or on dress parade are different in each cattle-raising sector. Some like them long and flaring. Others wear them short and rather skimpy. In California the style trends toward plain tanned and tooled leather chaps. Again, the Texas cowman goes opposite. He likes the shaggy, sheepskin variety.

NEXT WEEK'S THREE COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



WILLIAM HALL

—IN—

"THE SPY RING"

Two young army officers are working on a new type of machine-gun for anti-aircraft warfare, when one of them is murdered. The other vows to get the spies that are after the invention and thus avenge his friend's death. A stirring drama of death and espionage

"NIGHT SPOT"

A young singer becomes involved in trouble when she works for a night club in which two members of the band are in reality police officers who believe that the club is the headquarters of a dangerous gang of crooks. A real thriller, starring Allan Lane and Joan Woodbury

"TEXAS TRAIL"

During the Spanish-American war, Roosevelt's Rough Riders are short of horses, and Hopalong Cassidy is detailed to round up a bunch of wild broncs, but a renegade does his utmost to stop the round-up. A grand yarn, starring William Boyd

Also

Another episode of the grand serial:

"THE PAINTED STALLION"

Starring Ray Corrigan

It Wasn't In The Script, But—

Experienced motion picture directors are quick to capitalise on incidents occurring during production which add to story development.

Many of them watch the progress of a picture, planning inclusion of scenes which are not in the script, but which are suggested by gags between players "ad-libbing," or by the nature of the story. They are "on top" of their picture all the time, watching carefully for production aids.

During the filming of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Test Pilot," Victor Fleming glimpsed some off-stage foolery by Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy. The script called for a scene in a lingerie shop with the two stars purchasing a night-gown for Myrna Loy. It was rehearsed as written. Following rehearsal, Gable held the night-gown up against Tracy, saying, "Let's try it for size." The immediate burst of laughter from the entire company at sight of Tracy's face caused Fleming to include the scene in the picture. It won one of the biggest laughs at the preview showing.

In the same picture, Fleming capitalised on an aviation superstition, planning a bit of business which was not in the script, but which carried a tremendous wallop in front of an audience. Every time Gable took off for some dangerous flight, Tracy would stick chewing gum on the fuselage of his plane. The gum-sticking business was carefully built up to the climatic scene where Tracy goes up for his first test. In his excitement he throws the gum on the ground. The audience grasped the significance of the gesture, were justified in their gasps when the plane crashed and Tracy was killed.

Director H. C. Potter was watching a publicity man pose James Stewart for pictures peeling potatoes. Stewart, in army uniform, looked so natural peeling potatoes that Potter included the scene in "Shopworn Angel."

(Continued on page 25)

Having paid for the education and legal training of his brother, Bruce, with the idea that he shall become a lawyer, Frederick Garth, a racketeer posing as a big business man, is dismayed to find that Bruce has become a G-Man instead—and consequently a danger to himself. An action-packed drama, starring Don Terry with Jacqueline Wells and Robert Paige



"White-collar" Rackets

A HIGH-POWERED limousine drew up at the kerb in Eighth Avenue, New York City, opposite the tall Sherman Building, and a liveried chauffeur got down from it to open the door for his employer, Frederick Garth, who got out on to the pavement with some papers in his hand.

"Be here at twelve sharp, Jackson," said Fred, a very tall and very broad-shouldered man who was still on the right side of thirty, and whose clean-shaven face suggested strength of character, either for good or for bad. "I want to go to the printing plant."

"Yes, sir," nodded the chauffeur; and Fred crossed the pavement into the building, ignoring an impudent newsboy who tried to sell him a morning paper, and was swept up to the twenty-fourth floor in the cage of an elevator.

Twelve rooms on that floor were rented by him, but the one he entered was a general office, labelled on the frosted panel of its door, "Garth Investment Service."

A fair-haired man at a desk looked up to greet him.

"Good-morning, Morton," returned Fred, and he held out the papers. "Rush these air-mail."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you been able to locate Jennings?"

"He's waiting in your office," was the reply, "with Mr. Phillips."

Fred crossed to a door that bore the word, "Private," upon its long glass panel, and stepped into his own well-appointed room; whereupon Albert Jennings, a thick-lipped and bushy-browed

fellow, slid off the edge of a very substantial desk and said rather nervously: "Hallo, boss—how are you?"

Frederick Garth's right fist smashed into his jaw and sent him sprawling upon his back, and then Fred turned to the other occupant of the room, long-nosed and lean of face, whose name was Clifford Phillips, but who was known as "Clip."

"How was that," he inquired, "any better?"

"Fair," returned Clip critically, "but you're still a little slow with that right cross."

"It's these new shoes," said Fred. "My foot slipped."

"Maybe you ought to cover the floor with canvas," suggested Clip, "and put a resin-box in the corner."

Fred looked down at Jennings, who was still on the carpet, holding his jaw.

"All right," he said curtly, "get up! On your way—report to Jonesy."

Jennings scrambled to his feet, his brown eyes wide with astonishment.

"You—you mean I'm not fired?" he stammered.

"Not yet," replied Fred. "I just wanted you to have a sample of what you'll get the next time you try holding out on any collections."

Jennings made for the door and disappeared.

"The cheap chiseller!" exploded Clip.

"Yeah," Fred delivered a right cross that was quite perfect—and Clip went down with a thud practically where Jennings had fallen before him.

"What's the big idea?" he howled, sitting up and rubbing his chin.

"That was for letting Jennings get away with his chiselling."

Clip rose to his feet.

"Some day you're going to bounce one o' those off a guy that will lut back," he said, his voice comparatively mild, but his eyes blazing.

"Yeah?" drawled Fred. "I never get the best out of a man until he knows who's boss. If I'd handed you that one a month ago you'd have caught Jennings before I did. Come on, let's make the rounds."

He hung his hat on a peg, and they went out across the corridor into a room where a girl was busy at a switchboard, and out of that room into a very large one full of desks and the confused sound of many voices. At every desk a man was seated, and every man was either talking into a telephone or waiting for a number.

Fred, with Clip Phillips at his elbow, went from desk to desk. One of his "enterprises" consisted of bookmaking on a large scale, and the men were dealing with bets.

"That long shot, Chicago, is getting a heavy play," a man with the curious nickname of "Numbers" glanced up to say. "One o' those tipsheet hunches."

"Lay it off," said Fred.

At another desk he glanced over an employee's shoulder at a sheet less than half-filled with names and figures.

"What's the matter with Kansas City?" he asked.

"It's just before harvest there," was the reply. "In about two weeks they'll be coming through good."

"They ought to do better than that!"

Get Rocky on the wire and jack him up."

From the room devoted to book-making Fred proceeded to one in which various "white-collar" rackets (to use an expression of his own) were conducted. Men in that room were appealing, by telephone, for contributions to funds which existed mainly for his own benefit. He paused beside the desk of a venerable looking old fellow who had a telephone to his ear, a pencil in his hand, and a sheet of names, addresses, and telephone numbers in front of him, and this is what he heard:

"Hallo, Mr. Sanderson? This is Professor Atterbury. Perhaps you are unfamiliar with my name, but I know you are in sympathy with my cause. Two very dear friends of yours suggested I call you—Dr. Prescott, and the Reverend Mark Morgan. They are very enthusiastic supporters of a charity I'm heading; the 'World Association for International Peace.' They were certain you would welcome the opportunity of joining them as contributors to our fund. Dr. Prescott contributed fifty dollars, and— Oh, thank you, Mr. Sanderson. One hundred? Thank you, Mr. Sanderson."

"Nice work, professor," said Fred, and moved on to another desk at which an ugly fellow, who looked like a prize-fighter, was saying:

"Hallo, Jorgy, dis is Kid Lacey. You heard about Batl'n' Johnny Grogan? He took de long count, last night, yeah. Dey found him in a flop-house as stiff as a mackerel, widout a dime in his pocket. I been tryin' to get enough together to bury de guy, and I still gotta raise fifty bucks. What say? Dat's swell! I'll send a kid right over to pick it up."

"Business good this morning?" questioned Fred, as the ex-boxer put down the telephone to make an entry on a sheet of paper.

"Oh, swell," Kid Lacey declared. "I raised enough already to bury every pork-and-beaner between here and Frisco!"

"Well, keep punching."

On the other side of the room, Fred listened for a while to the soft voice of a military-looking man who hailed from Virginia and was known as the "Colonel." He was coaxing people into promising contributions towards the erecting of a memorial in a far-away town which never would be built.

In the next room to be visited, Fred called three men away from their desks to a tall window.

"Have you got the new lay-out?" he said to Clip Phillips, who joined him there.

"I'll get it."

Clip disappeared, presently to return with a number of folders.

"You men can quit raising that defence fund," said Fred. "I've got a new racket for you."

"What is it?" inquired one of the three.

"The Society for Keeping America American." Hand out the lists, Clip."

The three received a folder apiece, and Fred took another and opened it.

"Opposite these names," he said, "you'll find each man's pet peeve listed. That's what you'll hammer on. Take, for instance, Robert Amerson here, anti-anarchist. Tell him the society is for the purpose of driving the anarchists out of America."

He ran a finger down a list.

"Here's another one—Louis Prentice, tax evasion. Tell him it's for the purpose of checking up on tax dodgers."

He laughed as he fastened on another name.

"William Corbett, pet peeve—August 29th, 1938.

racketeers. Tell him it's for the purpose of wiping out men like us! D'you get it, boys?"

The "boys" assured him that they had got it. One of them declared that it ought to be worth fifty thousand dollars.

"Okay," said Fred, "go to it! Clip, you'd better stay here and check up on the first few calls. Make sure they have the right idea. See you later."

He gave Clip back the folder he had used, and he walked off into yet another room. The men in it were of a commoner type than those he had just entrusted with the new racket, but they were quite well dressed.

"Finish up your 'phone calls," he said, addressing them collectively from the doorway. "I've something I want to tell you."

Possibly, in order to impress his employer, one of them—a thin and melancholy-looking man, very aptly known as "Shifty"—lingered at his desk to finish a conversation he had begun.

"And, Marty, these tickets are so good that even the promoter would think they was real! You can get any price you ask, because the fight's a sell-out. Yeah, one buck a ticket, but you've gotta take a hundred. Okay, I'll send 'em over—"

"Come on!" cried Fred impatiently. "Come on, make it snappy!"

Seven men gathered round him at one of the desks.

"I've just gone over the month's report," he informed them, "and you fellows are below your quota."

"Business is bad this time o' the year," protested Shifty.

"Yeah?" Fred motioned to an assistant who had just entered with a big parcel to place it on the desk. "Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Portland are all doing all right. Even the Boston crew is ahead of you. Now, listen, we've got a printing plant as near perfect as money can make it. We're turning out the highest grade of 'trini' paper in the country. You men have the best territory, and what do you bring me? Excuses!"

He eyed them in turn.

"Well, I'm sick of excuses!" he barked. "I want action, and I'm going to get it, or you'll find yourselves out in the sticks!"

He pointed to the parcel which the assistant had opened.

"Now, here's your quota for the next thirty days, and you'd better see that it's all moved. Five thousand tickets to the police benefit, and they're so good you can sell 'em to the cops! Four thousand dupe theatre tickets, and two thousand Gasoline Company credit cards."

"The service stations are checking up on those phoney credit cards," complained one of the seven.

"This is a new company," returned Fred. "The railroad and the street car passes, as well as the cigar coupons, will stay the same as last month." He produced a little book in paper covers from his coat-pocket. "Look at that!"

Seven pairs of eyes stared at the book.

"Lottery tickets?" suggested Shifty.

"Yeah, tickets for the Irish Sweepstake—and they're so good you could put them beside the real article and couldn't tell the difference! Do you realise that over seven million dollars went out of this country to Ireland for the last sweep? It's a crime! I want these books in every pool-room, cigar-stand, and beer-joint from New York to San Diego, from Seattle to Key West. And I want you to sell more in this city than any two other cities put

together. Happy will give you the rates. That's all."

He was on his way out from the room when a smartly dressed young fellow intercepted him.

"Say, Mr. Gath. I've been looking all over for you. Can I see you alone for a minute?"

"Well, come on, make it snappy."

Fred led the way into a small and untenanted room.

"I want to talk to you about that programme for the Society Hospital Benefit," said the young man, who went by the name of "Dressy" amongst the rest of the staff. "Here's the sample I'm going to show Mrs. Graham—I thought you might like to take a look at it first."

Fred sat down at a desk with a dummy programme, its blank pages marked off with prices for advertisements of different sizes.

"These what you told her we'd charge for space?" he asked.

"That's the lay-out," Dressy replied. "One hundred dollars for a full page, seventy-five for a half, fifty a quarter, and thirty-five for an eighth."

"That ought to satisfy her," commented Fred. "And what do we really charge?"

"Here, it's right here." Dressy produced another dummy programme, marked with very different prices.

"Five hundred dollars a full page, three-seventy-five a half, two-fifty for a quarter, and a hundred and seventy-five an eighth."

"That will do."

"These Society dames are harder to see than the President," declared Dressy, "but when I told her we'd solicit all the advertising and print the programme at cost—"

Clip Phillips entered the room just as a telephone-bell rang.

"Answer that!" said Fred.

It was Morton on the telephone, calling from the general office. Fred rose and went to the instrument, whereupon Dressy whispered to Clip:

"Why does he play around with these chicken-feed Society programmes?"

"Aw, he's tryin' to muscle in on the social register!" scoffed Clip. "This stuff gives him an intro—"

"Now, get those rolling," Fred said, putting down the telephone, "and see to it that you sell every sucker on that list you've got!"

"Yeah," added Clip, "or you might get a few teeth knocked down your throat!"

Fred went out from the room into a corridor and along the corridor to the general office.

"What's up?" he questioned Morton.

"A man's in your room," replied the clerk.

"What's he doing in there?"

"I don't know, sir. He brushed past me before I could stop him."

Clip, who had followed Fred, arrived in time to hear that.

"Probably some smart cop, nosing through your papers," he growled. "I always said you oughta have a couple o' guards here."

"Yeah?" Fred was scornful. "I might as well hang a sign on the door telling the world exactly what business I'm in! You come in with me."

Bruce Provides a Shock

VERY little of the invader was visible when Fred opened the door of his room, but it was evident enough that he was sitting in Fred's own chair behind the desk. Apparently he was reading a newspaper, and the newspaper concealed all of him except the two hands that held it.

Fred strode towards the desk, and as

he did so the newspaper was dropped, and his eyes widened at sight of a young fellow of about twenty-three, dark-haired and brown-eyed like himself, but of slighter build, who said smilingly:

"Hallo, Fred!"

"Bruce!" exclaimed Fred delightedly, and he sped round the desk to clap a hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"Bruce! You're a sight for sore eyes!" "You're not so hard to look at yourself!" was the prompt rejoinder, and Fred looked across the desk at Clip.

"Okay," he said. "You can go, Clip—this is my brother."

Clip went, and Bruce Garth deserted the chair he had appropriated, but was immediately pushed down into it again.

"You old son-of-a-gun, where have you been hiding?" demanded Fred affectionately. "No letters—nothing!"

"Oh, I've been pretty busy, Fred!" said Bruce. "And, besides, I wanted to surprise you."

"Well, tell me all about everything," Fred perched on a corner of the desk. "How's Philadelphia?"

"Sleeping peacefully the last time I saw it. Say, you've got quite a place here."

"Like it?"

"I should say I do. I'd no idea there was so much money in the investment business."

"H'mm, that and other things! I own a printing plant, too."

"Well," laughed Bruce, "I've always said there should be one successful man in every family."

"Oh, you haven't seen anything yet! I've got something I've been waiting a long time to show you. Come on!"

They went out into the corridor and entered a room a little way beyond the elevator—a sunny room, attractively furnished, and in every way complete and ready for occupation, except that shelves set in two niches were bare.

"Well, how d'you like it?" asked Fred with a wave of his hand.

"It's fine, Fred," replied Bruce, "but I don't understand—"

"This is your office."

"Mine?"

Astonishment was writ large all over the handsome, clean-shaven face, but the astonishment was mingled with something very like dismay.

"It's been waiting ever since you finished law school," his brother informed him.

"You mean you've had this all the time that—"

"All the time you've been in Philadelphia," Fred completed.

"But, Fred, I—"

"Oh, I didn't mind waiting!" Fred spread his hands. "You'll find everything here but the law books. I didn't know just which ones you'd want, but if you'll make out a list I'll have them here by morning."

"Fred, I don't understand. This is all too—"

"Come here!" Bruce was marched round the desk and pushed into the arm-chair behind it, which had been provided for him. "I've been planning this for a long time, kid. You're going to be my lawyer—handle all my business."

"Just a minute—"

Bruce started to rise.

"Sit down!" said Fred. "I need a lawyer—a smart lawyer—one I know I can trust. And you're it!"

But Bruce shook his head.

"I appreciate it, Fred," he said. "Really I do. But I can't accept it."

"Nonsense!"

"No, wait." Bruce deserted the chair. "I let you put me through school. I let you give me everything I needed, and more. Well, from now on I'm going to stand on my own feet, and

I'm going to pay you back every penny I've cost you. Can't you understand that?"

He held out his hands almost imploringly, but Fred said:

"I understand just one thing. I need you. I've done fairly well. I've built a strong organisation, made some money. Now, with your help, we can really go places. I haven't told you the set-up, because I wanted you to learn every angle of the legal profession. That's why I didn't say anything when you went into Judge Frazer's office. I know you'd learn a lot there. I knew you'd make contacts that would help us both."

Bruce gulped.

"Fred," he said unhappily, "I haven't been in Judge Frazer's office."

"What d'you mean?"

Fred gaped at him.

"I haven't even been in Philadelphia. I've been in Washington, training for a different kind of a job."

From a breast pocket he produced a tiny leather case and opened it. Inside was a metal badge, inscribed "Federal Bureau of Investigation. U.S. Dept of Justice." Frederick Garth's face became almost distorted with horror after one glance at it.

"A G-man?" he gasped.

"That's right," said Bruce.

"You mean you're giving up a legal career to wear a tin badge and work for pennies?"

"You can call it that if you want—"

"What else can I call it?"

"I call it giving up a life of 'afore-saids' and 'whereases' to do something worth while. I've been finding out facts, Fred—facts that the average business man like you never thinks about. This country is overrun with crime. Rackets flourish that make the liquor gangs of Prohibition days look like kids at a Sunday-school picnic."

Fred turned away lest his face should betray him; but his brother went on impressively:

"Right now there are men—if you

can call them men—that are using fake charities as their cloak to swindle millions of dollars yearly from worthy causes. Talk about stealing from children! The men I'm speaking about, the scum, are taking money that ordinarily would go to hospitals and crippled kids, and people that really need it."

Fred mastered his emotions sufficiently to face Bruce again.

"You've been taken in by that sob-stuff, kid," he said gruffly. "The old newspaper scare."

"That's what too many people think," Bruce retorted. "but I happen to know that it's the truth."

"Well, suppose it is?" countered Fred. "There are plenty of other men to play hero. I need you to—"

"Sorry, Fred, but I'd rather be back of this badge than the biggest desk in the biggest law office in this town."

"Okay, kid, if that's the way you feel about it, go ahead." Fred drew a long breath. "Play cops and robbers. Maybe some day you'll come to your senses."

The door of the room was opened, and Bruce put away his badge in haste as a very beautiful girl in a dark frock put her head round it to inquire:

"May I come in?"

"Certainly," welcomed Fred, whose eyes had lit up at sight of her, and she walked into the room, a leather satchel under one arm and a slip of paper in her hand.

"Morty told me I'd find you here," she said, and held out the slip of paper, which was a cheque. "All I want is your autograph, Fred."

Fred took the cheque.

"Marjory," he said, "this is my brother Bruce. Bruce, this is Marjory Drake."

Bruce murmured a "How d'you do?" gazing with undisguised appreciation at beauty.



Frederick Garth's face became almost distorted with horror after one glance at the metal badge. "A G-Man?" he gasped.

"So you're the chap who caused me so much trouble!" she laughed.

"Trouble?" echoed Bruce in bewilderment.

"Yes," she nodded. "I helped Fred choose the furnishings for this office. How do you like it?"

"He doesn't like it at all," said Fred bitterly.

"I didn't say that," protested Bruce.

"I think it's swell."

"But he won't move in," said Fred.

"He prefers to—"

"Get a well-earned rest before he settles down to work," Bruce swiftly completed; and Marjory's hazel eyes were turned reproachfully upon him.

"Do you mean that Fred has had all this trouble for nothing?" she asked.

"I'm afraid so. You see, I'd made other plans, and—well—"

"Keep it dusted, Fred," she broke in brightly. "If my charity work piles up, I'll sub-let it!"

"Oh, do you go in for charity work?" asked Bruce.

"My aunt does," she replied.

"And all the heavy work falls on Marjory's shoulders," Fred added.

"Oh, I really like it!" she declared.

"Speaking of charities, by the by, will you sign that cheque, please? Morton made it out. It covers the money you collected for the hazaar programme."

Fred went to the desk to sign the cheque. Bruce said to Marjory, with a note of real regret in his voice:

"I'm sorry I won't be using this office. It really looks great. You must have worked very hard."

"Oh, think nothing of it!" she returned lightly. "I really enjoyed doing it."

Fred came back from the desk, whereupon Bruce stated that he must be going.

"Is the bazaar to-night?" asked Fred.

"Yes, of course it is," Marjory replied. "And with five thousand last-minute details to attend to, I'm afraid I'd better be running along." She offered her hand to Bruce. "It's been nice meeting you."

"I'll see you to your car," he said, holding the hand as though reluctant to part with it. "Dinner to-night, Fred?"

"It's a date," declared his brother.

"We'll both see you at the bazaar, Marjory."

She put the cheque away in the satchel, and she and Bruce went out together.

Tapped Wires!

THE charity bazaar, organised mainly by Marjory—though her aunt enjoyed all the credit for it—was held in the extensive grounds of the Drake residence at Far Harkaway, on Long Island. The stallkeepers were all members of Society, male and female, but the side-shows were run by show people and had been hired for the occasion.

The grounds were thronged, the stalls and side-shows were besieged by the cream of Long Island society, and Fred and his brother spent nearly half an hour trying to find Marjory before they ran into her—Bruce in a literal sense.

Immaculately arrayed in evening clothes, they were squeezing their way past a stall when she came out from behind it with a pile of boxes of chocolates in her arms that reached right up to her chin and she and Bruce collided.

Down she showered the boxes all over the grass at his feet, and he heard the voice of the girl for whom he and his brother were looking.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she cried.

"Hallo, there!" exclaimed Bruce.

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"We've been looking everywhere for you," said Fred.

"Did you win all these?" inquired Bruce, as he stooped to gather up the boxes.

"Heavens, no!" she laughed. "I'm the hired help around here. They're for the randy booth."

"They should equip you with a wheelbarrow," said Fred.

"Or two strong men," said she pointedly; and the two strong men carried the boxes for her to a covered stall, where one of the girls in charge of it received them gladly.

"And now," said Bruce, "you're elected to be our personal guide for the rest of the evening."

"Oh, I'm sorry, but I can't possibly," Marjory protested. "I've got a hundred and one things to do."

"The other hundred can wait," said Fred.

"Yes," said Bruce, and dared to catch hold of her arm. "Do you come willingly, or must we use force? We're known as the gory Garths where we come from!"

"Well, I seem to be outnumbered," she sighed, as Fred caught hold of her other arm. But the sigh was only a make-believe one, and she was a very willing captive.

They visited the side-shows, and at one of them they threw little hoops at articles ranged on shelves, and she won an alarm clock.

"Say, you must have played this game before!" exclaimed Bruce.

"What do you want with an alarm clock?" inquired Fred.

The clock was left at a stall for sale to anyone who fancied it, and they proceeded to seek amusement elsewhere. Marjory had won a bowl of goldfish by choosing "13" on a sort of roulette board, when another girl came running up to her, crying:

"Marjory, your aunt wants to see you! They're having trouble at the dance-floor ticket booth!"

"Where is she?" asked Marjory.

"On the terrace," was the reply.

"You'll have to excuse me," Marjory informed her captors.

"We will not," said Bruce firmly.

"We'll go with you," said Fred; and they went with her.

On the way back to New York, at a fairly late hour that night, Fred said to his brother:

"So you had a good time, eh?"

"Oh, a grand time!" Bruce declared.

"Do you run around much with that crowd?"

"No," Fred shook his head. "Why?"

"Oh, I was just thinking your investment service and your printing-press business must be mighty profitable to allow you to afford that gang of play-mates."

"If you'd give up that G-man idea and come in with me," said Fred, "we'd both be able to play around with anyone we chose."

"Sorry, Fred, but I'm still not interested."

The high-powered limousine in which they were travelling had covered another couple of miles before either of them spoke again. Then Bruce said rather dreamily:

"Nice girl, that Marjory."

"They don't come any better!" asserted Fred with enthusiasm.

Bruce stayed with his brother that night at his luxurious flat in West Fifty-seventh Street, but next day he acquired a cheaper and less elaborate flat for himself nearly up in the Bronx, and the two brothers met only occasionally during a whole fortnight that followed.

One morning, at the end of that fortnight, Bruce was at the wheel of a small motor-van and was driving slowly up Eighth Avenue when a man who was sitting beside him motioned to him to pull up outside the Sherman building.

The van, according to an inscription on its sides, was the property of the Central Telephone Company, and both Bruce and his companion might well have passed for linesmen; they were wearing leather jackets and dungarees. Both, however, were G-men—and they were on the trail of racketeers.

"Well, what have we here?" asked Bruce, as he ran the van to the kerb and braked.

Theodore Neale, his colleague, a bulky fellow with a fat face and a pair of slightly bulbous blue eyes, picked up a box from between his feet and prepared to alight.

"Well," he said, "we've got a couple o' firms, one using twenty-eight phones and the other sixteen. We can check 'em on the terminals in the basement."

Bruce did not mention the fact that his brother had offices in the building.

"Maybe," he commented, "this is our lucky place."

"You've been sayin' that twenty times a day for two weeks now!" retorted Neale.

"Well, we're bound to be right some time," said Bruce, "if we keep this up long enough."

"Sure," drawled the pessimist, "what's forty or fifty years to a couple o' guys like us?" He descended to the pavement.

"Hi, it's your turn to lug in the equipment. I'll run in and get the janitor to open up."

"Okay."

Theodore Neale disappeared into the building, and just then a limousine drew up behind the van and its chauffeur got down to open the door for Fred, who said to him:

"I'll call you, Jackson, when I want you."

Bruce got out from the van, but he did not reach into it for the box because his brother was staring at him.

Instead, he said calmly:

"Hallo, Fred!"

"What's the gag?" demanded Fred, looking from him to the van and back again. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, part of our work," said Bruce.

"Tell you about it later."

"Why not now?"

"Business before pleasure," Bruce fished out the box. "So-long, Fred."

He left his brother on the pavement and entered the building. From the hall he descended to the basement, where the janitor had unlocked and opened the door of a room which contained the main frame of all the tenants' telephone wires.

Neale was there and took the box, and presently was clipping the wires of a head-phone to various wires on the frame. It was after he had tapped a number of lines that his fat face lit up with satisfaction, and Bruce immediately inquired:

"Got something?"

"S-s-sh!"

Bruce waited in silence for the better part of a minute.

"What is it?" he asked then.

"Somebody eadging a donation for a cancer-cure foundation," Neale replied, and he slipped off the head-phone. "That's funny—the line went dead, just like that." He snapped a finger against a thumb.

Fred had ascended to the twenty-fourth floor by elevator almost as soon as Bruce had reached the basement, and he had summoned all the members of his staff to one of the big rooms.

"No more 'phone calls from here!" he said incisively. "Understand? We're moving! Everybody clean up your papers, each man's responsible for his own desk. You, Eddie, take care of the files. You, Jonesy, clean up the 'triu' paper. Cut those direct-track wires and pull out the inter-office communicators. Naw, get busy, everybody! I want this place emptied in minutes!"

The men hurried off to carry out his instructions; but Clip remained.

"Who got on to us?" he asked.

"Never mind," snapped Fred, and handed him a slip of paper on which addresses were written. "Here's where the new stuff goes. Sob-room boys will go down to Slaver Street. The bookies, Brant Avenue. The 'paper-hangers' will headquarter on Burlington Avenue."

Clip studied the addresses, two of which were in Jersey City, and one in Brooklyn.

"When did you line up these joints?" he questioned curiously.

"Months ago, just in case. Now get going!"

Down at the main frame in the basement Theodore Neale had tapped other lines associated with the twenty-fourth floor, but to no purpose.

"Dead as a door-nail!" he complained. "I'm goin' up there!"

"Wait a minute," said Bruce. "Let me see that list of firms."

Neale handed over a card.

"Twenty-fourth floor, eh?" Bruce bit his lip.

"D'you know them?" asked Neale.

"I know a chap who has an office on the same floor."

"Well, let's get going."

"No," Bruce shook his head. "If the two of us were to go up there it would create suspicion. I'm going up alone to smell around, and maybe I can find out about the others."

"Okay," Neale picked up the telephone. "I'll stay here and check."

Vanished!

ON the twenty-fourth floor, Bruce walked into the general office labelled "Garth Investment Service," and he said to Morton:

"Is Mr. Garth in? I'm his brother."

"Oh, yes, certainly." The fair-haired clerk had not recognised him at first because of his clothes, but he turned immediately to a dictograph.

"Mr. Garth, your brother to see you. Yes, sir." He looked up at Bruce. "Go right in, please."

Bruce entered his brother's room to find Marjory in there, looking very businesslike in a chair at the side of the desk behind which Fred was seated. He would have backed out again, but Marjory greeted him and Fred told him to come in.

"I didn't know you were busy," said Bruce, "or I wouldn't have bothered you."

"We're just about finished."

"Well, don't let me disturb you. I'd take a look round outside."

"No, no!" cried Fred. "No, wait, Bruce! Come on over and talk to us. There you are." He pointed to a chair. "Sit down."

Bruce hesitated, but Marjory assured him that she was leaving almost immediately.

"I only dropped in for a moment," she said. "Is that what the well-dressed idler is wearing this season?"

She was looking at his leather jacket and dungarees.

"Oh, these are my hunting togs," he informed her; and she, having no idea that the words bore a double meaning, laughed at what she took to be a jest.



"That's the kind of evidence we can take to court!" Preston exclaimed. "How many more records have you?"

"Marjory's lined up some more charity programmes for me to print," explained Fred.

"You do quite a lot of that, don't you?" asked Bruce.

"A bit."

"He does more than any other printer in town," declared Marjory. "It's a shame the way he lets people impose on him, particularly me."

"Don't look so guilty," chaffed Fred. "I always charge you for the cost of the materials."

"That's the smallest part of it!" she retorted. "How about the preliminary work—planning the programme, soliciting all the advertising?" She sat bolt upright. "Say, why don't you let me do that for you? On all your charity work?"

"I wouldn't think of it," Fred replied.

"Why not? I'd feel that I was really accomplishing something."

"She's certainly in a position to contact the right people," said Bruce.

"Of course I am!"

Fred said that he would have to think it over.

"Think it over nothing!" Bruce retorted. "You're hired, young lady. Are you still paying rent for that office I turned down, Fred?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"It's yours!" Bruce gave the room to Marjory with a gesture, then grinned at his brother. "Any arguments?"

"Well," began Fred dubiously, "I—"

"It's all settled, then!" Bruce addressed Marjory in the manner of an employer. "Report for work to-morrow morning, and if he doesn't treat you right let me know."

"I will," she promised laughingly.

"He won't be sorry, really."

"Sorry?" scoffed Bruce. "He's tickled to death!"

She rose and gathered up some papers.

"Then we can discuss these to-morrow in my office," she said impishly.

"So now I'll be on my way."

"Well," said Fred, "don't forget that as long as you work for me your time is mine."

"Only eight hours a day," corrected Bruce. "I lay first claim to her evenings."

"I'll fire her!"

"Go ahead—I'll hire her!"

"Gentlemen, please!" cried Marjory. "I love a battle, but I can't stay to watch one. Won't you both come to dinner one evening this week?"

"We'd love to," chirruped Bruce, "only Fred's going to be too busy."

"I'm not going to be busy at all!" averred Fred.

"Then prove it!" she challenged. "Seven o'clock Thursday?"

"Fine!"

"It's a date," Bruce confirmed. "Good-bye, boss." She sailed away to the door, and Bruce went with her to open it. But after she had gone the light manner Fred had adopted deserted him.

"Well, kid, what's on your mind?" he asked almost stiffly.

"Those neighbours of yours down the corridor," said Bruce.

"What neighbours?"

Bruce consulted the card he had taken from Neale.

"The Beauty Weave Hosiery Company, and the Melo Wax Products, Limited. Do you know anything about them?"

Those names were on the doors of several rooms that opened on to the corridors of the floor and were rented by Fred—though not in his own name. But he shook his head.

"No," he said, "I never pay any attention to the other tenants. Why?"

"Oh, just curiosity."

"Do you suspect them of something?"

"I suspect a lot of people, Fred."

"In that case," said Fred dryly, "maybe I'd better watch my step. Some of you smart G-men will come in and want to look at my ledgers here." He pushed a box across the desk. "Have a cigar?"

"No, thanks." Bruce looked at him strangely. "Come to think of it, you would make a good suspect. You have a comparatively new firm, evidently earning a pot of money, and your offices are near definite suspects. Besides that, Fred, the telephone lines we were listening on downstairs went dead a few minutes after you entered the building."

Fred raised his brows.

"You must be running very short on suspects," he said; and then, quite seriously: "Listen, kid, supposing you did find out that I was running a racket. What would you do about it?"

"You know that as well as I do!"

Fred picked up a pen and dropped it again.

"I see," he said, and looked his brother straight in the eyes. "Well, if I ever have to be arrested, I'd just as soon you took the bows for catching me."

"I don't want those sort of bows, Fred," said Bruce gravely. "You're the last guy in the world I'd ever want to pinch. I guess you know that." He looked at his wrist-watch. "Well, I'd better be going, or my partner will be wondering what's happened to me."

"Supposing I pick you up on Thursday evening?" suggested Fred.

"I'll give you a ring," said Bruce. "So long, Fred."

He went out through the general office into the corridor, but instead of crossing the corridor to one of the elevators, he passed along it to the door of the big room in which the professor and others had worked.

Fred was peeping out from his own room as he turned the handle and slipped into the room. According to the sign on the door it was one of the offices of Melo Wax Products, Limited, but it was untenanted, and empty drawers were piled upon deserted desks.

Bruce visited other rooms, but they were all dismantled and unoccupied. He rejoined Theodore Neale in the basement, and about three hours afterwards the motor-van was in a yard off Wall Street, and they were in a room on one of the upper floors of the Treasury Building in that thoroughfare, talking to Robert Preston, the keen-eyed chief of all the G-men who operated from the Department of Justice there.

"Don't tell me they vanished into thin air!" barked Preston.

"We couldn't find a trace of them," lamented Neale.

"But their papers, their equipment, their furniture—"

"They left most of the furniture," Bruce broke in, "but they took a few filing-cabinets down in the freight elevator."

"Then the elevator operator must have seen them."

"He did," said Bruce. "But only as far as the ground floor. They carried the stuff out to the alley at the back of the building themselves."

"And we've checked with all the moving and trucking companies," put in Neale.

"They must have used their own cars," Preston decided. "Could they have heard a sound of any kind when you were tapping their lines?"

"No, sir," Neal was emphatic.

"Then what tipped them off?"

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"Well, I don't know—but maybe they won't be so lucky next time."

"They'd better not be! You keep on with your listening until further orders. They're still at it, and I'm going to get that bunch if we have to tap every 'phone wire in the city!"

On the Trail

FOR the next fortnight, Bruce and Neale spent most of their time in manholes below the pavements of the city, or perched on telephone poles in the city's outskirts. They arrived, one morning, with their van at the base of a huge pole at the corner of Shaver Street, Brooklyn, and Concord Street, and they fastened safety belts round their waists preparatory to climbing.

Neale preceded Bruce, and as he mounted he became vocal:

"So I say to myself, 'Theodore'—I always call me by my maiden name—I says, 'Theodore, are you gonna spend your life in a rat? No! You're gonna be a G-man and live a life of romance and adventure.' So I became a Special Agent, and what happens? I live one half of my life in manholes, and the other half sittin' on top of telephone poles trying to be a woodpecker!"

He looked down at Bruce.

"Here, you can start decoring the Christmas-tree now! I hope you can stand the altitude! We're gonna find out what Mrs. Crossmeyer is orderin' from the butcher!"

He reached a little platform, high up on the pole, and Bruce joined him there. Each was carrying a portable telephone equipment slung over a shoulder.

"Here, you flatten your ears," said Neale, "mine's cauliflowered."

Bruce put on a headphone, a wire was tapped, and suddenly a tense expression appeared on his face.

"What are you lookin' so serious about?" demanded Neale. "Something comin' through?"

Something was coming through the professor's voice was in Bruce's ears.

"Yes, Mr. Macdonald, your old friend Major Duncan suggested I call you in regard to our Foundation to discover a cure for cancer."

"We'd better get down," said Bruce. "This is what we've been looking for—cancer cure racket!"

"Boy," rejoiced Neale, "if I were any place else I'd turn a handspring!" He looked round at the buildings in the vicinity of the pole. "Say, listen, if we could rent a room around here some place I could run a lead into it."

"You get to work," said Bruce. "I'll arrange for the room."

They descended the pole, and it was not very long before Bruce had found a semi-underground room to let at the bottom of an area, associated with a tenement house. He interviewed an agent, and after a somewhat hurried meal he and Neale took possession of the room.

Wires were run from the line that had been tapped down through the area and in at the top of a window, and in the gloom of the room these were connected with an electrical recorder, something like a gramophone in appearance.

All through the rest of the day they listened and recorded till the professor's voice was no longer heard; and next morning they were at it again, the recorder this time attached to another pair of wires.

"How are you doing, fellow?" Neale inquired towards noon.

"They must have collected three thousand dollars or more this morning," Bruce informed him.

"Oh, boy, will Preston be glad to hear that?"

"You said it!"

Late in the afternoon, Bruce set off for the Department of Justice, dressed in his own clothes and carrying a parcel of disc records; and Robert Preston listened to the records through a headphone as they revolved upon an electrical reproducer.

"That's the kind of evidence we can take to court!" he exulted. "How many more records have you?"

"Twenty-three when I left," Bruce replied, "and Neale was still recording."

"You've studied the premises, of course. Is there any particular time of day when all the men are in the place?"

"We caught a telephone call from a man who told them he'd pay them off at nine to-night," said Bruce. "He didn't identify himself, but he sounded like the head man."

"To-night at nine?" Preston removed the headphone and beamed at his informant. "We'll clamp down then! Get back to your hide-out and keep on recording. Call me every hour to make sure there's no slip up. I'll have a raiding party prepared."

Bruce went back to the basement room, but at eight o'clock that night the pangs of hunger assailed him and his colleague, and they repaired to an underground place of refreshment, almost next door, known as Finn's Café.

They had chosen that very modest establishment not merely because it was near, but also as the result of a telephone conversation they had intercepted; and they were at a table with high partitions on either side of it, and had finished their meal, when Fred descended the outside steps with a satchel under his arm and walked up to a long counter behind which the proprietor was serving customers who preferred to perch on stools.

"Hallo, Finn," he said, "has Clip Phillips been around?"

Charlie Finn, a tall and flaxen-haired Swede, shook his head.

"He has no come in to-night yet," he stated.

"Well, when he comes in tell him I'll be in the usual booth."

"All right, Mr. Garth."

Fred made straight for the table next to the one at which Bruce and Neale were sitting—a table in a secluded corner—and he caught sight of them as he was about to pass and stopped short with startled eyes.

"Well, hallo!" he exclaimed.

"Hallo, Fred," returned Bruce, none too pleased at having been discovered.

"What are you doing here?"

"Contracting ptomaine, I think! Meet my partner, Theodore Neale. This is my brother Frederick."

Fred sat down at the table, and he saw that the two had been eating. He came to the conclusion that their presence might be accidental.

"By the way," said Bruce, "what are you doing in a dump like this?"

"Oh, business," Fred replied. "Told a fellow I'd meet him here. How's trouble-shooting?"

"All right. How's Marjory?"

"Fine. She said you'd 'phoned her several times."

"Tell her I'll be around to see her soon."

"I will." Fred returned to the subject his brother seemed to have no desire to discuss. "You getting that trouble all cleared up?"

"A bit."

Clip Phillips had entered the café, and at that moment he reached the table.

"Been waiting long, boss?" he inquired.

"No." Fred got to his feet. "Well, here's my man," he said to Bruce and

his companion, "I have to be on my way. Glad to have met you, Neale."

He and Clip went off together, and on the steps outside the front door of the café Fred handed over the satchel.

"Here's the pay-roll," he said. "Take my car and park it a block beyond the Luster-Glo Building. Stall the men until I get there."

"What's up?" asked Clip.

"Get going—I'll tell you later."

Clip got into the limousine that was standing at the kerb near the corner of Shaver Street, and the limousine shot off round the corner; but Fred went no further than a doorway from which he could keep an eye on Finn's Café.

He had been in the doorway less than two minutes when Bruce looked at his wrist-watch and said to Neale:

"Time we 'phoned in."

"Right," said Neale, and they paid for their meal and sauntered out from the café and along the pavement to the steps that led down to their retreat.

Fred stole after them, and as soon as they had disappeared into the basement room he crept down to the area and flattened himself against a wall under the arch of the steps that led up from the pavement to the front door of the tenement house.

He heard Bruce say into a telephone: "Hallo, Preston? Garth and Neale reporting. Just back from dinner. All set for nine o'clock? Fine! We'll meet you about eight fifty-five. The Luster-Glo Varnish Company."

The Gothic Press

THE Luster-Glo Varnish Company had no real existence. The name figured on a list of tenants attached to a wall in the hall of a fairly big building in Shaver Street, and it was painted on the panels of two doors on the second floor, but behind one door was a small office in which a clerk kept up appearances for the benefit of strangers who really thought they could order

varnish there, and behind the other was the so-called "sob-room," in which the professor and the colonel and all the rest of the men engaged in Fred's charity rackets had continued their activities after leaving Eighth Avenue in a hurry.

By half-past eight Fred was in this second room, and all the men in it were grouped round him.

"Now get this," he said with dramatic abruptness, "the Federal Bureau has got this sob-room spotted! They're going to raid it to-night!"

His words created panic.

"Let's get out of here!" shouted one of the men, and several of them started towards the door.

"Wait a minute!" roared Fred. "Stay here! Listen to me! There'll be plenty of time for you to get out—if you want to!"

Kid Lacey, who had been about to open the door, returned from it to question in astonishment:

"What d'you mean if we want to?"

"Just this," Fred replied. "They chased us out of our other place, now they've located us once more. We could vanish again, but it would be the same story in another month. That's why I want them to find just enough men working here to fool them into thinking that they've wiped out the whole racket. Understand? Those of you who want to stay and take the rap will go on a fifty dollar a day pay-roll, starting right now, and they will stay on that pay-roll until they're either acquitted in court or released from gaol."

The men stared at him and at one another.

"Fifty bucks a day for sitting in clink?" exclaimed Lacey. "Hi, why are you doin' dis?"

"It's my way of doing business."

"I'd do a ten-year stretch in solitary for that kind of dough!" declared one enthusiast.

"Not me!" cried another man. "It'd

make my fourth rap, and you know what that means in this State!"

"When do we get paid off, if we do it?" questioned a third man.

"When you walk out of the court room or the pen," said Fred. "Come on, make up your minds. Those of you who want the fifty a day step over there. The rest of you get to work and clean this place up—get every scrap of paper that might possibly lead to me."

Ten men volunteered to be caught, and to those he said:

"Now remember, the man who owns this place is a short, dark, smooth shaven fellow, fifty years old and named—or—John Hoffman. However many questions they ask, stick to that. You will have the services of a good lawyer, and I'll do everything I possibly can to get you off. That's all, and good luck!"

He turned to Clip.

"Where are the keys of my car?"

"Here." The keys were handed over. "You and the other men had better get out in ten minutes to be on the safe side. I'll see you later."

At five minutes to nine several squad cars drew up outside the building and G-men and uniformed police officers got down from them, all armed, some carrying sub-machine-guns. The front and rear entrances were covered, and Bruce and Neale joined Robert Preston, who led the raiding party up the stairs.

The ten volunteers were arrested at their desks, protesting volubly, and from the rear window of his limousine down the street Fred watched them being bundled into the squad cars.

"Take me to the office, Jackson," he directed.

Two days after the raid, Bruce and Theodore Neale were summoned to Robert Preston's room at the Treasury Building, after enjoying a little well-earned rest.

"I know we haven't brought the 'phone racket to a stop," Preston said to them, "but at least we've slowed it down for a while. Are you two tired of climbing telephone-poles?"



Jennings completed the filling of the middle bag with notes from the safe, while Turk stood on guard with his gun.

"Oh, I'm getting used to it," Neale assured him ironically. "I can't sleep in a bed any more—I'm used to a perch!"

Preston chuckled.

"Well, I'll give you a different assignment for a week or two," he said. "Our fingerprint check-up on the Luster-Glo plant turned up quite a few prints that didn't match those of the men we caught. Washington identified one set as those of Syracuse Charlie Lamb—and Syracuse Charlie was picked up this morning. He was carrying this!"

An opened parcel on Preston's desk was indicated, and a book of Irish Sweepstake tickets was extracted from the parcel and displayed.

"Some of the best fake lottery tickets I've ever seen!" Preston declared, and he held first the cover of the book and then one of the tickets up to the light. "Only the watermark gives them away. Look! One kind of stock for the cover, another for the actual tickets. Now, if you can find out what printing press in this State has purchased both types of paper you may get a lead."

He tossed the book across to Bruce. "You'll have to work fast, though," he went on. "Note the date of the drawing—October 1st. That means the tickets will have to be sold before the 16th of September, and the men behind this swindle will undoubtedly destroy all the evidence after that. They may decide to drop out of sight, once all the money's in their hands, so they must be found in the next ten days. Neale, you get to work on Syracuse Charlie—find out anything you can from him."

"I'm on my way," said Neale; and he rose and went out from the room.

"This looks like a complicated printing job," remarked Bruce, studying one of the tickets.

"It is," confirmed Preston. "You can't do that kind of work on a hand press."

"Probably done in some supposedly respectable plant, eh?"

"Probably. Get some of those samples into the lab. for a check on the stock."

Bruce visited the laboratory on the top floor of the building, where experts examined the paper of the covers and tickets of the sweepstake books, and from the laboratory he went off to interview the manager of Messrs. Rayburn & Fiske, wholesale paper dealers, in Madison Avenue.

The manager, an enormously fat man, turned up records, and finally informed Bruce that only three firms had bought any quantity of the paper on which the covers were printed.

"Here they are," he said, jotting down the names on a slip. "The Colonial Printing Company, Cosmopolitan Engravers, and the Gothic Press."

"The Gothic Press?" Bruce remembered that name. "Thanks very much."

The printing works of the Gothic Press were situated in East Thirty-fourth Street and occupied the whole of the ground floor and basement of an old-fashioned building. While Bruce was on his way to the address in a taxicab, Fred descended from the office on the ground floor to a big room in the basement where compositors were setting up type and two printing machines were in use.

The foreman printer joined him as he went to one of the machines and picked up a proof which had just been pulled.

"It was matching the ink that slowed us up, boss," the foreman said, "but now we can run the rest of 'em off in no time."

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Fred screwed up the wet proof and tossed it into a big wire waste-basket.

"Stay with it," he said. "Put on a night shift if you have to."

He went back to the office on the floor above, and he said to Clip Phillips, who was leaning against a desk in it:

"We've only got a few days left, so we'll fill the out-of-town orders first and sell the last batch around here. I'm going along to my office now."

His limousine was out in the street, but as he was about to descend the front steps to it a taxicab drew up at the kerb and Bruce alighted from it. Fred dived back into the room he had just left.

"It's my brother Bruce," he said to Clip, "just arrived."

"What's he doing here?" demanded Clip.

"I don't know." Fred slammed the door. "Do something! Get busy!"

"He's a G-man!" roared Clip. "I'll take care of him!"

He whisked a six-gun from his coat pocket, and with his left hand went to re-open the door. But Fred stopped him.

"Hold it!" he commanded harshly. "I told you he was my brother."

"So what?" challenged Clip. "You know he's a G-man. What are you tryin' to hand out here? Let me get him!"

"Wait a minute," insisted Fred. "Give me that rod!" He took the gun and pocketed it. "You do as you're told—I'll handle this. Pretend you're working."

Clip went over to some bookshelves and took down a volume which had been printed by the Gothic Press. Fred sat at the desk, jabbed a finger at a bell-push underneath its knee-hole, and picked up a telephone.

A red light flashed over the door of the big room below, and the foreman printer saw it.

"Cover up, boys!" he cried. "There's the light!"

The men at the machines and the compositors at the type-cases immediately stopped work to gather up everything of an incriminating nature, and the foreman dashed to a card on one of the walls which bore a notice "No Smoking." He turned the card upside down on its nail and tugged at a lever in a box-like cavity the card had concealed.

The whole of one section of the wall moved as on a central pivot, taking type-cases and shelves with it, and another room beyond was revealed. Printed matter was bundled hurriedly into this room and the wall was restored to its normal position.

By this time Bruce had paid off the taxi-driver and ascended the steps into the building. As he entered the office his brother appeared to be talking to someone on the telephone.

"Twenty thousand handbills in black and red? I'll have to figure that out, Mr. Taylor." Fred looked up at Bruce with well-simulated surprise. "Hallo, kid! Come on in. What's that, Mr. Taylor? Oh, certainly, ten per cent off for cash. Thanks."

The telephone was replaced, and Fred leaned back in his chair.

"Well, kid," he said, "looking for someone to have lunch with?"

"No, I'm not, Fred," Bruce gravely returned. "I'd like to take a look at your press room."

"Why?"

"Oh, just a matter of business. Do you mind?"

Clip looked round from the book he

was pretending to study and Fred got to his feet.

"What's this all about?" he asked, and his voice had an edge to it.

"I'm going to take a look, at that press room, Fred, whether you like it or not."

Fred shrugged.

"That's okay with me, kid—I've nothing to hide. This way."

He went with his brother to the stairs.

"Straight ahead," he said at the foot of them, and they entered the big room.

Men were at work on two presses, but the one on which the printing of spurious sweepstake tickets had been in progress was idle. Bruce roamed about the room while Fred looked on with his hands behind his back, seemingly amused.

There were stacks of paper on shelves and benches, but Bruce could not find any of the kind for which he sought. On one of the machines in use elaborate two-colour programmes were being printed; on the other—a Cropper—were some bills concerning a boxing match. After inspecting pulls of these programmes and bills, Bruce turned to a bench just inside the door on which hundreds of large cards were stacked.

On the cards were texts, and he noticed two of them in particular: "All who believeth shall have everlasting life," and "Those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword."

"We print quite a lot of these for the Bible Institute," said Fred, walking over to the bench and holding up one of the cards.

Bruce turned away and came to the wire waste-basket. He caught sight of the crumpled proof his brother had tossed into it, turned his back on the basket and covertly scanned the proof and slipped it into a pocket.

"Anything else you'd like to see?" Fred inquired after a while.

"No," Bruce replied, "but I'd like to know what you're doing with the ivory-coated translucent Bristol stock you bought from the National Paper Supply Company."

If Fred was startled he did not show it.

"I imagine we can get that information in the files," he said. "Come on up to the office and I'll ask Phillips."

They went back to the office and the question was put to Clip, who promptly turned up files and order books.

"Here we are," he said after a while. "That run of announcements for Halstead's new Undertaking Parlours—and an order from Consolidated Dairies."

"What about the canary coated stock you bought last month from Rayburn & Fiske?" inquired Bruce.

Clip turned some more pages of the order book.

"The canary stock," he said, "we used on a couple of jobs, part of it for the Lyceum Theatre Club and some for a couple of High School shows."

"Did that use up the whole stock?"

"No, only part of it," admitted Clip. "We still have some left."

Fred glanced at his wrist watch.

"I'm due at my office in a few minutes," he said, "but if there's anything else you'd like to know—"

"No, I think I'll be on my way, too," Bruce decided, and he thanked Clip and walked out into the street with his brother.

"I hope you weren't disappointed in your visit to the plant?" Fred said casually as they reached the limousine.

"I found out just what I expected," Prince replied.

"I understand you cleaned up your telephone assignment, the other day."

"How did you know?"

"Oh, I read the papers. Did it help you any with the authorities?"

"You don't get medals in this work, Fred."

"What are you working on now? Why did you check my plant?"

"You'll have to read it in the papers."

"All right." Jackson was opening the door of the limousine. "So-long, kid. To the office, Jackson."

The limousine had shot off in the direction of Eighth Avenue before Bruce got into a taxicab, and the taxicab had left East Thirty-fourth Street behind before he took the crumpled proof from his pocket and examined it with frowning eyes.

Clip Goes Too Far

A FEW minutes after the two brothers had gone out from the printing works, Clip Phillips telephoned down to the foreman that he wanted a word with him, and the foreman ascended to the office.

"Do you know who Garth just showed through the plant?" Clip questioned.

"No." The foreman shook his head.

"Who?"

"His brother—a G-man."

"The boss' brother a G-man?" The elderly foreman screwed up his eyes.

"Oh, you're kidding!"

"I wish I was. I think we're being framed for a double-cross—all of us."

"Oh, but—why should the boss double-cross us?"

"Women and rackets don't mix. I've been watching him for a long time, and I've seen it coming. He's getting ready to quit."

"Yeah?"

"Sure." Clip was malignantly emphatic. "All he thinks about is that

Drake dame he's got workin' for him. He's planning on marrying her and museling in on Society—and he's fixin' for us to hold the bag."

The foreman printer rubbed his chin. "Got any idea what we ought to do about it?" he asked.

"I know exactly what to do," rasped Clip. "I'm gonna get all the boys over and give them the low-down."

He telephoned to members of the gang who had been installed in offices in Brant Avenue and Burlington Avenue, Jersey City, and to the remnants of the "sob-room" staff who had been transferred to the Bronx, arranging for them all to meet him at the works at four o'clock in the afternoon, and soon after the appointed hour they were all crowded in the office, listening to him in astonishment.

"I tell you he hasn't any use for us!" he blazed. "We're just a bunch of stoogies to be socked around if we make mistakes. Pretty nearly all of you have taken a licking from him at one time or another. Well, now it's his turn to take one."

The professor and the colonel gazed dubiously at one another, and Clip pounced on them.

"You think he wouldn't double-cross us, eh?" he snapped. "How about the other boys in the Luster-Glo hide-out? He let them get knocked off, didn't he? And he knew that raid was coming—knew it in plenty of time to get 'em all out, but it didn't catch him, did it? No, and the next one won't, either. But it will us!"

"But," protested the Professor loyally, "he's paying those men fifty—"

"He promised them fifty bucks a day, yes," interrupted Clip, "but d'you think they're gonna get it? By the time they're out of stir he'll be in Monte Carlo or some place, I tell you. And how about his brother? You guys didn't know his brother was a G-man, did you?"

He flung out his arms.

"Yeah, a G-man!" he raged. "A Federal snoop! He led that raid, and d'you want to know what happened

here a while ago? Garth showed his brother all over this plant. Now, do you think he'd do that if he wasn't plannin' on sneaking out?"

The men looked at one another, and there were mutterings, but few of them had any great liking for the speaker and their faith in their employer was not wholly shattered. Clip adopted a fresh line of attack.

"Do you want to know how he splits the dough this outfit takes in?" he demanded. "Out of every ten bucks he grabs off six and pays us out of the other four. What's stopping us from running things ourselves? We've got as much brains as he has, haven't we?"

"Now you're talking!" cried Jennings.

"You bet I am!" Clip pressed his advantage. "We do the work, we earn the money, and I'm gonna see that we get it. I'm gonna tell Garth where he gets off—tell him we're through working for him. We're taking over. Who's coming with me?"

There were ten who offered to accompany him, and after some further talk he and the ten set off for Eighth Avenue. They swarmed into the Sherman Building there, ascended to the twenty-fourth floor and invaded the general office.

Morton blinked at them from his desk, but as Clip strode towards the door of Fred's room the clerk sprang up indignantly.

"You can't go in there like—" he began, only to break off because Clip was already inside the room and slamming the door behind him.

Fred, seated at his desk, frowned at the intruder.

"I thought I told you never to walk in without knocking?" he barked.

"Yes, I know," Clip coolly responded. "I've just come from a meeting of the boys."

"The boys at the printing plant?"

"And the bookmaking office, and the sob-room, and the whole mob! They don't like the way you let the Luster-Glo outfit get knocked off."

Fred stood up, and his jaw was set.

"Oh, they don't!"



"Half a million bucks if you let us go!" Fred had nearly reached the piled-up texts.

"No," said Clip fiercely, "and they don't like the way you've moved that Drake girl in here."

"Since when have you or the boys been running my business?" thundered Fred, moving round the desk with clenched fists.

"Since right now. We're through taking orders from the brother of a G-man!" Clip thrust a hand under his coat to a shoulder-holster.

"Who told them Bruce is a Federal agent?"

"I did. I saw him at the Luster-Mo raid, and I know you let him knock that joint off just to stick a feather in his hat. Well, me and the boys are makin' sure it doesn't happen again."

"Just what do you and the boys expect me to do about it?"

"Step out. You've made yours—now we're gonna run things on an even-split basis."

"And supposing I'm not ready to step out?"

"Then I'll tell your precious brother all about you. I'll even tip off the Drake girl, too."

That last threat seemed to have more effect. Fred's hands dropped at his sides, and he said:

"You've got everything figured out, haven't you? Looks like you've got me coming and going."

"We have!" snarled Clip.

"All right, you win," Fred pointed to the chair he had vacated. "If you're going to start running things you might as well take over the throne."

"You're being smart about this," said Clip, his evil brown eyes showing his elation, but his right hand remained on the butt of the gun that was in the shoulder-holster. "Most guys don't know when they're through."

"If you don't mind, I'll take these letters with me," Fred moved to the desk as though to pick up some envelopes that were lying there, and Clip nodded and stepped aside.

For the moment the crook was off his guard, and the moment sufficed. Like lightning Fred seized upon the arm that was under the coat and with his other hand secured the gun and pitched it across the room behind him. Clip struck out with his left fist, but the blow was evaded, and then with all the weight of his body Fred drove his right to the point of his treacherous lieutenant's jaw.

Clip was lifted clean off his feet with the violence of that terrific drive, and he went crashing backwards through the long panel of the door to fall amid a shower of glass almost at the feet of the men in the outer office.

Fred stepped through the broken panel, ready for any sort of action.

"Who wants to be next?" he challenged; but not one of the rebels made a movement or uttered a word.

"You bunch of fatheads!" Fred blazed at them. "Don't you know this whole business runs because of me, not you? As long as you're in rackets with me, I'm running them, and I'll keep on running them until I'm ready to step out—not until some half-smart mug like him tells me to quit!"

Clip was struggling feebly to rise. The glass of the panel had cut his forehead, just over the left eye, as he had crashed through it, and blood was streaming down his face. His companions seemed to be completely cowed.

"In case you have any more smart ideas," Fred went on, "let me tell you that a very good friend of mine has a couple of letters he'll mail if I should—or—disappear. One of them's to the

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Chief of Police, the other to the Department of Justice. If those letters are ever read, you'll be the most hunted group of men in the country! Remember that, and I'll forget this. Now get back to work, the whole bunch of you!"

Jennings and another man helped Clip to his feet and led him away. The others followed, and Morton closed the door upon them. Fred's face relaxed into something like a grin.

"You know, Morton," he said, "that isn't a bad idea about those letters. Come into my office and I'll dictate a couple of real ones. Then arrange to have the door fixed."

"Yes, sir." Morton snatched up a notebook and pencil, and in Fred's room the letters were dictated.

"When did Miss Drake say she'd be here?" Fred broke off to ask.

"Oh, not for another half-hour, sir."

"Good! And in conclusion, I wish to make it clear that my brother, Bruce Garth knows absolutely nothing of my connections or my work. Make two copies of each, and then tear up your shorthand notes."

At the end of half an hour Fred entered the room that was to have been his brother's and found Marjory at the desk in it, taking some papers from a satchel.

"Hallo, hard worker!" he greeted.

"Very hard worker," said she, smilingly. "Would you mind looking over this proof for the Wednesday Morning Club programme?"

"Not right now," he demurred. "I want to talk to you about something else. How long have we known each other, Marjory?"

"Oh, about a year," she replied.

"One year, three months, and eleven days." He sat on the edge of the desk beside her. "We were born on different sides of the tracks," he said wistfully. "Has that ever bothered you?"

"No," she assured him, "I don't think it makes very much difference where you start. It's where you finish that counts."

"I thought you'd see things that way. Do you like me?"

"Why, certainly, Fred."

"Do you like to travel?"

"Why—yes," she hesitated.

"How would you like to spend a couple of years going around the world? Visiting all the little out-of-the-way places that you've read about and always wanted to see? Staying as long as you like, and moving on when you felt in the mood?"

She murmured that it sounded interesting.

"I'm quitting business," he said, "retiring. I have a deal coming up—my last one. It'll put me on Easy Street for life. I'll have enough money to do whatever I want—enough for two people to do whatever they want."

She saw what was coming and tried to stop it.

"Fred, I—"

"Let me finish," he pleaded. "I'm going to ask you something that I've wanted to ask you for a year. I want you to marry me, Marjory. I haven't mentioned anything about love on your side, but you can't stop me from hoping."

She got to her feet, and she looked away from him, biting her lip.

"I hardly know what to say, Fred," she stammered as he ventured to put a hand on her arm. "I—I admire you very much. I think you—you're one of the finest and most generous men I've ever known, but—"

"Don't say any more now," he urged. "Don't say, 'I like you as a

friend.' Take your time—think it over. My deal won't be terminated until the 16th; I'll wait until then for my answer."

He slid off the desk and, with a complete change of manner, said:

"Now let's get down to business and look at these proofs. The men are waiting for them."

Face to Face!

AT seven o'clock that evening, Clip sat at the desk in the office of the Gothic Press, a piece of sticking-plaster over the cut in his forehead, and the other members of Fred's outfit were clustered round him.

"A dumb guy, Garth," he remarked venomously. "We offered him an easy way out and he wouldn't take it. Now he can go the hard way. I'll show him he can't handle me like that!"

"What are you figuring on?" asked Jennings.

"That's what I'm gonna tell you. Garth doesn't believe in bank accounts—he keeps practically all his dough in ready cash where he can get at it. Any of you ever get a look inside that safe in his office?"

"I have," said Jennings. "You could park a truck in it!"

"Yeah," nodded Clip, "and right now it's full, jammed to the door with the money from the lottery tickets. Well, we're gonna split that jack-pot!"

"What about the letters his friend's got?" asked a full-faced fellow, short of stature but stocky of build, known as "Turk," who habitually wore his hat with the brim pulled down over one eye.

"I can get around them," was the confident reply. "Now Garth will be at his office to-night, waiting for Numbers to show up with the race-track winnings, so we're all going to dinner together, just in case one of us is a loose-mouth. And after dinner we're coming back here to show Mr. Garth who gets the last laugh. Come on, let's go!"

They all went out from the building, and the ground floor and basement were in darkness half an hour later when Bruce forced open a window of the printing-room from a yard at the rear of the premises and proceeded to search it thoroughly in the light of an electric torch.

Paper on shelves and benches engaged his attention, and he studied a number of line and process blocks; but he looked in vain for spurious sweep-stake tickets, or the sort of paper upon which they were printed.

He became convinced that there must be some hidden room, but though he roamed the whole of the basement he could not find it. Back in the printing-room he began to tap the walls, and the one near the "No Smoking" notice gave back a hollow sound.

He pushed against the type-cases, but they did not move, and he was tapping the walls again when he came to the "No Smoking" notice, and knocked it aside by accident. He turned the light of the torch upon the box-like opening, and he saw the lever inside it, pushed to no purpose, then gave it a tug.

The section of the wall that had sounded hollow began to revolve, and he squeezed into the room beyond it. There he found the tickets and the plates and the unused paper that had been stowed away in haste; but the sound of many footsteps overhead caused him to slip out into the printing-room again, lest he should be caught.

He pushed the lever, waited only to see the section of the wall swinging back into place, and then made for the

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In the fever-stricken areas of Cuba a brave band of scientists and U.S. Marines fight a losing battle against the deadly plague of "Yellow Jack," until the great heroic risk taken by an Irish sergeant at last brings victory. A stirring story starring Robert Montgomery, Virginia Bruce and Lewis Stone



Sergeant O'Hara

HEADED by a band playing a stirring march, a tired but cheerful column came marching into Havana. In spite of the fetid heat and the blistering sun, these men had sung most of the march, because that evening they would be embarking on transports and returning to the States, and they hoped that they would never see this pestilential country again.

This is a story of the days when the United States became masters of Cuba. They were the victors, but yet it looked as if they were going to be beaten. Not by force of arms, but by a deadly tropical fever known as "Yellow fever" or "Yellow Jack." Taken in time, it was possible for the doctors in some instances to effect a cure, but generally the victim succumbed before the medical authorities could do anything. It was a swift and deadly fever that struck mysteriously, and none knew the cause. No wonder soldiers were glad to leave Cuba and wish never to return.

Suddenly one of those marching soldiers began to stagger and reel as if he were drunk. He collapsed in a heap as a corporal hurried up the line to find out why the column had broken step.

It chanced that the soldier had collapsed almost outside the white-washed walls of the Havana Military Hospital, and from the grounds came a small party of stretcher-bearers, headed by Sergeant O'Hara. The section of men with the sick man were ordered to fall out, whilst the rest of the column continued their march to the docks.

The Irish sergeant was a tall, handsome young fellow. His eyes were fearless and hard, his jaw was stubborn, and yet his lips had a way of twisting into a mocking, sarcastic grin. He had joined the Red Cross because the pay was better than the ordinary ranks of the Army, and he hated foot-slogging. He was witty, tough, and hard as nails.

O'Hara knelt beside the unconscious man, felt the pulse, and flicked up an eyelid with professional skill. As he got up an officer appeared and demanded what was wrong.

"Yellow Jack!" drawled the sergeant, and grinned as he heard the soldiers round him gasp.

The officer gave orders for the section to be isolated and for Sergeant O'Hara to instruct his stretcher-bearers to take the sick man into hospital. The Red Cross men did not fancy touching the soldier, but O'Hara did not worry. He picked up the limp form, slung the soldier across his shoulders, and hastened off to the hospital. It was not exactly devotion to duty that made the sergeant take this risk, but because it would afford him the opportunity to see and talk with Nurse Blake.

Nurse Frances Blake was one of the brave girls on the staff of the Fever Hospital. She was fair and very pleasing to the eye. Her job came first, and she had no time for the flirtatious attentions of the sergeant. When he staggered in with his load the nurse gave a sigh of despair. They had had eight new cases in two days, and here was another. The sergeant dumped the

soldier on to a vacant bed. The matron hurried off to call Dr. Lazear.

Charlie, the fat, unwieldy orderly, stopped O'Hara as he left the ward.

"Say, has he got it?"

"Yeah," drawled the sergeant, and then leaned forward. "You look a little yellow yourself, Charlie."

The orderly gave a frightened moan and scampered for the nearest mirror. O'Hara knew that Charlie would spend the next ten minutes looking at his tongue and taking his own temperature, and that would give the sergeant the chance of talking to the nurse.

Even the prim and proper uniform could not conceal the beauty of this girl, and her flaxen hair under the small white bonnet seemed to gleam. She entered the outer office and looked at him in businesslike fashion.

"You'd better wash up with some carbolic solution, sergeant."

"No yellow bug'll ever hurt O'Hara!" he boasted, and her disdainful smile goaded him. "I'll be taking that back, Miss Frances," he cried, hand on heart. "I'm a sick man. A little starched bonnet has got me on my knees."

"Men are dying all around you, sergeant. Your fellow-soldiers." Nurse Blake stared at him resolutely. "Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

"Sure. That's bad luck for them, poor devils," he answered, and came nearer. "But I'm alive, Frances. And so are you."

She backed away nervously, because those smiling eyes were so ruthless and so determined.



Major Reed looked at the bottle containing the eggs. "If I hatch these out and let them bite a man down with Yellow Jack I make them instruments of death," he said quietly.

"You'd better go about your work, hadn't you?"

"I'm thinking you're working too hard. A little rest now and then would do you good." O'Hara smiled at her boldly. "A walk on the beach, say, or a boat ride—"

"With you, sergeant?" Her eyes did not waver. "I'll look forward to that."

"Then you'll go?" he demanded ardently.

"Thank you—no!"

Nurse Blake spoke sharply, and, pushing past him, disappeared into the ward.

Sergeant O'Hara shrugged his shoulders. For weeks and months he had been trying to persuade Nurse Blake to take up with him, but with no success. But the sergeant had plenty of confidence in his own powers to charm the fair sex. He liked them stubborn and hard to win.

A Puzzling Clue

THE doctors of the Yellow Jack Commission that had been sent by Washington to solve the problem were looking glum. For more than a year they had been trying to track down the germ of this dread disease, and they were no nearer than when they started. That morning there had been a request to attend the office of the general in command of Western Cuba, and the interview had not been too pleasant. The commission had a thorn in its side in the person of Colonel Tory of the Marine Hospital Corps.

Major Reed, the head of the commission, was sunk in the depths of despair. Assisted by three other doctors, Carroll, Lazear, and Agramonte, he had worked night and day to solve the mystery of Yellow Jack, and they had failed. It was galling to have officers like Colonel Tory hinting that they were doing more harm than good, and that the commission should be sent back to Washington. Colonel Tory reckoned

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that by hygiene he had done more to check the fever than any person living, and he resented an inferior officer being in the position to hand out orders to his superiors. It was Tory who had been responsible for this day's meeting, but the one bright thing was the loyal support of General Wood. The general appreciated the amount of work done by the commission, and he felt certain that one day success would crown their efforts.

"It's a thankless, back-aching task," complained the outspoken, hot-tempered Dr. Carroll. "Look at Lazear squinting down that damned microscope. He could squint till Doomsday and not be any the wiser. We've made every sort of examination possible, and yet we can't, and never will discover how these people get Yellow Jack. Agramonte thinks the same."

The latter, who was a Cuban, shrugged his shoulders.

"Truly I am beginning to despair," he agreed.

"We must find the secret," Lazear had French blood in his veins and could be very intensive. "We can't go back and admit that we're beaten."

"Better to do that than stick here till the fever gets us," sneered Carroll.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" Major Reed begged a trifle irritably. "We have had so many of these discussions, and they lead nowhere. You know we cannot go home unless ordered to, and that is the one thing that I dread. At a great price Cuba became part of the United States, and yet Cuba is beating us. We've got to find what causes Yellow Jack or give up Cuba." There was a knock at the door. "Come in!"

Sergeant O'Hara stepped smartly into the laboratory and saluted. He held out some papers.

"My report on the Ferguson case, sir."

"Thanks, O'Hara." The white-haired, weary Major Reed tossed the report on

the table. "A pity we were too late to do anything for him."

The sergeant should have saluted and gone, but he lingered, and Major Reed glanced up at him.

"Anything else, O'Hara?"

"You'll excuse me, sir, but there's something unusual about this Ferguson case," answered the sergeant. "It looks like Ferguson couldn't have been near Yellow Jack for a month."

"What do you mean?" sharply questioned Lazear.

"He was locked in the Pinar guardhouse." O'Hara looked at Lazear with a mocking grin. "Doctor, eight men shared that guardhouse. We checked 'em at mess, and they were eating like horses. The whole eight were due to go home, and they were a section of the repatriation convoy."

Major Reed pondered this point.

"Those men were all isolated and you checked them." He stared at the sergeant under beetling brows. "They show no signs of fever?"

"None, sir."

"Something in Ferguson's food—"

"I don't suppose any of you gentlemen have ever been in a guardhouse." O'Hara grinned at them derisively, and his eyes were twinkling. "Meals are sort of democratic. Food in one trough and water in one pail. They all ate and drank the same."

Major Reed sat up alertly and looked across at the other doctors.

"This does sound unusual. It seems that it couldn't be the food, and I don't see how it could be contagion, and yet Ferguson is dead." He picked up the report. "You've got all the details here, O'Hara?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, that will be all."

The major dismissed him.

For a long time the doctors discussed the unusual case, and all theories put forward did not satisfactorily explain the mystery.

"Nine men slept, ate, and drank together," the major said at last. "Same food, same room, same air. Yet only one of them caught Yellow Jack. O'Hara is one of the most reliable sergeants that I have met, and I'm sure is correct in all his details. By all the known laws of contagion, Ferguson should not have got Yellow Jack, and as he came out of that guardhouse this morning he must have caught it in that guardhouse and nowhere else." He jumped up, his jaw set and his eyes alight with hope. "We'll go to Pinar. We'll inspect that guardhouse."

Colonel Tory's dark, swarthy face did not light up when Major Reed appeared, and he laughed sneeringly when he heard that the commission wished to inspect the guard-room, but as the order was signed by the general the colonel could not refuse the request. He considered it just eye-wash to impress the general.

Major Reed and his doctors made a thorough examination of the guard-house, and, to the colonel's disgust, asked for the prisoners to be removed. The colonel could not refuse, and after that the major went over the room even more thoroughly. He pointed to a small, grilled window.

"That window isn't screened."

"Why should it be?"

The colonel took umbrage at once.

"It could be some insect." The major spoke patiently. "What else could explain a plague which travels along one side of a street, then, for no reason at all, skips a house, then jumps to the other side? What would pick one man out of nine? An insect. It would answer all our crazy riddles."

The colonel laughed ironically.

"Major, you're daffy! As daffy as that old Scotch idiot Finlay and his menagerie of mosquitoes. The man insists they carry yellow fever."

Reed seemed bewildered by this information. He looked at the other doctors.

"Have you ever heard of this man?"

"I sort of recollect something," murmured Carroll. "But I can't remember what it was."

"Colonel Tory," Reed faced the officer. "Do you mean that this Dr. Finlay has a complete theory worked out for a mosquito carrier?"

"Complete?" Tory's face was convulsed with ironic amusement. "The man's a lunatic!"

"Maybe, but mosquitoes make sense," quietly retorted the major. "We'll get hold of this Finlay."

Finding that the Scotch doctor resided on the outskirts of Havana in the native quarter, the commission left Pinar and the derisive witticisms of Colonel Tory. Agramonte, on getting back to the hospital, went into the library. He had remembered something about Finlay, and he found what he sought in an

old medical journal. Nineteen years ago this same Dr. Finlay had expounded his theories on mosquitoes, and the people present had laughed him to scorn. The doctor had called them harsh names, and, as far as Agramonte knew, his name had not appeared in a medical journal since.

Major Reed wrote a note and dispatched it by Sergeant O'Hara, and the Irishman came back with the note torn in half. The commission learned that the doctor wanted nothing to do with them. So Major Reed, his doctors, and the sergeant went down to the native quarters. They found the house.

Dr. Finlay was a great bull of a man with flaming red side-whiskers and mud-tidy, scanty locks. His harsh voice was not friendly. It was the infinite tact and courteous speech of Major Reed that appeased the Scot's anger, so much so that he invited them eventually into his laboratory.

"Nineteen years ago I told a world, populated apparently by fools and idiots, that yellow fever was caused by mosquitoes. They laughed at me, and so I retired to Havana." The Scot laughed mirthlessly. "I might do the laughing now, because many people have died since I tried to save the world from this plague. Why don't you laugh at me, sir?"

"I would never have laughed in the first place," the major replied. "I only wish that your name had been mentioned to me before. We have tried many experiments, and only recently a man died that caused me to suspect that the fever might be caused by insects. When I heard of your theory that the mosquito was a carrier I felt that at last we were progressing. Dr. Finlay, you would be rendering the commission a very great service if you would advise us."

The fiery old Scot, mollified by the major's words, nodded his head briskly and said that the work of the last nineteen years was at their disposal. He

showed the commission a glass cage that buzzed with mosquitoes.

"I have made a study of these little beauties, and, so far, I have found over eight hundred different varieties," Dr. Finlay explained. "I have tried experiments with animals, but they won't take yellow fever. Only human beings seem to get it, and it is caused by a certain type of mosquito. Naturally, it is a female. Most mosquitoes like the flesh round the ankles, the wrist, and the neck, and my pet is no exception. There are plenty of them in that glass cage, but this will answer your purpose." He picked up a bottle covered with fine muslin. "In this bottle lies sleeping death. There are enough eggs in there to hatch out hundreds of this particular brand of mosquito. Just add a few drops of clear water, and the heat will do the rest." He held out the bottle to the major. "But you can make the tests for yourself. I've proved my own theory."

Major Reed looked at the bottle containing the eggs.

"If I hatch these out and let them bite any man down with Yellow Jack I make them instruments of death."

"If you let them escape," agreed Dr. Finlay. "Well, gentlemen, I have handed you nineteen years of my work, in spite of my solemn vow that I wouldn't help any of the medical authorities even if they went down on their bended knees." He laughed. "If there is anything else I can do, you'll let me know."

"I will inform you of all the tests that we carry out, Dr. Finlay," solemnly answered Reed. "On behalf of the commission, I thank you for the very great trust you have placed in us."

Woman's Wiles

MAJOR REED, on obtaining authority from the general, ordered two new shacks to be built, and soon rumours began to fly round the camp that they were being



Major Reed and Doctor Carroll strove desperately to save the life of Lazear.

erect, for some sort of experiment. They were very similar in design to the guardhouses at Pinar. Somehow it leaked out that the major was going to try experiments with mosquitoes, and this was strengthened when Finlay's pots were taken to the hospital and allowed to bite every man down with Yellow Jack. A mosquito was kept in a small test-tube and very cautiously placed on bare flesh, and when the creature had done his worst, great precaution was taken that he did not escape out of the tube.

One person who did not take a great deal of interest in the major's experiments was O'Hara. Major Reed was a great man, in his mind, but definitely "nutty." Besides, he had much more to worry about than the major. He himself was "nutty" about Frances, but whenever he tried to get a few moments alone with her she would either be cold and distant or else talk about the work done by Major Reed. It seemed her dearest wish that the major should solve the mystery of Yellow Jack.

O'Hara shared a large tent with his four orderlies, and, naturally, there was a great deal of talk among them regarding the mosquitoes. They were an odd assortment. There was a big, slow-speaking fellow, who talked of the girl back in Montana that one day he hoped to marry, and for some strange reason was called by his buddies "Jellybeans." There was a little, fiery fellow, who had German blood in his veins and who was almost a Bolshevik—that was Busch. Brinkerhof was a good-looking, lazy fellow, who was popular at camp concerts. Breen was the youngest, a mere boy, and he would spend hours reading medical journals, because it was his ambition to become a great doctor. He hated Cuba and dreaded Yellow Jack. Sometimes the four would discuss the major and run him down, and then O'Hara would butt into the conversation. The major might be "nutty," but it he heard any of them expressing their opinions aloud he'd be after knocking their heads together.

Then came the official announcement that startled the camp. Volunteers were wanted. Three hundred dollars would be paid to any man who allowed a mosquito who had bitten a Yellow Jack patient to bite him. To the men it seemed a certain form of suicide, and as a result there was not one volunteer. Colonel Tory came to see the general and kicked up an awful fuss; in his opinion Major Reed and his commission should be sent off before they did a lot of harm. It was monstrous to suggest that men should sacrifice themselves for such criminal folly. The general listened, and he also talked with Major Gorgas, who was having similar trouble with Yellow Jack in Panama. Gorgas supported Major Reed, and so the commission was allowed to go on with its work.

One day the Red Cross orderlies were digging a grave, whilst O'Hara looked on and smoked beneath the shade of a palm tree.

"How could a harmless little bug carry germs?" Busch questioned.

"Why not?" replied Brinkerhof. "Mosquitoes are small, but this germ is smaller. Maybe it's our place to volunteer."

"I sure could use the dough," unblebed Jellybeans.

"Boys, here's one good old army rule," called out O'Hara. "Keep your mouth shut, your eyes open and never volunteer."

The argument was interrupted by the appearance of Charlie Spill, the hospital orderly. That worthy shuffled his feet and said he'd like to speak to the ser-

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geant sort of private. He had a message from Miss Frances. The nurse felt she needed some relaxation, and she would be pleased to meet the sergeant down on the beach by the big rock at eight o'clock. Charlie hated giving this message. He had argued and argued with Frances, who was such a nice girl, that she should not go out with the sergeant, but the nurse had made up her mind.

Sure enough, Frances was down on the beach, and she was wearing a summery dress that made her look divine. O'Hara had rented a canoe, and it was a perfect night. Cuban music drifted across the water as O'Hara paddled lazily along the coast.

"Without your uniform and cap you're very human, Frances. You're the most beautiful girl in the place." He rested on his paddle. "What lucky city did you come from, darling?"

"Washington." Major Reed brought Miss MacDade and myself with him," she smiled at him. "Now you answer a question. Why did you switch to the Medical Corps?"

"Sure. I did it because I thought the work would be lighter."

"I don't believe that."

"Well, then, since I know you feel the same way about the fine, foolish man—I did it to look after the major." O'Hara almost convinced himself. "Him chasing about with his doctors, worrying after a will-of-the-wisp he'll never find." His dark eyes studied her intently. "Why did you ask that?"

Frances avoided his eyes. She pointed to a promontory and suggested that they land and sit for a while beneath the shadow of the palms. She sat down with her back against a palm, and O'Hara wondered if he might dare kiss her—he was scared that she would be annoyed and run away.

"Why are you a soldier, John? Drilling, maybe twenty years of drilling. Maybe another war, and more life thrown away. Finally, a pension, and the old soldier's home."

"It ain't much," he admitted, and wished she would talk of more pleasant things.

"For the first time since armies began soldiers have a chance to do good instead of harm. Why hasn't one man dared come forward for Major Reed?"

"There's a lot of 'em talking about it."

"But the doctors are desperate. It's been two weeks. Won't he get a single volunteer?" Frances saw him stifle a polite yawn. "The major said only tonight that the first man to step forward would touch the heart of the whole world. He'd give our army a new sort of hero, the major said." O'Hara's head jerked round and his eyes narrowed, but Frances did not notice because she was so wrought up with emotion. "Oh, John, I could have cried to see him so helpless. At the edge of his great discovery he's unable to move."

"And what did you say to him, Miss Blake?" demanded O'Hara, his voice biting. "Didn't you say 'Leave it to me, major. I know the very man?' I'll bet you did. I'll bet you promised to lead me back with a ring in my nose."

"No! No!" Frances gazed at him in distress. "I thought if I could make you see—"

He jumped to his feet.

"What a fine rotten thing to bait a man on. If you'd asked me straight out I might have done it silly as it is. But this!"

"John—" She jumped up and gripped his arm, but he shook himself free.

"You had a fine opinion of John O'Hara, didn't you?" His lips were twisted into a sneer. Then he saluted. "I'm sorry I ever annoyed you. And I won't again." He darted off into the palms before she could say a word.

Dr. Lazear a Victim

WITHOUT a volunteer, Major Reed could do little. Dr. Carroll wanted to volunteer, but the major would not hear of it. His services were far too valuable to take such a chance. Victims of Yellow Jack kept on coming into the hospital, and the doctors continued with the work of allowing the *Stegomyia* mosquito bite the sick man. The mosquito was then taken to a thin-meshed cage and allowed to rejoin its companions.

Rather difficult to take a roll-call of your mosquitoes, so that if a few escaped it would not be noticed, and those mosquitoes were always on the look-out for a chance. There are careless people in this world, and one day a clumsy orderly hit the wire mesh with a broom handle and made a small hole. He discovered it later and managed to repair the damage, but not before one *Stegomyia* had escaped. That mosquito set out to find someone to bite, and it did not want a pallid human being.

Dr. Lazear was busy in the ward at the time, and after a while he bent down to scratch absent-mindedly at his ankle. Three days later Dr. Lazear went down with the yellow fever.

It was Breen who brought the news to the orderly tent, and his distress was pitiful.

"He's a goner," he stammered out. "Doc Carroll was out in Havana. Major Reed sent me after him, that's how I know."

"You mean he's got Yellow Jack?" questioned O'Hara.

"Yes—yes! They're in his quarters now. He keeps raving about his wife and kids. They sent me here for a stretcher, sergeant."

"Stop shaking like a jellyfish and get busy," the sergeant shouted. "Don't stand there gaping, all of you, get busy."

O'Hara helped the orderlies with the removal of Dr. Lazear from his house to the hospital. Lazear was muttering and raving, whilst poor Major Reed stared down at the man who had been his ablest assistant, in helpless despair.

"One man!" the dying man cried deliciously. "An army of men—and not one man!"

On the way back to the orderly tent young Breen began to moan to himself, and the others looked at him uneasily. Suddenly he buried his face in his hands.

"A whole army!" he shouted. "And not one man! We'll never see him again." A wild cry of despair, and then he had dropped in a heap.

O'Hara picked him up in his strong arms and carried him to the tent. He picked up a pail of water and flung it in Breen's face. The boy coughed and spluttered.

"Well, my little man! Aren't you proud of yourself fainting away like a flower for no reason at all? You lily!" the sergeant said with bitter contempt.

"I never said I wasn't afraid," hoarsely came the answer. "But so are you! All of you!" The boy's voice became shrill and high pitched with hysteria. "You're all scared stiff—the whole army! I couldn't stand it any more, that's all—trying to shout 'I volunteer' when the words wouldn't come."

O'Hara made no answer. What Breen

had just said had shocked him. So this kid had been trying to volunteer and hadn't got the nerve. They hadn't even thought about volunteering, and he had dared to call Breen a lily. He looked up and saw that all those others were staring at him. In moments of crisis they always turned to him involuntarily. He seemed to read their very minds, and they were looking to him for guidance.

"I'm beginning to think," said O'Hara with that whimsical smile of his. "That I might have to do something about it, after all."

Major Reed and Dr. Carroll strove desperately to save the life of Lazear, but it was in vain. Agramonte had collapsed because Lazear was his greatest friend. The major was in despair because not only was his best man dead but it seemed that Finlay's theory about mosquitoes was wrong. Directly Colonel Tory heard he would make another outcry and the commission would be all washed up. He left the hospital in a daze and walked across the compound to his quarters. He did not hear the tramp, tramp of marching feet until a hearty cough made him glance round. He saw O'Hara, and behind him the four orderlies—all standing stiffly to attention.

"Well, sergeant, what is it?" the major asked wearily.

"We wish to volunteer, sir," stated O'Hara. "But we none of us want the reward."

Major Reed was for a moment robbed of all speech. Then impetuously he stepped forward and held out his hand to O'Hara.

"Thank you, sergeant. Thank you, boys."

Five Brave Men and True

IN the laboratory the next morning the five volunteers listened to the solemn words of Major Reed. Carroll and Agramonte were in the background, but Nurse Frances was seated close to the

major and taking down notes. Very solemnly the major told the volunteers of the grave risk that they were taking and that it was not too late for them to back out if they wished. Young Breen was sweating a little, but he made no attempt to throw in his hand. The major's tired eyes were proud as he gazed at them. He had always regarded them as his boys, for they had served him very faithfully in the months they had been at Havana. The eyes of Nurse Blake were full of pride, and several times she tried to smile at the sergeant, but he looked straight to his front.

"Men, you must know exactly what these new houses are for and what we intend. Then you can draw lots, or divide up, as you please."

They made no answer, so the major continued:

"House One we will call the dirty house. Three men will go into it and unpack the sealed boxes waiting there. Those boxes contain pesthouse beds and bedding, pyjamas that men have died in, pillows and mattresses soaked with fever. A stove will increase the heat, and tubs of water will make the air stifling. All present theories say that those men should develop yellow fever."

The major looked at them inquiringly. Busch spoke almost at once.

"I'm for that."

"So am I, sir," spoke young Breen, very white about the gills.

"Me, too," drawled Jellybeans.

Sergeant O'Hara smiled as if well satisfied.

Nurse Blake jotted down the names.

"House Two is anti-septically clean," went on the major. "Two men will live there. One, before he enters, will be bitten by an infected Stegomyia mosquito. Anticipating fever, we can catch the disease at its inception." He paused. "There's a very reasonable chance of recovery."

Brinkerhof clicked his heels.

"I'll do that, sir!" he cried.

"It seems that I'll have to be the fifth man, sir," O'Hara said with a grin. "I seem to have got off lightly."

"You will not be bitten, but will bunk with Brinkerhof," stated the major. "Our experiment attempts to prove that contagion is impossible; that no human being can acquire yellow fever without the bite of an infected Stegomyia. Do you all understand your tasks?"

"Yes, sir," they answered in one voice.

"I forgot to mention that the three volunteers lodging in the filthy hut will have to stay there twenty days," murmured the major, and could not quite suppress a smile at the look of horror on their faces.

The volunteers saluted and Sergeant O'Hara marched them out of the laboratory.

Major Reed began to discuss details with Carroll and Agramonte, and that gave Frances a chance to slip out unobserved. She darted out on to the veranda and called out to the sergeant, but if he heard he paid no heed. She had to run after him. The sergeant halted and the others went on.

"John, I wanted to tell you. I'm glad you're doing what you are."

She looked up at him wistfully.

"I'm going for the relaxation of it, Miss Blake," O'Hara answered stiffly and formally.

"But you still don't understand."

"Maybe not. Is there anything else, Miss Blake?"

"Yes, John. I'm sorry about the other night. I think you were perfectly right, but I was so anxious for the poor major to get a volunteer, but now that you—"

Her voice trailed away.

"What are you trying to say?"

He was puzzled.

"That now you have volunteered I'm terribly frightened," she whispered, and



Very solemnly the Major told the volunteers of the grave risk they were taking.

then added with a half-sob: "For you!"

The big hands of Sergeant O'Hara went out and gripped her shoulders. His eyes were twinkling and gay.

"Darlin'," he cried, "you pick out the funniest darned time to come to your senses!"

Nights of Torment

IN House One life was scarce worth living. The atmosphere was so heavy and fetid that you could cut it with a knife. There was hardly any ventilation, because the major wanted a high temperature in the room. The bedding and night attire of the victims of yellow fever stank. The tubs of water soon became warm.

"And we're doing this for nothing," complained Busch. "I've been in here about twelve hours, and it feels like twelve years. The major sure lived up to his reputation for thoroughness when he made this a filthy hut. It's not mosquitoes that'll be biting me soon."

"I wonder how my girl in Montana is getting on," dreamily murmured Jellybeans.

"Well, she'd not think much of you if she could see you now," gibed Busch. "How you feeling, Breen?"

"So far, I have no symptoms." Breen looked up from a book. "I suppose we should take our temperatures again."

"You took yours only an hour ago," growled Busch. "Let's have a game of cards. We'll play for the three hundred bucks each of us hasn't got."

In House Two everything was spotlessly clean. The beds were marvellous, and there was mosquito netting. There was plenty of air, and, as far as Sergeant O'Hara was concerned, it was a rest cure. All his life he had had a great deal of confidence in himself, and he would have wagered a year's pay that he would not get Yellow Jack. He was certain that he was immune. A pity that he had to stay cooped up in this place when he could have been taking Frances out for a canoe trip, but that could come later. The world was very rosy to the Irishman.

Brinkerhof had been bitten by an infected Stegomyia, but did not look ill. Of course, the disease might be days in developing. Bad luck for the major if nothing happened to Brinkerhof. And in his heart of hearts O'Hara did not expect anything to happen to his companion. He had not given Yellow Jack very much thought, but he did not think a great deal of this mosquito idea. It couldn't have been a skeeter that killed Doc Lazar.

So the days passed. Regularly at the times stated on the chart the two men took their temperatures. They wiled away the time with cards and books.

One morning O'Hara was lying flat on his back, dreaming that maybe he and Frances would get married some time, when the restless movements of Brinkerhof made him glance round.

"You okay, pal?"

"Sure, sure!" came the answer. "Though I find it darned stuffy in here."

"The window's open."

Brinkerhof rolled off his bed.

"Guess I'll have a breather." He stood by the window for a moment, and then closed it. "Gee, that wind seems cold. I'm all chilly."

O'Hara looked up from a book.

"Come back to bed," he called out. "Another four days and we'll be outa here."

"I feel awful hot, O'Hara."

The sergeant rolled out of bed.

"First you're hot, then you're cold, now you're hot again. Here, steady on!" He caught Brinkerhof by the arm August 20th, 1935.

as the orderly swayed. He peered closely and then helped Brinkerhof to the bed. A moment later he had flung back the window. At the top of his voice he yelled: "Ambulance! Ambulance! Ambulance!"

The three prisoners in the dirty hut scrambled off their beds and stood on a ladder to peer out of the window.

"It's Yellow Jack!" gasped Breen. "Brink's got it."

"And whether we get it or not we've got to stay here another four days," moaned Busch. "And I'm being eaten alive with lice; I smell like a polecat, and I've a thirst that I'll never quench. Ah, here comes old Charlie with the ambulance!"

"They're carrying Brink out," cried Breen. "He's not delirious yet."

"I'll be babbling when I gets outa here," drawled Jellybeans. "My gal in Montana will have to marry a loony."

Brinkerhof had got Yellow Jack right enough, but as the major had said, they were prepared for the first symptoms, and O'Hara was like a schoolboy when he heard that his companion was out of danger.

The three wretches in House One now and again hammered to be let out before they went crazy, and O'Hara felt so sorry for them that he spent a week's pay on champagne. The sergeant had hoped that Brinkerhof might have been allowed a drink, but this the doctors would not allow.

O'Hara was planning on taking Frances out one evening when he got an order to report to Major Reed, and he wondered whether he was to be called over the coals regarding the champagne. To his surprise, when he reported at the laboratory, he found not only the doctors there, but Dr. Finlay and Major Gorgas. The latter had been forced to leave Panama with his canal-building crew because the place was rampant with yellow fever.

"John"—Major Reed looked at the sergeant almost eagerly—"I've got something to ask you."

"Yes, sir."

O'Hara beamed at the doctors and waited for the major to speak.

"You and the others have done enough to warrant Congressional medals: Medals, I'm quite sure, you'll never receive."

That made O'Hara laugh.

"Here's a chance to be a real hero, O'Hara." It was Carroll who spoke, and he seemed unduly excited. "A man who'll step forward and do it all over again."

The sergeant looked inquiringly at Major Reed.

"Dr. Carroll is quite right, John. Only this time we know that our mosquito is the criminal. Those three in the dirty house will walk out tomorrow perfectly well, demonstrating definitely that nothing but the Stegomyia matters. You yourself have proven that Yellow Jack can't be acquired by contact."

"But can we prove that you're not immune, O'Hara," impetuously cried Carroll. "Maybe you'd never get it, anyway, under any circumstances. That's the first question the world will ask us!"

"It seems a good question," O'Hara admitted.

"If we could give you yellow fever now with a mosquito—" began the major.

"It's a temptation to me, sir," interrupted O'Hara. "But I couldn't do it."

"Afraid?" sneered the hot-tempered Carroll.

"In a way." O'Hara smiled and

nodded his head. "It's the fear I have of blasting all you've done. No chance of John O'Hara catching Yellow Jack or anything else from the nastiest little bug that ever lived."

"We'll take that chance, O'Hara," urged Carroll. "We'll unloose every Stegomyia in the menagerie on you."

"You're under no compulsion, John," said the major, but his expression was pleading.

"It'll be ruinous to you, sir," replied O'Hara. "But I'll do it if you like."

"Bravely spoken, young man," chimed in Dr. Finlay as he rose to his feet. "I wish you gentlemen the best of success with your experiment."

"There's no time like the present, John," stated the major. "In hoping you would agree we have everything prepared."

"There's one condition I'll be after making," O'Hara's eyes were twinkling. "Can I have anything I like to eat?"

"Anything, John."

"Then I'll have strawberries and cream for my breakfast."

John O'Hara was placed in a sterile bath and left to soak with a canvas cloth exposing only his head. After a while a door opened softly, and Nurse Blake came in, and her hand went to her mouth when she saw him.

"John, I've just heard," she cried. "Are you mad? You mustn't do it! You've risked your life once, you're young. Your whole life's before you. Let someone else do the rest of this."

"Sure, it's sweet to know you'll worry." He smiled at her affectionately. "But I couldn't let the major down."

"But, John, I won't let—"

"Major! Major!" John raised his voice. "I'm all set."

When Frances heard the footsteps of the major in the next room she had no option but to go.

They took the sergeant to House One. He was wrapped in a dressing-gown and seemed to be quite content. Carroll opened the door, whilst Charlie held a glass bottle with a cap over it and shook as if he were holding some sort of infernal machine. The major took the bottle from him and handed it to O'Hara.

"You know what to do?"

"Sure—sure." Holding the bottle, O'Hara went up the steps of the house. He looked back and grinned. "And my strawberries and cream?"

"You'll have them with your breakfast in the morning," the major assured him. "Good luck!"

The door closed.

"If he comes through this he deserves medals and promotion," muttered Carroll.

"I have already spoken on the matter to the general," answered the major. "Now, O'Hara is an impetuous young man, and he will probably release all those Stegomyias, and he may get the disease quicker than he imagines. I don't want O'Hara to know we're watching him, but I want it done without him knowing. Nothing can happen till morning. Perhaps it would be as well if you took him his breakfast, Carroll."

"Certainly, major, certainly," agreed the doctor. "And I'll go in there sheathed in armour. I'll report on him."

"And if he is still all right then, watchers will be posted. He's promised to ring that bell, but the fever may overcome him so quickly that he won't have the chance. Every so often someone must take a quick look in at one of the windows."

(Continued on page 25)

Ride the danger trail with the pioneers of the Old West in this pulsing epic of the days when fearless prairie scouts took up the challenge of savage Redskins and murderous desperadoes. To the beat of thundering hoofs and to the blast of flaming guns this vivid serial runs its thrill-a-minute course, with hot action in every smashing episode and Ray Corrigan in its starring rôle



THE PAINTED STALLION

Read This First

Backed by Dupray, a scheming Spaniard who is Governor of Santa Fe, but who has received news that he is to be deposed by the newly established Mexican Republic, a band of renegades led by one, Zamora, is preying on the wagon-trains that ply to and fro across the Western wilds with rich merchandise under their awnings.

The activities of these renegades are hampered by a mystery rider on a painted stallion, who has sworn to defeat outlawry and who again and again warns the bandits' intended victims of their danger by means of whistling arrows.

The year is 1824, and in that year an American frontiersman known as Clark Stuart is detail 2 by the U.S. Government to negotiate a trade treaty with the Mexican authorities. It is a treaty which Dupray is anxious to prevent from being conceded, and at his instigation Zamora invites the Indians to attack a wagon-train led by a trader named Jamison—a wagon-train with which Clark is travelling, and whose personnel also includes Jim Bowie, famous as the inventor of the Bowie knife, and Kit Carson, a boy later to become renowned as a Western scout.

The Rider of the Painted Stallion saves the train by calling off the Redskins, who regard that mysterious figure as a supernatural being, and later the Rider rescues Clark from the clutches of some of Zamora's henchmen.

Clark afterwards learns the Rider is in reality a white girl, and then, while he is on the trail of a renegade named Macklin, the frontiersman is robbed of a letter of authority from the U.S. Government. Clark tracks Macklin to

the headquarters of Dupray, but is discovered hiding in a cupboard, and, the door being locked on him, a squad of soldiers are ordered to pour a volley through the panels.

Now Read On

Imprisoned

AWARE that a fusillade was about to be discharged through the locked door of the cupboard in which he had concealed himself, Clark Stuart had almost given himself up for lost when suddenly he chanced to look up, and in spite of the gloom which shrouded the narrow confines of the press he saw that there was a shelf above him.

It was a shelf which was at a higher level than the lintel of the door, the cupboard being loftier than that door, and in desperation Clark flung his hands over his head and clutched this shelf. Then he pulled himself up to it, and had hardly scrambled on to it when the muskets of the firing-squad belched in unison.

From his perch Clark heard the bullets smash through the panels of the door below him and spank into the cupboard's wall, and knew that if he had not hoisted himself to the shelf he would have sunk lifeless under that leaden hail. As it was, he was not by any means out of danger, for inevit-

ably the door would be opened so that Dupray might behold the result of his men's handiwork, and the scout could only hope that he would be able to fight his way out through the scoundrelly Lieutenant Governor's minions and escape from the presidio or fortress without being shot down.

Crouching on the shelf he drew his gun, and waited, and after a moment's silence the cupboard door was unfastened and opened, the soldiers of the firing-squad appearing on the threshold with their captain.

On the instant Clark sprang from his vantage point, charging headlong into the uniformed men and taking them completely unawares. But though two of them were bowled over by his onset and the others were scattered to right and left they quickly recovered themselves and closed in on him.

A fierce scuffle ensued, a scuffle during which Clark had no chance to use his gun. Indeed, it was wrested from his grasp at the commencement of the mêlée, and for all that he gave a good account of himself with his bunch of knuckles, the odds against him were too heavy and he was finally overpowered.

He might well have been slain there and then, but looking on with Zamora and Macklin, Dupray suddenly ordered the soldiers to bind his hands behind his back, and for some reason best known to himself withheld the command to destroy him.

Rope being procured, Clark's wrists were lashed firmly together, and soon he was standing there helplessly, the captain of the firing-squad by his side

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EPISODE 6:

"Thundering Wheels"

and the rest of the soldiery gathered about him. Then Dupray stepped forward and addressed the scout.

"When a spy is captured in this presidio he usually receives short shrift," he observed in English, "for I am determined to safeguard my life against assassins and malcontents of every description."

Clark eyed him steadfastly. He sensed that the Lieutenant Governor had delivered himself of that speech for the sole purpose of misleading the soldiery and disguising the real motive behind his wish to dispose of him.

"I didn't come here to assassinate you," the frontiersman announced. "What's more, I'm not a spy—and I've a pretty good idea you know it."

Dupray's eyes glittered.

"You are not a spy?" he reiterated smoothly. "Then why do we find you hiding in my headquarters? Listen, scout, the Mexican Republic has just been established in place of the old Spanish regime. This is a new country, and its enemies are not treated kindly."

"But I'm not an enemy," Clark retorted, "and if I can see the Governor—"

"Our new Governor has not yet arrived from Mexico City," Dupray cut in. "Until he does arrive I am in full charge here, and if you have anything to say I am the only one to whom you can appeal for a hearing."

Clark bit his lip. In view of the snatch of conversation he had previously heard between this man and Macklin, he had no hope of making any impression on the Spaniard by stating his case.

"Well?" snapped Dupray, as the frontiersman remained silent. "Have you nothing to say, after all?"

"I can only say that I am Clark Stuart," was the reply, "and that I've been authorised to represent the United States Government in trade negotiations with Mexico."

"I see," the Lieutenant Governor murmured. "And your credentials?"

Clark glanced at Macklin, who was hovering beside Zamora.

"I had a letter of authority from Washington," he announced, "but that man stole it from me."

Dupray affected to frown.

"That is a serious charge, senior," he remarked, and then turning to Macklin:

"Did you steal any such letter from this man who calls himself Clark Stuart?" he asked the gangster.

"Naw, of course I didn't," Macklin rejoined. "I don't know who he is an' I don't know what he's a-doin' here, but I know he's sure lyin' about me."

Clark glared at the outlaw, and then flashed his eyes on Dupray again as the latter raised his voice once more.

"It's only your word against Macklin's, apparently," the Lieutenant Governor said to the scout. "And Macklin is known to us. I have every reason to regard him as honest and trustworthy."

The frontiersman's lip curled at that. "When my friends of the Jamison wagon-train show up here," he retorted, "they'll not only identify me, but they'll also bear me out in statin' that Macklin is a low-down, treacherous, murderin'—"

"Enough!" Dupray interrupted sharply. "I am not prepared to listen to any lying calumnies against Macklin. You have been caught in this presidio under suspicious circumstances, and you cannot give adequate account of yourself. Therefore as Lieutenant Governor of Santa Fe I

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am instructing that you shall be removed to a cell, whence you will be taken out and shot when I choose to name a day for your execution."

Clark ground his teeth together.

"You listen to me!" he jerked. "I don't know why you're so anxious to get rid of me, but I know that all this talk about me bein' a spy is so much eyewash, and—"

Once again Dupray broke in on him, wheeling abruptly on the captain of the guards.

"Get the prisoner out of here!" he barked. "Take him to one of the cells and lock him up! Pronto!"

Clutched by the arms, Clark was hustled along the corridor, and as the U.S. Government agent disappeared in the custody of the soldiery and the garrison officer, Dupray smiled at Macklin and Zamora.

"So much for Senor Stuart," he commented. "Perhaps it was just as well that he followed you here after all, Macklin."

"So," Zamora interposed, "just as well, your Excellency. But why delay his execution? Why not have him shot at once?"

Dupray fingered his clean-shaven chin.

"I had intended to have him shot at once," he mused. "But as it transpired that he escaped that first death-volley and was disarmed and captured without bloodshed, it occurred to me that we might wring some useful information out of him in due course regarding the details of his mission. Moreover, I rather like to think of this man Stuart spending a day or two in reflecting upon his approaching end, and wondering just when it will come."

Macklin looked at him comprehensively.

"Meanin' he's caused us a deal o' trouble an' you'd like ter see him squirm, hey?" he said. "Well, them's my sentiments, too, an' there's nothin' like suspense fer breakin' down a man's nerve."

In the meantime, while the foregoing discussion was afoot, Clark Stuart was being marched from the presidio to a long, low shed which stood on the outside of the stronghold's north wall. It was a shed divided up into mean cells whose windows were rendered impenetrable by strong iron bars, and into one of these cells Clark was cast, a stout wooden door being locked and bolted upon him. Then his escort marched off and the frontiersman was left to his thoughts—thoughts that were gloomy enough, though in his plight he clung to one slender possibility of rescue.

He had not forgotten Davy Crockett, that staunch friend whom he had encountered in Santa Fe, and who had ridden on his behalf to meet the Jamison wagon-train with the news that Macklin had right of entry to the Lieutenant Governor's citadel.

If the wagon-train arrived in Santa Fe before Dupray carried out his threat of execution then there was a chance that the imprisoned frontiersman would be saved from death, for his friends of the column, would move heaven and earth to find out what had happened to him, and if they discovered his situation, they would leave no stone unturned in their efforts to secure his release.

Ahead of the Wagon-train

TWO days after Clark had been lodged in the cell building adjoining the north wall of the presidio, Dupray and Zamora might have been found in close consultation within the Lieutenant Governor's study.

"Three times I have visited Stuart, your Excellency," Zamora was saying, "and on each occasion I have asked him many questions concerning his instructions from Washington. He has answered none of them, however. What is more, he does not seem to be giving way under the strain of awaiting execution. I tell you, that fellow is a man of iron."

Dupray uttered a grunt.

"He may be a man of iron," he remarked, "but another day or two of suspense may find him more pliable. Anyhow, we—"

He did not complete the sentence, for at that juncture there was a tap on the door, and as the Lieutenant Governor called out in answer a soldier put in an appearance and saluted smartly.

"Three men are at the main gateway of the presidio, your Excellency," the soldier announced. "They are Americans, and they claim to be from the Jamison wagon-train. It is their desire that you should permit them an interview, Excellency."

Dupray and Zamora exchanged glances. Then the Lieutenant Governor addressed the man in the doorway.

"Bring these Americans to me," he ordered. "I will see them."

The soldier departed, and when he had gone Dupray went out into the corridor where Clark Stuart had been captured a couple of days previously. From a chest there he picked up a gandy serape, and looking back at Zamora significantly, he pulled ajar the door of the cupboard in which Clark had come so near to death and draped the serape over that door so that the bullet-holes in its panels were concealed.

He now stepped back into his sanctum, and was seated at his desk with Zamora by his side when the representatives of the Jamison column were shown in.

The foremost of the trio was Jamison himself, and his companions were Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett, the last-named remaining a little in the background as the wagon-boss and his whiskered aide moved close to the Lieutenant Governor's desk.

Pretending to have been busy with a quill pen and an official-looking document, Dupray eyed the newcomers blandly, his sallow features radiating that genial expression which could mask his true character so effectively.

"Senores, I do not believe we have met," he declared. "But I understand you wish to have an audience with the Lieutenant Governor of Santa Fe, and I am he—Escobedo Dupray at your service. Er—this gentleman with me is Zamora, my—er—my confidential secretary."

Jamison squinted at Zamora, and could not help thinking that he was a pretty unsavoury-looking customer to be the confidential secretary of a Lieutenant Governor. For that matter, however, he was not favourably impressed with Dupray, either. The man's veneer of charm did not deceive him. He saw through it, and marked the underlying craftiness of his eyes, the ruthlessness of his thin-lipped mouth.

Jamison's scrutiny was more than ordinarily critical perhaps. Nor was that to be wondered at. Davy Crockett had come to him with word that Macklin had apparently had right of entry into the Lieutenant Governor's headquarters. Therefore he, Jamison, had come here with the suspicion already formed in his mind that the

Lieutenant Governor might not be a pretty honourable personage.

"My name's Jamison," the wagon-boss now said. "These here are two friends o' mine—Jim Bowie an' Davy Crockett."

"Ah, Senor Jamison!" Dupray exclaimed. "I am happy to welcome you to Santa Fe. My good wishes have been with you on your long trip."

"Thanks," Jamison murmured. "As a matter of fact, the wagon-train ain't due to arrive till to-morrow. We three pushed on ahead expectin' to find Clark Stuart in Santa Fe, but we've combed the town an' there ain't no word of him there. That's why we came out to the presidio. We figured he was bound to have called here."

Escobedo Dupray spoke suavely.

"You refer, of course, to Clark Stuart, the agent of the U.S. Government," he said. "Yes, he did call here, and he presented his credentials to me. It seems they'd been stolen from him, but he had succeeded in recovering them."

He made a motion with his quill-pen as if to indicate that Jamison and his companions should draw up chairs for themselves, but neither Bowie, Crockett, nor the wagon-boss accepted the invitation.

"So Clark Stuart looked you up, eh?" Jamison remarked. "And where is he now?"

"Why, he rode out to meet the new Governor who is coming here from Mexico City," Dupray rejoined glibly. "But pray be seated, gentlemen. You look uncomfortable standing there."

Jamison did sit down now. So did Davy Crockett. But Jim Bowie remained on his two feet, and, while Dupray went on to give an imaginary description of Clark's visit, the old Indian fighter began to range about the room in a suspicious fashion, and even wandered a little way out into the corridor.

The serape hanging over the cupboard door took his eye, and, with the sharp wit characteristic of a scout and tracker, he wondered if it might have been placed there to hide anything, and as a consequence he surreptitiously

drew aside a loose corner of the sheet.

He immediately perceived the bullet-holes in the door-panels, and without a word he let the hem of the serape fall back. Then he sauntered back across the threshold of Dupray's study, giving no indication of the discovery he had made.

"Clark musta left pretty sudden," was all he said, breaking in on the conversation the Lieutenant Governor was holding with Jamison and Crockett.

"Yes," Dupray admitted. "As a matter of fact, he did. He was anxious to contact the new Governor as quickly as possible."

Jamison stood up all at once.

"Well," he declared, "I reckon we won't take up any more o' your time, your Excellency, but I hope we'll see you again after our wagons get in to-morrow."

"Amigo," Dupray replied, "not only will you see me again, but you will see me in holiday mood. For I propose to order a fiesta in honour of your arrival—a fiesta which will take place to the south of the town, and which will be attended by all citizens of Santa Fe who care to fraternise with you and partake of the victuals and entertainment I shall provide."

After expressing pleasure at this happy thought on the Lieutenant Governor's part, Jamison took his leave in company with Crockett and Bowie, both of whom followed the wagon-boss in a silence that was not broken until they had mounted their horses and left the presidio.

"Hey, what in tarnation's the idea of you believin' that varmint Dupray?" Davy Crockett demanded of Jamison, then. "Didn't I tell you that he must be in cahoots with Macklin?"

Jamison pacified him with a gesture.

"Davy, I didn't believe a word that hombre said," he announced. "But as long as Dupray thinks he's fooled us we'll stand a better chance of findin' out what's really happened to Clark. And if Clark's in any trouble, we'll get him out of it just as soon as we can locate him."

"Yeah?" Bowie struck in grimly.

"Well, if you ask me, I got a hunch Clark is past helpin'."

He went on to mention the bullet-holes he had seen, and gave it as his opinion that there had been a fight in the corridor outside Dupray's sanctum, his words casting a dark depression over the minds of Jamison and Davy Crockett. Then after a while the wagon-boss spoke again.

"Pardner," he said to Bowie, "I'm hopin' things ain't so bad as you figure. But if they are, then somebody's got to answer for Clark Stuart's death."

About that same time, up in the Lieutenant Governor's sanctum, Zamora was delivering himself of a caustic observation.

"You told those Americanos a pretty story, senor," he muttered, "and they were clearly deceived by it. But I do not understand why you should go to the expense of arranging a fiesta for them."

Dupray smiled evilly.

"Let me explain," he said. "While that fiesta is in progress, some of your men will make a trip to the Jamison wagon, which will no doubt be unattended, or nearly so. One of those wagons is bound to contain the powder and ammunition supply of the train, and it will be your job to locate it and remove it, so that Jamison and his followers will be at a disadvantage in a fight."

"A fight?"

"Yes, Zamora. For after you have got rid of that powder wagon, I will devise plans for you to attack the Jamison encampment. You see, amigo, I still intend that the merchandise of that train shall fall into our hands before it can be marketed here, and I might say that it will recompense us many times over for the expense of the fiesta."

Zamora's eyes gleamed.

"Now I follow you," he murmured. "The Americanos will only be able to resist so long as the ammunition in their belts holds out. After that, there will be none to fall back on, and Jamison and his crowd will be at our mercy," he gloated evilly.



Rope being procured, Clark's wrists were lashed firmly together, and soon he was standing there helplessly, the captain of the firing-squad by his side and the rest of the soldiery gathered about him.

August 26th, 1938.

"Exactly," Dupray answered. "Moreover, you may rely on me to requisition all ammunition from the stores in Santa Fe, on the pretext that it is needed for the garrison of the presidio. Thus Jamison will not be able to lay in a fresh supply when he discovers the powder wagon is missing. And, incidentally, you need have no fear of the people in Santa Fe interfering when you stage your attack on the encampment, Zamora. They may be in sympathy with the Americanos, but if I know anything of them they will not choose to throw away their lives in an affair that is no concern of theirs."

Zamora looked at him shrewdly. "You are right enough there," he agreed. "The people of Santa Fe will keep out of harm's way. There is just one point, however. What about the presidio garrison? They might take up arms against my bravos. Remember, they have no idea that you and I are behind the banditti who operate between here and the U.S. frontier. Remember, the troops are only loyal to you because they believe you stand for law and order."

Again Escobedo Dupray smiled. "I have not overlooked the question of the troops," he said. "Before the time comes for you to attack Jamison and his friends, I shall see to it that the presidio is practically denuded of soldiery. I shall see to it that after the fiesta the bulk of the garrison is despatched from here into the northern hills—to punish the Indians there, who, I am told, scalped some fool of a prospector up in Canyada Colorado the other day."

Death-Freight

A NEW day had dawned, fresh and fair—such a day as might make men feel that it was good to be alive. But in his cell, hard by the north wall of the presidio, where he had been visited only by Zamora and an occasional soldier who had fed him at meal-times, Clark Stuart gained no enjoyment from the brightness of the weather.

He was alive, but could not help wondering sombrely if he would still be so when the westering sun had crossed the sky and the shades of another night had drawn in over the landscape. Or would his bullet-riddled body be lying in some nameless grave near the fortress? Would the threat of execution that was hanging over his head have been carried out by the time dusk had fallen?

Such were Clark's thoughts as, with hands still bound behind his back, he stood gazing out through the window of his cell—a window fitted with grimy panes, outside which were bars of iron embedded in the adobe of ledge and lintel.

Clark's cell was the end one in the row, and his window was located in a side wall that faced east. Nevertheless the sprawling settlement of Santa Fe was not within the scope of his vision, and he was unaware that the Jamison wagon-train had arrived this morning and was encamped to the south of the town. He was likewise ignorant of the fact that a fiesta was in progress—a fiesta that had provided the newcomers from the States and the citizens of Santa Fe with an opportunity of mingling pleasantly.

All that Clark could see from his prison was a strip of open terrain bounded by a dusty ridge, and he was looking towards that ridge gloomily when all at once his glance was attracted to a figure which appeared on the crown of the eminence.

The figure, silhouetted against the

skyline, was mounted on a horse, and, although far out of call, was identified almost immediately by Clark. It was the figure of the mysterious white girl who wore the clothes of a Redskin and who was known throughout the wilderness between Santa Fe and Independence as the Rider of the Painted Stallion, enemy of outlawry.

Why she had wandered so close to the town the imprisoned frontiersman did not know—though if he had been aware of the Jamison wagon-train's arrival he might have guessed that she was merely there to satisfy herself that the column had reached its destination safely. As it was, he only knew that a person who had already proved herself friendly towards him was in sight, and would assuredly endeavour to help him if only he could acquaint her with his unenviable position.

No guard or gaoler was in the neighbourhood of the cell-building. Clark's captors seemed to consider that he did not need watching, and, Zamora excepted, did not come near him between meals. But the frontiersman had no doubt that if he broke the window and tried to hail the Rider, someone in the presidio would hear his voice and come running to investigate. Into the bargain, it was all too clear to him that, even if he bellowed with all the force of his lungs, no shout from him could ever carry to that figure on the ridge.

Yet Clark did decide to break the window, for all of a sudden an inspiration occurred to him.

Climbing on to a bunk that was the cell's only article of furniture, he lifted his boot and smashed one of the panes. Then he twisted round and thrust his pinioned wrists into close contact with the jagged edge of the breach he had made in the window, and in another moment he was chafing his bonds against the rent in the glass.

Before long he had severed the thongs, and, his wrists free, he turned and peered out through the window again, noting to his relief that the Rider of the Painted Stallion was still limned on the ridge.

Clark now picked up a fragment of glass that had fallen on to the sill, and by means of this he extemporised a kind of semaphore, catching the sun's light and flashing the reflection of that light afar, with such shrewd aim that it smote dazingly into the eyes of that silhouetted figure he had recognised.

The girl twisted her head this way and that, as if to elude the irritating glint, attaching no special significance to it at first. But as it continued to play upon her eyes persistently, even when she tugged the rein of her horse and moved a little to one side, she suspected all at once that someone was purposely directing it on her, and she quickly focused her gaze on the quarter whence it was coming.

As he realised that she was staring towards his cell-window, Clark pulled out a white handkerchief and waved it through the rent he had driven in the pane, and, detecting the flutter of that handkerchief, the girl hesitated only for a few seconds before starting to ride down from the ridge.

She advanced cautiously, very likely fearing a trap, but a few minutes later she was near enough to distinguish the prisoner who had attracted her attention, and, as she saw the handsome scout who had saved her life when she had been trapped in the box canyon some days previously, she gave vent to an exclamation of concern.

In another moment she was urging her stallion close to the door of Clark's cell, and then she spoke rapidly to the

horse in the Comanche Indian dialect, whereupon the animal wheeled right-about and proceeded to lash out at the door with its hind hoofs.

Under the onslaught of those powerful hoofs the woodwork splintered and gave way, flying into smithereens, and, ordering the stallion to desist when the door had been disposed of, the Rider waited for Clark to emerge.

The big frontiersman slipped out into the open almost immediately and addressed words of gratitude to the girl. Then she motioned to her horse's back, indicating that he should climb up behind her, but he shook his head and turned towards a small stable adjoining the cell-building.

He had seen one of his captors lead his blaze-faced sorrel into that stable, and he now fetched the bronc out. At that the Rider of the Painted Stallion nodded understandingly, and then with a wave of her hand she swung around and headed for the ridge from which she had come.

Clark himself lost no time in climbing astride his pony, for he imagined the Painted Stallion's attack on the cell door may have been heard in the presidio. Nor was he mistaken, for as he was about to gallop off Zamora came charging round the north-east angle of the fortress wall on horseback.

There was a gun in his fist, and as he clapped eyes on Clark he attempted to bring the weapon to bear on the scout. But before he could do so the American had spurred close to him, and, striking up the Dago's arm with one hand, he hit him flush in the jaw with the other.

Zamora plunged out of the saddle and lay grovelling in the dust. As for Clark, he drove his heels into the flanks of his sorrel and "hit the breeze" for town, and it was as he was approaching the settlement that he saw a great number of prairie schooners assembled some little distance to the south of Santa Fe.

He knew then that the Jamison column had arrived, but none of his friends appeared to be with the wagons. He suddenly espied a mob of people gathered close to the south gate of the town of Santa Fe, however, and as he drew nearer he made out familiar faces among them—the faces of wagon-drivers and outriders who belonged to the Jamison train.

They were fraternising with the people of the settlement, and in that genial concourse of human beings courteous Spanish-Americans were rubbing shoulders with rough-and-ready, jovial manured Yankees, gathering in groups around fires where haunches of venison and leef were being roasted, or tripping a measure to the strains of music provided by guitarists and fiddlers.

Such was the fiesta that had been arranged by Escobedo Dupray, and the Lieutenant Governor had graced it with his presence—was riding, resplendent in uniform, among the crowds, exchanging nods and smiles with citizens and visitors, receiving the salutes of unarmed soldiers of the garrison, for most of the troops of the citadel had been given a few hours furlough so that they might attend the festival.

Dupray did not realise it, but three men and a boy were keeping very close to him as he moved to and fro amid the throng. They were Jamison, Bowie, Davy Crockett and Kit Carson, and they had elected to watch the Lieutenant Governor and shadow him diligently, in the hope that he might meet with some one of his hirelings, and make some reference to Clark Stuart—some unguarded reference which the friends of the missing scout might overhear.

Jamison, Bowie, Crockett and Kit Carson were still sticking to Dupray's

trail through the crowds when the swarms of revellers were scattered by the advent of a horseman. That horseman was none other than Clark, and as Jamison and his three companions beheld the frontiersman they shouted his name in accents of relief.

A few seconds later Clark was beside them, and, breaking in on their interrogations, he pointed acensingly at Dupray, whose face had become the picture of dismay and who was pulling at his mount's rein as if bent on making himself scarce.

"Stop that man!" Clark rapped out, and with characteristic promptitude Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett closed in on Dupray and gripped his pony's bridle, at the same time covering the Lieutenant Governor with their guns.

Dupray's escape having been frustrated, Clark Stuart went on to denounce him as one who was plainly hand in glove with a pack of outlaws and renegades, and in loud tones he detailed those facts which supported his indictment against the Lieutenant Governor.

His story raised angry murmurs from the men of the Jamison wagon-train, who had now mustered about their leaders. As for the citizens of Santa Fe and the soldiers on furlough from the presidio, they seemed amazed by the charges that were being made against the high personage they had held in esteem and respect, and they were giving tongue to a confused babble of exclamations when an elderly American was seen elbowing his way through the press of humanity.

He was a member of the Jamison column, and at sight of him the wagon-boss confronted him sternly.

"What are you doin' here, Saunders?" he demanded. "I thought you were detailed to stay at the encampment and keep an eye on the prairie schooners."

"Jamison," the other panted, "I ain't here 'as a man that shirked his duty. I'm here to tell you that a bunch o' gummies sneaked up on me at the encampment. One of 'em laid me out with the butt-end of a six-shooter, but I wasn't knocked cold, and I saw 'em pick out the powder-wagon an' make off with it, headin' south-east. What's more, one o' them was Macklin!"

Those within hearing lapsed into a blank silence at this piece of information. Then Clark Stuart found his voice.

"Jamison," he cried, "we've got to get after those outlaws, and there's no time to lose. Leave a couple of men in charge of Dupray and then come on with the rest of the boys. I'm ridin' ahead."

With the words he pushed his bronc forward through the crowd, and, clearing the mob, he struck out for the south-east, passing the wagon-encampment about a minute later and spying ahead of him a cloud of dust amidst which he was able to make out a group of horsemen and a speeding prairie schooner.

Boldly he gave chase, and he had not gone far when he looked back and saw that Jamison and his followers were running to the encampment and mounting up, having presumably left a couple of their number to stand guard over Escobedo Dupray. Nor was it long before the wagon-boss and his men were thundering in a body over the route the fugitives and Clark were taking.

Meanwhile, Clark was gaining steadily on the crooks, and these becoming aware that he was in pursuit, they opened fire on him viciously, but without effect.

The frontiersman responded with his gun, and saw one of the renegades clutch at his arm. Then all at once those of the rogues who were on horse-

back swerved off, abandoning the wagon—not because they feared Clark alone, but because the rest of the Jamison column's personnel were coming up fast in support of the scout, and the mules harnessed to the stolen prairie schooner were no match for saddle-ponies in pace.

Clark kept to the trail of the powder wagon, and, swiftly overhauling it, he drew abreast of the vehicle as it was racketing along the edge of a deep gulch. Then he set eyes on a solitary gangster crouching on the driving-seat with the mule-team's reins gripped in his fists—a gangster whom he recognised as one of the rogues who had figured in the attempt that had been made on his life at Boulder Notch.

The fellow, deserted by his comrades and lacking a bronc himself, had had no choice but to remain aboard the wagon and hope for the best. Now he reached for a forty-five and tried to draw a bead on Clark, but ere he could do so the U.S. Government agent had thrown himself from his horse and landed beside the outlaw.

He swung his right in a slashing upper-cut that took the ruffian under

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the chin, and the man went tumbling back amongst the powder barrels and ammunition boxes that packed the interior of the covered wagon. But in his fall he must have dragged on the reins in such a manner as to throw the mule-team into a wild swerve, and suddenly the whole equipage was going over the rim of the gulch.

Away to the rear, through the smother of dust set up by the powder-wagon's wheels, Jamison and his comrades saw the vehicle plunge down the declivity with its team. Pulling up, they watched it in horror as it capsized and went rolling towards the gulch's bed, the mules losing their footing and rolling with it in a kicking, struggling heap. Then it crashed with violent impact at the foot of the slope, and instantly there was a blinding sheet of flame and an ear-splitting roar as its deadly contents exploded!

(To be continued in another high-tension episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)

"WHEN G-MEN STEP IN"

(Continued from page 12)

window at which he had entered, and scrambled out at it.

The foot-steps that had alarmed him were those of Clip and his companions, but the crooks did not descend the stairs—they passed on into the office, where Clip once more sat down at the desk.

"I've been waiting for this opportunity for a long time," he said, as he pulled a telephone towards him. "Now pipe down, all of you!"

"You're sure this'll work?" asked Jennings, as a number was dialled.

"I'm making it work!" snapped Clip; and then, into the telephone: "Let me speak to Miss Marjory Drake, please."

He had rung up Marjory's home, and in a very little while he heard her voice in his ear. He told her that some men from out of town were at the printing works with what looked like a really good order, but that they were leaving New York that night, and he had been unable to locate Fred.

"I've phoned everywhere," he lied. "If you could just come over to the plant and settle the deal, that would be fine. You will, right away? Oh, that's good!"

He put down the telephone. "She'll be here in about half an hour," he informed the others with evil satisfaction. "Jennings, you and Turk go to the boss' office. See that you get there at half-past nine. Tell him I sent you."

"He'll throw us out," growled Jennings.

"No, he won't. Tell him I'm in a jam—tell him anything. Turk, you keep him covered, then get me on the phone. I'll give that guy something to worry about! We're trading the girl for the money in his safe and those letters. On your way now, and bring him back as soon as you can."

At a quarter-past nine Fred was in his room at the Saerman Building and the door was locked. He had sent Morton home at seven o'clock, and, after Marjory had left for Long Island, he had gone out to get a meal, visited his own flat, and returned a little before nine with three travelling bags.

The bags were on his desk, and the steel door of a huge safe was wide open. From the shelves of the safe he had transferred bundles of notes to two of the bags, and he was filling the third bag when a rap at the door startled him.

He deposited the bag in the safe, closed the steel door, and then went over to the door at which the rapping persisted. The broken panel had been replaced.

"Who is it?" he called out. "Bruce," replied his brother's voice; and he unlocked and opened the door. "Well, this is unexpected," he said. "Come on in!"

Bruce stepped into the room, and the door was shut and the key turned in the lock.

"How did you know I was here?" asked Fred.

"I went to your apartment," Bruce replied. "Your valet told me."

"Well, I had a little book-keeping to take care of. It's just about finished."

No account-books were on the desk, but Bruce picked up from it a pamphlet concerning European tours.

"Planning a little trip, Fred?" he inquired.

"Yes," admitted his brother. "Quite an extended one."

"Rather a sudden decision, isn't it?"

"Yes and no. I've sort of lost interest in the business since you refused to come in with me."

"Is that the only reason?"

"No, the trip's going to be a honeymoon. Marjory and I are going to be married."

Bruce stared.

"You're not going to marry Marjory Drake!" he said sternly.

"Why not?"

"Have you told her you're skipping the country, Fred?"

"What are you talking about?"

"I've just come from the Gothic Press," Bruce replied, and added significantly: "I found the revolving wall section."

Fred compressed his lips.

"Was your partner with you?" he questioned abruptly.

"No, I went alone."

"That simplifies things a lot. Listen, kid, I'm through with the rackets for good. I'll give you my word on that. I've never really hurt anyone—I've just taken a lot of suckers for a joy ride. Forget what you saw to-night and I'll give you more money than you've ever seen before."

"Commonly known as bribery!" scoffed Bruce.

"Why not?"

"You wouldn't understand."

"Bruce, there's such a thing as being a hero, and there's such a thing as being a sap."

"If it's being a sap to live up to an oath," Bruce retorted implacably, "then I guess I'm a sap. You know why I came here, Fred?"

"Yes, I know," sighed his brother, "the jig's up. Well, I've always said if I had to be arrested I'd want you to take the bows." He squared his shoulders and he held out his wrists. "Get your handcuffs, Mr. G-man, I'm ready!"

Bruce took out a pair of handcuffs, but somehow he could not snap them round the extended wrists, and he looked as miserable as he felt.

"What's the matter?" asked Fred. "You've been hunting me ever since you arrived in town. The hunt is over now, and you're in at the kill."

"I can't do it, Fred," Bruce said hoarsely. "I came here to arrest you, but I can't do it. No, you've taken care of me for a long time—now it's my turn. There's one way out."

"What do you mean?"

Bruce put away the handcuffs and pointed to the desk.

"Write down all you know concerning the rackets," he said. "Names, figures, addresses—everything the Government will need to wipe them out of existence."

"And?"

"I'll wait till you and Marjory are safely out of the country, then I'll turn in the information and my badge with it."

But Fred shook his head.

"Don't be a fool," he said, "the whole case would be open and shut. You're my brother—they'd know why you did it!"

"What difference does that make?" shrugged Bruce. "You never thought much of my being a Federal Agent."

"You couldn't even be a lawyer, after that! They'd disbar you!"

"You're wasting time, Fred. Start writing!"

"I've got a better plan. Wait until Marjory and I have gone out of the August 20th, 1938.

country, then tell your chief you've just found out about the Gothic Press."

"No dice, Fred."

"Well, suppose you were here tomorrow, bound hand and foot? You could tell 'em you'd come to arrest me, but I overpowered you."

Bruce was not to be persuaded.

"We'll do it my way," he insisted.

"Listen," said Fred, stepping closer, "you could say that we were talking. I took you off your guard and knocked you out—like this!"

The blow was entirely unexpected. It was a right cross to the jaw, and just to make sure that his brother really was knocked out, a left hook followed. Bruce thudded to the floor, on his back, and Fred was kneeling beside him, binding his ankles and his hands with rope from a parcel of programmes, when a rap at the door made him jump.

"Who is it?" he called.

"Jennings," was the reply.

"What do you want?"

"We're in a jam, boss."

"Okay, be there in a minute."

The Text

IN less than a minute Fred had tugged his unconscious brother into a large cupboard, across the room, and shut the door upon him. He flung the tell-tale pamphlet into a waste-paper basket, and then he went to the door, on the other side of which Jennings and Turk were waiting, and opened it.

The two entered the room, Turk with a hand in his coat-pocket, and the door was kicked shut by Jennings.

"Well, spill it!" barked Fred.

Turk's hand came out from his pocket, and in it was an ugly little Derringer.

"Lift 'em!" he snarled.

Fred raised his hands.

"What's this all about?" he asked.

"Get 'em high! Higher!"

Jennings passed his hands swiftly over Fred's pockets, and reported that there was nothing on him.

"You know what this is going to get you?" rasped the captive.

"Sure," drawled Turk, "all the dough in that safe!"

"Don't forget those two letters I told you about!"

"We ain't forgettin' 'em. Get over there!"

Fred was driven back against the safe, and Jennings went to the telephone on the desk and dialled a number.

"If that's Clip you're calling," said Fred, "you may as well tell him to start running, because if ever I catch up with him—"

"Shut up!" hissed Turk, and jabbed him in the ribs with the gun.

Clip, in the office of the printing works, answered the call. The rest of the gang were there, and Marjory was a prisoner in a chair.

"Put him on," directed Clip; and then, as Jennings held the telephone to Fred's ear: "I suppose you're kind o' mad, Mr. Garth?" mocked his voice.

"Well, let's see how tough you are after you talk to a guest I have here."

The crook rose from the desk and thrust the telephone he had used upon Marjory.

"Say 'Hallo' to your boy friend," he directed harshly. "Go on, talk to him, and tell him he'd better get down here and bail you out, or it's gonna be just too bad. And don't think we're foolin'!"

Fred heard most of that, and then he heard Marjory's voice; but what she said, bravely enough, was:

"Don't pay any attention to him, Fred. He wouldn't dare touch me. I'm perfectly safe."

"Recognise that voice, Garth?" demanded Clip.

"You crazy fool!" stormed Fred.

"You can't get away with anything like this, especially with a girl like Marjory Drake! You'll have every policeman in the country looking for you! Where are you?"

"Never mind where I am," Clip retorted. "The boys will bring you to me—and don't forget your girl friend's health depends on how quick you get here!"

Bruce, by this time, had recovered consciousness in the cupboard and was gnawing at the knots in the rope that bound his wrists. Jennings took the telephone from Fred, dropped it on its plunger, and said:

"Now, let's have that dough!"

"Yeah," said Turk, "and then we can go to that friend o' yours—the one who has the letters."

Fred, more concerned for Marjory's safety than his own, confessed that the letters were not with any friend, but were in the desk.

"Well, get 'em!" snapped Jennings.

Fred bent over the desk and opened a drawer in it; but his hope of being able to knock the gun out of Turk's hand was frustrated, for Jennings produced a gun of his own, and cried:

"No fumbling! Come on!"

Two envelopes were taken from the drawer, and Jennings pocketed them. Fred was then compelled to open the door of the safe and to step inside it.

"Where's the dough?" Jennings demanded, following him, while Turk remained by the door.

"In the bags," Fred replied.

"Grab two of 'em yourself, porter! I can watch your mitts better!"

Fred stooped and picked up two of the bags, and Jennings picked up the third one. They were deposited on the desk, and Jennings completed the filling of the middle one with notes from the safe, while Turk stood on guard with his gun. In the cupboard, Bruce had freed his wrists and started to unfasten the rope about his ankles.

The third bag was closed and fastened, the door of the safe was locked, and Fred was forced to carry two of the bags out to an elevator, with Turk very close beside him, and Jennings bringing up the rear with the bag he himself had filled.

The elevators were self-working after eight o'clock at night. Jennings pressed a button, a cage ascended, and the gates were opened. The three got into the cage, and the cage was disappearing from sight when Bruce came unshing across the corridor.

He had to wait for the cage of another elevator, and by the time he reached the street Jennings had followed Fred into the back of a saloon car that was standing there, and Turk was at the wheel and starting the engine. Bruce raced along the pavement to another car and scrambled into it beside Neale.

"Theo, tail that car!" he cried. "The one that's just pulled out—and don't get too close to it!"

Neale shot off in pursuit, and East Thirty-fourth Street was reached via Broadway. Bruce, realising that the crooks were taking his brother to the Gothic Press, told Neale to stop about a block away from the building, and there he alighted.

"Get to the nearest 'phone," he directed. "Call Preston, and tell him to bring a squad of men to the Gothic Press as fast as he can!"

Higher up the street the saloon had

been brought to a standstill by Turk, who covered Fred while he got out, cumbered with the three bags, then he descended. Jennings followed, and the three entered the building.

Marjory was in the office with the gang, but a man was standing over her with a six-shooter in his hand, and she did not attempt to rise as they appeared. She looked at Fred, but she did not speak.

"Have a seat," said Clip with a wave of his hand.

"Drop them bags first!" snapped Jennings.

Fred set the bags on the floor and dropped into a chair.

"Did you get the dough?" demanded Clip eagerly.

"Right in them bags," responded Jennings.

"And the letters?"

The two envelopes were handed over, and the letters they contained were examined while the bags were being put away in a safe.

"How do I know you didn't make copies of these?" rasped Clip, whirling round on Fred.

"You don't," was the quiet reply, "but there's one way you can find out."

"That's what I was thinking. Let's you and me and Miss Drake talk things over in the press-room, where any noise we make won't be heard in the street."

"You've got nothing against her!" protested Fred. "Let her go!"

"Oh, I think she'd better come along," drawled Clip, "seeing that she knows almost as much now as you do."

"Wait a minute."

"On the way, both of you!" Clip roared. "Come on! You with me, Jennings—the rest of you stay here. Close the doors and lock them."

Fred was jerked to his feet by Jennings, who brandished a six-gun; Marjory rose of her own accord, and Clip caught hold of her arm. The two prisoners were marched out to the stairs and down the stairs to the printing-room.

Bruce had entered that room by way of the window-less than a minute before the door was opened, and he ducked down behind a bench.

Marjory and Fred were driven over to a wall and ordered to turn about, and Clip was advancing towards them when Bruce rose up behind the bench with an automatic in his hand, and shouted:

"Get 'em up!"

"Bruce!" screamed Marjory.

"Look out!" shouted Fred.

But Jennings had fred, and Bruce dropped the automatic, wounded in the wrist.

"Nice work, Jennings," said Clip, and he eyed Bruce malevolently. "Well, if it isn't little brother G-man, just in time for the party! Get over against that wall!"

Bruce stood beside his brother, who whispered hurriedly:

"If you get out of this alive, kid, there's a couple of letters in my desk that will tell you all you want to know."

"Stall them," Bruce whispered back. "The Feds are on their way."

Clip had stepped back to the other side of the bench on which the printed texts were piled, and Jennings was behind him.

"Turn round and take what's coming to you!" blared Clip. "Come on! We haven't got all night!"

Fred, with upraised hands, took a step forward.

"Wait a minute, Clip," he pleaded. "You're a smart guy—I'll make a deal with you."

"You get back!" Clip roared at him.

"I'm not interested in any deals."

But Fred dared to take another step forward.

"I've got half a million bucks in a safety-deposit box," he said.

"They can stay there!"

"Half a million bucks if you let us go!"

Fred had nearly reached the piled up texts.

"Get back, there! I'm warning you!"

"You'd better do it, Clip, because if you don't—"

With a sudden sweep of his right arm he sent a stack of texts showering off the bench against the crook and with his left fist sent him crashing to the floor.

"Bruce, the wall!" he cried.

Bruce was close to the box-like cavity behind the "No Smoking" notice. He reached into it and tugged at the lever. But Jennings' gun spat flame, and Fred fell in a crumpled heap amongst the fallen texts.

In almost the same moment, Neale appeared at the open window, and he fired at Jennings, who dropped his gun and held up his hands, blood streaming from a wound in his cheek.

The movable section of the wall was beginning to revolve, but Bruce did not bundle Marjory into the room beyond it. Robert Preston had burst in at the door from the stairs, and with him were half a dozen armed G-men. Neale scrambled in over the sill of the window and hurled himself upon Clip, who was beginning to rise, and Preston shouted:

"All right, get 'em and hold 'em!"

Upstairs other G-men had captured the rest of the gang, but Fred was lying dead upon the floor.

Bruce dropped on his knees to look mournfully down into glazing eyes, and Preston put a hand on his shoulder.

"It's too bad, Bruce," he said sympathetically.

Fred's limp right hand was resting upon one of the texts he had sent flying, and, somehow, it seemed appropriate to his end.

"Those who live by the sword," it ran, "shall perish by the sword."

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Don Terry, with Jacqueline Wells and Robert Paige.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WHEN G-MEN STEP IN."—

Frederick Garth, Don Terry; Marjory Drake, Jacqueline Wells; Bruce Garth, Robert Paige; Theodore Neale, Gene Morgan; "Clip" Phillips, Paul Fix; Robert Preston, Stanley Andrews; John Morton, Edward Earle; Albert Jennings, Horace MacMahon; Turk, Huey White.

"YELLOW JACK."—

Sergeant John O'Hara, Robert Montgomery; Frances Blake, Virginia Bruce; Major Reed, Lewis Stone; Charlie Spill, Andy Devine; Dr. Jesse Lascar, Henry Hull; Dr. Finlay, Charles Coburn; "Jellybeans," Buddy Ebsen; Colonel Tory, C. Henry Gordon; Captain Gorgas, Henry O'Neill; Breen, William Henry; Miss MacDade, Janet Beeche; Brinkerhof, Alan Curtis; Busch, Sam Levene; Dr. James Carroll, Stanley Ridges; Ferguson, Phillip Terry.

"YELLOW JACK"

(Continued from page 18)

Mosquito Versus Man

THE sergeant closed the door of House Two and glanced round in an amused, whimsical way. He held up the bottle and made a face at the small things beating against the glass walls. He put the bottle down on a table, yawned, and wandered round the room to see that everything was in order. Satisfied, he took off his dressing-gown. Except for trunks he was naked. He pulled back the mosquito netting over the bed and climbed inside, lying there for a while on his back, musing about the anxiety of Frances. Then he reached out a hand, and, lifting the netting, picked up the bottle. Might as well do the job thoroughly and release all these little darlings inside the netting so that they cannot escape. He lifted the lid and one escaped, and that made him laugh. He watched it for a while, then removed the cover completely and placed the bottle between his knees.

Buzz-zz-zz-zz! The Stegomyias buzzed forth, and for a while flew round the netting.

"Come on, girls!" shouted O'Hara. "I'll stand you a drink!"

Arms folded across his chest he watched them with amused tolerance, and then winced. He raised his hand. One little beauty had bitten his ankle.

"Hope it poisons ye!" he cried, and watched one settle on his knee. A moment later there were ten or more mosquitoes on his body. "Let 'em all come!"

He laughed, and couldn't resist squashing one that dared to settle on the end of his nose.

Tiring of the sport, O'Hara relaxed, and, though he itched from the bites, managed to fall asleep. He woke up in the morning, yawned, and suddenly thought of the strawberries and cream. If the major did not keep his word, he'd quit the Service. Except for a slight headache he felt fine, and that would pass off after a nice cup of tea.

Carroll brought his breakfast, but did not stay very long, though O'Hara assured the doctor that the majority of Stegomyias were still under the bed netting. They might be useful for another experiment.

The sergeant looked out of the window. It was a grand morning. He rubbed his hands together and sat down at the table. He lifted a lid and peered at the strawberries. He poured some cream over them, then poured himself out some tea. He made a face over the tea—it tasted like dish-water. He touched his forehead—he was sweating. He put it down to the mugginess of the room. He opened a window and felt much better. Once more he went back to his breakfast. He ate a strawberry liberally soaked in cream and chewed it slowly. It did not taste very nice. He smelt the cream to see if it were sour. He shivered suddenly and got to his feet. Curse this confounded weather, one moment hot and the next cold.

For a while he sat there looking at the strawberries and making no attempt to eat them. Why did he feel so rotten? He was far too tough for any pesky mosquitoes to get him down. Maybe it was something else he was sickening for.

Not hearing any sounds from the hut, a watcher stole up to the window and August 26th, 1938.

saw O'Hara sprawled across the table with his nose buried in the strawberries and cream.

After that O'Hara knew little for a very long while. Sometimes the major or Dr. Carroll seemed to float before him and sometimes it was Frances. They were worried about him because he seemed so angry that the mosquitoes had got him down and he couldn't raise a hand against them. In his nightmarish dreams hundreds of Stegomyias were charging at him, buzzing like an angry cavalry charge.

The three volunteers were released at last from House One, and what a sight they presented. Unshaven, dirty, haggard and staggering like drunken men.

"Don't come too near me," protested Charlie Spill, who had been sent to release them.

"Why not?" demanded Busch, with some slight resemblance of his old truculence.

"Because you don't look too clean," Charlie answered. "Now you boys mustn't argue with me. You gotta get busy."

"Busy?" the three wrecks cried.

"Your orders are to burn them dudes before they crawl away, have a bath, and report for duty in an hour," Charlie backed away. "It ain't any use getting sore with me. They're the major's orders. He needs every man."

Busch's language was unprintable, but it was amazing what a bath and a change of clothing can do. And when they reported back on duty they held their shoulders square, because the few words Major Reed had spoken to them had made them feel like heroes.

Major Reed was determined to wipe out Yellow Jack, and he needed the help of every man. The orderlies were put in charge of large parties of troops with provisional rank. The major told them exactly the sort of places where the mosquitoes were likely to breed, and he wanted them wiped out. If the people protested, then the troops were to use force. The movement had the backing of the general. If any officers made any protest the matter was to be reported to Major Reed. Nothing was to stand in the light of this purge. The existence of the Stegomyia mosquito was to be wiped out for ever. The troops set to with a will.

And the man who had proved conclusively that Yellow Jack was caused by the Stegomyia lay in a coma in the pest house. Major Reed and the other doctors were constantly at his side, because it was going to be a hard fight to drag O'Hara from the valley of death.

It was days before that dreadful buzzing ceased for O'Hara and he opened tired eyes. He knew at once that he was in a hospital cot and that those cursed skeeters had beaten the great O'Hara. He turned his head painfully and saw Nurse MacDade bending over him.

"Morning, John," she greeted him brightly.

"Hey, what's up?" he demanded.

"Your fever's breaking, and you'll soon be well again," the nurse assured him. "The major's in Havana. They've cleaned out the city. Every rain-barrel, every cistern, every water-hole—the soldiers haven't left the mosquitoes a drop of uncovered water to breed in. Yellow Jack is licked in Cuba."

O'Hara moved restlessly.

"Where's—where's—"

"Asleep," laughed the nurse. "The poor girl's worn out from spending the day and most of the night by your bed—"

August 20th, 1933.

side. She'll be back soon. Now relax and stop talking."

There was intense excitement in Quemados, the military camp on the outskirts of Havana, because the majority of troops were to be relieved and sent home. Transports were at anchor in the bay.

It was a great moment in Major Reed's life when he was sent for by the general and Colonel Tory stepped forward to make his apology for the hard things he had said about the commission. The general thanked the major because the conquest of Yellow Jack meant so much to the United States—it meant that Major Gorgas could go back to Panama.

Major Reed and Major Gorgas, after the little ceremony, went off to enjoy a quiet chat, and the latter said he wished that he could get hold of men like Sergeant O'Hara to volunteer for Panama.

"Why don't you ask him?" replied the major. "Maybe you might tempt him with extra pay and the promise of a commission."

Sergeant O'Hara had never given very serious consideration to anything, but these last few weeks had changed him. He wanted to marry Frances, and what had he to offer her. Maybe it would be best if he went home on the first ship available and forgot Frances. His job was finished here. And then Major Gorgas came to see him.

There came a day when O'Hara was once more on his feet and he went down to the nurses' office to see Frances, who was returning to New York on the first available transport. Frances thought that O'Hara might be going as well.

She was waiting for him. Never had she looked so beautiful. She held out her arms to him and he drew her into a bear-like hug.

"I'm a little weak in the knees yet," he told her.

"Once you get home you'll soon feel better."

"Well—er—I'm after staying out here for a while longer." He grinned boyishly as he saw the expression of horrified surprise. "Didn't I tell you I was heading for Panama, to watch out for Major Gorgas?"

"Panama!"

"He's a fine man, darlin', although a little daft with this notion he has of digging a ditch across the hemisphere."

"You mustn't go." Frances elung to him. "Oh, John, do I have to do the asking? Come to Washington. Get a job—settle down."

"The army's in my blood," cried O'Hara. "Besides, I've been offered special pay and maybe the chance of a commission. Darlin', wouldn't you like to be a captain's wife?"

"I want to be Sergeant O'Hara's wife," sobbed Frances. "Besides, it's dangerous in Panama."

"Not at all." O'Hara stuck out his chest. "And nothing can harm an O'Hara—for long." He gripped her shoulders. "But I'm to have special leave some time. Could you be in Washington round about the middle of April?" She nodded. "Meet me there and we'll get married even if I'm a general."

"I think you could persuade me, John O'Hara"—Frances stood on tiptoe—"if you kissed me just once again."

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd., starring Robert Montgomery as Sergeant O'Hara, Lewis Stone as Major Reed and Virginia Bruce as Frances.)



(Continued from page 2)

While "Yellow Jack" was in production, George Seitz took advantage of an incident on the set, including it in the finished picture. Robert Montgomery and Sam Levene were seated in a tent, discussing yellow fever. Following the rehearsal, Montgomery turned to the mirror, felt his face, wondered if he was really coming down with the disease. The action fitted the scene so well that Seitz included it in the picture.

Directors are alert for these seemingly meaningless incidents, realising that the natural reaction to a scene is often more dramatic than anything the writers can anticipate.

Ronald Reagan—Ex-Announcer.

Look to the movies for proof of the wisdom of some old proverbs.

Take that wheeze about "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good!" Small comfort, perhaps, it is to hear that when you're down on your luck—but if it hadn't been for somebody else's misfortune the screen might be deprived of some of its brightest stars to-day.

And there's another saying—"Some are born to greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them"—which doesn't reflect on those achieving greatness but is true nevertheless.

If Ronald Reagan hadn't just happened to have been broadcasting the 1937 spring training of the Chicago Cubs at Catalina Island, he probably still would be a radio announcer. Instead, Max Arnow, Warner Bros' talent scout, heard his voice on the air, a screen test was given and followed by a long-term contract.

Now Reagan is playing the leading rôle in "Accidents Will Happen," his third picture, and is ready to declare that there is something in a title after all. But while it was through chance he won his opportunity, sheer talent made it possible for him to make good, and it made him one of the outstanding discoveries of recent years.

Actors Too Rough.

A fist fight between Warner Bros' new star, Ronald Reagan, and actor Elliott Sullivan is part of the melodrama, "Accidents Will Happen."

Director William Clemens explained that the scrappers were to pull punches, be careful not to hurt each other, and, above all, not to blacken each other's eyes.

"I'd put this fight sequence at the end of the picture, to play safe, but as the schedule stands I can't do it," he explained. "You'll just have to be careful, that's all. Ronnie gets a black eye, supposedly, but remember that's to be applied by the make-up man, not a fist!"

The boys promised faithfully. They rehearsed in good order. They emerged with a black eye each—and the make-up man spent next day keeping the "shiners" white-washed.

Hollywood Has Arranged For Guaranteed Weather.

Hollywood weather may be brilliant or sunless, but it is always guaranteed weather.

A day in advance, sometimes as much as a month ahead, studios get an analytical report on the weather for film shooting. As a result, no

(Continued on page 23)

ARE YOU IN OUR NEW COLLECTING SCHEME?

JOIN IN
TO-DAY!



1000 FREE FOOTBALLS

for Scoring "Goals" with FOOTER-STAMPS

ARE you collecting FOOTER-STAMPS? They're all the rage, and you really must be in this wonderful scheme! This is what to do: Every week in BOY'S CINEMA we are giving "Footer-Stamps"—pictures of six different actions on the football field. The object of this great stamp-game being to score as many "goals" as possible in time for the first prize-giving next week, when the first 250 footballs are to be awarded.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.**

Easy, isn't it? The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"—you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

We give ten more stamps this week. Cut them out and try to "score a goal"; then keep all your stamps until you get some more in our next issue.

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Sports Budget" and "Triumph."

Keep at it, pals, because the August contest will close next week, and we shall then ask you how many "goals" you have scored. Up to 250 of the FREE Footballs are going to be awarded then—for readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. More footballs will be given in the next month, and so on.

Don't send any stamps until we tell you how and where next week, when the closing date will be announced.

RULES: Up to 250 Footballs will be awarded in the August contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given later). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B. "Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "GEM," "MAGNET," "MODERN BOY," "DETECTIVE WEEKLY," "TRIUMPH," "WILD WEST WEEKLY," "THRILLER," "SPORTS BUDGET" and "CHAMPION.")
OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best "scores" from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

TEN
MORE
"FOOTER-
STAMPS!"



The News Reel

(Continued from page 26)

companies sit about idly twiddling thumbs waiting for the weather to clear, as happened many times in the past.

The Producers' Association Weather Bureau, subscribed to by all studios, has put a stop to costly loss of time through uncertainty as to weather.

The man responsible is Dr. Irving F. Krick, at the California Institute of Technology. A teletype in the production office of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, for example, connects with his weather bureau. The studio transmits queries on weather conditions a day, week, or even a month ahead, and receives a reply in a few minutes.

Because of this arrangement the studio was enabled to make "Test Pilot," a picture which required more than half of all scenes to be made outdoors, without a day's loss because of weather. There were no occasions of transporting Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, and Spencer Tracy to location and back again without making a shot. The studio knew in advance when bad weather was ahead and stayed in sound stages at these times. When clouds were required, the studio even knew in advance when to expect them.

The same thing is being done on "Too Hot To Handle," the newsreel cameraman story starring Gable and Miss Loy, for which many outdoor scenes are required. Fortunately, bright sunshine prevailed when the picture started, and two big exterior sequences were cleared up. A week before the present "high fog" hit the locality, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer knew it was coming and that it would last for days. So the company adjusted its schedule and settled down to an extensive stay on sound stages.

When Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer sends Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney, and a crew of a hundred back to Omaha with Director Norman Taurog for "Boys' Town," it will do so with complete knowledge on weather conditions, even that far away. Day by day, the Hollywood production office will be able to let the company in Omaha know what to expect in weather right where they are.

The same plan will be carried out when W. S. Van Dyke II takes Tracy, Robert Taylor, and Wallace Beery into Idaho for "North-West Passage."

Such lengthy location trips demand accurate in-the-future forecasts to avoid waste, for, once on location, in bad weather there is little to do but wait. So locations are planned only at ideal times.

Shorter locations, such as day trips, are just as important. For example, "The Boy From Barnardo's," starring Freddie Bartholomew and Mickey Rooney, demanded more than half of all scenes either at Malibu Lake, fifty miles away, or a school thirty-five miles distant. A single trip to either spot on what seemingly was a bright day, only to have the sun vanish after a short time, would have entailed great waste. By the time the company moved equipment and players back to the studio, at least a half and possibly an entire day would have been lost.

Years ago, every location call carried the joker, "weather permitting." This meant that the location would be at the mercy of the weather. If the day dawned cloudy and murky, quick changes were made and the company summoned to a stage rather than to location. It meant rapid telephone calls to cancel arrangements, and "extras" always got those location jobs on a conditional basis.

To-day, because Hollywood really does something about the weather, "weather permitting" is almost an obsolete phrase.

Taylor Plays Strenuous Fighting Scenes

Taylor fought almost continuously all day in the long shots for "The Crowd Roars." First of all he fought four rounds with McAvoy, because McAvoy was to fight Maxie Rosenbloom at San Diego that evening and had to get away early. Big laughs came when Taylor knocked out McAvoy in the fourth, according to the script. McAvoy fell on Taylor, who was off balance, and both went down to the canvas. They laughed so much they had to be helped to their feet.

In this bout Charlie Randolph was the referee; Art Lasky and Benny Mozelle were seconds for McAvoy; Lionel Stander and John Kelly were seconds for Taylor.

The fight crowd of extras wouldn't yell loud enough, and had to be continually prodded via the portable microphone.

"Come on, this is one time you can yell anything you want to!" Director Richard Thorpe yelled at them.

Atmosphere complete, with Press row, Press photographers, candy butchers, and nut-shells strewn all over the place.

Altogether, Taylor had the gloves on for fourteen days before this fight was shot. Before he was assigned the stellar rôle of this picture he had never had a boxing-lesson. Consensus of opinion of professionals appearing in the picture is that he is 95 per cent better than they expected; that he has a fast, wicked left, is a swell counter-puncher, and strips better than most guys of his weight who are professionals.

Second fight was with Bill Gargan, playing the rôle of Johnny Martin, former light-heavyweight champion, who raised Taylor as a kid, and has now been substituted at the last minute in a Madison Square Garden bout. Martin is trying a come-back, and gets killed in the second round when a blow to the head causes a blood clot. Crowd boos Taylor lustily as he leaves the ring.

Maureen O'Sullivan was an off-stage spectator most of the day, not working until late afternoon. In private life Maureen never goes to fights—can't stand them—but got a thrill out of these.

Gargan's seconds and handlers were Sam Bagley, Jack Masters, Mike Donovan, and Freddie Welsh. Taylor's were Frank Morgan, Lionel Stander, Phil Bloom, and John Kelly. Dan Tobor, famous announcer at Olympic and Legion stadiums, worked this and next bout.

Final bout was eight rounds with Perroni, shot in the afternoon, after Taylor had rested for an hour at noon. Perroni's actual manager, Henry Andrews, acted as his second, along with Joe Lynch, Si Malis, and Monte Vandergriff. Spike Mason substituted for Frank Morgan among Taylor's handlers in this bout. Morrie Cohen refereed.

Lou Ambers, world's light-weight champion, was among the spectators. He climbed into the ring and wished Taylor luck between rounds.

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EVERY
TUESDAY
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SEPT. 17, 1938



"KIDNAPPED"

Starring

WARNER BAXTER

& FREDDIE BARTHOLOMEW

A TALE OF A SCOTTISH REBEL

The early days of the union between Scotland and England, when Alan Breck was the last rebel fighting for Scottish freedom. A stirring story of this stalwart fighter, a brave lassie and a boy named David Balfour, portrayed by Warner Baxter, Arleen Whelan and Freddie Bartholomew



A Mysterious Past

SCOTLAND in 1747. The Highland clans had twice rebelled against English rule. The rebellions had been crushed in blood, but there was still one man who refused the British yoke. His name was Alan Breck. The notorious outlaw gathered together a small force and rode for Edinburgh, rousing all the clansmen on the way that was possible. It was his last gamble for justice.

The Duke of Argyle, Lord Justice General of Scotland, was urged to sign a warrant for Breck's arrest, but those Scottish chiefs who had agreed to the union with England warned the duke that the outlaw was the popular hero and that such an act might cause the whole of Scotland to rise.

"While he is alive the country will remain in a ferment, so that we have no choice but to fight and kill," was the final decision of the duke. "You say the people will make a martyr of him. It is better to deal with one martyr than a nation of martyrs."

As a result a reward of five hundred pounds was offered for the capture of the traitor, Alan Breck, in the name of his Majesty George II, King of Great Britain and Ireland.

In a small village many miles north of Edinburgh one of those reward notices reached Dominic Campbell, who was the law-abiding schoolmaster of a small class of boys ranging from six to fourteen years of age.

The schoolmaster brought the notice into the class-room and rapped on his desk for attention.

"There's trouble among us again. Rebels riding by night and the King's September 17th, 1938.

troopers along the highway. There's one man behind it all. You know his name—Alan Breck. That man is a traitor to our King. Have no truck with him or his men. They will come to your houses at night and whisper and beg of your father for food and guns for the cause—a lost cause—Scotland's freedom. You've all taken with me the oath of allegiance. If you are faithful to that oath, Alan Breck and his men are your enemies."

When the class was dismissed Dominic Campbell came across to young David Balfour and bade him come across to the house. Kindly mother Campbell bowed her head when she saw them and made herself busy with the fire. The schoolmaster, as if weary, seated himself at an old desk, and from a drawer produced a long envelope.

"This letter came to-day from Newfoundland."

"It's from my father?" was the eager question.

"No, David." The schoolmaster looked at him sorrowfully. "It says that your father is dead."

The boy went very white, then pulled himself together.

"That is sad news, sir," he said with no sign of tears.

"Yes, but not as sad as it might be, considering you never really knew your father. He died a brave death." The schoolmaster handed over the letter. "Here, read it for yourself."

"I'll take it back with me to the class-room."

"Wait, there's something else. Things are not going to be quite the same now, David. You'll be leaving us." He produced another letter, very old, faded. "When your father left you here as a child he gave me this—

told me that if anything ever happened to him before he could come back for you I should send you to your uncle and to tell you to give him this letter."

The letter was addressed to Ebenezer Balfour at Edinburgh.

David was loath to go because Mr. and Mrs. Campbell had been like mother and father to him. Only vaguely could he remember the big man who was his father, and that for that reason the news of his death was not the terrible shock it might have been. But always David had been a dutiful lad and therefore he must obey the commands of this letter. Dominic Campbell knew little about this uncle except that he was reputed to be rich and lived in a castle.

So David's few possessions were put into a bundle. With this fastened to a stout stick the boy set out to trudge the two days journey to Edinburgh. He can be forgiven for having a quiet sniff on parting with the kindly Campbells. He promised to return and see them soon. And before the parting old Dominic prayed for the boy.

"Merciful Lord, let him go forth in righteousness, humble of heart, practical of mind, strict of purse, and let him honour God and King. Amen."

The Killing of Red Fox

IT was late in the afternoon of the second day that David entered a small village near Falkirk. It was his intention to push on for another five miles before seeking shelter in some cottage or a comfortable haystack. The boy inquired from a portly, snuff-taking innkeeper the way to Edinburgh, and had been shown the direction when a horseman dashed down the

street vaulted from his horse and ran up to a post in the market square, where there was a large bell. The violent clanking brought everyone running out of their cottages.

"Hide your valuables!" yelled the ringer. "The King's tax collector is coming!" There was a gasp from the villagers. "I saw him come over the hill, the same that was here before, the one we call Red Fox."

The news seemed to strike consternation in everyone because the villagers rushed to their homes and in a few minutes appeared with some of their taxable possessions, such as pigs, fowls, sacks of corn, cloth that had been weaved and even things such as furniture and bedding. David watched all this in amazement. After dumping their possessions in the woods the villagers returned to their homes for more, but it was too late. Down the street came a magnificent coach, with an escort of mounted soldiers riding on both sides. Their scarlet uniforms made a blaze of colour. The coach pulled up in the square and a door was opened. Out stepped the person whom these people called Red Fox, and David thought the same name fitted.

"There's a royal welcome for you." David could hear every word the man spoke. "You'd think a plague had struck the place. Hiding their shillings, that's what they've been up to. Captain Frazer, order your men to rout them out and assemble them in the square. I want every snivelling one."

A tavern keeper emerged from his hostelry with a mug of ale, which Red Fox accepted, and then shouted to the man to fetch out ale for the soldiers. The frightened fellow scuttled back to obey the order. Never had he been so terrified because by ill chance his private parlour housed Alan Breck and a number of his outlaws. Breck was there for a purpose. He had known of the intended visit of the tax-collector, and he was planning a daring coup that would enable him to recover the wealth Red Fox had filched from his victims.

David was herded together with the rest of the villagers and he kept close to the portly minister. He had sworn the oath of allegiance, but the brutal methods of this tax-collector and his soldiers made his blood boil with indignation.

"MacDougall, ten shillings tax." Red Fox leered at the minister when the portly one said he had no money. "Search him," came the order.

"Don't hurt him!" shrilled David. "He's a minister—he's a man of God!" "Get out of the way! Get out of the way!" shouted Captain Frazer, raising his hand to slap the impertinent youth.

At that precise moment a shot rang out and Red Fox slumped to the ground in a heap.

David had been puzzled by the strange behaviour of a horseman whom he had observed watching everything from the shelter of a hedge. A rough, fierce sort of fellow and he had a gun. David had wondered whether he should tell Red Fox, but decided it would be wisest not to interfere. Then before he could do anything the gun had been swung up and Red Fox had fallen.

The bailiff, the tax-collector's assistant, bent over the still form and in horrified accents announced that his master was dead. Captain Frazer ordered his men to surround the village, search everyone for firearms, and shoot any that tried to escape.

"Captain, did you see who fired the shot?" the bailiff questioned.

"No, the boy distracted my attention," answered the captain.

"He was here for that purpose—an accomplice," decided the bailiff. "Get him!"

David had been edging away all this while, but when the soldiers at Frazer's order moved towards him he took to his heels in panic. From a window of the tavern Alan Breck had witnessed the whole incident. He surmised that the soldiers were after the boy because he had seen the face of the man who had killed Red Fox.

The boy was thinking that it was futile to try and escape when hands reached out and seized him. Before he could cry out a hand was clapped over his mouth, but he was able to turn his head. His heart missed a beat for he knew that this was Alan Breck. Things happened fast and furious after that. They whisked him round the back of a building and he was bundled into a saddle, someone held him firmly and then followed a nightmare ride. There were shouts and shots came very close, but Alan Breck and his followers made good their escape. They rode towards high ground, and in the dim light of dusk soon threw off the pursuit. Before a cabin in a quiet dell the rebels drew rein, and inside David saw again the man who had slain Red Fox.

"You blundering idiot, I told you there was to be no bloodshed!" raged Alan Breck.

David gazed curiously at the famous outlaw and had to admit that he was a handsome fellow. He would not understand fear. The killer was a shifty-eyed individual.

"I aimed as you told me," he whined.

"You were told to frighten the horses and start a runaway so I'd have a chance to get the money bag."

"I know, but is it my fault if Red Fox crossed my line of fire. I didn't mean to kill."

"I don't believe you!" blazed Alan Breck. "It was a chance to settle your score with Red Fox and you took it. Well, it's just what the Duke of Argyle has been waiting for—a chance to swing a few of us from the gibbet."

"But they've no proof—not a soul saw me."

"There was one who saw you, Jamie. This boy." The outlaw looked at the youngster curiously. "What is your name?"

"David—David Balfour," the boy said defiantly. "I know who you are



"You blundering idiot, I told you there was to be no bloodshed!" raged Alan Breck.

September 17th, 1933.

—you're Alan Breck, a fugitive from the law. These men are rebels in a lost cause."

"Well, you're no coward, I'll grant you that." Breck seemed impressed.

"Why do you say a lost cause?"

"Dominie Campbell—that's my schoolmaster—says so. He says we'll be better off under English rule. He says we'll have more trade and more food. Order's order, he says, and law's the law."

"You see, Alan, what he is!" harshly interrupted Jamie. "He'd blab, so we must fix him."

"You would have me murder a child?"

"It's him or me."

"There's only one thing to do, and that's to get you clear of the country," decided Breck, looking at the other grim rebels as he spoke. "Take him to Glasgow and put him on the first boat sailing for America."

"No, Alan, you can't send me away to a strange land!" Jamie cried hoarsely. "Everything I have is here—my house and my sheep and the girl I'm going to marry. Scotland's my home."

A shrewd, wiry fellow with a heavy jaw and fiery blue eyes stepped forward. Ian Douglas drew his chief to one side. Jamie was a coward, and if caught would talk. He advised Breck to find this girl and then ship them both out of the country. Other rebels called into the consultation agreed, and so Alan Breck decided to go to Glencoe to fetch Jeannie MacDonald.

"Take Jamie away, and keep close watch over him," Breck said at the end to Douglas. "I'll meet you at Tam Dale's in Glasgow."

All this while David had been moving step at a time towards the door, but it was Alan Breck who went after him when he did a run for it.

"Where do you think you're off to?" he demanded, holding the boy.

"Well, I was going to Edinburgh."

"I'd like to whisk you there on a broomstick, but I've no choice but to take you with me so that law-abiding tongue of yours won't wag." Alan Breck grinned at the lad. "We've got a long, hard ride before us."

Three in Hiding

ON the journey to Glencoe, David learned to admire Alan Breck, though he told the rebel that he did not in any way agree with his ideas. True, the English were being bad task-masters, but rebellion against their rule would not lessen the oppression of the Scots. They had many an argument, but at last they reached Glencoe.

Jean MacDonald was a slim, bright-eyed lass, and she listened gravely to all that Alan had to say. Her parents agreed that it would be best for the girl to go with the rebel leader to Glasgow, though they knew that parting with their daughter would be hard. As the Redcoats were always searching for Alan it was decided that Jean should pretend to be Alan's wife, and David their son. MacDonald had a horse and cart, and Jean was told to keep her shawl round her young features, as soldiers might be suspicious of David being her son. David was enjoying the adventure.

Thus did the MacKenzie family start off for Glasgow. Once or twice they were stopped but they managed to deceive the English patrols. And though David could have betrayed them he aided and abetted, because by now he had a great liking for Alan Breck, though still disagreeing with his views

and opinions. There was moisture in David's eyes when his new friends bade him good-bye at the nearest point for Edinburgh.

"We take the high road and you take the low." Alan shook the small hand warmly. "And sorry I am to be parting with you, lad."

"You may be sure, sir, that I'll hold my tongue," the boy said gravely.

"Yes, I know you will," the rebel smiled. "And good luck with your uncle, the laird."

In a little hostelry a drunken man would persist in drinking with the MacKenzies, but when no one was looking he beckoned Alan to bend near to his mouth. It was Douglas.

"They traced you to the MacDonalds. They know about the cart. They'll be searching here before long. When you leave you must try some new disguises. Get away alone. I'll take her to Jamie in Glasgow myself."

"I promised the MacDonalds I'd give her into Jamie's arms myself or they'd not have let her go," answered Alan. "So she goes with me, and with no one else. We'll beat across the west on foot to Invercaig and then take a boat to Glasgow."

That night soldiers came to the inn, but they kept up their pretence of being man and wife and as there was no boy with them managed to bluff the soldiers. In the morning they took to the hills and headed for Invercaig.

The Castle of Balfour

AT last David came in sight of Edinburgh. He was puzzled by the peculiar strange looks and queer remarks passed when he asked for the Castle of Balfour. One old woman quite scared him, for she was like a witch.

"Now you know where it is keep clear of the place!" she shrilled. "Blood built that place, and blood stopped the building of it. If you must go, tell the laird that all the decent folk about here call down a curse on him and his house. Black be their fall."

"The Laird will never see you," another man told him.

"Well, I think he will," retorted David. "He's my uncle."

The track leading to the castle was nothing but stones and boulders. Horses and carriages could not come this way, and it puzzled David. It was well after dark one stormy, thundery night that a flash of lightning revealed the castle perched upon a crag. Dark and sinister it looked, but David was not daunted. It was beginning to rain and that made David hurry because he had no desire to get soaked. He crossed over a bridge, the parapet of which was broken, and up a twisty, weedy path towards the castle, which seemed to tower over him like some sinister giant. He came to a heavy door with a small wicket. There was a rusty chain that he pulled and he thought that a distant tinkle sounded. He waited, and was about to give a second tug when the wicket slid back and he saw a thin, wizened face, a mass of untidy white hair and two staring eyes.

"Go away! Get away from here!" this spectre cried. "Who is it?"

"I've come with a letter for Mr. Ebenezer Balfour."

"A letter!" A hand came through the grill. "Well, hand it to me and be off with you."

"I'll not!" stoutly answered David. "I'll deliver it as I was told—to my uncle."

"Your uncle?" How balefully those

eyes gleamed. "Just a minute." The eyes vanished and the grill closed. Then came the sound of chains and bolts being removed. The door swung open. A flash of lightning revealed the bent figure of a man in a shabby dressing-gown. He beckoned David, who stepped into a cold, stone-flagged hall. A candle was raised, and the spectro cackled. "Well, it's plain to see whose son you are. You're the spitting image of Alexander."

"You're Uncle Ebenezer?"

"Aye. Welcome—welcome, David, to Balfour Castle."

"Dominie Campbell sent me here and told me to give you this letter."

Ebenezer peered at the letter.

"So your father's dead then. Do you know what this is about?"

"You can see for yourself, sir, that the seals are unbroken." David was indignant.

"Aye, well, come along, David."

Ebenezer closed the door. "I was just having supper."

Over the worst meal that David had ever tasted he learnt that his uncle lived in this vast castle by himself. There was dust and cobwebs everywhere and much of the furniture was broken. A small fire burnt in an open grate, and the old man protested when David wanted to put some more peat on the fire. Peat was two shillings a cauldron and mighty dear. The porridge for supper was sour and cold and the ale well watered. It was dawning on David that his father's brother was a miser. After a while Ebenezer remembered the letter and perused it.

"If there's anything in it that concerns me I'm anxious to know what it is, sir."

"Oh, no. It's just a letter written by your father many years ago—entrusting you to me."

The prospect of living with a miser in these bare walls made David shiver. It was also very cold in this vast dining-room. His uncle became immersed in the letter and that gave David a chance to walk round and explore. He picked up a dusty Bible from a table and turned to the fly-leaf.

"To Ebenezer Balfour, on his Fifth Birthday, from his elder brother—Alexander Balfour."

David closed the book and came back to warm his cold hands by the fire. Ebenezer put away the letter and got to his feet.

"Well, it's getting late, Davie, and I was forgetting the long journey you've had. So off to bed with you. You must be weary. I've got a fine room for you in the stair tower."

David went with his uncle to a narrow stone stairway. His uncle told him to go to the very top and then turn to the right.

"It's dark up there, sir. I'd be obliged to you for a candle."

"Nonsense, it'd be burning good money. Candles are sixpence a pound. Why, a brave lad like you shouldn't fear the dark. Go ahead with you." He pointed a thin, veined hand. "To the very top, mind you, then to the right. Good-night, David."

"Good night, uncle."

Except for occasional flashes of lightning there was no light in this gloomy tower. The boy gave a cry as something brushed by his face. It was a horrible bat. Up and up he climbed, and it was a testing climb, because there was no rail and if he had slipped might have rolled into a void. He paused for breath, and then as the lightning flashed stepped for-

Alan Breck kept off the attack with his trusty blade.



ward. His foot was on the edge of a void. A stone slithered beneath his foot, but David managed to fling himself backwards. Down those stairs raced David, and Ebenezer gave a cry at sight of him.

"You sent me up there to—kill me!" David accused.

"I said turn to the left."

"You said right. And there was nothing there—I'd have fallen."

"You're crazy, boy!" cried the old miser. "Why should I want to kill you?"

"To keep the estate—to stop me from getting it!" David accused. "My father was the elder, else he must have given you that prayer book and written it before he was even born. As the elder brother the estate was his, and so now it's mine, isn't it?" He held out his hand. "Give me that letter."

David was strong and Ebenezer but a wizened wreck of a man. The boy had to take the letter by force.

"Dear Brother Ebenezer,—The bearer of this is my son, David, heir to the lands and estates of Balfour. By our agreement you will take him to lawyer Rankeillor who has my last will and testament."

The miser sank into a chair and began to snivel out his story. David's father and himself had both loved the same girl, and they had quarrelled bitterly. To settle the dispute Alexander married the girl and Ebenezer had taken the castle, but should there be an heir Ebenezer had to relinquish his rights on the death of Alexander.

"I'm telling you all this so that you'll understand," whined the old rogue. "I want you to understand, so you won't be too hard on an old man and turn him out when you've got the right."

When David went to bed he chose a room on the ground floor and he bolted and barred the door. In the morning his uncle produced a much better breakfast and fawned over him

in a manner that made the boy sick. He was ready to give up the castle. He had been a wicked old man, and his only wish was that David would forgive him. After breakfast they set out for the city, and the old rascal drove along the coast as he had some important business at Leith.

David was interested in the shipping. His uncle left him to find a Captain Hoseason regarding a shipment of tobacco. An innocent-looking lad named Ransome invited David to come aboard one of the brigs and see what it was like below. David should not have been so trusting. He was flung into a locker room and the ship at once set sail. When the ship had been some hours at sea the captain, a burly, brutal, demon of a man, dragged David from the evil-smelling place.

"You'll keep your mouth shut, Davie, unless you wish to feed the fishes," threatened the captain. "Behave yourself and you shall be a cabin-boy." He cuffed David's ears. "Stand up and be a man. Better hurry up and get your sea-legs."

Thus was David kidnapped aboard the boat of one of the most rascally skippers of those restless times. A man who smuggled men and women, cut-throats and thieves and those whom the law sought. A pretty penny he charged them for passage money. Uncle Ebenezer had had to dip his hands in his money bags to rid himself of his cursed nephew.

The Escape from the Brig

DAVID BALFOUR was forced to do menial jobs about the brig. It was unwise to disobey because Captain Hoseason was a bully of the worst type and would flog a person on the least provocation. By curious chance this ship was in port when the two fugitives reached Invercraig.

Captain Hoseason tried to charge them sixty pounds for passage money, but this extortionate amount Alan got reduced to sixteen. This angered the rascally captain and he instructed his mate, Riach, to keep a sharp eye on

the pair. His suspicions were increased when he entertained Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie to some hot rums in the saloon. It was David who served the drinks, and the rogue did not miss the look of amazement that passed between the boy and the two voyagers.

"I can't believe it of David," Alan said to Jean, when they had gone to their cabin. "Telling us those tall stories about his rich uncle the laird and that castle at Edinburgh, and all the time he's a cabin-boy on this foul brig."

"I'm sure he won't give you away," Jean answered. "He's fond of you, Alan."

"Well, I must be going, Jeannie," Alan said huskily.

"The great adventure is nearly over."

"It's just beginning. Glasgow—Jamie—and America."

"Beginning! To me it's the end," the girl cried. "I never promised Jamie really, and—well, I hadn't met you, Alan."

"Jamie's my clansman and I'm his leader," Alan spoke sternly. "I know I promised to take you to him in Glasgow, and that's what I'm doing. And I wish to heaven you were there now and married to him." Alan hastened out of the cabin.

Jean felt so worried about this tiff with Alan that after a few minutes she left her cabin and was making her way to the deck when she heard the captain's voice.

"Now, Davie lad, let's understand one another—man to man. If you don't tell me who that man is that calls himself MacKenzie I'll whack your head off. His name!" Silence, and then the sound of a blow. "Now you'll tell or you'll get it again."

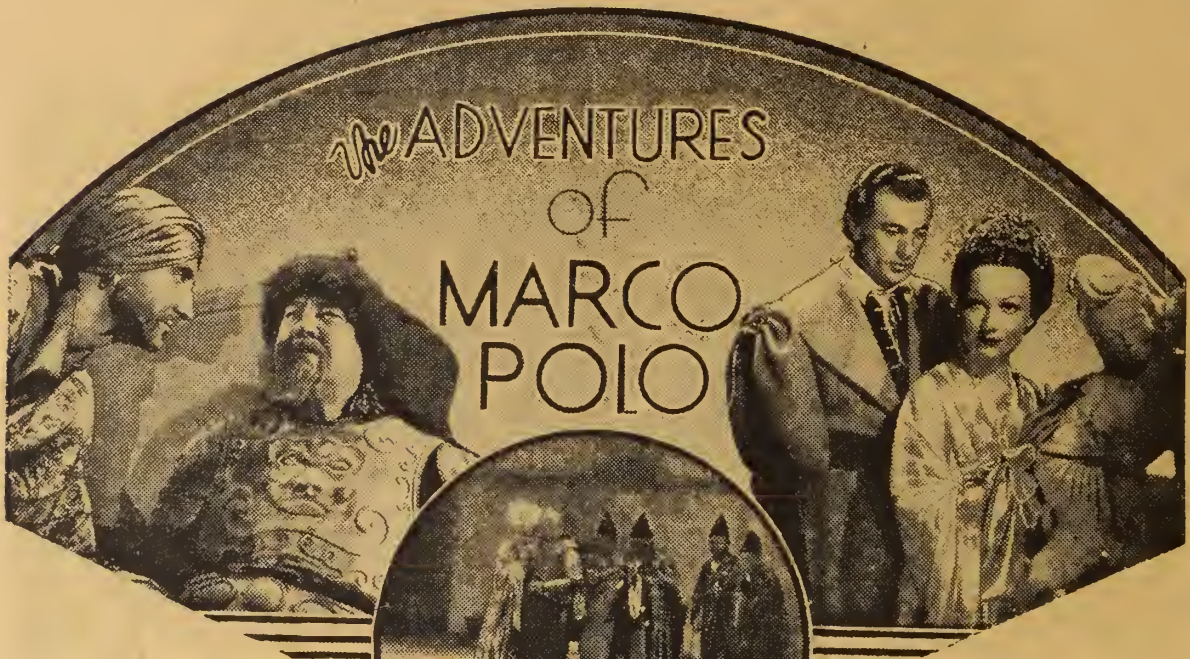
Jean sped up to the deck. When a woman loves she can be unscrupulous.

"We've got to get away, Alan," she cried, when she had found the outlaw. "Can't we take a skiff and make for the mainland? They know who you are."

(Continued on page 22)

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A fearless young man ventures into a strange and hostile county after a trade pact, and there attempts to rescue a princess and free a country of a tyrant. Starring Gary Cooper



The Emperor's Daughter

IN the year 1274 the firm of Polo Brothers was the most important in Venice. Other merchants and importers envied their trade, but in this year the Polo Brothers came to a momentous decision. They had secured all the trade of the surrounding countries and realised that unless they opened up new channels the business would begin to go downhill. For this purpose Maffeo and Nicolo Polo detailed Marco, Nicolo's son, to go as an Ambassador to China.

Marco was a tall, handsome young man, whom a great number of people regarded as a gambler and a waster, but he had been responsible for a great deal of the prosperity of his father's and uncle's firm. He had been sent on many such missions before and all had resulted in excellent trade pacts. It was arranged that he should be accompanied by Binguccio, an elderly, portly servant, who held up his hands in despair when he heard they were to travel across the world to China.

"The Orientals are a curious people, they do not trade as we do," Nicolo informed his son. "I want you back with agreements that will enable us to send our ships into the China seas. Now I have two things for you." He held up a sealed envelope. "One, a letter to Kublai Khan, the mightiest emperor on earth. That is where your journey ends—in his incomparable city of Peking. The other is more valuable." This time he held up a small bag. "Once I went away. My father gave this to me. He said—and I say to you—fill it with what you see on your way."

"But it will hold nothing but the smallest things," argued Marco.

"The smallest things have changed the world," Nicolo pointed to a map on an ebony table. "Here is your route. You sail first for the Port of Acre—a fortified city on the coast of Asia, now held by the Crusaders—from Acre, you go overland by caravan across the Arabian Desert into Persia—to

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Samarkand—over the boundless plains of Tartary, and so into the great Land of Cathay. To the incomparable city of Peking, where lives Kublai Khan, ruler of the earth and the sun, the moon and the stars." He held out his hands. "Farewell, my son, Marco Polo. God's benison go with you."

Many moons were to pass and many were their adventures before the day came when they sighted in the distance the gleaming walls of Peking. Many hundreds of miles had been travelled on foot and they were footsore and weary. Binguccio so tired that part of the way his master had to carry him on his back. So they drew nearer to Peking and they were quite unaware that from the towers above the gates the approach of the two strangers had been noted.

Marco had keen eyes for the procession of people heading for Peking, and he smiled when he learned that most of them came from the warm south with silks, spices, gold and jade, from India with precious stones, and from the north with furs and ermine. There was a wonderful lot of loot in China. They came to the city wall and paused to rest close to a house that had been built into the outer wall.

A little meek, wise and aged Chinaman sat before the door of this house reading to two small children, a boy and a girl.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful—"

"For they shall obtain mercy," Marco spoke in eager tones. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God—"

"You know those words?" questioned the amazed Chinaman.

"Yes, I know them. Are you a Christian?"

"No, but I want my children to learn the truths of all the philosophers."

Thus did Marco meet Chen Tsu and make his first friend. The Chinaman courteously invited the two travellers to step across his threshold and share their inadequate meal. That brought life back to Binguccio, though he found the food and the instruments used to consume it a problem. The food was spaghetti and the instruments chopsticks. They met Chen Tsu's tired wife and his reverend mother. One strand of spaghetti Marco placed in the small bag his father had given him.

Marco explained his mission, and the Chinaman looked grave.

"I advise you to be very careful when you enter the palace, Marco Polo. Kublai Khan is a good man and a just man. But he is surrounded by advisers who have little respect for the sanctity of human life. There have been rumours—" He paused nervously.

"Of what, Chen Tsu?"

"We have a proverb here: 'Too much gossip is the surest form of suicide.' So when you meet the emperor's Minister of State, a Saracen, named Ahmed, make every effort to convince him that you are no more than a friendly gentleman who wishes to see the world without treading on anyone's toes."

Suddenly there was a loud bang, and with a cry Binguccio leapt in the air. The children screamed delightedly. For the first time Marco Polo heard about a fire-cracker. Marco inquired about this strange invention and was taken into a back room that was not unlike a modern laboratory.

Chen Tsu explained that in his humble way he was a chemist. A combination of carbon and saltpetre, when touched with fire, puffed up harmlessly, but when contained in a case so that the vapours

could not easily escape, it would burst with great violence. He was able to ek out his humble existence by making these fire-crackers for illumination of holidays and festivals. Often the emperor commissioned him to make thousands of boxes for ceremonial occasions.

"I should think it might be a valuable weapon of war," Marco said thoughtfully.

They bade farewell to the kindly Chinaman and promised to return. At the city gates they were stopped by the guards, but when they heard it was Marco Polo, of Venice, the way was open at once. They had heard of his remarkable progress. Messengers bring immediate news of any stranger who sets foot in China, and Marco was surprised when the guard pointed upwards at an eagle. A canister was attached to the eagle's stomach. An officer appeared and ordered that Marco Polo and Binguccio be conducted to their quarters and their every wish gratified.

A bath, new clothes and a night's rest made a new man of Marco, though Binguccio complained bitterly of his blistered feet. In the morning Marco, eager to see everything, went for a stroll round the palace. Marco noted the splendid uniforms of the soldiers, the marvellous carvings, the marble statues and the general air of wealth. Eventually he found his way into the palace grounds.

In the throne-room the emperor was enjoying a game of soldiers. A huge mosaic map of the Tartar Empire had been built into the floor, and model Chinese soldiers, like hundreds of chessmen, were occupying strategic points. A gold rake helped to move and control pieces. The emperor was very fat and very jovial, and he stroked his chin and his long whiskers as he watched his Minister of State. Ahmed was tall, sleek, dark of skin and his eyes had a strange way of half-closing. He was

demonstrating that with ten thousand ships and a million soldiers the conquest of Japan should be finished in a few weeks. But the emperor shook his head. That would mean taking all the armies from the West, and they were necessary there for the rebellion in Kaidu's province.

"We need no army to deal with Kaidu," answered the crafty adviser. "His Tartar barbarians can out-fight our best generals." His eyes half closed and his lips became a thin line. "No! The greatest weapon we can use against him is—deception. Subtle poison!"

Tiring of the game, the emperor asked querulously who wished to see him to-day. A bevy of young and beautiful women to be chosen as attendants at his court; the Persian Ambassador and a stranger from the City of Venice in the Empire of Rome. He decided to see the ambassador first and the young women last. The ambassador, after much bowing and scraping, announced that his royal master wished to know when the emperor would dispatch to him the lady of his choice, his affianced bride, his future queen—the Princess Kukachin, the emperor's beautiful daughter.

Kublai Khan loved his daughter and he looked miserably at his Minister.

"The time has come when she must fulfil the marriage contract negotiated when—"

"Yes, I remember," interrupted the emperor. "But I hadn't noticed the passage of years and that she had ceased to be a child." He turned to the ambassador. "You may send word to your royal master that the Princess Kukachin will embark for Persia at the seventh moon."

But when messengers were sent to find Marco Polo they found that the Venetian was missing. Binguccio was informed that his master must be found at once. His master was talking with Princess Kukachin.

It had happened this way. Marco Polo had rested against a tree to admire the scenery and the beautiful gardens. The princess, with her charming hand maiden, Visakha, was practising archery. Only such people as the emperor and the Minister were allowed in these grounds, so that Kukachin may be forgiven for shooting off arrows at random. Marco ducked behind a tree, and it was as well he did, for the arrow would have pierced his head. When the Princess tried to pull the arrow out of the tree a strong hand assisted her. She stared into the bold, admiring eyes of the Venetian. He did not grovel at her feet or mumble words of praise, but just held her hand till she snatched it away and demanded to know who he was.

"Marco Polo, from Venice."

"Venice? Is that one of our provinces?" asked the girl, whom Marco thought the loveliest creature he had ever known—and he had known a good many.

"No, it's a long way off. The journey took me years. It was a terrible journey, too: full of perils and hardships that would have defeated any but the bravest, strongest man."

"You think you're rather splendid, don't you?"

"Oh, no, that isn't my thought," he laughed lightly. "It's just what I've been told."

An amazed Chamberlain appeared to stammer out that his presence was sought after by the Great Khan. Marco smiled at the princess and raised his hand in a farewell salutation. He promised to try to see her again. The princess was speechless at this impertinence.

Marco Polo went to the throne and knelt before the emperor and was bade to rise. He explained that he had come to Cathay because he had heard of the wonders of the country. It was merely a trip—for educational purposes. Marco could see that nothing would be gained by mentioning a trade pact with this hawk-eyed Ahmed having the emperor's ear. It was a shock to him when the beautiful girl he had met swept gra-

Maffeo and Nicolo Polo detailed Marco, Nicolo's son, to go as an Ambassador to China



ciously into the throne-room and was introduced by the emperor as his only daughter, the Princess Kukachin.

"Marco Polo comes to us from Venice," stated the emperor.

"Yes, I know all about Marco Polo," answered the princess. "He has told me everything about himself."

The eyes of Ahmed narrowed. The emperor asked Marco to help him choose the most beautiful attendants for his court, and Marco did this by asking all the girls, "How many teeth has a snapping turtle?" Those who made wild guesses and those that answered "None" Marco rejected, but those who said they did not know he chose because, to his way of thinking, it proved them both honest and reasonable. The emperor was so grateful that he asked Marco if any lady of his court captured his fancy. Marco could not help glancing at the princess, and Ahmed's hand went to his sword. "Ahmed," haughtily spoke the Daughter of Heaven, "have you any traitors or spies on hand for punishment? If you have, I suggest you take this Venetian and let him see how you dispose of them."

It was a task that gave Ahmed great pleasure. Marco Polo and Binguccio saw sights that day that made them shudder—sights that even the haughty princess knew little about. Ahmed had a portion of the palace set aside for his own use. He conducted them to a door, which, when it swung open, revealed a fifty-foot void. Ahmed struck a gong and immediately a covered drawbridge was lowered from the nearby building. They entered that part of the palace owned by Ahmed. They saw vultures in cages and saw skeletons that had once been prisoners, whom they had stripped of all flesh. They saw wild and ferocious animals, and eventually two of Ahmed's servants, a scared ruffian named Toctai and an ugly fellow named Bayan, brought in a wretched fellow who was an officer in the army of Kaidu, the rebel. He had been caught in the palace as a spy. Marco could not suppress a shudder as the man was thrown to the wild beasts.

"You are very observant, Marco Polo," sneered Ahmed. "That is an admirable quality. It will save you from the danger of casting your eyes in the wrong direction."

"And just what does that refer to?" Marco demanded.

"I leave that to your intelligence," mocked this sinister rogue.

Treachery that Failed

AT a suitable moment Marco Polo discreetly mentioned to the emperor that a trade pact with the firm of Polo Brothers might be a good thing for both countries. The emperor promised to consider the matter, and in the meantime Marco was to make himself at home in the palace. Marco saw the princess one day from his window. She was sitting by an ornamental pond, feeding the carp, and she was rather pleased when the Venetian appeared.

"Strangers are not supposed to come into these gardens uninvited," she informed him.

Marco just smiled and, somehow, the princess smiled back. And so they met every day in the gardens. He learned that when in her cradle she had become engaged to the King of Persia. She was pleased at the idea of marrying such a great man and becoming Queen of Persia. He heard the happy event was to take place at the seventh moon. She showed him a white stone image

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and told him it was the shrine of the Moon Goddess. All maidens prayed to her that they would find a lover who is faithful, gallant and strong."

"And you're going to marry the King of Persia. You don't love him."

"He will put love in my heart."

Marco decided that he must give up seeing the princess because he was falling in love with her, so one day he explained his feelings as best he could and asked as a favour that he might say farewell to a kiss. But kissing was not an Eastern practice—they rubbed noses. Marco Polo had to teach Kukachin the Western practice of kissing, and after that the princess was quite sure she did not want to be the Queen of Persia.

Ahmed was seated in his quarters discussing with Toctai the rebellion in Kaidu's province. It must be put a stop to before the emperor learnt the truth about the taxes Ahmed had been collecting extortunately. For that purpose Toctai and Bayan must disguise themselves as Tartar tribesmen, join Kaidu's army and spread discontent in the army by making the soldiers believe that Kaidu was the one stealing their tax money. Later they were to kill Kaidu. The rebellion would be broken because his army would break up into warring factions. Bayan entered the room to report that he had seen the princess in the arms of the Venetian, and that made Ahmed draw Marco Polo into this plot.

The Minister told the emperor that Marco Polo was seeing too much of the princess, and that as his Majesty was going on an expedition to Japan it would be as well if Marco Polo were elsewhere. Why not send this clever young man into Kaidu's camp? He would be above suspicion and might even gain Kaidu's friendship. Then he could work with the secret agents and plot Kaidu's downfall. The emperor agreed and sent for Marco Polo. The latter did not at all relish the task.

"It is very possible that, upon your return, you will be very much nearer your coveted trade agreements," hinted the emperor.

"When would I start?" Marco asked.

"At once!" cried Ahmed, his eyes gleaming balefully. "You will be escorted by some of our most reliable men."

Marco returned to his quarters and ordered Binguccio to pack their few possessions, then in the dusk the Venetian wandered into the gardens where he had first met Kukachin. An arrow quivered in the same tree, and there was a silken cord attached to it. He followed that cord and it led to the princess' apartments. She was on the terrace to greet him and she was so frightened.

"You must not go to the West, to Kaidu's province." She clung to him. "Ahmed is trying to get rid of you. He'll never let you come back alive. No one will ever know what became of you."

"He could do it here as easily as anywhere else," answered Marco, and held her close. "But if I go on this expedition, and be of some value to the emperor, then—"

"Then what, Marco?"

"Then perhaps the Moon Goddess might tell you that you don't have to travel all the way to Persia to find a husband."

"She doesn't have to tell me—I know."

"My humblest apologies, daughter of Heaven, for this intrusion," came the smooth tones of Ahmed, as he appeared

on the terrace. "But I have come to tell Marco Polo horses are ready and it is advisable for him to start out with all possible speed."

"Your Highness, we may never meet again, so I beg leave to say farewell in the fashion of my native land." Marco pressed his lips gallantly to those of the princess and then said in a whisper that only Kukachin heard: "Send word if you need me."

In the narrow pass of Nung Po the cavalcade halted. There were horsemen in front of Marco and Binguccio and horsemen in the rear. At a signal from the lieutenant in command the horsemen drew their swords and rushed towards the two Venetians. Marco and Binguccio managed to drive their horses up an incline and over a ridge, but the little fat man was flung from his horse as it reared up in the air. The horsemen paid no heed but went after Marco. The Venetian slid down the other side, could not stop, and horse and rider slid over a precipice.

Binguccio had darted among the rocks when the horsemen returned and they did not bother to look for him—the chief man was dead, or so they thought. Marco landed on a ledge, rolled off it, and then over and over down a steep incline. Much battered, he came to rest in a bush by a narrow stream. It took Marco an hour or more to climb the cliff face and get back to the trail. There was no sign of the horsemen or his companion.

While way back in Peking Princess Kukachin said good-bye to her father. Ahmed smiled. The China Sea was a powerful adversary, and one good typhoon might end the glorious reign of Kublai Khan. The princess was afraid because she saw the strange gleam in Ahmed's eyes and wondered if he were plotting treachery against her father.

Kaidu, the Rebel

MARCO bought a horse from a farmer for a gold piece, and after a vain search for Binguccio, went on his way. What luck when he sighted a staggering figure ahead. The servant was so frightened when he heard someone shout that he ran for dear life, toppled over a ledge and landed on his face in a muddy pond.

Very much the worse for wear, the two continued on their way. Marco now decided to return to Peking to have a few words with Ahmed, but this plan was upset some days later by an encounter with a Tartar outpost. These long-haired, bearded men captured the two weary men, who were unable to make any sort of fight, and they were conducted to the camp of Kaidu, the rebel.

Kaidu was a powerfully built man, whose face was not as ruthless as one might have expected, but the big jaw was stubborn. He was a much worried man. There was much discontent among his men, the forces of Kublai Khan seemed to have vanished, so there was no one to fight, and he was cursed with a wife. Nazama was very beautiful, very loving, very jealous and very dictatorial. She was the one person of whom Kaidu was thoroughly scared. An officer had just reported another thousand desertions, a mutiny in the seventh corps, and, worse still, food was falling short.

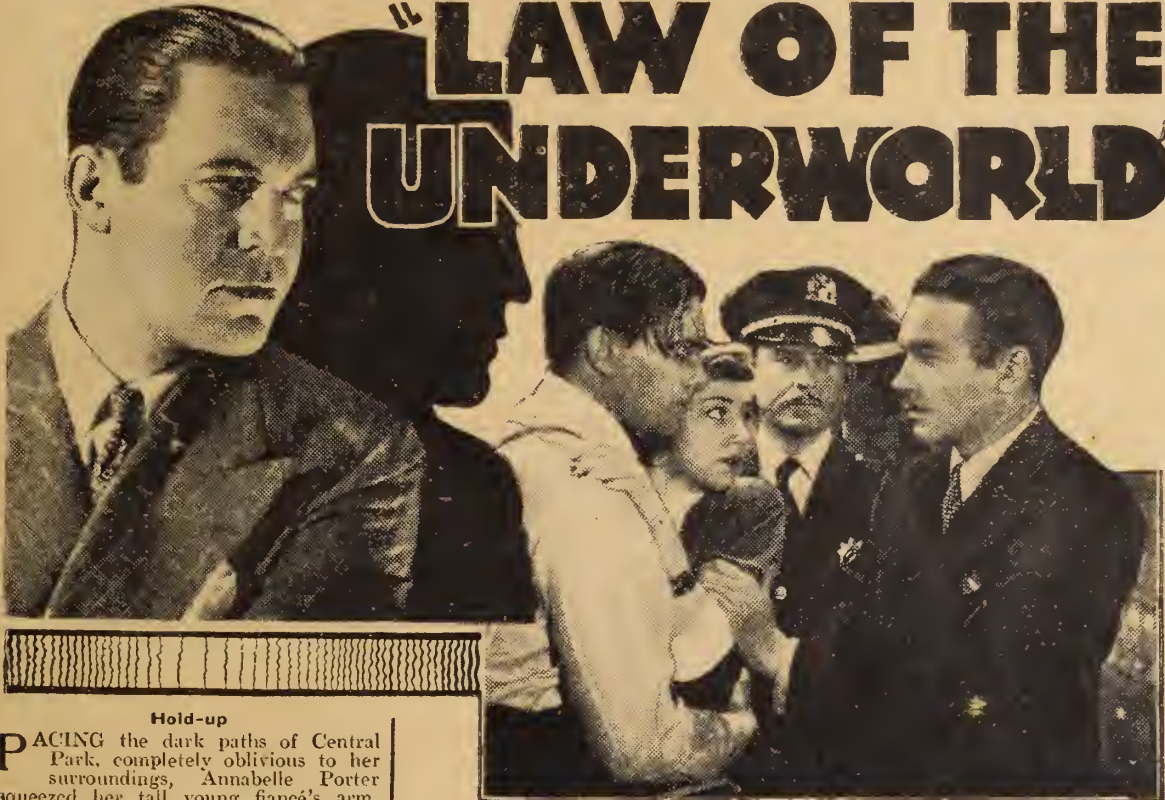
"Kill the dirty spies! Death to Kublai Khan! Death to Ahmed! Death of a thousand cuts to these spies."

These shouts brought Kaidu out of his tent—Marco and Binguccio, with a

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A drama of gangster rule, and of a young man and a girl who were involved with a criminal. Starring Chester Morris

"LAW OF THE UNDERWORLD"



Hold-up

PACING the dark paths of Central Park, completely oblivious to her surroundings, Annabelle Porter squeezed her tall young fiancé's arm. "Mrs. Brown," she murmured happily, "Mrs. Thomas Brown—" Her poorly paid work in a huge department store hadn't taken the freshness and sweetness from Annabelle's face.

Tommy Brown thought she looked particularly beautiful in the dimness, with her eyes shining like stars.

"Eleven hours and twenty-three minutes, then you won't be Annabelle Porter any more."

Suddenly she stopped.

"Tommy, I just thought, maybe when you took out your handkerchief on the subway—"

He grinned, taking a roll of bills from his pocket.

"One hundred and thirty-six dollars. We spent four at Coney—" His voice changed as two dark, menacing figures stood in their path. "What d'you want?"

The older man, with a pale, lined face and glittering, snake-like eyes, said in a harsh voice:

"Could you spare a poor man a hundred and thirty-six bucks for a cup of coffee?"

Tommy looked down. The man's hand was in his overcoat pocket; something jutted significantly. The other man, round of face, similarly menaced the young people.

"Tommy," cried Annabelle, "call a policeman!"

"Good," grated Rocky Mosby, "he can call for your ambulance."

"Oh, give us a break," Tommy pleaded, "we're getting married on that money!"

"Maybe the girl is marrying you for the dough," Rocky sneered. "Now you can find out."

Tommy's face flamed, then whitened. There was something horrible about the glare of the hold-up man—ruthlessness and cold ferocity were in it.

A policeman passed, swinging his stick, eyeing them curiously. Tommy's mouth opened, then shut, as Rocky made a movement with his hidden hand. "I'll be lighting a cigarette in case he looks back," the crook muttered. "Get the dough."

"Say, if the boss ever finds out about this—" grunted his friend Bill.

"He won't," said Rocky coldly.

Bill's hands went to Tommy's pocket. The young man glared helplessly at the evil-faced Rocky.

"Hey, wait a minute, I know you! I've seen you around the apartment house where I work!"

Rocky started, then whispered:

"Listen, kid, maybe you do know me—but you wouldn't want to be a widower before you got married."

"Why don't you fight like a man?" snarled Tommy.

"How?" murmured Bill. "Like this?" His fist came up with shattering force. Tommy, unprepared for the blow, went back, thudding on the hard pathway, and before he could get up the two hold-up men melted away in the darkness.

Gene Fillmore's clean-cut, hawk-like face bore a slight smile as he was let into the apartment where his gang had gathered. He greeted Batsy, the quaint, somewhat dull-witted crook who opened the door, and his eyes shot to the paper they had been reading.

A front-page splash announced the appointment of Warren Rogers as the new District Attorney, who intended to wipe the city clean of racketeers. They had been chortling over it, bandying witticisms about the young lawyer.

Affectionately the gang-leader greeted "Dot" Palmer, the blonde night-club

singer to whom he was engaged. He was unconscious of the hate in Rocky Mosby's eyes, for he had no suspicion that Dorothy really loved Rocky and was just playing a double game with him for all she could get out of him.

"What's this I hear about a new D.A.?" demanded Rocky, his heavy lids masking his glittering eyes.

"I just left him," grinned Gene calmly.

"What—what? Say that again," chorused the amazed gangsters round the table.

"I just left Warren Rogers' apartment," said Gene coolly, seating himself at the head of the table. He had just dined with Rogers, for they were friends in the social round, where Gene posed as a good-natured playboy. Over a game of billiards he had heard Warren announcing his plans. Gene had even been asked to give up his polo and chase crooks instead. But since he happened to be one of the hidden men at the top of the gangs whom his unsuspecting friend was out to catch, he had declined politely.

The gang jeered derisively at the simplicity of Warren Rogers.

"Well, you're wrong, boys," said Gene crisply. "He's plenty smart, and plenty tough. But we're going to be just a little tougher. If we make one wrong move—"

"Is that all you wanted to tell us?" drawled a sleek-haired young gangster.

"Why, no, Frankie. As a matter of fact, I asked the boys to meet me here to see if you could dispose of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth of jewellery."

Rocky lit a cigarette. "I know a warehouse we can knock over, with a million bucks in furs."

"Rocky, our next job will be Mor-

ton's Fifth Avenue jewellery store!" snapped Gene Fillmore.

"But I've got this fur thing all lined up! Get rid of the watchman and the whole place is ours."

"Rocky, we're not doing any jobs requiring butchering. I'm running this like a big business, with a minimum of risk. You're not thugs any more—you're gentlemen."

Everybody sensed the undercurrent of hostility between the pair. Gene believed in planning, pitting his wits against the forces of Law and Order. Rocky, jealous of him both as Dot's fiancé and leader of the gang, was a killer. He believed in force, the rule of the gun. Harshly he sneered: "Gene, you'd look real nice in a scout suit."

"That'll be enough from you!" snapped Gene. "We'll meet day after to-morrow and make all the arrangements."

"All right," Rocky growled. "You're the boss. But why do you have to mix with a cocktail and polo crowd all night long? Ain't we boys good enough for you?"

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do, Rocky," said Gene sarcastically. "I'll loaf around here all night, and you can mingle in Society and find out where the big money is. The best people will welcome you with open handcuffs."

Rocky's eyes flickered murder as Gene bade them all good-night. He was having a final word with Dot when the door crashed open. Tommy and Annabelle burst in. Tommy's face was tense, frowning; hers slightly apprehensive.

"Stick 'em up, all of you!" he snapped, his hand gripping something in his coat pocket.

"All right, boys," smiled Gene, raising his hands. "Put 'em up—no rough stuff."

"Up on your feet! Line up here!" growled Tommy. "Now turn around." To Annabelle: "Frisk 'em!"

"What's that?" she stammered.

"Go through their rear pockets and look for guns!"

Not knowing whether to laugh or groan, the gangsters allowed Annabelle to take their artillery. She shrank a little when she came to Rocky.

"Side pocket," he grinned.

"All right," growled Tommy. "Take his money and give me a hundred and thirty-six dollars."

Gene's eyebrows rose.

"You'll pardon me for butting into a private affair, but why a hundred and thirty-six dollars?"

"Well, you see," said Annabelle breathlessly, "we were going to be married to-morrow, and these two men held us up and took it all. That's how much it was."

"Stop talking," said Tommy brusquely. "Give me the money."

Then the lights snapped out as Gene took advantage of the lad's temporary slackening of watchfulness. Gene grabbed Annabelle. Rocky pinioned the struggling Tommy, and when the lights went up again the discomfited pair found themselves surrounded by gangsters. Frank exclaimed:

"Why, I know this boy! He works here."

"Call the police," snarled Rocky Mosby.

"Wait a minute, Frankie," snapped Gene.

"You can turn me in," muttered Tommy, "but let her go. She didn't have anything to do with it."

"I did!" Annabelle exclaimed. "If you turn him over to the police, I go, too!"

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"Give me the money, kid," said Gene, not unkindly. "You know, you've both committed a serious offence. Why, you can get fifteen years in prison for this! You'd be old when you got out. Of course, it's my duty to turn you over—" He tailed off thoughtfully, and Annabelle shuddered. Fifteen years in prison!

"We're not criminals," Tommy snapped. "We're just trying to get our own money back!"

Annabelle looked accusingly at the sneering Rocky.

"That man said he'd kill us if we told the police!"

Bill, shuffling his feet, growled uneasily:

"Aw, chief, let's turn 'em over to the cops."

"I'll handle this," grated Gene Fillmore. "Right now, I want to hear more about that stick-up."

"Chief, you ain't gonna believe those kids, are you? We never stuck up nobody!"

Rocky shouldered forward, came close to Gene and stared into his eyes.

"Wait a minute! I'm not afraid of you, Gene. Sure we stuck up the kids. You've got this bunch buffaloed into letting you keep all the dough, and give us coffee and cake money. Well, I needed more, and the kids were handy."

Gene eyed him coldly.

"I keep you all on an allowance so you won't splurge all over town and give yourselves away. How many times have I told you to lay off small fry? Why take the chance for a couple of bucks?"

"Chances are in my line," growled Rocky.

"You're all a lot of crooks!" Tommy burst out.

"He's positively psychic," drawled Dorothy.

"Well, never mind what we are, young fellow," said Gene easily. "You've just stuck up a private apartment."

"Yeah," nodded Batsy wisely, "they got laws against that."

Gene grinned.

"But maybe you can help me. Do you want to do me a little favour, or would you rather go to gaol? It's up to you, kid."

Tommy and Annabelle, now thoroughly seared by the enormity of their act, exchanged glances.

"We'll do anything," muttered Tommy, "if you'll let us go."

Gene looked at the girl; wide-eyed, she nodded miserably.

"All right, it's a deal! We'll talk about the favour later, but remember, if you break your word, it's gaol for both of you."

Miserably they nodded before his stern gaze. Followed by the good-humoured jeers of the mobsmen, Gene took them to his own home to stay. He intended to give them a good time, gain their confidence, for he had an idea they would fit in with his plans.

Gunplay

THOUGH Tommy was still suspicious of Gene's intentions, Annabelle, overwhelmed by the luxury of the gang-leader's apartment, set out to enjoy herself. Despite his antagonism, the young man began to like the racketeer, who was of a different stamp from his gang.

When Gene took them to the Club Sultan, in which he had an interest, Annabelle forgot her troubles, for the night-club life was new and fascinating to her. Gene left them at a privileged table while he went to an inner

office for a gang meeting, and got down to business.

"Here is an enlargement of a candid camera shot of Morton's store. I want you to memorise every detail of it. This is Edward Larkin, the salesman. Morton is an old man, you won't have any trouble with him. But keep an eye on Larkin. The store opens at nine in the morning, but they seldom have any customers before nine-ten. If anybody should come in—you know, line them up against the back wall."

That was Gene's way—scientific, with every detail planned out in advance for a minimum of risk—but Rocky was impatient.

"We're wasting time," he sneered. "I can get in, and I can get out."

"Sure you can, Rocky. We all know that. But my way, you see, nobody gets hurt. Personally I prefer gaol for robbery rather than the chair for murder. How about you boys?"

They nodded agreement. Rocky's lips curled as Gene continued.

"Now, you all know what to do, and the exact time. Memorise your instructions and then destroy them."

He told them that at two minutes after nine Johnny and Bill were to start a fight outside the store—a real one. He made them all set their watches by his, so that there would be no hitch in the timetable.

"How about protection?" asked Rocky. "Who's carrying the machine-guns?"

"There won't be any machine-guns. If you pull a trigger on this job, Rocky, you won't rate a cent out of it."

"That's easy to say. Nobody will be shooting at you. I'm the one that's pulling this job. All you do is sit behind a desk."

"And give the orders," smiled Gene. "Maybe to those kids!" snarled Rocky. "But not to me!"

"Rocky, you're getting annoying!" Gene laughed coldly. "Speaking of those kids, go and get them."

Rocky turned to one of the others.

"Call the kids."

"I said you get them!" snapped Gene.

For a moment there was an electric silence as Rocky's pale face glared murder. Then he swaggered to the door. Everybody relaxed. Gene was the coolest man there.

Tommy and the girl were nervous when they came to the office. Gene tried to put them at their ease.

"It's all right, Annabelle, relax. Now I asked you kids to do me a little favour, you remember? That's why I bought you some new clothes so you could go into an expensive jewellery shop to-morrow and not look out of place."

"We're not going to do anything crooked!" declared Tommy.

"Now wait a minute, Tommy, wait a minute. All I want you to do is to ask to see some diamond rings. You won't like anything you see, and the salesman will put several trays on the counter."

"What for?" demanded Tommy suspiciously.

"The two thousand dollars I promised you," said Gene easily.

"Yeah, but we don't—"

Gene's voice hardened.

"And to keep you both from going to gaol for sticking us up at Frank's place." He turned his back on them. Tommy's arm went round Annabelle's slim shoulders. Misery was written on their faces, for despite Gene's friendliness, there was no doubt that they were caught in the toils of gangsterdom.

They had no means of knowing that it was Gene's intention only to use them for this simple job—then they could go their ways, for he didn't want them to get mixed up with the gang. There was no danger to them as he had worked it out. But next morning they were so nervous when they entered the jewellery store at the appointed time—nine o'clock—that they thought Larkin would see something was wrong. However, he put their nervousness down to shyness, and brought out tray after tray of rings, laying them on the counter.

Annabelle was admiring some expensive rings when an uproar started outside. Loud voices quarrelled discordantly, then came the thud of blows. Quickly a crowd collected outside the windows as Billy and Johnny slammed away at each other. The rest of the gang mixed with the spectators.

While Larkin's attention was distracted, Tommy and Annabelle seized the opportunity to hurry out. They edged round the milling crowd as a policeman forced his way through. Larkin was just putting the rings away when a cold voice snapped:

"Reach!"
Covering him was Rocky, with Batsy and Eddie, grim-faced, behind him. Old Morton, standing near his salesman, glared in horror. A hold-up! While the policeman was still struggling to get to the fighters, the crack of a shot sounded from inside. Rocky, Batsy and Eddie dashed out, hurling startled people aside. They leaped into their car. Out rushed Larkin, yelling distractedly:

"Help, stop those men! They shot Mr. Morton!"

Another shot barked as the car screamed away from the sidewalk. Larkin staggered, clasping his shoulder, and collapsed against the doorway as another policeman came running to his assistance.

At nine-seven Gene Fillmore grinned as he looked at his watch. All over by now, and without any trouble. He

grinned at Dorothy, who was still recovering from the surprise he had given her when he announced his intention of making this the last job and arranging for their marriage right away. She hadn't expected this, and wondered what the jealous Rocky would have to say.

Then the radio announcer's voice began barking a news flash.

"Armed bandits broke in Morton's Fifth Avenue store and escaped with over a hundred thousand dollars' worth of jewellery. When Mr. Morton lowered his hands slightly one of the bandits shot him in cold blood. Edward Larkin, the salesman, ran out to summon aid and was also shot at by the escaping thugs. His condition is reported critical."

Savagely Gene's voice ripped through the sudden silence.

"Rocky! Wait here for me, Dorothy. We may have to move fast!"

Tommy and Annabelle had been waiting outside the Club Sultan in a panic for a long time when Gene's roadster screeched to a standstill beside them. Annabelle gripped his arm imploringly.

"We never wanted to get mixed up in this robbery and killing."

"All right," Gene snapped. "Come on inside. I'll attend to you later."

He raced into the deserted café, a place of dim shadows, with chairs piled on tables after the cleaners. With the youngsters behind him he came to a full stop as a soft voice drawled:

"Hallo, Gene!"

Sitting at one of the tables in the shadows with a gun resting before him, was Rocky Mosby. The killer had been tipped off by Dorothy that Gene was on the warpath. He had come prepared for a show-down in the only way he understood—with a gun in his hand.

With the bar at their backs they faced him as he rose, smiling mirthlessly.

"Get out of the way, kids! You're in the business now, like the rest of us. So you can watch me elect a new boss."

"Still ambitious, Rocky?" said Gene mockingly.

"Yeah, I like to tell people what to do. I hate to be told. I tried to tell you you needed a gun in this business. People respect you more." All the time he was watching Gene like a snake, ignoring the others.

"All right," grunted Gene. "Go ahead and shoot. Get it over with."

Rocky smiled.
"I like to see you squirm first. I've got something to say that might make you wriggle a little."

Gene grinned offensively.
"Been stealing cheese out of my ice box, Rocky?"

"Funny guy, ain't you? Well, have a good laugh. While you were mixing with the best people I was taking out Dorothy. I suspect she loves me."

Only by a narrowing of his eyes did Gene Fillmore show his amazement.

"You're a liar!"
"You can check on us," snarled Rocky, raising his gun, "when you come back to haunt me!"

His hand contracted on the trigger, but with one amazing leap Tommy came at him, swung a lusty arm and sent the gun flying from the killer's hand. Snarling, Rocky bent swiftly to pick it up. Gene was on him instantly, smashing a blow to the jaw that sent him flying in a heap and picking up the gun himself.

"Thanks, kid," he drawled. "All right, stay where you are, Rocky."

Warily, Rocky began to rise.

"All right, boss, now it's your chance to shoot. But you won't. I ain't afraid of you. You never scared me. That's why I took your girl away. That's why the gang wants me to tell them what to do!"

Unwavering, Gene covered him with his own gun and snapped:

"Tommy, take Annabelle into the back room."

"Stick around, kids," Rocky invited "I'm going to take that gun away from him in a minute."

"Rocky," Gene drawled, "you've



"Stick 'em up, all of you!" he snapped, his hand gripping something in his coat pocket.

been getting out of line lately. You're becoming a liability to the gang. I got a letter from Mrs. Winters this morning."

"So what?" grated Rocky, crouching watchfully.

"She called us a bunch of yellow rats," came Gene's cold, measured tones. "When her husband went to prison we promised to keep her going and send her money. She never got a cent. What did you do with the money, Rocky? The boys would like to know about that."

"Yeah?" scowled Rocky. "But you ain't gonna tell them. You ain't gonna tell them nothing. Why don't you shoot, you big shot?" He started towards Gene.

"Stay where you are, Rocky." "You don't know how to fire a gun, do you, Gene?" the killer jeered. "Well, I'll show you."

Like a striking snake his hand flashed to a shoulder-holster. The weapon was half out when Gene's gun crashed. Face contorted, Rocky coughed and crumpled to the floor. A killer even in death, he fired spasmodically as he rolled in agony, his automatic ripping shots at Gene. Bottles smashed to the floor, their contents splashing over Gene as he ducked. In a haze of gun-smoke he stared down at Rocky as the twitching body gradually became still.

Gang Law

"GENE, we're going to give you a fair trial. If the boys decide against you, I guess you know what that means."

A grim gathering faced Gene Fillmore that night. Dorothy Palmer sat alone, her eyes smouldering with hate. It was the singer who had come first on the scene of the shooting, and knelt, sobbing, by the body of Rocky Mosby.

"He was a rat," said Gene coldly when she accused him of shooting the killer in cold blood. "He tried to kill me."

Venomously she stared at him. "The boys will get you for this."

Dazedly he stared at her. "Then everything he said about you was true, huh?"

"Figure it out for yourself!" she snarled, and when the gang came rushing to the scene she accused him point-blank in the face of the evidence of Tommy and Annabelle, whom nobody would believe.

Gene stared round at the grim faces of the men who were to try him. The law of the underworld decreed that a man accused of killing a fellow gang member should himself be the object of gang vengeance. It was obvious that although one or two were trying to be fair-minded, the general opinion was hostile to him. Dorothy had worked well on their minds.

Knowing his life depended on a hair-trigger, Gene had tried to square things with Tommy and Annabelle. They wouldn't accept the two thousand dollars he offered them, wishing only to be free of this atmosphere of robbery and murder. Annabelle, who admired his many good qualities, was still dazed at the discovery that he, too, could be a killer. Uncomfortable before her wonderment, he gave them their hundred and thirty-six dollars.

"Now beat it while you're still carrying it. You don't belong around this place."

As Tommy pulled her away, Annabelle exclaimed:

"But couldn't you run away before they try you?"

Gene laughed grimly. "Sure, I'll tell you what I'll do. September 17th, 1938.

I'll hide in my attic. That'll fool them. Go on, get out, will you, and stop worrying about me."

Now alone—for Batsy, who was on his side, was out on an errand—he faced his accusers and claimed the right to talk.

"What for?" snapped Dorothy. "You killed him, didn't you?"

"Look at yourselves, boys," said Gene. "What were you before I took over? Just a bunch of petty thieves. Do you fellows realise that this past year our receipts were over a million dollars?"

"All I got was fifteen grand," Johnny complained.

"Well, you're not the whole organisation. You're simply a wheel in the machinery."

"Yeah? Well, I'm a pretty big wheel."

"Besides that," said Gene, "I pay out a lot of money for your protection."

"May I inquire, Mr. Fillmore," said Dorothy acidly, "what all this has got to do with your shooting of Rocky?"

"It has this to do with it," he said curtly. "Under my leadership you've all kept out of trouble. If I was right in one thing, I've been right in another. Rocky disobeyed my orders, and he ended up by pulling a gun on me. Fortunately, I beat him to it."

"I was there," said Dorothy implacably. "He shot Rocky down cold. Didn't give him a chance."

NEXT WEEK'S COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



DON TERRY

"SQUADRON OF HONOUR"

As the result of a diabolical frame-up the National Commander of the American Legion is arrested for murder; and Dan Blaine, a young District Attorney, sets out to establish his innocence—and enlists the aid of a hundred thousand Legionnaires to capture the actual killer. A novel drama

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Another episode of the fighting serial:

"THE PAINTED STALLION"

Starring Ray Corrigan

Bill glanced at Eddie and rose.

"Well, that's enough for me, boys. Let's get going." And Gene knew that the verdict was against him.

Johnny protested.

"Why can't we just kick him out of the gang and let it go at that?"

"He didn't give Rocky a chance!" snapped Dorothy.

"Well, frankly," grinned Gene, "I'm against it. But I guess I'm outvoted." With a bitter sting in his voice he added: "Well, gentlemen, after looking over this gang, all I can say is that New York is reasonably safe to-night. I'm not going to crawl. It is clear to me that I am the difference here between a well-regulated business organisation and a gang of thugs."

"We got along all right before you came," snarled Bill, and Dorothy Palmer smiled evilly: "And we'll get along all right after you're gone, won't we, boys?"

Johnny, Frankie, Eddie and Larry nodded grimly, and Gene read his doom in their faces. He shrugged, and they were preparing to leave when Batsy burst in cheerfully with the money from the Morton jewels.

"Hi ya, guys, I brought the treasury! Well, what's the matter, did I miss something?"

"Well, you missed all the speeches," drawled Gene, "but you're in time for the fireworks."

"Is that so? I brought along a few friends to see some fun. I didn't have any subpoenas, but I rounded up some witnesses!" And Batsy brought in Annabelle and Tommy, with a pale-faced woman in a dark costume who had once been pretty. Now she looked a very sick woman.

"I thought I told you kids to stay away from here!" Gene growled with more emotion than he had shown hitherto.

"Yeah, but Batsy here said it would help if we told about Rocky trying to shoot you!"

"You coached them swell, Batsy," sneered Dorothy. "Is that Gene's poor old mother?"

"Oh, I forgot to introduce you," said Batsy airily. "Fellows, this is Mrs. Winters."

The gang stared unbelievably.

"Billy's wife?"

"Yeah," said the pale woman drearily. "I'm Mrs. Billy Winters. I guess I look a lot different than when Billy and me was running around together. When you ain't eating regular—" She broke off, coughing spasmodically. "Billy was in the wrong business, but he didn't realise that when he went to prison, I'd be left behind like this!"

"But how could that be?" gasped Bill. "We been sending dough regular!"

"By way of Rocky," drawled Batsy. "He was a nice boy."

"He kept the money for himself?" said Larry incredulously.

"Don't believe her!" snapped Dorothy, her eyes showing her fear that Gene would go free. "It's a frame-up!"

Bill swung on Gene.

"Did you know about this?"

Batsy answered sardonically:

"He showed me a letter from her, but he didn't think you guys would care about a thing like that."

Bill shrugged, staring at Gene.

"The trip's off."

"That's what you think!" screamed Dorothy Palmer, her face twisted with hate, and she suddenly flashed a small automatic out of her handbag. Gene

(Continued on page 23)

The fearless Englishman, up against a mysterious enemy, risks his life in a dangerous mission. Starring John Barrymore and John Howard



A Theft and a Murder

IT was quite a merry little party assembled at Phyllis Clavering's villa in Switzerland, and Phyllis was happier than she had been for a long while. For it was on the eve of her marriage to Captain Hugh Drummond, and as he had promised faithfully that he had abandoned all his crime work and was really intending to settle down at last, his fiancée for once was content. For though she loved Drummond dearly and was secretly proud of his many daring exploits she had no fancy for being married to a man who was continually risking his life in the discovery of crime.

The time was just before dinner, and in the lounge-room were Drummond and his fiancée, their Aunt Blanche, and Sir Raymond Blantyre, millionaire, and head of the world famous Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate.

The door opened suddenly and Teuny, Drummond's impassive "man," entered the room. On a salver lay a small package which he presented to Drummond.

"Just arrived, sir."

Drummond glanced at it.

"More loot, darling," he said with a smile in the direction of his fiancée.

"Valuable, too, from the look of it, Hugh. Why, look at all the insurance stamps."

She went on surprisedly as Drummond opened it.

"It's from Gwen and Algy! Why on earth didn't they bring it themselves? They'll be here any moment now."

She opened the letter and read as follows:

"Dear Hugh and Phyllis,—Look what daddy has just made in his lab! This

is our wedding gift to you, but don't tell anyone as it's a secret."

She looked up with a smile.

"Don't suppose it matters much," she said, "as we're all friends. But isn't it rather wonderful? It really looks real, doesn't it, Sir Raymond? You're an expert on these things."

It certainly did look real. It was a large diamond about the size of a small nut. As it lay on its velvet bed it winked and glittered at them.

Blantyre took it and studied it with a slight frown on his face.

"You say this lady's father made this?" he asked incredulously.

"Oh, yes," replied the girl readily.

"He's Professor Goodman, the famous chemist. He's been working on this for years—it's his hobby. It's rather a beautiful bit of glass, isn't it, Sir Raymond? For, of course, as it isn't real it can't be of any value, can it?"

He handed it back to her. Drummond was watching him with a slightly perplexed look on his face.

"Oh, no," answered the millionaire carelessly. "It isn't of any value, of course. But it's interesting all the same."

It was not until dinner was over and Blantyre had left that the subject came up again, for Algy and Gwen had turned up, and after the usual greetings had been exchanged Drummond turned to Gwen.

"Thanks for your present, Gwen," he said. "But might I ask the reason of all the insurance stamps?"

"Well, diamonds are worth it, aren't they, Hugh?"

"Diamonds are, old lady—but not manufactured bits of glass."

Her smile was a shade pitying.

"That's a real diamond, Hugh."

He stared at her.

"But you said your old man made it?" he queried.

"So he did. He's been working on the process for nearly twenty years, and this is the first real result. He showed it to an expert, without telling him he'd made it, and the expert offered to give him twenty thousand pounds for it straight off."

Drummond sat up in his chair.

"D'you mean that, Gwen?" he demanded.

"I most certainly do. And he says he can make all he wants to. He's as pleased as a dog with two tails."

"I'll say he is," replied Drummond emphatically. "He can make all the money he wants."

"Oh, that doesn't interest daddy in the slightest," answered the girl. "He won't try and make money out of it. All he's interested in is the fact that he can now do what he's been trying to do for years."

A worried frown came to Drummond's face as he got up from his chair.

"That sounds all good, my dear, but if this gets out—"

As he paused, Gwen broke in.

"It had better not, Hugh. Father doesn't want it known yet."

"H'm! Sorry about that. Sir Raymond Blantyre seemed a bit interested in it. He was here when your letter came, and he examined that diamond at some length."

Aunt Blanche, however, broke in here.

"My dear Hugh, don't be so ridiculous," she said. "Sir Raymond is a gentleman and one of the best known men in the whole of London. I'll tell him when I see him to-morrow that you don't want this thing talked about yet. Now bring Gwen and Algy and let them see your presents."

"Let's hope they're all safe," chimed in Longworth. "If the jolly old burglars were to get to work—"

"Nonsense," interrupted Aunt Blanche, "we've got a special detective guarding them day and night."

They went into the room where all the presents were laid out.

"Hallo?" exclaimed Drummond as he glanced round the room. "Where's our sleuth?"

"Popped out to have one," suggested Longworth facetiously.

"I must talk to him about—" began the other, but he swung round in a moment as a little scream came from his fiancée.

"Hugh, it's gone!"

"What's gone?"

"The diamond—the diamond that Gwen and Algy gave us. The case is here, but it's empty."

They stood together gazing at the empty case. Drummond's face was grave. But they swung round in a moment at a startled cry from Algy Longworth, who had been searching about in a corner of the room.

"And here's your 'tee, Hugh," he said as he pointed grimly to a figure that lay sprawled out inertly on the floor.

Drummond was across the room in a flash. Aunt Blanche had given a scream and collapsed into a chair. Gwen and Phyllis were clutching each other and their faces were white.

Drummond, down on his knees beside the unfortunate detective, spoke at last.

"Ring up the police, Algy," he said.

"This man's been murdered."

A Caller for Professor Goodman

PROFESSOR GOODMAN, elderly, dreamy-eyed, benevolent, was in his library when a maid entered.

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir," she said. "Sir Raymond Blantyre and his secretary."

The professor tapped his head thoughtfully.

"Ah, yes," he murmured, "I remember now. They made an appointment. Show them up, Mrs. Weevens."

Blantyre came into the room, a big, florid-faced man.

"My name is Blantyre, professor," he said. "This is my secretary, Mr. Roberts. As I told you on the phone, being the head of the greatest diamond syndicate in the world I am naturally curious about this new process of yours."

"Naturally, naturally," replied the other with a bland smile. "I suppose you are inclined to look upon me as a serious rival, Sir Raymond, but you needn't worry a lot. My interest is in my experiments. I shan't flood the world with my results for the purpose of making money."

A frown crossed the millionaire's face.

"Forgive me for saying so," he replied, "but you have not yet convinced me that you can make diamonds."

The professor beamed on him.

"No, my friend," he answered, "but I very soon shall. Now watch me closely."

No two people could have watched him more closely than did those two for the next twenty minutes. They saw him busy himself with queer evil smelling liquids which he mixed in front of them with exceeding great care; they saw him empty the result into a empty metal cup, and the cup itself enclosed in a cylinder which in turn was screwed tightly into a complicated machine. Then they saw him pull a switch and the sparks begin to fly.

They stood watching in dead silence. The noise of the machinery was deafening, the sparks were blinding. Presently flames began to shoot out and they

stepped back in slight alarm, but the professor merely shook his head as though telling them there was no need for fear.

Finally, he pulled a succession of levers and at last came silence.

"Gentlemen," he said impressively, "you have witnessed the birth of a diamond."

Said Sir Raymond with a frown: "Let's have a look at the diamond, professor."

The latter, with a pair of tongs, unscrewed the cylinder and removed from it a round black ball which he dropped into a vat of liquid which spurted up a cloud of steam.

Presently he lifted the black ball out. "There is your diamond, gentlemen," he said.

"That's not a diamond," said Roberts sincerely.

"You don't think so?" asked the professor with a smile. "Let us see."

He picked up a small hammer, gave a few gentle blows to the black ball which shivered and broke. And there lay a glittering diamond!

"I can make those at a cost of a few shillings apiece," he said modestly.

Sir Raymond picked it up, examined it closely; studied it through his glass.

"Perfect," he pronounced. "Small, admittedly, but—"

"Ah, I shall do better later on, Sir Raymond. If I had an equipment like Dr. Botulian's—"

"And who's he?"

"You've never heard of him? Why, he's the great American scientist, now over here. Incidentally"—with a smile—"he is my rival."

Blantyre, who had been listening with the closest attention, now spoke.

"Professor," he said, "I will pay you fifty thousand pounds for this secret of yours."

The professor regarded them coldly.

"I'm afraid I'm not interested, gentlemen," he said.

"Name your figure then. I'll pay you anything in reason."

A slightly angry look appeared on the professor's benevolent face.

"As I have already told you, Sir Raymond, my invention is not for sale."

"But, professor, surely you can see—" began the other when Goodman cut him short.

"You're wasting your time and mine, sir," he said sharply. "I have been pleased to show you my invention. I have now the honour to wish you good-morning."

As Blantyre and Roberts came down the staircase together the millionaire was scowling.

"I wish to goodness you hadn't killed that detective," he said.

One hour later Drummond was interviewing Colonel Neilson, of Scotland Yard, though the latter's opening remark as Drummond entered the room was hardly encouraging.

"I never see you come into this room, Drummond, without wishing you a million miles away," he said crossly.

"Thanks for the kind thought," replied the big man cheerfully. "But you've got to listen to this one."

He proceeded to relate exactly what had taken place in the villa at Switzerland, Blantyre's hurried departure, the theft of the diamond and the murder of the detective.

"I've just come from Professor Goodman's," he went on, "and Blantyre's been there trying to get him to sell his process, and practically threatening him with things if he doesn't do so. Now give me the answer to that one."

Neilson was silent. He was never inclined to encourage Drummond too much because he was always a little

nervous of what he would do. But he could see there was something grave at the back of it.

"Sir Raymond is a most respectable man," he said abruptly.

"So's every criminal till he turns crook," retorted Drummond. "But it's pretty plain to me that he murdered that 'tee, and the next murder you'll hear of will be Professor Goodman. And if you won't be around to see it, I shall. Good-morning."

He went out raging. Neilson, with a smile, rang his bell and one of his clerks came in.

"Put a plain-clothes man on to Drummond," he said, "as he may get into trouble, and we've got to be there to help him out. And have two men watching Professor Goodman's house."

Sir Raymond Lays His Plans

BLANTYRE and Roberts called on Dr. Botulian that afternoon, for Professor Goodman's chance remark had put an idea into the millionaire's head.

He began with an encouraging smile after he had stated who he was and the experiment that he had recently witnessed, for he had seen other things than mere interest show in the doctor's eyes during his recital.

"You and the professor are rivals, aren't you, doctor?" he asked blandly.

"We've both of us experimented along similar lines, if that's what you mean," replied the other guardedly.

"And you've failed where Goodman seems to have succeeded?"

The other stroked his small beard. There was a frown on his face which did not escape Blantyre.

"At present—yes."

"We are very interested in the Goodman process," said Roberts smoothly, "and we have made him a very handsome offer, but he declines to sell."

"I have an appointment with him this evening," murmured Botulian thoughtfully. "I'm taking him some of my equipment at nine o'clock."

Blantyre and Roberts exchanged glances. This was news, and interesting news.

"Supposing that—or—we kept your appointment for you?" suggested Blantyre ingratiatingly.

Botulian looked thoughtful, and Blantyre went on.

"We should be charmed to pay you five thousand pounds to keep the appointment."

Botulian's eyes narrowed.

"But I might hit upon the process myself later?" he murmured thoughtfully.

"When we should be delighted to buy you out at a high figure," replied the millionaire.

Botulian sat nodding thoughtfully.

"Exactly what have I got to do?" he demanded at length.

"Receive a cheque for five thousand pounds," answered the millionaire smoothly, "and remain here so that you have a perfect alibi."

"One of you gentlemen, I take it, intends to go as me?"

Sir Raymond rose to his feet with a smile.

"Let's say, doctor," he answered, "that whatever risk we take will be our own."

For some time after they had gone Botulian sat thinking deeply. Then at last he summoned his assistant.

"Well?" demanded the latter.

"You heard the suggestion?"

"I did. So you aren't keeping your appointment to-night?"

A smile spread over the doctor's face.

"That's where you're wrong, my dear

fellow," he replied blandly. "I am keeping it—but it will be well before nine o'clock. Poof, I can see their game! They're going to destroy his laboratory. All right—they shall. But we'll be well in front of them and we'll get Goodman away. And I fancy then that Blantyre will be ready to pay fifty thousand pounds instead of a paltry five."

Drummond had already had in the course of years too many rebuffs from the Yard to be inclined to take them seriously, so after his fruitless interview with Colonel Neilson he went straight back to Professor Goodman's house, where he, too, leaped that he had got an appointment that night with Dr. Botulian. Though when later in the day the faithful Tenny who had followed Blantyre and Roberts after they had left Goodman's house, apprised him of the fact that these two had both called upon Dr. Botulian and had come away obviously pleased with themselves, his fears all leaped up again. For he was quite sure that something sinister had been planned, though he was entirely at a loss to understand what it could be.

All the same he had no idea of abandoning his investigations. He was firmly convinced in his own mind that Blantyre was planning something desperate, and he was determined to find out what it could be. So that evening soon after eight o'clock he was loitering round Goodman's house, dodging backwards and forwards about the shrubbery in his efforts to avoid the two constables who were patrolling the house. And it was while he was crouching down behind one of the laurel bushes that the faithful Tenny joined him.

"Dr. Botulian, sir, has just entered the house," he whispered. "The police stopped him, but he said who he was and he was allowed to go in."

"Funny," mused Drummond. "His appointment was for nine, and it's not half-past eight. Tenny, you must slip away from here and try and draw off

the police. I've got to get into the house and see what's going on."

He heard his man slip away and waited, listening. He was quite convinced now that something queer was on foot, and in a few minutes' time when no sound came to him he slipped from the shrubbery and was soon busy on one of the lower windows. But he swung round in a flash as a voice came from his elbow.

"Good-evening, Captain Drummond."

Drummond cursed him under his breath. Two stalwart constables were standing before him.

"It won't do, sir," went on one of them calmly. "We have special instructions from Colonel Neilson, sir, to take you off if we found you trying to get into this house. It would be wiser to come quietly."

Drummond swore softly but volubly.

"You mean you're going to arrest me?"

"Afraid we've got to follow orders, sir. If you won't come quietly—"

But here Drummond interrupted them with a weary shrug of the shoulders.

"Oh, what's the use?" he exclaimed bitterly. "I'll come."

Neilson regarded him sternly as they brought him into his room.

"So you were still at it, were you?" he queried. "I've been looking for an excuse for some time to lock you up, Drummond, and now you've furnished it. You were trying to batter your way into that house—"

"To prevent a murder being committed."

"Oh, I've heard that tale before!"

He turned to the attendant constables. "Take him away and lock him up," he said.

"But, colonel!" exclaimed Drummond desperately. "Even if you do lock me up, will you send someone up immediately to Goodman's house? I tell you—"

"I don't care what you tell me!" stormed the other. "I tell you that

there's nothing wrong with Goodman's house and—"

But at that moment the telephone-bell shrilled out, and he picked up the receiver, though even as he listened the expression of his face changed.

"What? There's been an explosion—the house has been wrecked—Goodman's house!"

He banged down the receiver, glared at Drummond, who was whistling softly under his breath.

"My car—quick!" exclaimed Neilson. "And you come along, too, Drummond!"

As they pulled up outside the house where the constable was holding back the crowd they saw only too clearly that there had been a serious explosion, for almost half the house was in ruins.

But even as they alighted from the car a slight, bearded man came forward in an obvious state of agitation.

"I'm Dr. Botulian," he said. "I'm looking for Professor Goodman's house. I have an appointment with him."

Neilson glared at him.

"What time?"

"Nine o'clock. I'm a bit late, I'm afraid, but—"

But at that moment Mrs. Weevens pushed her way forward and threw out an accusing finger at the doctor.

"There he is!" she exclaimed.

"There's the blackguard who called on my master over an hour ago."

"Oh, but that's impossible!" exclaimed the doctor. "I have never even approached this house until now."

"Oh, you did, I saw you!" replied Mrs. Weevens.

"I can prove I didn't."

Neilson was rubbing his chin.

"I'm afraid, doctor, that this is a case for a magistrate to decide," he said.

"But you can't possibly arrest me," answered the other excitedly; but Neilson came in angrily.

"Can't I?" he retorted. "You evidently don't know—"



Drummond stepped back, his sword above his head. . . .

But a quiet voice came from his elbow.

"I shouldn't if I were you," it said. Neilson wheeled round furiously. Drummond was standing there holding out something.

"Take a squint at that which I found just now inside the house, colonel," he suggested, and there was a smile on his face.

The other snatched it from him, glared at it, and then glared back at Drummond, who went on quietly:

"That's why I say you mustn't arrest the doctor," he said. "That's a piece of a false beard or a false wig the same colour as Dr. Botulian's, so it looks very much as though—"

"Someone's been impersonating him? Great heavens!" exclaimed Neilson.

He swung round on one of the constables.

"Did you see anyone like Dr. Botulian arrive?" he flung out.

"Well, sir, a gentleman arrived, like this gentleman, who said he was Dr. Botulian, and he drove up with a big packing-case—"

"Which was probably filled with high-explosives," finished Neilson, now thoroughly angry. "Oh, you make me tired, the whole lot of you!"

The Trapping of Bulldog Drummond

IT was two days later, and Bulldog Drummond sat at his breakfast with the imperturbable Tenny motionless behind him.

"You are not getting on with your breakfast, sir," suggested the latter mildly.

"I'm not, Tenny. Things aren't going right, and I can't make it out. I've got a strong feeling in my bones that Goodman was never killed in that explosion. Yet if he wasn't—"

He left the sentence unfinished as he stared gloomily at his plate. At that moment the electric bell in the hall whirred out.

"Go and see who that is, Tenny," he said.

A few moments later the man appeared, ushering in Dr. Botulian.

"How are you, doctor?" asked Drummond smoothly. "What can I do for you?"

"The late Professor Goodman seems to have had a premonition that something was going to happen to him," replied the doctor as he sat down. "A week ago he sent me a letter requesting me in the event of his death to carry on his diamond experiments."

"I see. But may I ask how this affects me?"

"Merely that Goodman gave his notes to you for their safe keeping."

Drummond frowned.

"On the contrary, doctor, I begged him to do so and he refused."

Dr. Botulian, without a word, produced a letter which he handed to Drummond.

"Read that," he said laconically.

Drummond glanced at it. It read thus:

"Dear Drummond,—In the event of anything happening to me will you please turn over my notes to my old friend and colleague, Dr. Botulian?—
"BERNARD GOODMAN."

Drummond looked up. There was a smile on his face.

"I naturally wanted to be quite sure," he said. "I admit that he did give me the notes. They're at the bank in my safe deposit. Perhaps if you will come back here this afternoon at four—"

"I could come with you now?" broke

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in the other eagerly; but Drummond merely shook his head.

"I'm not doubting you, doctor," he replied, "but out of fairness to my old friend I must verify his signature. If it's O.K., as no doubt it is, you shall have the notes at four this afternoon."

The other rose from his chair.

"Thank you, captain. I'll be here at four," he said.

After he had gone Drummond sat fingering the letter and examining it closely. His eyes were narrowed. Tenny was watching him.

"Now this is highly interesting, Tenny," murmured Drummond. "I want a long envelope and half a dozen sheets of paper. I think I can most certainly say now that Professor Goodman isn't dead, after all."

One hour later he was seated in Colonel Neilson's room, and the latter was studying the letter which Botulian had given him.

"I suppose you're telling me that this letter is a forgery?" he queried at length.

"On the contrary, Gwen has identified it as her father's handwriting."

"Then why can't you give Botulian the notes?"

"Simply because Goodman never gave them to me."

Neilson stared at him.

"Then if Goodman never gave them to you—" he began, and then stopped. Drummond came in with a smile.

"Exactly."

"But that means—what exactly does it mean, Drummond?"

"One of two things, colonel. Now listen."

By the time he rose to go, Neilson was nodding grim approval.

At four o'clock Botulian entered the room and Drummond rose to meet him. But his greeting was strange, for he suddenly grasped the doctor's beard and gave it a violent tug.

"What the devil—what the—" spluttered the other; but Drummond came in with a smile.

"Forgive me, doctor. I must apologise, but a man obviously impersonating you came here this morning with this letter. D'you recognise it?"

He handed the other the letter which the latter himself had brought, and Botulian stared at it for some moments as if undecided as to what to say.

"This letter," he said at length. "was stolen from my house last night. I didn't report it to the police as it would make it public."

"And I merely pulled your beard just now, sir," replied Drummond airily, "to make sure you are the real Dr. Botulian, Tenny, give the doctor those notes."

Drummond stood chuckling after Botulian had left.

"My hat and revolver, quick, Tenny," he said. "I think he'll lead me all right now to Professor Goodman."

It was a long pursuit, but Drummond had been accustomed to long pursuits, and he knew furthermore now that the Yard men were joining in the chase and would follow him wherever he went. And that was quite good enough for him when eventually he tracked Botulian down to a little village in the Midlands. And so sure was he of those whom he believed to be following him that he went boldly up to the house and knocked at the door, which was opened by the doctor himself.

"Ah, come in, Drummond!" he exclaimed genially. "D'you know I had a sort of fancy that you'd be coming along."

Drummond's hand was in his pocket

on his gun, and he pushed it forward a shade ostentatiously.

"I shouldn't try any tricks, doctor," he said quietly. "I hold you covered."

"My dear fellow, I can see that. I'll go first and you can follow me if you like. Though I don't understand quite what this means."

"I most certainly should like," answered Drummond grimly. "But don't please let me see your hands go to your pockets. I'm horribly quick on the trigger."

He followed the other into a comfortably furnished hall, but he saw in a glance that it was empty.

"I want to see Professor Goodman," he said briefly.

Botulian smiled.

"My dear man, I'm not a medium. I can't bring the dead to life."

"Ah, but Goodman isn't dead, doctor. That letter you gave me was written within the last twenty-four hours. I know; the ink has been tested."

A dangerous light shone for a moment in the other's eyes, but he turned it away with a laugh.

"Well, we all make mistakes sometimes," he said. "Even Captain Drummond. Look out behind you."

But Drummond, smiling, shook his head.

"I'm not falling for that one, thank you, doctor," he answered. "It's a bit too old. I'll trouble you to—"

And then something crashed on his head from behind, and as he slid inertly to the floor he knew that he had fallen into a cleverly laid trap.

The Last Round

WHEN Drummond came to his senses it was to find himself in a small attic the windows of which were closely barred. And Professor Goodman was bending over him. In a few moments Drummond explained all that had occurred, but even while he was talking they heard the sound of bolts being drawn, and in another moment Botulian entered the room.

"Well, gentlemen," he said as he surveyed them with an evil smile. "isn't it time we came to an understanding? I don't want blank sheets of paper, Drummond, such as you put into that envelope—I want the notes."

Said Goodman, after a pause:

"They're in my laboratory."

"Unfortunately your laboratory has been blown to bits, professor. But what you've done once you can do again."

"It will take a long time."

Botulian shrugged his shoulders. "With an able assistant like Captain Drummond?" he queried. "Surely not."

Drummond spoke then:

"And if we refuse?" he asked grimly.

Botulian smiled.

"The consequences, I'm afraid, will be most unpleasant for both of you," he said. "Think it over."

While this was taking place Colonel Neilson was sitting in his room with an exceedingly worried expression on his face. Opposite him was Sir Raymond Blantyre, no less worried; but from an entirely different cause had Neilson but known it.

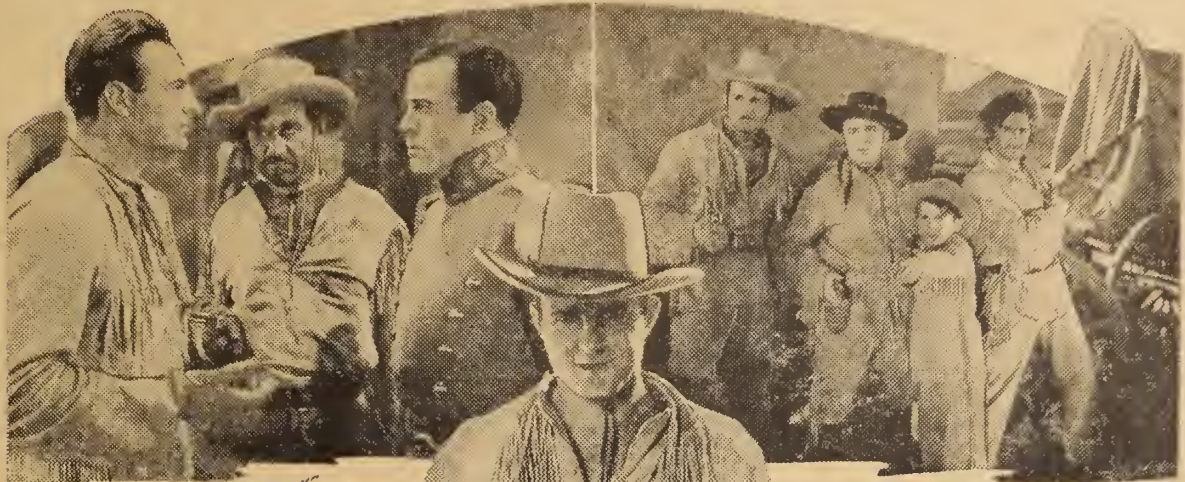
"And you can't give us any idea of what's been going on?" asked Neilson at length.

Blantyre threw out his hands. His plans had miscarried very badly, and he had a shrewd suspicion that Botulian had in some way double-crossed him. But he wasn't telling Neilson so.

"I know no more than you do," he protested. "I want to find my man

(Continued on page 23.)

Ride the danger trail with the pioneers of the Old West in this pulsing epic of the days when fearless prairie scouts took up the challenge of savage Redskins and murderous desperadoes. To the beat of thundering hoofs and to the blast of flaming guns this vivid serial runs its thrill-a-minute course, with hot action in every smashing episode and Ray Corrigan in its starring rôle



THE PAINTED STALLION

Read This First

Backed by Dupray, a scheming Spaniard who is Governor of Santa Fe, but who has received news that he is to be deposed by the newly established Mexican Republic, a band of renegades led by one, Zamora, is preying on the wagon-trains that ply to and fro across the Western wilds with rich merchandise under their awnings.

The activities of these renegades are hampered by a mystery rider on a painted stallion, who has sworn to defeat outlawry and who again and again warns the bandits' intended victims of their danger by means of whistling arrows.

The year is 1824, and in that year an American frontiersman known as Clark Stuart is detailed by the U.S. Government to negotiate a trade treaty with the Mexican authorities. It is a treaty which Dupray is anxious to prevent from being conceded, and at his instigation Zamora invites the Indians to attack a wagon-train led by a trader named Jamison—a wagon-train with which Clark is travelling and whose personnel also includes Jim Bowie, famous as the inventor of the Bowie knife, and Kit Carson, a boy later to become renowned as a Western scout.

The Rider of the Painted Stallion saves the train by calling off the Redskins, who regard that mysterious figure as a supernatural being, and later the Rider rescues Clark from the clutches of some of Zamora's henchmen.

After learning the Rider is in reality a white girl, Clark and his companions reach Santa Fe, where they discover

Dupray's association with the outlaws.

Dupray escapes, and by a trick decoys the Jamison party and Santa Fe's garrison into the hills. Then his men attack the residence of a new governor who has arrived at the citadel.

Together with Kit Carson and Jim Bowie, three of Jamison's men and half a dozen soldiers have been left behind. These rally round the new governor and engage the outlaws, but the residence being set on fire, the heroic defenders rush forth to die fighting.

Kit, attempting to follow, trips and strikes his head against a door, losing consciousness.

Now Read On

To the Rescue

JIM BOWIE, Don Luis Alvarez and their companions were unaware of the accident that had befallen Kit, but even had they known that he was lying insensible in that room which they had evacuated they might well have considered it an act of mercy to leave him there.

The chances were that he would remain mercifully oblivious and that death would steal upon him painlessly. And what alternative could Bowie, Don Luis and their party have offered the boy if they had realised his plight and turned back to revive him? They

could only have shepherded him out of the burning residence to meet his end by a bullet, for Zamora and his blood-thirsty satellites were not of the breed to show mercy to anyone—not even to a lovable little fellow like Kit Carson.

As it was Kit seemed destined to die of suffocation, and not by a slug from a six-gun.

Down the stairs that led to the ground floor of the house went Jim Bowie, long-barrelled rifle clutched in his horny, calloused hands, weather-beaten face grim-determined in its expression. After him, revolver in fist, came Don Luis Alvarez, Governor of Santa Fe and representative of the newly-established Mexican Republic, and bunched in the rear of that elderly hidalgo were Bowie's three comrades of the Jamison wagon-train and the half-dozen soldiers who had been detailed to remain at the presidio or fortress when the rest of the garrison had departed.

Through weltering smoke luridly coloured here and there with tongues of fire those eleven men fought their way to the front door of the dwelling. Then they charged out on to the veranda and out into the courtyard of the presidio, and as they appeared there in full view the air seemed to rock with a bellowing volley of gunplay that came from the position occupied by Zamora and the besieging outlaws.

Leadens missiles ripped across the patio, dealing murder. One of Jim Bowie's fellow Americans buckled at the knees and sank riddled to the dust. Three of the Mexican troopers pitched headlong, lifeless. The survivors, unscathed, gave swift response to the

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EPISODE 10:—

"Ambush"

missalade—the other three soldiers, the governor and Bowie's remaining compatriots standing in front of the burning residence and shooting at the renegades, who had issued exultantly from cover.

Jim Bowie on his part was not content to stand still and trade lead with the outlaws across an intervening area that measured some forty or fifty yards. A wild light of battle had kindled in his eyes, vivid as the tongues of flame that were threatening to raze Don Luis' quarters, and his teeth were bared so that they lent an expression of indescribable ferocity and mad courage to his features. Indeed, he might have been likened in that moment to some Viking of old—berserk in the determination to slay before he himself was slain.

Savagely he rushed towards the muster of gangsters, and, rifle held low, firing from the hip as he ran, he accounted for two of his enemies. Then suddenly realising the weapon in his grasp was empty, he clutched it in mid-stride and charged on.

It seemed miraculous that he had not already fallen dead, struck by an outlaw bullet, for the crooks had not been slow to concentrate their gunplay on him when he had dashed forward. Yet perhaps because there was something unnerving in the spectacle of his frenzied figure hurtling to the attack, the aim of the renegades was singularly inaccurate, and he was within twenty paces of them before a bullet tumbled him to the ground.

Even as he fell, Zamora and his accomplices became aware of a commotion outside the fort, and all at once the four gangsters who had been left on the watch beyond the gateway scuttled into the courtyard with loud cries of alarm.

"Beat it, fellers! The Jamison crowd an' the garrison—they're high-tailin' it straight for the fort! They're comin' up at full stretch, and it looks like Clark Stuart is with 'em!"

Such were the shouts raised by the men who had been posted outside the presidio, and Zamora and the other outlaws could scarcely believe their ears on hearing them. Then panic seizing the rogues, a general rush was made for the gateway—a rush which Zamora made no attempt to stem. Indeed, the dago would have led that precipitate flight if he had not been restrained for a moment by Macklin.

"Wait!" the latter jerked. "We ain't got what we came for, but we'll take somethin' away with us."

He pointed to the figure of Jim Bowie. The veteran scout was struggling to his knees in a dazed fashion, and was fumbling vaguely for his rifle, which had slipped from his fingers and was lying a yard or so in front of him. There was blood in his hair, but the bullet that had dropped him had not injured him seriously—had merely ceased him.

"That hombre is Bowie," Macklin panted to Zamora, as he indicated the bemused frontiersman, "an' he's about as close to Stuart an' Jamison as a brother. We might find him a useful hostage if we took him along with us. Quick, let's pick him up!"

Anxious as he was to escape from the presidio, Zamora blundered towards Jim Bowie with Macklin, and the pair of them laid hold of the veteran, who made an attempt to resist but who was speedily struck senseless by a blow from the butt of Macklin's forty-five.

In another instant Bowie was being dragged towards the gateway, and though his captors were harried by a

burst of shooting from Don Luis and the other survivors of the party which had defended the governor's residence, the smoke that was swirling over the patio tended to spoil the aim of the unconscious scout's friends.

Unharméd, Macklin and Zamora hauled their prisoner out of the fort. Meanwhile, their accomplices were making off at top speed, and the Jamison crowd and the troopers who were riding stirrup to stirrup with the Americans from Independence were approaching the scene rapidly. But the newcomers were still some little distance away when Zamora and Macklin flung Bowie over the back of a spare mount which had belonged to one of the renegades killed in the attack on the presidio, the frontiersman's captors then springing astride their own broncs.

Macklin seized the rein of the pony across which Jim Bowie had been thrown, and, Zamora by his side, struck off at full pelt in the direction which the rest of the gang were taking. As for the cavalcade headed by Jamison, Clark and the captain of the Santa Fe garrison, they separated into two bodies, one giving chase to the bandits and pumping lead at the ruffians' fleeing forms, the other pushing onward for the fortress.

Clark and Jamison were among those who bore down on the presidio, neither of them having recognised the unconscious man who was in the hands of Zamora and Macklin. They had both been under the impression, in fact, that the figure which had been hoisted athwart the spare bronc had been that of a wounded outlaw.

Jamison's horse, carrying Clark as well as the wagon boss, was the first to enter the courtyard of the fort, and a few seconds afterwards the pair of them were confronting Don Luis Alvarez and the remnants of the little party which had held out against the renegades' onslaught.

Dismounting, Clark and Jamison glanced at the huddled bodies of the men who had been shot down by the outlaws. Then the wagon boss addressed himself to the Governor.

"I reckon none of you would 've been left alive, Don Luis," he said, "if Clark Stuart here hadn't met up with us out in the hills. We mighty soon found out from him we'd been tricked into leavin' Santa Fe, an' we turned back pronto. But where's Jim Bowie? I don't see him around."

"Your friend Bowie was carried off by two of those renegades," the Governor answered sombrely, at which piece of news Jamison and Clark looked at each other in dismay.

Then the U.S. Government agent found his voice.

"And Kit Carson?" he rapped out. "Have those coyotes carried him off as well?"

At that one of the two surviving Americans in Don Luis' party gave vent to an exclamation.

"Kit Carson!" he blurted. "Why, no, Clark, the outlaws didn't get him. He must still be inside the Governor's quarters—up in that room there."

He indicated the windows of the apartment which the little group of defenders had been forced to evacuate a short time previously, and Clark waited to hear no more. With a hoarse cry on his lips he bounded to the veranda of the burning building, and, hurling himself across the threshold of the residence, he fought his way through the dense clouds of smoke and ascended the staircase leading to the upper floor, where it did not take him long to find the room in which Kit lay.

Stumbling upon the boy's prone body, Clark gathered the lad in his powerful arms and then retraced his steps down to the hallway and the front door, choking and retching as the fumes of the conflagration assailed his throat and lungs with ever-increasing effect. Indeed, he was almost at the last gasp by the time he gained the courtyard, where Jamison and the Governor took charge of the rescued youngster and set themselves to the task of reviving him.

In the meantime the courtyard had become crowded with those men of the returned cavalcade who had followed Clark and the wagon boss to the presidio, and efforts were being made to quench the fire that had broken out in Don Luis' quarters. Nor were those efforts unsuccessful, although more than an hour elapsed before the flames were completely extinguished.

By then young Kit Carson had been restored to his senses and was more or less himself again, and he was assuring Clark, Jamison and Governor Alvarez that he was none the worse of his experience when the men who had spurred in pursuit of the outlaws were seen cantering towards the fort.

They brought with them the disappointing intelligence that the bandits had made a clean getaway, owing to the fact that their horses had been considerably fresher than the ponies ridden by the supporters of law and order. The crooks, it seemed, had turned east after entering the hill-country to the north, and although the outdistanced pursuers had done their utmost to stick to the fugitives' trail, they had lost the scent utterly amid the barren mountains.

On learning this Don Luis Alvarez looked at Clark Stuart gloomily enough.

"My friend," he said, "the events of this morning have compelled me to make up my mind on the question of your mission to Santa Fe. I know that we have not had a chance to discuss that mission thoroughly as yet, but under the circumstances it is impossible for me to negotiate any trade treaty with your government on behalf of the Mexican Republic while this province remains exposed to the depredations of these outlaws.

"I understand there is a clause in that proposed treaty which refers to a guarantee of adequate protection for American wagon-trains," he said. "And, placed as I am, I cannot take it upon myself to guarantee any such protection in this territory until Dupray and his associates have been stamped out."

Clark nodded gravely.

"I appreciate all that, your Excellency," he rejoined. "On the other hand, it may not be long before the Dupray-Zamora outfit are brought to justice. You see, I know where their hide-out is situated now, and although it's liable to prove a difficult place to storm, I reckon our combined forces ought to be able to take it."

The Governor bit his lip.

"Our combined forces, eh?" he murmured. "Senor, I cannot afford to send my garrison into the hills again. I cannot afford to take that chance, leaving the presidio open to further attack by those outlaws—indeed, leaving the whole town at their mercy. For you can be sure that if the renegades learned Santa Fe had been left practically undefended again they would circle round and repeat the onset they made to-day, and perhaps with more success. No, senor, from now on

the troops under my control will be kept close to home."

It was a decision from which he would not budge, not even when Clark reminded him of Bowie's capture and appealed to him to lend aid in attempting the rescue of the veteran scout.

"I deeply regret the kidnapping of your friend," Don Luis said. "But I would be neglecting my duty to an entire community if I allowed myself to be swayed by considerations for the welfare of one man."

They were his final words on the subject—words that boded ill for Jim Bowie, who at that very moment was being conveyed through the mountains by the rogues who had taken him prisoner.

Still lying insensible over the pony across whose back he had been flung, Bowie was oblivious of his surroundings and of the band of ruffians who were galloping eastward with him, Macklin and Zamora having caught up with the rest of the fugitives by now. Nor had the captive recovered consciousness when the crooks reached their destination—that lofty cavern with its inner compartment wherein Escobedo Dupray had now taken up his abode.

Dupray was sitting alone in that inner chamber when his hirelings entered with the prisoner, and when he heard how the attack on the presidio had been frustrated he broke out into a torrent of abuse, concentrating his wrath upon Zamora so that the latter fairly squirmed under the deposed lieutenant governor's venomous upbraiding.

"I send you and your men to Santa Fe to plunder the Jamison wagons and to obtain for me the official seal of the new governor—and what do you bring me? News of failure—news that five of the gang have been killed—news that you have accomplished nothing! Por Dios, are you and your compadres a pack of spineless fools, Zamora? Are you completely without courage and initiative?"

Such was the sum total of Dupray's angry remarks, and in response to them Zamora could only protest that they were unreasonable, and that the ineffectiveness of the attack was due to one factor alone.

"Clark Stuart was responsible for halting us," he declared. "We believed he was dead, but we were wrong, and he must have fallen in with his friends and the troopers of the garrison and turned them back from the hills."

"That may be," snarled Dupray, "but it sounds to me as if you were an unconscionable time in driving the few defenders of the Governor's residence out into the open. You ought to have finished what you set out to do long before Stuart and his crowd showed up with the troopers!"

He paused, then directed an ugly glance at Jim Bowie, who had been thrown unceremoniously on to a rude couch.

"And what's the idea of bringing that fellow here, anyway?" he demanded. "Of what use is he to us?"

Macklin answered him.

"'Twas me as had the notion ter bring him along," the gangster stated. "Either Clark Stuart or Jamison would give their right arms for him, an' I figured he'd make a good hostage. You know, Stuart found out where this hide-away is, an' we might have a little trouble here with the Jamison outfit an' the troopers before long. All right, we can tell Stuart an' the Jamison mob to sheer off or we'll rub out this pal o' theirs. That'll mean we'll only have the troopers ter worry about, an' I reckon we can hold out against them."

Dupray was silent for a while, and, his wrath appearing to abate somewhat, he lapsed into a thoughtful mood. Then all at once he looked at Bowie again, and, noting that he was still insensible, slid his eyes upon Macklin.

"I think I've got a better idea regarding this prisoner of yours," he observed. "Supposing, when he comes round—supposing we let him overhear us talking about the Rider of the Painted Stallion. Supposing I make out I've discovered that the Rider is encamped up in—Lost Canyada, shall we say? And supposing I mention that I intend to send three of you there to deal with that pest?"

"Well?" queried Macklin.

Dupray smiled craftily.

"If this prisoner of yours were then permitted to escape," he remarked, "I'll wager he'd carry word of what he'd heard straight to Clark Stuart, and, considering the friendship between Stuart and the Rider, there isn't much doubt in my mind that the U.S. Government agent would take the trail to Lost Canyada immediately—probably with Jamison and one or two others, but certainly not with the whole personnel of the wagon-train, since he'd only expect to meet three of our gang."

He leaned back in his chair, an evil glint playing in his deep-set eyes.

"Instead," he went on, "all of you would be there, lying in ambush. It

would be the end of Stuart, and anyone who happened to be with him—the end, at any rate, of a man who has proved a stumbling-block to us at every turn. Yes, it would be the end of Clark Stuart, and somehow I feel that with him out of the way our luck might change."

"If Jamison were with him it would be so much the better," put in Zamora. "The Americans of the wagon-train would be leaderless then, and it is my belief that if we can get rid of those two men—Stuart and Jamison—things will be a lot healthier for us. We—"

He was interrupted by a movement on the part of Jim Bowie, a movement which the veteran accompanied with a half-stifled groan.

"The prisoner is coming round, Dupray," Zamora hissed then. "Better get ready to pull that bluff about the Rider."

In Lost Canyada

IT was early afternoon, and at the wagon encampment near Santa Fe a conference was in progress, a conference attended by the entire personnel of the Jamison columns, a conference at which Clark had done most of the talking.

"Well, I've put the facts before you, boys," he was saying now. "Don Luis won't take the risk of sending his troops into the hills, and it's not for us to try and tell him how to deal with the situation in his province. But, outside of the fact that Jim Bowie is in the hands of those renegades, every wagon train that tries to get from Independence to Santa Fe an' back is gonna be in constant danger as long as the Dupray-Zamora gang are operatin' in the wilderness."

"Clark's right, men," Jamison interposed. "All of us here know that them outlaws are a bigger menace by far than hostile Redskins, and, unless I'm mistaken, Clark wants us to make a drive against 'em—not only for Jim Bowie's sake, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of every outfit that uses the trail between here and Independence."

The U.S. Government agent nodded in assent.

"I couldn't put it in clearer words," he stated, "but I want to make it plain to everybody that we'll be up against a tough proposition if we do move in on these renegades. Their hide-out is mighty well situated to withstand attack, and, even if we manage to storm it, the chances are that a lot of us will be put out of action in the process. I'd like all of you to realise that—before you thing of volunteerin' for this enterprise."

Jamison stepped forward and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Well, Clark," he declared, "whatever my men decide on, you've got one volunteer in me."

"An' here's another," struck in Davy Crockett, renowned frontiersman. "I don't belong in this outfit, but I'd follow you all to Hades, Clark—if Jim Bowie was in trouble there."

A spontaneous chorus now arose from the wagoners and outriders of the Jamison column, every single man pronouncing himself ready and eager to accompany Clark to the mountain lair of the desperadoes, and it was while those voices were resounding about the U.S. Government agent that the big fellow suddenly perceived a diminutive figure struggling towards him through the assemblage.

It was the figure of Kit Carson, and, reaching Clark, the boy spoke to him excitedly:

5 MORE BIKES! And Over 2,000 Other Prizes Won in the July "Armaments" Race!

Here's more winning news for thousands of "Armaments" Stamp collectors. The July entries have now been checked and every one of the 2,004 readers who sent in 323 or more Battleship and Tank Stamps has won the prize of his choice, while the following five collectors whose totals were the largest received, win the FIVE £4 7s. 6d. "HERCULES" BIKES:

E. RICHARDSON, 145a, Hammersmith Grove, London, W.6.

A. MAISEY, 19, Colthrop Cottages, Thatham, Berks.

ARTHUR HYDE, Crundalls Farm, Wribbenhall, Bewdley.

R. SCARGILL, 20, Ivy Street, York Road, Leeds, 9.

H. TURNER, 5, Lentmead Road, Downham, Bromley.

All prizes have now been despatched, and if you have not been successful, remember there's another prize opportunity in our Latest Collecting Scheme—FOOTER-STAMPS—on page 27. You must be in that, too!

"Jim Bowie's safe!" he panted. "Clark, Jim Bowie's safe! He's a-headin' into the encampment now!"

He was right. Astride a lathered bronc, the veteran frontiersman was bearing down on the scene from an easterly direction, and within another thirty seconds was drawing rein amidst his comrades of the wagon-train, who pressed around him with exclamations of thankfulness and congratulation.

Bowie interrupted them, however, calling for silence. Then he addressed himself to Clark.

"Listen," he rapped out, "the Rider o' the Painted Stallion is in danger. I heard that hombre Dupray tellin' his men that he'd seen her camped up in a gulch called Lost Canyon, an' I heard him say that three o' the gang had better start out and get her. Him an' his pack o' cut-throats seemed so hot-up over the prospect of finishin' her off at last that I managed to make my getaway an' grab myself a bronc, and here I am."

Clark Stuart's features had become tense.

"Lost Canyon!" he reiterated. "Where's that?"

"As far as I could make out from what Dupray said," Bowie rejoined, "it's about four miles north of Red Ridge, on the —"

"I know Lost Canyon," Davy Crockett broke in. "Clark, I'll trail along with you an' Bowie an' show you the way."

"Yeah, an' you can count me in on this, too," said Jamison. "Hey, listen, I reckon this needn't interfere with our drive against the gang's hide-out. While you and I an' Davy an' Bowie are makin' for Lost Canyon, Clark, the rest o' the boys can start for Dupray's headquarters. After we've horned-in on this attempt to wipe out the Rider, we can swing south and join up with 'em somewhere near Tascosa Bend."

Clark acquiesced in this suggestion, and, after bidding Kit Carson remain at the encampment, he and Jamison and Davy Crockett took horse and spurred in a north-easterly direction with Bowie, leaving the other members of the wagon-train to set forth at a more leisurely pace for Tascosa Bend, on the River Los Lunas.

The hoofs of their ponies drumming on the snubbed ground, Clark and his three companions galloped onward into the hills, little dreaming that they were following a course that was to lead them into a death-trap. Not for a moment did any of them suspect that they were the intended victims of a cunning plot whose motive was murder—and least of all did Jim Bowie suspect that he had been made the chief instrument of that plot, the innocent bearer of false tidings.

With Davy Crockett acting as guide, the quartet pressed on through the hills, and an hour after leaving the wagon encampment outside Santa Fe they might have been seen approaching a craggy, rock-strewn ravine that was hemmed in amongst the remote, barren mountains.

"That's Lost Canyon right ahead," announced Davy Crockett.

The four of them eased up, and, their broncs travelling at a walk, moved forward into the gulch, unaware as they passed between the sloping walls of it that sinister eyes were watching them from above—the eyes of gunmen who lurked amid groups of boulders that littered the rims of the two activities.

Zamora and his cronies were in position, and well concealed, and there was not one of the dago's confederates whose trigger-finger was not itching to

send a bullet speeding towards the quartet who had entered the canyon. But Zamora had been insistent that the victims should be allowed to proceed well into the ravine before a shot was fired, and the outlaws held themselves in restraint.

Zamora himself would give the signal to rain death upon those four men below, and the signal would take the form of a bullet discharged by him and directed at Clark Stuart. Thus had it been arranged when Clark and his comrades had been seen approaching from afar.

Slowly the U.S. Government agent and his friends advanced along the rock-strewn floor of the canyon, scanning it in anticipation of spying the Rider or her stallion, never casting so much as a glance in the direction of the twin ridges from which their hidden foes were looking down on them. And yet, oddly enough, each one of the four began to feel conscious of a sense of misgiving, a nameless apprehension, a vague uneasiness that stole upon them as they penetrated deeper into the defile.

It has been said that men who live cheek-by-jowl with danger sometimes develop a curious instinct, a sixth sense, which tends to warn them of an enemy's presence before that enemy has revealed himself to the eye. Such might have been the case now as far as Clark, Davy Crockett, Jamison and Bowie were concerned, for there was not one of them whose career had not been fraught with hairbreadth escapes and desperate situations. On the other hand, it may have been the deathly silence which reigned over the gulch that communicated to them a feeling of tension and nervousness.

At any rate, none of them gave any audible indication of foreboding, each trying to dismiss the premonition from his mind as something that was unfounded.

"It's mighty quiet, an' if the Rider's around she ain't keepin' much of a look-out," Bowie said presently, "or she'd have spotted us by now an' showed herself."

Clark fidgeted in his saddle.

"Maybe we got here too late," he muttered anxiously. "Maybe those outlaws have been and gone. Maybe she's —"

He checked all at once, for his keen eyes had detected imprints on the ground ahead—the imprints of hoofs which led from the eastern end of the defile and then split up, one set of tracks turning off up the canyon's left-hand slope, the other swinging across to the slope on the right.

"Say," he ejaculated, "a whole bunch of horsemen seem to have been here pretty recently, unless I'm mistaken. Take a look at these."

He dismounted to examine the imprints more closely, and his companions followed suit. Then, having scrutinised those tracks, Clark raised his glance towards the summits of the activities on each side of the defile, and it was as he was conning the ridge on the right that he espied a man's head lift into view above a craggy boulder.

He recognised the face that was disclosed. It was the face of Macklin, and at sight of that ruffian the big frontiersman gave vent to an exclamation and whipped his six-gun from its holster.

Realising he had been spotted, Macklin ducked. In the same instant Clark's revolver belched flame and lead, the smashing report of the shot splitting the silence of the canyon startlingly,

the bullet clipping splinters from the boulder behind which Macklin had crouched down again.

And then pandemonium broke loose in that remote ravine of the northern hills. From all points along the rims of the twin promontories that overlooked the defile the forty-fives of Zamora and his satellites gave grim response to the missile discharged by Clark, puffs of gun-smoke issuing from the gangsters' coverts, deadly slugs zipping viciously around the ambushed quartet in the canyon and kicking up spurts of dust and stones.

The ravine echoed and re-echoed the blatter of the fusillade, and the tumult of the shooting and the ugly whew of lead struck terror into the mounts of Clark Stuart and his friends, the animals plunging and cowering wildly. Indeed, those belonging to Jamison, Crockett and Bowie tore their reins free from their masters' hands, and suddenly the broncs were wheeling to stampede out of the canyon in panic-flight.

Headless of their owners' stentorian cries, the ponies dashed from the defile, leaving Crockett and Jamison and Bowie without the slightest prospect of escaping from the death-trap—for, if there had been some slender chance of each of the four ambuscaded pioneers beating a retreat on horseback and regaining open ground to show the outlaws a clean pair of heels, there was certainly no hope of any of them except Clark accomplishing such a project now.

Clark alone had retained control of his horse. Yet he had no impulse to swing himself astride the creature and seek safety by galloping out of the canyon and abandoning his comrades to their fate. Instead he yelled to the other three men to burrow down amongst a cluster of rocks hard by, and as they made for those rocks he accompanied them in a blundering fashion, dragging his scared sorrel after him.

As on many another occasion, the gun-play of Zamora and his rascally crew was not characterised by any outstanding degree of accuracy, or Clark and his friends would have been struck down by the opening salvo. As it was, they reached the nearby rocks without so much as a scratch being inflicted on them, and from the shelter of these natural breastworks of granite they began to pump retaliatory bullets at their foes.

Clark plied his six-gun resolutely with his right hand, the while he maintained a grip on his bronc's rein with his left. Jamison and Davy Crockett likewise handled revolvers, blazing away at the canyon's rims. As for Bowie, he added the whip-like crack of his long-barrelled rifle to the booming detonations of his pardners' forty-fives and the reverberating volleys of the Zamora gang's "irons," and of the first dozen shots loosed off by the four men on the ravine's bed three hit home.

"I reckon we've got the best vantage-point we could've found on the floor o' this here canyon," Jamison presently vouchsafed, as he was reloading the chambers of his six-shooter. "An' if we can keep pickin' off them coyotes on the slopes we may come outa this ambuscade alive yet."

Davy Crockett glanced at him.

"You're sort of forgettin' that our ammunition may run out long afore all them bandits have emptied their cartridge bolts, Jamison, ain't you?" he rejoined.

There was a brief silence, and then Clark spoke.

"Dat's right, old-timer," he said to

the wagon boss. "Their ammunition is liable to outlast ours. In any case, if we're still here at nightfall they'll be able to sneak down on us in the dark an' jump us, and if they come to grips with us it will mean our finish. They're six to one against us."

He paused, and laid a hand on Jamison's arm.

"There's just one chance for us," he stated. "If I can get out of here with my sorrel I can ride south, contact the boys and bring 'em here leather-to-split. I hate to leave you, but none of us will see another sunrise if the four of us stay where we are."

The wagon boss compressed his lips. "If you could get outa here," he breathed, "I reckon Davy an' Bowie an' I could hold these outlaws off until you showed up with the boys. But I doubt if you'd ever win your way clear o' the canyada, Clark."

"I'm goin' to try, anyhow," the younger man declared. "You and Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett do your best to keep me covered while I'm makin' my break."

Without another word he spun round towards his horse and set foot in stirrup. Then, throwing himself lithely into the saddle, he spurred for the western end of the ravine.

Immediately the fire from both sides of the canyada was redoubled, rascally desperadoes starting up from their coverts to concentrate their attention on the U.S. Government agent's flying figure. Yet those ruffians who had shown themselves so spontaneously were soon flinging themselves down again, being subjected in turn to sharp shots from the rocks amid which the departing frontiersman's comrades were ensconced.

Thanks to the gun-play of Jamison, Bowie and Crockett, the gangsters on the rims of the canyada failed to keep up the furious fusillading with which they had challenged Clark's bid to escape, and, though a bullet ripped through a fold in his buckskin tunic and another seared across his left wrist, the big scout swept forth from the ravine at top speed without serious hurt and veered off to the south.

"He made it!" Jamison cried exultantly, as Clark disappeared from sight. "He made it!"

Bowie offered a curt retort. His steel-grey eyes were fastened on the south slope of the defile.

"Yeah, Clark made it all right," he barked. "But unless I miss my guess, there go three or four o' the Zamora gang ter pick up hosses an' set out after him."

He motioned to a group of bandits who had straightened up and who were turning to vacate their posts, and, perceiving all at once that Maeklin was one of them, Bowie fell a prey to the impetuosity which was at times so characteristic of him.

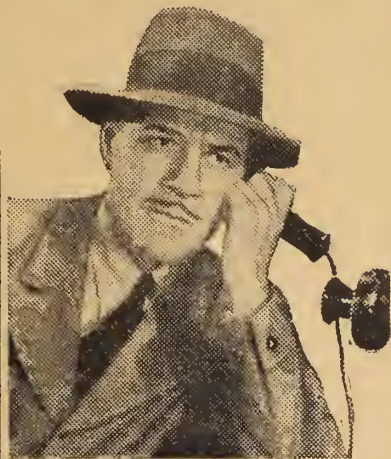
"There's that treacherous varmint what joined your wagon train at Independence, Jamison!" he shouted. "I'll get him—if it's the last thing I do!"

Rifle clutched in his hands, he blundered from the rocks to obtain a better view of Maeklin, but his two companions laid hold of him.

"Don't be a fool, Bowie!" Jamison panted, his fingers locked on the veteran's arm. "Come back under cover!"

With Davy's aid he dragged the old Indian fighter into the shelter of the rocks before any harm could befall him, and, Bowie putting a curb on his own

Say LISTEN HERE, fellas Getta load of THIS!



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recklessness, the three friends settled down to a prolonged gun duel with the outlaws who still manned the canyada's slopes.

In the meantime Maeklin and those who had detached themselves from the party on the south rim had vanished beyond the scope of the ambuscaded trio's vision. As Bowie had guessed, they were hurrying towards their broncs, which were concealed some little distance away, and soon they had mounted up and were giving chase to Clark Stuart.

By then Clark was a hundred yards from the mouth of the canyada whence he had escaped, and he was travelling at full pelt over the route by which he and his friends had approached the defile. Their gaze riveted on him, Maeklin and his cronies gouged the flanks of their horses with their spurs and swarmed down a long gradient that slanted towards a stretch of level terrain their quarry was crossing, and for a spell it seemed as if they might head him off. But, becoming aware of their headlong rush in his direction, the frontiersman bore away to the right.

Frustrated in their hopes of intercepting him, Maeklin and his confederates reached level ground and pressed after him, blazing at him as they rode—failing, however, to bring him down.

Onward to the tattoo of drumming hoofs sped the U.S. Government agent and his pursuers, and before long it was apparent that Clark's sorrel had the legs of the gangsters' broncs. Yet, even as the frontiersman was congratulating himself on possessing a mount that was more than a match for those of his enemies—even as he was telling himself that he would continue to push westward until he had outstripped the crooks and could safely swerve on to his original course again—he beheld in front of him a dark, ragged cleft that seemed to extend north and south as far as the eye could see.

It was a sinister chasm that cut clear across his path, and as he gained the edge of it he discovered that it was fully two hundred feet in depth and of a width that no pony could have spanned at a jump. His escape, in fact, was completely balked by that fearsome abyss—nor was there any chance of eluding his foes by turning to right or left, for they were bound to head him off if he did so and drive him over the cleft's brink to his doom.

There was nothing for it but to stand his ground and shoot it out with the pursuers, and, wheeling to face them, he raised his six-gun. As he drew trigger, however, the hammer of the weapon fell with a harmless click, and, realising that the revolver was empty, he fumbled at his cartridge belt in desperato haste.

Meanwhile the group of outlaws headed by Maeklin were coming up fast, but all at once the rogue who had once been a member of the Jamison wagon train seemed to divine Clark's plight, and, calling a halt on the instant, he brought up his forty-five and took aim at the frontiersman as the latter was still endeavouring to reload.

Deliberately he sighted his gun on the figure of the U.S. Government agent, assuring himself as he "drew a bead" on Clark that at this close range he could not miss, and deliberately he curled his finger around the trigger.

(To be continued in another thrill-packed episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)
September 17th, 1938.

"KIDNAPPED"

(Continued from page 5.)

"Who knows?" he demanded. "The captain—I heard them in the roundhouse. I went to look for you and they were saying that they were going to turn you in at Glasgow and get the reward."

"So that's how the wind sets—it's that lad, David. He must have told."

"Quick, Alan, get the skiff!" cried Jean, and she did not tell the truth.

David Balfour gritted his teeth and glared defiantly at his tormentor. What with the bullying of the captain, Ransome, the other cabin-boy, Riach, the mate, and fed on filthy food, he had just about had enough, and when the captain raised his belt for a second time the boy acted. He picked up a heavy ornament from a table and it caught the captain right in the stomach. The boy was out of the roundhouse and racing for the deck—he would rather drown than stay another moment on this brig. He came upon Alan and Jean prepared to launch a skiff.

The rebel half drew his sword. "You little sneak!" he hissed. "I thought I could trust you, but you told who I am."

"No." "You did—you're the only one aboard who knew—you told them that I was Alan Breck."

The mate had been stealthily creeping along the deck to see what was going on, and when he heard the name of Alan Breck he rushed below to tell his master. David saw that flying figure, but there was no time for words now as a number of the crew led by Captain Hoseason had appeared on deck. The boy helped Jean with the boat while Alan Breck kept off the attack with his trusty blade. How the boy's eyes gleamed as he had glimpses of the wonderful swordsmanship of the rebel. He saw the point catch the mate under the heart. At last the boat was lowered and Jean slid down a rope.

The ropes were cast off and a shout from Jean told Alan that the boat was away. He dived from the poop and was helped into the skiff. Vigorous rowing soon brought them to an island, and as there was a thick mist Alan decided to stay there till the dawn. It was then that he learned from Jean that she had made it up about the captain knowing he was Alan Breck. She had done it because she did not want to go with Jamie.

"David, I've misjudged you," the rebel cried. "But if you didn't tell them I was Alan Breck, who did?"

"You did yourself, you big blunderhead," retorted the lad with spirit. "On the deck when you called me a sneak and shouted out your own name."

"I'm sorry, lad," Alan held out his hand. "Shall we be friends from now on? True friends that trust and help each other always?"

"True friends it is, sir, but I still wish you weren't a rebel."

Condemned to Death

EBENEZER BALFOUR was invited to the offices of Mr. Angus Rankellor, the lawyer, and there he met a Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie, who pretended that whilst collecting driftwood by their cottage on a lonely island they had rescued a half-drowned boy. They expected Ebenezer to do right by then for tending him. "Not a shilling,"

September 17th, 1933.

was the miser's answer, but they persisted and asked for the same amount that he had paid Captain Hoseason for the kidnapping.

"The lad claims he's the rightful heir of Balfour," stated Alan Breck, "and you paid Hoseason to get him out of the way. We can keep our mouths shut, but you'll pay us the sum you paid Hoseason—two hundred pounds."

"Twenty pounds was the bargain," screamed the miser.

The door opened and in walked the lawyer, David, and one of the clerks. Ebenezer realised he had been tricked into a betrayal, and he railed and cursed, but when he went he knew that Balfour Castle was his home no longer.

Rankellor had been a willing accessory to this trickery. He had always loathed Ebenezer Balfour, and although a lawyer and not a soldier he had admired the pluck and perseverance of Alan Breck in a lost cause.

Jean was all smiles because, when they had reached Glasgow, it was to find that the cowardly Jamie had taken the first boat to Newfoundland. She stated firmly that she was not going back to Glencoe and that she was never leaving Alan. They were discussing the possibilities of getting married when a commotion in the street took them to the windows.

Of all the bad luck Ebenezer must bump into Captain Hoseason. The rogue had come to Edinburgh because at the docks in Glasgow he had heard something that told him his quarry had flown, and the covetous rogue was after the reward. Ebenezer howled that he had contracted for the captain to take the lad to the Carolinas, and instead he had been flung off near the Isle of Mull. David had escaped drowning, and now he was a pauper. At once Hoseason guessed the identity of the two people who had tricked Ebenezer, and as the result soldiers rushed to surround the lawyer's office. Alan Breck tried to get away down a drain pipe and down an alleyway, but it was too late. They arrested him for the murder of the King's tax collector.

The only satisfaction that David had was that lawyer Rankellor was able to have Ebenezer and Hoseason arrested for kidnapping, which was a crime punishable by hanging.

If only they could have got hold of Jamie a confession might have been secured. Jean would even have married Jamie to save Alan's life. The court sentenced Breck to be hung and his body to swing in chains at a gibbet. The prisoner was asked if he had anything to say.

"You can hang me for hanging's sake, but not for murder," his voice rang through the court-room. "Of that I stand innocent. Nor can you hang me for treason, for how can a man be traitor to King or country that he has never called his own."

The Duke of Argyll was alarmed. The erection of the scaffold seemed to have thrown the whole of Scotland into a ferment. This man Alan Breck was even more of a national hero than his Grace had imagined. Deputations of clansmen called on him and begged him not to hang Alan Breck.

"Grant us his life," one clansman cried, "and we swear to submit to English rule."

"Your offer's absurd. Alan Breck would never be loyal to King George. With that man alive there can never be peace between England and Scotland. Alan Breck must hang."

The duke granted the last request of the condemned man. Jean and Alan were married. They dragged him back

to his cell after the ceremony. David Balfour would not despair, and in desperation he resolved to see the duke, and he managed to get into the duke's palace.

The duke was pacing his room. Every hangman selected for the task had either turned tail or had been abducted by the clansmen. He was wondering if he should get another company of Grenadier Guards from Berwick when he realised he was not alone. A slim lad.

"Who the devil are you?"

"Please, your Grace, please let Alan Breck go free. You mustn't hang him. He's innocent. I know the man who killed Red Fox. I saw him—it's a man they call Jamie. I'm no rebel, sir, but Alan Breck is my friend and we're pledged to help each other always. And if you'll be so good as to pardon him, sir, I can keep him out of Scotland. You see, I'm the Laird of Balfour."

"And what makes you think he'll stay there?" chuckled the duke.

"There is a lass who has a way with him, sir. If you'll only spare his life, sir."

"No, his fate's decided," rasped the duke. "I cannot change it."

But the duke was so impressed by young David that he visited the rebel in his cell, and after talking with the rebel knew that this frank-eyed man could never be a murderer. He gulled Alan Breck into talking of the cause for which he fought and his reasons. The duke offered a bargain to the condemned man. He would guarantee to do all the reforms that Alan sought, if Alan for his part would beg the mob gathered together for the hanging to disperse.

"Tell them to return to their homes in peace—for the sake of the country we both love," suggested the duke, and Alan Breck agreed.

There was a vast crowd to see the hanging of Alan Breck, and when the rebel appeared on a balcony of the court house the crowd surged forward shouting his name. It would take but a spark for these dour Scotsmen to charge through the soldiers. Alan raised his arms.

"Scotsmen, my people! The duke and I have bargained. He has promised to lift the burden of our taxes. In return I have pledged you to peace. Let there be no rioting, revolt or bloodshed."

"What about you, Alan Breck?" they cried.

"Alan Breck has asked naught for himself!" The duke stepped forward, "Yet, because of him, we are a people united for the first time—united, God willing, for all time. In the face of such service to the Scotland he loves more than life itself, I feel it my bounden duty to alter the sentence of hanging to exile."

The departure of Alan Breck and his wife was almost in the same category as one given to a prince. The clansmen were there to bid him farewell, and they vied to see that the Duke of Argyll fulfilled his promises.

"Why don't you come along with us, David," Jean said shyly to our young hero.

"I'd like to, but I've business to attend to," was the simple, frank answer. "After all, I am the Laird of Balfour, and I must grow up to be a good Scotsman."

"That's right, David, your place is here," Alan Breck cried as he bade the boy farewell. "Scotland for ever!"

(By permission of 20th Century Fox, Ltd., starring Warner Baxter as Alan Breck and Freddie Bartholomew as David.)

"LAW OF THE UNDERWORLD"

(Continued from page 12)

grabbed her before she could fire, wrenching the weapon from her hand.

"No you don't, Dorothy! Give me that. You know how I hate guns. Beat it!"

Her eyes blazing, the woman snarled sneeringly past the group of silent gangsters, and without another word, left the office.

"Sweet kid, that one," grinned Batsy. Late that night, the singer, spurred on by the desire for revenge which filled her whole being, phoned Warren Rogers and gave him the tip that if he raided the Club Sultan he would pick up the whole mob concerned in the Morton Store affair. Surprised as he was, the District Attorney promised to attend to it at once, and come round to her apartment with police protection, for now that she had taken the plunge, Dorothy Palmer was a creature of nerves, fearing the vengeance which would fall on a squealer.

But the only people the squad of twenty police picked up when they raided the club were Annabelle and Tommy. Gene and Batsy, who had been having a late meal with them after the ordinary patrons left, had doused the lights and ducked out the back way when they heard the thunderous knocking on the door that announced the police swoop.

Annabelle and Tommy, hiding under a table, were spotted by the eagle eyes of Captain Gargan and ordered sternly to come out.

"We didn't do anything," panted Tommy, helping the girl to her feet.

"Honest," cried Annabelle, "we were just sitting here, eating, and you burst in and—"

Gargan grinned at her.

"Yes, sure, the place has been closed for an hour, and you're just sitting here eating! We'll take these kids in, anyway!"

Meanwhile, out in the back alley by which they had escaped, Gene turned to Batsy.

"I can't let the kids take the rap for this! We can thank Dorothy."

"Don't you worry about her," said Batsy grimly. "I'll take care of her!"

Third Degree

"YOU'RE sure the raid went off all right?" Dorothy Palmer looked nervously at Warren Rogers and his assistant, Barton, a lean-faced man with pinee-nez glasses. "Then your boys will have a little surprise for you when you get back to the station. An old friend of yours, named Gene Fillmore, will be there!"

Warren Rogers' brow clouded. "Fillmore—Gene Fillmore? What's he got to do with it?"

The woman enjoyed the annoyance in his tone.

"He's what the newspapers mean when they talk about a crime wave. How much protection are you going to give me?"

"All that's necessary." Warren's tone was brusque, for in spite of the fact that she was giving him valuable information, the District Attorney found the whole thing distasteful. He took the phone as the station rang, then turned to her again. "All they picked up in that raid was a couple of kids. Now what's all this about Gene Fillmore?"

"I tell you it's true! He's the man

you want. He hired those two kids for the Morton robbery."

"Let's check on that, Warren," suggested Barton.

"We'll see you later," said Rogers to the woman.

They had just shut the door when a shot cracked from the window. Dorothy Palmer gave a little sigh and crumpled. When the lawyers and the two policemen with them dashed back, they caught a glimpse of Batsy's face just disappearing from the window.

Hastily he began clattering down the fire-escape. But a patrolling policeman who had heard the shot spotted him. The cop's revolver roared. Batsy threw up his arms, swayed, and toppled from the escape, to land with a dreadful thud on the concrete fifty feet below. The trail of death started by Rocky Mosby had ended with the shooting of Dorothy Palmer and the death of her executioner.

Warren Rogers could see that the woman had died instantly.

"I can't believe Gene had anything to do with this," he muttered, kneeling by her body. "The more I think of it, the more preposterous it seems. What could I possibly accuse him of?"

"Maybe this is Exhibit A!" Barton had been going through an ornate bureau. He handed Warren Rogers a cheque. It was made out to Dorothy Palmer for one thousand dollars, and signed by Gene Fillmore.

"That's Gene's signature all right," said Rogers grimly. "I want to talk to those two kids. You boys wait for the coroner."

But Annabelle and Tommy, seared as they were, yielded nothing on cross-examination. They denied knowing anybody by the name of Gene Fillmore, and said Dorothy Palmer must have been lying when she linked their names with the crime.

"We never heard of any Gene Fillmore," said Tommy. "If he's the man you're after, why don't you arrest him and leave us alone?"

"Because if we arrest him now, we'll never be able to make it stick. That's why I want you two. I want to build up a case against Fillmore so that no jury on earth will fail to put him in the electric chair."

Warren Rogers' determination hardened when he took the pair to the hospital, and Edward Larkin, still weak and ill, positively identified them as the people who had caused him to lay all the trays on the counter. He couldn't understand the motives of Annabelle and Tommy, but he intended to knock the truth out of them for their own sakes.

Leaving Annabelle in his office, he took Tommy

into a grim, darkened room, where the only light was a strong spotlight which shone directly on the prisoner's face. Here Rogers, Barton and Captain Gargan fired questions at Tommy till his brain reeled. Nervously he tore at his collar, his face streaming with sweat. But still he wouldn't admit anything.

"Tommy," said Rogers sternly, "I've given you every chance, but you're making it tougher and tougher for yourself. You have a fine sense of loyalty, but it's misguided. You've got to look to the law to help you now."

"Kid, we call this the singing-room," Gargan grated. "Because sooner or later everybody sings in here."

Warren Rogers allowed Tommy to see Annabelle for a moment in the hope they would say something. Outside, he listened with Gargan.

"They're listening to every word we say," Tommy whispered, holding Annabelle close. "No matter what they do, we can't talk. If we talk, they've got us."

"But Mr. Larkin identified us!"

"They can't prove any connection with the gang unless we talk!"

Rogers came in expectantly. Their expressions decided him.

"You don't leave us any choice," he said. "The rest is up to you."

He gave the sobbing girl a chair in his office. She was racked with anxiety. What was happening to Tommy in the hands of those hard-faced men? Calm-faced, Rogers pretended to read a book while the girl fidgeted. The clock ticked slowly on. No sound came from the inner-room.

It wasn't until Gargan looked in that she broke.

"He hasn't broken yet," he snapped. "But he will."



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"All right, don't let up. Keep pounding those questions."

"Don't!" shrieked the girl. "Don't beat him any more, please! I'll tell you! We were hired to go into Morton's and we were part of the gang!"

Warren Rogers smiled with satisfaction as she buried her face in her hands, but when Tommy was brought in they still wouldn't implicate Gene Fillmore.

"I'm asking you to testify that Gene Fillmore hired you!" snapped Rogers.

"We don't know any Gene Fillmore. It was—it was Rocky who hired us!" Tommy glanced round frantically. "Rocky did!"

"Take them back to their cells," said Rogers wearily. To Barton he added: "They've got courage. Too bad it's wasted."

The only thing left was a bluff, and to carry it out the young lawyer went to call on Gene Fillmore, and noted with grim amusement that he was giving a party before sailing for Europe. Smiling aside Gene's chaff, he brought up the subject of Dorothy Palmer.

"You know her pretty well, don't you?"

"I've heard of her," said Gene lightly. "She's a night club singer. Has a good voice."

"You know her better than that," said Warren grimly. "You gave her a cheque for a thousand dollars."

Gene laughed.

"Well, why the mystery, Warren? Of course I gave her a cheque!"

"She was killed last night," said Rogers quietly, "and you're involved."

"Really? Well, what d'you want me to do?"

"I think you'd better come down to my office."

"It won't take long, Warren? Remember, I don't want to miss my boat."

"I hope you don't," said Rogers meaningly as Gene excused himself to his guests.

Captain Gargan met them directly they entered Warren's office.

"Mr. Rogers, Tommy and Annabelle have just signed a confession admitting that Gene Fillmore is the head of the gang!"

Tommy jumped up furiously.

"We did not! We never said a word about you!"

"If you didn't know Gene," put in Rogers swiftly, "how did you pick him out so quickly?"

Disturbed, Tommy turned away. Gene smiled his appreciation of the clever trap.

"Frankly, I don't know what this is all about. Who are these children—yours?"

"Take them into the next room," Warren ordered. "No use stalling, Gene. We've got you."

"Got me? On what grounds?"

"I'm afraid you're headed for the chair. You were back of the Morton job."

"Really? What makes you think so?"

"Perhaps this sounds flattering, but it was such an ingenious job that it would take a mind like yours to conceive it."

"Why, I'm surprised at you, Warren! The courts call that imagination, not evidence."

"Gene, I wasn't even sure myself until those kids picked you out. Dorothy Palmer told us about them and Rocky and the Morton job. It all fits in with your European trip."

"It's the testimony of a dead woman against mine," said Gene coldly. "and you know, Warren, frankly I'm conceited enough to think I'll be believed."

"You're also got this," said Warren soubrely. "a sworn confession from those kids, saying that they were part of the gang."

"You mean those kids confessed to murder?"

"Read it!"

Gene laughed softly as he read.

"Well, this doesn't involve me at all. That's a very cheap trick, Warren."

The attorney shook his head.

"No, I'm just being honest with you. I'll admit we could have pushed those kids a lot further, but they would never have willingly implicated you. But it's just a question of time."

"Who are you after?"

"You."

"You'll never get me," smiled Gene.

"Gene," said Warren earnestly, "let's forget for a minute which side of the fence we're on. The real tragedy of this is not Dorothy Palmer, or the Morton Store—it's those two youngsters in there. Those two kids are just as guilty of murder as the gunman who did the actual shooting."

Gene's lips curled scornfully. He was

convinced a jury would never convict the youngsters, and he held to his belief. When an assistant wanted to speak to Rogers alone, and was asked to go into the next room, Gene found them sitting there in a strained silence.

But Tommy jumped up angrily.

"Look, you got us into this, now get us out of it!"

"I'm sorry, kids," muttered Gene.

"You're sorry. Words don't help any. Get us out of this." Tommy was frantic by now, his nerve breaking.

"D'you want us to die?" Gene shook his head grimly. "Well, then, tell them you sent us. Tell them you made us go!"

"Gene," Annabelle pleaded, "if you'd only tell them you sent us to the jewelry store we could go free."

"Stop it, will you?" rasped the gangster. "Why should I worry about your problems? I've got plenty of my own!"

"You've got to help us out. We don't want to die!" Tommy's voice broke.

"Neither do I. Maybe if I can get out I can hire lawyers to fight for you."

Then Warren came in, carrying some papers.

"Gene, in case you've changed your mind, here's a confession all ready to sign."

"Why should I, Warren? Do you think I'm crazy?"

"I've got these kids," said Warren grimly. "They haven't a chance."

"Well, how would my signing help them?"

"I might go easy," Rogers shrugged, staring into his eyes.

"That isn't enough," snapped Gene Fillmore. "I want the unconditional release of Tommy and Annabelle!"

Tense silence gripped them all as the attorney stared at the gangster. Then he handed a foolscap sheet of Gene.

"Here are the two confessions. Sign yours and you can tear up theirs."

With tears in her eyes, Annabelle stared at Gene. His face had whitened, the jaw muscles standing out like cords. He was fighting an inward battle. The desire for life was strong. But he couldn't see these innocent youngsters suffer for the crime that had really been Rocky's. Firmly he gripped the pen and wrote his signature. Without a word he handed his confession to Warren Rogers, and took the confession of Tommy and Annabelle.

"Gene, it's too bad a man with your brains went wrong. You'd have been a big shot in legitimate business."

When he left the trio alone for a moment there was silence. Then Annabelle said haltingly:

"Is there anything we can do for you?"

"No, thank you, Annabelle," he said with a return of his former grim humour. "Mr. Rogers will make me very comfortable." He tore up the confession and gave the pieces to the girl. "There's a little present from me to you. Now get out of here, both of you, and don't ever come back!"

When they left, after Annabelle had planted a sly kiss on his cheek, Gene Fillmore lit a cigarette with steady fingers and strolled to the window. Warren Rogers gripped his arm.

"Come on, Gene."

"Oh, just a minute!" said Gene, without turning. "I want to watch the kids go out."

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Chester Morris and Anne Shirley.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"KIDNAPPED"

Alan Breck Warner Baxter
David Balfour Freddie Bartholomew
Jean MacDonalld Arleen Whelan
Duke of Argyll C. Aubrey Smith
Captain Hoseason Reginald Owen
Ebenezer Balfour Miles Mander
Jamie Ralph Forbes
Rankeiller H. B. Warner
Riach Arthur Hohl
Minister MacDougall E. E. Clive
Dominie Campbell Halliwell Hobbes
Ransome Donald Haines
Douglas Maroni Olsen
Red Fox Leonard Mudie

"THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO POLO"

Marco Polo Gary Cooper
Princess Kukulchin Sigrid Gurie
Ahmed Basil Rathbone
Binguccio Ernest Truex
Kaidu Alan Hale
Kublai Khan George Barbier
Nazama Binnie Barnes
Chen Tsu H. B. Warner
Bayan Stanley Fields
Toctai Harold Huber

"LAW OF THE UNDERWORLD"

Gene Fillmore Chester Morris
Annabelle Porter Anne Shirley
Rocky Mosby Eduardo Ciannelli
Warren Rogers Walter Abel
Tommy Brown Richard Bond
Dorothy Palmer Lee Patrick
Batsy Paul Guilfoyle
Captain Gargan Frank M. Thomas
Bill Eddie Acuff
Eddie Jack Arnold
Johnny Jack Carson
Barton Paul Stanton
Frank George Skegley
Larry Anthony Ward

"BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S PERIL"

Colonel Neilson John Barrymore
Captain Hugh Drummond John Howard
Phyllis Clavering Louise Campbell
Algy Longworth Reginald Denny
Tenny E. E. Clive
Doctor Botulian Porter Hall
Aunt Blanche Elizabeth Patterson
Gwen Longworth Nydia Westman
Professor Goodman Halliwell Hobbes
Sir Raymond

Blantyre Matthew Boulton
Mrs. Weevens Zeffie Tilbury
Roberts Austin Freeman

"THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO POLO"

(Continued from page 8)

number of other prisoners, were the cause of the uproar. Kaidu went to the throne-room in the big tent to pass judgment, and he had scarce sat down when he was joined by Nazama. He scowled fiercely and ordered the first case to be brought before him.

Soon Chung, captain of the second corps, had wilfully and brutally put to death eight of his men without giving them benefit of trial. The witnesses against Soon Chung were the men of his own command, and they demanded the death of this murderer.

"All right, Lord Kaidu, put me to death," cried the officer. "But if you do you'll find that no soldier in this army will obey any command from any officer—including you."

"I'll have to think this over and make a decision later," announced Kaidu. "Next case." He turned to whisper to Nazama. "That Soon Chung is one of the worst brutes in the army, I'd like to kill him with my own hands, but I daren't punish him publicly." He looked up and saw Marco and Binguccio. "Who is this?"

"My troop was camped last night in the Meiji Pass and we caught these two men spying on us," was the report.

"My name is Marco Polo, Lord Kaidu," spoke the prisoner. "I am a representative of Polo Brothers, honourable merchants, and this is my servant. We come from Venice." He decided on a daring experiment. "I could tell you how to settle the case you have just heard."

Kaidu gasped at such effrontery and was going to have the prisoners immersed in boiling oil, but Nazama stayed him. She liked the build of this tall, handsome stranger. Let him first speak. Marco was ordered to step forward, and he spoke his suggestion very softly. Kaidu listened and smiled.

"Soon Chung, I acquit you of the charges against you and set you free," Kaidu called out, and the officer was freed. Then the rebel turned to the soldiers of Chung's command, who were also under arrest. "And I will also set free any man who kills him."

Soon Chung gave a cry and ran with his soldiers chasing after him. His death was not very pleasant. Thus ended the life of one of Ahmed's treacherous agents. Kaidu was so delighted that he set Marco and Binguccio free. He noted the interest in Nazama's eyes and that made him even more happy—this stranger should keep his jealous wife intrigued whilst he flirted with one of her serving wenches.

By his quick wit Marco had saved their lives, but he was very much a prisoner though he was given fine raiment and a special tent. In the days that followed he had to talk much about Venice and his people, and to pay especial attention to Nazama. It was a relief to find that kissing was not known among the Tartars, but he got rather tired of rubbing noses with the rebel's lovely but dangerous wife. In this camp Marco found one more treasure for his little bag—it was a lump of coal. It was found in the valleys and used for fuel. All the while Marco was thinking how to get back to Peking.

Marco feared that all was not well in Peking, and he was right. News came to Ahmed that the emperor's mighty army had been swept away in a typhoon, and only a handful had reached the shore in safety. The same day as this news arrived the Persian ambassador put in another appearance. He brought a jewelled casket, in which was a necklace for Princess Kukachin. Ahmed's eyes glistened. He had the ambassador cast to the vultures, and he took the casket to the princess. She was not pleased to see him in her apartments. She refused to accept the necklace, and said that her father would punish him for daring to come to her unannounced.

"Disaster has overtaken your father and his army!" Ahmed cried, his eyes triumphant. "I have decided, princess, that you will not have to undertake the long and tiresome journey to Persia, for I have decided on the seventh moon you will be my wife. You will share my throne and my glory as sovereign of the greatest empire the world has ever known."

"You inhuman beast!" she cried in horror. "You don't at the moment think me qualified to be your husband," Ahmed smiled mockingly. "But time will convince you of your error. I have had seventy-eight wives already, and I have profited by experience."

When alone the princess summoned her maid Visakha and told her the dire news that her father was probably dead and most of the mighty army destroyed. She must



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go to the Tower of Eagles and dispatch one of these birds with a message.

"How far would he have gone?"

"He would be in Chingtien by now," thought the maid. "If he travelled fast."

"He would travel fast!" cried the princess. "Send the eagle to Chingtien."

That eagle was sighted by some of Kaidu's men on outpost duty, and it was shot down and the message was brought to Kaidu's tent. The rebel handed the message to his prisoner.

"Tell Marco Polo that I need him," Kukachin had written, and she had drawn a small arrow.

"You're quite a lady's man," mocked Kaidu. "What's your secret?"

"Kaidu! Let me go back!" desperately pleaded Marco. "She is in danger. I must help her."

But Kaidu had found a companion for his wife and he refused. He warned Marco not to try to escape. Marco went off to his tent in a rage. He paced up and down, and then went outside to try to think. It was then that he saw Toctai, and recognised him by the scar.

The rogue had managed to get into the Tartar camp, and Marco soon found out the man had bribed his way to the position of night guard to Kaidu's tent. Now Toctai did not know that his master had planned to destroy Marco, and when the Venetian beckoned him to his tent he thought that Marco had just acted up to Ahmed's instructions. Suspecting nothing, he told Marco much news of importance. He had heard from Ahmed. The princess was a prisoner and would soon be Ahmed's wife. Very soon Ahmed would rule the whole of Cathay—directly Kaidu was dead.

To Binguccio's amazement his master aided and abetted the scheme to kill Kaidu, but when Toctai did rush in to pierce the sleeping Kaidu with his lance it was the shield held by Marco that deflected the blow.

"That is one of Ahmed's men!" Marco cried as the guard rushed in. "Seize him!"

"Traitor! Traitor!" the wretch screamed as they dragged him away.

"You saved my life!" gasped the grateful rebel.

"It was nothing personal, Kaidu," blandly answered Marco. "It's just that I'd do anything to annoy Ahmed."

After that the two men had a heart-to-heart talk, and Kaidu explained why he was in revolt against the emperor.

"Because my people have been taxed to the point of starvation. I don't mind paying proper tax to Kublai Khan, but I won't pay taxes to Ahmed for his private treasury. I and my people would rather die fighting."

"Ahmed!" Marco snapped his fingers. "So he's the cause of your rebellion. I don't blame you. There is one more thing you ought to know."

"What?"

"You must take your army to Pekin, storm the palace—"

"My army against all the forces of Kublai Khan."

"Kublai Khan and his forces have gone to war against Japan, and Ahmed is in command at the palace. That's what the message from the princess meant. Ahmed is going to marry her and make himself emperor."

"Ahmed! Emperor of China!" shouted Kaidu. "Better the Black Plague."

"You're the only one to prevent it. The road to Pekin is open to you. No one can stop you."

September 17th, 1938.

"But the palace walls. I have no siege machinery."

"You'll have to leave it to me to get you through the walls," Marco said with confident assurance.

The Siege of Pekin

AHMED was preparing for his wedding when Bayan appeared to report that the emperor was returning.

"With the whole army?" Ahmed asked in alarm.

"No, only his bodyguard—a few hundred men. We could kill them all before they reach the palace gates."

"Let them come in," decided Ahmed. "Welcome his Majesty with the usual ceremony. Do as I say!" he cried as the man hesitated. "And bring the princess here at once."

A weary, sorrowful Kublai Khan was surprised to find so much gaiety in Pekin. Why all these flags and banners? He found it was in preparation for a wedding. In his own throne-room he learnt from the mocking lips of Ahmed the name of the bridegroom. Ahmed placed a document before the frightened old man.

"It is necessary for you to sign this at once. It is merely formal acknowledgement that when I am married to your daughter and you are dead, I am recognised as the rightful heir to your throne."

"You black-livered traitor!" cried the emperor, and called for his guards in vain. He refused to sign until Ahmed whipped back some curtains to reveal Kukachin gagged and bound tightly to a post close to a cage full of hungry vultures, who were straining at their chains to get at her. The emperor signed the fatal document.

Ahmed clapped his hands. "Release the princess!" he ordered of his slaves. "And see that she dresses for the marriage ceremony."

It was a surprise to Chen Tsu to see Marco Polo again. The Venetian had no time to waste on philosophies. He wanted all the fire powder that the little chemist possessed, and it was for Ahmed's wedding festival. Also Chen Tsu must help him get into the palace, and the little Chinaman made him strip, then he painted his body a rich brown and garbed him in the scanty attire of a Malay. Finally, Marco wound a turban round his head and gave instructions about the destination of the fire-boxes he had ordered.

Kukachin had been dressed by Visakha for the ceremony, but the unhappy princess was contemplating committing suicide by throwing herself from her balcony when a strange, brown-skinned man appeared. What a cry of delight when she recognised Marco, but he had no time for kissing. He told her to delay the marriage ceremony as long as she could. A cry from the walls brought him out on the balcony. He rushed back to his princess.

"It's Kaidu at last!" he cried. "I must go and open the gates to him. I will return, beloved."

From the citadel tower Ahmed saw Kaidu's approach, and he gave orders that all the gates to the city be closed but the west gate and the gate to the palace. As Kaidu charged into Pekin followed by his soldiers the palace gate closed in his face. Then the west gate closed, and Kaidu's army looked as if it were trapped. Arrows began to pour down from the walls and ramparts on the Tartar soldiers.

But by the palace gate there was an innocent-looking horse and cart. It had bolted up the street, and from one

of its numerous boxes gunpowder had streamed. Chen Tsu had done his work well. The horse was freed and the trail of gunpowder fired.

Those gates went up in a sheet of flame, and then the Tartars charged into the palace in a surprise attack.

Meanwhile, in the palace the princess had done everything possible to delay the ceremony, but at last she had been forced to stand before the priest. Yet when she had to make her vows she prolonged them.

"I, Kukachin, of the house and blood of Genghis Khan through my father, Kublai, the Khan of Khans, and my royal mother Tofar, who was the daughter of Ildabar, who was the daughter of Queen Dir-See—" It was at that precise moment that the palace gate went up in the air.

Ahmed shouted to the girl to go on, and she was starting all over again from the beginning when the doors of the chapel burst open and there was a wild-eyed man holding a knife and sword. Then the villainous schemer recognised his enemy and drew his sword.

Ahmed fought with desperate fury, but before this young giant he had to give way. His sword broke. Marco seized the man in his arms, and it was on the edge of the void that separated Ahmed's quarters that they struggled. The emperor held his daughter close as the two men fought like furies. Marco broke his enemy's hold, pushed him over the void, and held him for a moment.

"I shall be going through Damascus soon, Ahmed!" cried Marco. "I'll tell your seventy-eight wives what has happened to you." He shook off the clinging fingers and Ahmed crashed to his doom.

Not many minutes later Marco brought Kaidu into the presence of the emperor. The rebel was surprised because he thought Kublai Khan was away fighting Japan.

"We beg to welcome you, our honoured cousin, Lord Kaidu!" cried the emperor, with something of his old pomp. "We understand that you and your people have been victims of injustice. The cause of that has been removed. It will never be repeated. I have assembled the most beautiful maidens of our court, and I beg leave to present them to you as a slight token of my high regard. You will take them with you, as your wives."

Everybody laughed, and everybody seemed happy. Marco whispered to Binguccio that now was the time to secure the trade agreements. Meanwhile he would go with Princess Kukachin into the gardens and feed the fish. The Oriental moon smiled down upon them. The two young people sighed happily, for it was the seventh moon.

"You should go across the sea to become the Queen of Persia."

"Yes."

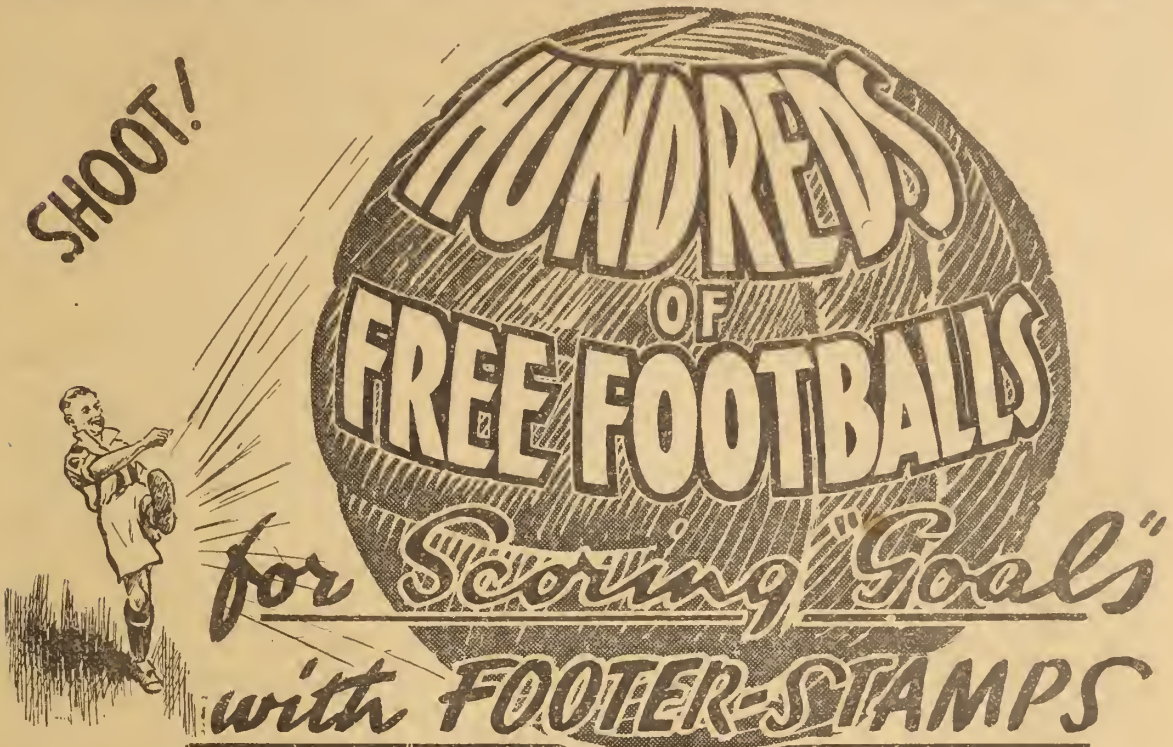
"It's a perilous journey, but we Venetians are the world's best sailors as well as the world's best business men." He put his arm round her slim shoulders. "I think you should ask your father to appoint me as your protector on the voyage."

"I'll ask him, Marco Polo—and he'll agree." She snuggled closer. "How long does it take to get from here to Persia?"

"Oh, years and years." He kissed her. "I might even lose my way and find myself in Venice."

(By permission of United Artists Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Gary Cooper as Marco Polo, Sigrid Gurie as Princess Kukachin, and Basil Rathbone as Ahmed.)

ARE YOU IN OUR GRAND COLLECTING SCHEME ?



ARE you collecting FOOTER-STAMPS? They're all the rage, and you really must be in this wonderful scheme!
 This is what to do: Every week in BOY'S CINEMA we are giving "Footer-Stamps"—pictures of six different actions on the football field. The object of this great stamp-game being to score as many "goals" as possible in time for the second prize-giving next week, when up to 300 footballs are to be awarded.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.**

Easy, isn't it? The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"—you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

We give ten more stamps this week. Cut them out and try to score a "goal" with them; then keep all your stamps until you get some more in our next issue.

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Sports Budget" and "Triumph."

Keep at it, pals, because the September contest will close next week, and we shall then ask you how many "goals" you have scored. Up to 300 of the FREE Footballs are going to be awarded then—for readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. More footballs will be given in the next month.

Don't send any stamps until we tell you how and where next week, when the closing date will be announced.
RULES: Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given next week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "GEM," "MAGNET," "MODERN BOY," "DETECTIVE WEEKLY," "TRIUMPH," "WILD WEST WEEKLY," "THRILLER," "SPORTS BUDGET" and "CHAMPION.")

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

**Ten More
 "Footer-Stamps"
 To Save!**



"BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S PERIL"

(Continued from page 16.)

Roberts. Why he should disappear is a mystery to me."

"Mystery?" ejaculated Neilson. "It's all a mystery. Goodman blown to bits, Botulian gone, Roberts gone, and now Drummond gone."

"And you've no idea where Drummond can be?"

"They've found his car abandoned in a village called Market Rutherford."

"Not very helpful," replied the millionaire as he got up from his chair. "Well, I hope you'll find him and clear this thing up."

The moment he had gone Neilson picked up the telephone and spoke into it.

"Blantyre's just leaving the building. Have him closely followed. I fancy he knows something," he said.

Actually there were others besides Colonel Neilson who had had the idea of scouring Market Rutherford in search of Drummond, for Longworth, his wife, and Phyllis Clavering having heard from Neilson that Drummond's car had been found in the village had immediately rushed down there post-haste, and the trio were doing a house-to-house visitation in the hope of learning something about the missing man. And chance brought Phyllis after many failures to the house where he had been made prisoner.

Botulian, who opened the door himself to the girl, was only able to repress a start with difficulty when she told him her errand. But his smile was disarming as he invited her into the house, for he was anxious to know exactly what was going on.

She in her turn suspected no trap. He had given his name readily enough to her, and she had recognised it in a moment. And as he expressed surprise at her fiancé's disappearance and she had no idea of the part he had been playing, she told him all she knew readily enough. Finally she rose to go, but here he spoke, and now her heart missed a beat at the expression on his face.

"Sorry to have to disagree with you, my dear young lady," he said, "but I shall have to keep you here for a bit."

She stared at him. Fear had suddenly leaped into her heart.

"What d'you mean?" she managed to get out; but she had already guessed.

"Just what I said, my dear. You see, Captain Drummond happens to be here, and my prisoner; and you know far—"

But she never heard the rest of the sentence. She made a wild rush for the door, but Botulian was on her and another man had appeared suddenly. And despite her frantic struggles her hands were quickly bound behind her and she was flung on to the sofa.

Botulian addressed the man.

"That will do," he said. "She won't give us any more trouble now, I think." The man slouched away, and the girl heard a door slam in the distance. Botulian spoke quietly but venomously.

"If you're thinking of screaming, I shouldn't," he said. "Because you will be gagged then, and it won't be comfortable."

"What d'you want with me?" she demanded.

A pitying smile came to his lips. "Actually I didn't want you at all," he replied. "But as you were silly enough to butt into my affairs I'm sorry to have to say that like your fiancé—"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Seems a pity, I admit, having to kill both of you, but what am I to do? It's your own fault."

Her eyes half closed. A deadly fear was surging over her, but as she opened

Drummond leaped into the hall, snatching a sword from the wall as he did so. But Botulian had emerged from his hiding-place, and now the girl saw with horror as he slashed at Drummond with the whip that he evidently was well accustomed to handle. And it seemed to her as he went on slashing at her lover furiously; holding him well at bay, that there could be only one possible end to this dreadful contest.

She was struggling furiously all the time as the two men circled the hall. Botulian was lashing fiercely, savagely, and raw weals were showing on Drummond's arms. Then suddenly an extra savage lash from the whip snapped Drummond's sword in two, but in a flash Drummond had snatched down another from the wall. And this time he hurled himself at Botulian regardless of the whip, pinning his arm against the wall.

It was a scene she never forgot. Botulian's other hand had gone up over his head and his eyes were terror-stricken. Drummond had stepped back and his sword was above his head. He seemed to be gloating over his success.

"Like it, Botulian?" he jeered.

"Don't—don't!" screamed the other. And then a quiet voice came from behind.

"Drop that sword, Drummond, you're covered. By Jove, Roberts, your disguise is perfect!"

Drummond spoke then. "This isn't Roberts, Sir Raymond, it's Botulian himself."

He heard a startled exclamation from Blantyre, but his voice was level when he spoke again.

"Afraid it won't matter a lot to you either way, Drummond," he said. "I've got the whip hand now and—"

But the words died in his throat as another voice broke in, and Drummond realised in a flash that it was Neilson.

"I think not, Blantyre," he said, and in a moment the room was filled with policemen, and both Blantyre and Botulian were in handcuffs and Phyllis was in her lover's arms.

Neilson was studying Botulian closely. "So you're Dr. Botulian, after all?" he queried. "But I'd like to know—"

"Oh, that's easy, colonel," interrupted Drummond. "Sir Raymond here can put you wise if only he'll talk. Eh, Sir Raymond?"

And then as the other merely scowled, Drummond went on easily:

"Goodman wouldn't sell, and Sir Raymond here tried Botulian, and the good doctor agreed to make an appointment with the professor and let Roberts take his place. That was to be his alibi. However, a better idea occurred to him, and he turned up an hour earlier and—oh, well, I'll fill in all the blanks later if you want 'em."

Neilson chuckled grimly.

"We'll make a detective of you yet, Hugh," he said.

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them again a wild thrill surged across her, for at that moment on the staircase behind Botulian she saw a shirt-sleeved figure creeping stealthily down—a figure that even as she saw him lay a finger on his lips. Drummond!

But Botulian had seen the hope leap into her eyes. And in a flash he had slipped behind the thick curtains.

For a few seconds there was deathly silence. Drummond came creeping stealthily down the stairs, and Phyllis saw that there was a gun in his hand. She guessed that he had failed to see where Botulian was hiding, and she was signalling him frantically with her eyes.

Lower and lower came Drummond, his gun in his hand sweeping circles. He had failed to see Botulian, who now had a whip in his hand. And then suddenly the girl gave a scream as a long, sinuous tongue leaped out swiftly from behind the curtains and Drummond's gun clattered to the floor.

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The Jewel Robbery

"LORD GEOFFREY BRAEMAR'S car," reported the doorman of the big London hotel.

The clerk in the reception office got through to suit one-twenty to inform his lordship of the fact.

"I ordered it half an hour ago," a voice shrilled at the other end of the 'phone. "The service in this hotel is atrocious."

"Very, very sorry, m'lord. Most unfortunate delay. I'll transmit your complaint to the garage." The clerk hung up and looked at the instrument as if it were going to bite him. Then his quite pleasant face contorted, and he muttered savagely: "Young pup!"

A few minutes later the buzzer at the lift started and went on in stops and starts as if the manipulator were in a hurry.

"That's him all right," muttered the lift operator.

On the second floor the operator slid back the doors. A thin slip of a boy, in an Eton suit and a top hat, stood by the gates. He was a pale, very arrogant young fellow, who looked at the lift operator angrily and contemptuously.

"You kept me waiting!" raged Lord Braemar as he stepped into the lift.

A quiet, middle-aged woman followed. She was obviously some sort of a nurse or companion. Doris Clandon was very quiet, round-shouldered, and seemed almost terrified of her dictatorial young employer. She had the sympathies of the hotel staff, who thought a bath in boiling oil could not be too bad for Lord Braemar.

"The lift operator wisely had kept a still tongue. He closed the doors, and the lift descended slowly.

"Make it go faster!" ordered his lord-

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ship. "I'm not going to spend all day in this antiquated lift."

The operator pulled the lift up at the ground floor with a jolt.

"You did that on purpose!"

"I'm sure the young man did not do it intentionally, Lord Geoffrey," said Doris Clandon, in weary, tired accents.

"That's no excuse." His lordship looked at the lift operator, and with biting sarcasm added: "What he needs is fewer brass buttons and more brains."

"Good-morning, your lordship," murmured the reception clerk.

"It would be if the services in this hotel weren't so poor."

"I'm sorry, your lordship. I'll make a note of your complaint."

"Do." Lord Braemar turned to the woman, and said in eager tones: "Thank heaven the mater's coming tomorrow to take me out of this wretched hotel!"

"Thank heaven!" murmured the clerk, when his lordship had passed through the swing doors.

Outside Lord Braemar had a few words to say to the doorman because the latter was not as quick as he might have been.

"More brass buttons and no brains!" contemptuously sneered his lordship.

Accompanied by the woman, this unpleasant young man entered the large limousine. It was the woman who instructed the chauffeur to drive to Morcotts, the jewellers in Bond Street. The doorman's face was ugly.

"Little snob!" he muttered viciously as the car glided away. "Two streets away, and he has to have a blooming car."

The big car pulled up before the swagger West End jewellers. An elderly, frock-coated individual stepped forward,

bowed courteously to the two customers.

"Good-morning, madam. What may I show you?"

"His lordship would like to select a simple gift for his mother," the woman explained.

"You see, the mater arrives from India to-morrow," said his lordship. "And I do so want to get her something nice."

He was shown a little something in carved jade and platinum, which cost only eighty guineas.

"Have I that much saved, Miss Clandon?"

"Oh, no, I'm afraid not, dear. Could we see something a little less expensive?"

"But it must be nice," added Geoffrey. "The mater is very particular."

A bearded, spectacled man entered the shop and another assistant hurried forward. A card was extended:

"I believe you have been expecting me," said the new arrival.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hampstead," murmured the assistant. "We had a wire from your firm in Manchester this morning. Please excuse me a moment."

The head jeweller had just shown Geoffrey a very pretty locket, and the boy seemed pleased with this present, which was only twenty guineas. He was looking round to see if there was anything else that he fancied when Mr. Hampstead moved across the shop.

"Oh, Miss Clandon, how simply lovely. Wouldn't mummy look beautiful in those?" Geoffrey pointed to a necklace in a case. "But I suppose they're much more than eighty guineas?"

The jeweller laughed, opened the case,

and very gingerly removed the necklace, which he handed to Lord Braemer.

"I'm afraid so," the jeweller said in apologetic, slightly amused tones. "Those are the 'Zyrtaine Emeralds.' A mere matter of thirty thousand pounds."

"Oh!" gasped Geoffrey.

"Never mind." It was Mr. Hampstead who spoke. "A bright lad like you will be able one day to buy those for your mother."

Geoffrey nodded, moved towards the case to replace the emeralds, when he gave a slight cry, staggered, clutched at his stomach and half sank to the floor. The jeweller and his assistant were just able to catch the boy before he fainted. Mr. Hampstead picked up the necklace, which had dropped to the floor, and it was Mr. Hampstead who brought the fainting boy a glass of water.

"A terrible pain here—I can't breathe," Lord Geoffrey gasped.

"He's subject to these attacks," Miss Clandon whispered to the jeweller. "He's always been on the delicate side."

Geoffrey sipped at the water.

"Sorry to be such a bother," said Geoffrey, his face all twisted in agony.

"Hadn't I better ring up a doctor?" suggested the jeweller.

"Oh, no, no!" hastily murmured Doris Clandon. "I'm used to these attacks. I know just what to do, but I must get him back to the hotel at once."

"There's a stout fellow." The jeweller helped the boy to his feet. "You'll be all right soon."

Mr. Hampstead had gone by now. They got the boy to the waiting car.

"Please don't sell the mater's locket to anyone," begged Geoffrey. "I shall call for it in the morning."

On getting back to the hotel, Miss Clandon got the doorman and an assistant to help Geoffrey out of the car. She explained that his lordship had had a fainting fit. Would they take him to his room, whilst she went to the chemist to get a special prescription made up.

Once alone, Geoffrey behaved singularly strangely for a sick youth. He helped himself to several chocolates and then switched on a gramophone, and was wandering round the room humming a tune when there came a knock at his door.

"Come!" he said in lordly tones.

A middle-aged, shrewd, thick-set man walked into the room.

"Lord Geoffrey Braemer?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"My name's Scott. Morcotts sent me round to inquire how your lordship feels."

"A bit better, thank you."

"Splendid!" Scott smiled and took out a note-book. "Then perhaps you could answer a few questions—about the incident in the jeweller's shop."

"I'd be glad to, but I'm not feeling quite fit yet. Some other time."

"Time's important, your lordship. I was hoping you'd be able to describe the man who was looking at the emerald necklace."

"How should I be able to describe a total stranger?" haughtily demanded the boy.

"Well, it would be helpful if you could," the detective smiled. "You see, the necklace was stolen."

"Indeed?" exclaimed Lord Braemer, then shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I didn't notice him. Now, if you'll pardon me I'd like to lie down."

"Perhaps the lady who was with you might have noticed him?"

"Oh, my governess. She's gone off to the chemist for my medicine. She may be quite some time."

"I'll wait, if you don't mind." The detective closed the book.

"But I do mind!" haughtily cried the boy. "I feel better, but not quite up to entertaining strangers."

Lord Braemer went and flung himself on a settee and buried himself in a book, whilst the detective seated himself in a chair.

"You've lived in India, I believe."

"Yes, for three—no, four years," Geoffrey replied and looked at the detective as if he wished he would go away.

"Landed at Calcutta, I suppose?"

asked Scott, and Geoffrey nodded. "Dirty place, isn't it?"

"Yes, dreadful people. The intouchables, you know."

"Been to Darjeeling, too?" Scott asked, and there was a curious smile round his hard mouth. "Very hot there eh?"

"Yes—awfully" Geoffrey buried himself in a book.

"Braemer—Braemer," the detective said a moment later. "Could your father have been Lord Thomas Braemer, by any chance?"

"No—no, that's quite another branch of the family."

"Possibly an uncle?"

"Yes—yes, an uncle."

"Splendid man, your uncle. I knew him during the war."

"Yes, Uncle Tom is a jolly old chap," agreed the boy. "Mater and I are going to visit him. At least, I—I think we are."

"I doubt it," the detective said in harsh tones. "Lord Thomas Braemer was killed in 1917." He got up. "You're smart, my lad, but not quite smart enough. When you go to India you don't land at Calcutta, you land at Bombay. And Darjeeling isn't hot—it's in the mountains. And you're not Lord Geoffrey Braemer."

"You're being very impertinent, my man," Geoffrey jumped up. "I shall have to ask you to leave."

"Very well. I shall have to ask your lordship to accompany me. I am an investigator for the insurance underwriters. Come along."

It was at that moment that the 'phone shrilled. The boy snatched up the receiver.

"Hallo, Geoffrey, this is Doris. Everything's all right. Jim got it."

Scott tried to grab the 'phone, but the boy jumped back. "Please, Mr. Detective," he cried loudly, and then slammed the receiver down.

In a quiet room in a back street a man



He was shown a little something in carved jade and platinum, which was only eighty guineas.

was seated before a mirror removing make-up from his face. He had just removed a false moustache and beard. On a stand were a number of beards. It was Mr. Hampstead. The woman—it was Doris Clandon—stood there staring at the receiver. Suddenly she put it down as if it were red hot.

"They've twigged us, Jim," she cried hoarsely. "There's a detective in the room with him."

"That didn't take them long," the man shouted angrily. "We'd better clear out of here—and quick!"

"And what about Geoffrey?"

"He'll have to take care of himself."

"He's the only one that can definitely identify us," the woman cried as she removed a brown wig to reveal raven black locks. "If he talks we're done for."

"You're right. Let's get out of here before they trace the call back," decided her husband. "You take your make-up off, and change your dress. Give me those wigs."

The woman scraped off her make-up to reveal quite a young face, though now it was lined with anxiety. A number of wigs were tossed into the fire and burnt fiercely. The man laughed.

"There go Jim Hampstead and Doris Clandon," he said.

The Sentence of the Court

THE bogus young Lord appeared at the juvenile court some days later. He was now dressed in a grey suit, but he was still very much the haughty young member of the aristocracy. One could see his nose curling as if he found the surroundings distasteful.

The magistrate stated that thorough investigation had not revealed any living relatives. All that Geoffrey knew about his youth he told. His father had told him once that they were the last of the family. He was born in South Africa, at Johannesburg, and came to England four years ago, but he bowed his head when mention was made of the railway accident in which both his parents had been killed.

"Were you hurt?" a kindly woman magistrate of the court asked.

"Just shaken up a bit. They took me to a nursing home, and—when I asked to see mother—they—they told me. I ran away."

"Ran away? Why?" the woman magistrate asked.

"My mother was so wonderful. I couldn't bear it," was the frank admittal.

"Where did you meet this man and woman?" the magistrate asked.

"I was standing in front of a confectioner's shop, sir. I was hungry, and it smelled so good. They took me in and gave me tea." Geoffrey stared round defiantly. "Mr. Hampstead and Miss Clandon were always good to me. They bought me clothes and they travelled a lot on the Continent with me. Miss Clandon made me keep up with my lessons."

"You realise, don't you, that this is a very serious matter?"

"Oh, yes, your worship."

"Show him the photographs."

Inspector Scott handed the boy some pictures. One was a photograph of Hampstead without the beard, and underneath was the name Charles Debtford. Another revealed Hampstead with a moustache, and this time the name was Smith.

Geoffrey studied them closely.

"This man doesn't look like him at all," the boy said in his sharp, frank way. "He had a moustache, but not

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one like this. I know his moustache was real."

Inspector Scott grunted.

"Miss Clandon, did she wear a disguise?" asked the woman magistrate.

"Well, I—I don't want to be disloyal," Geoffrey hesitated. "Well, she was getting on a bit, you know, and—well, she did touch up her hair."

The magistrates began to confer in whispers. Inspector Scott, with a sour look at the culprit, stepped forward.

"May it please the court. It's my observation that the boy has not been fully co-operative."

"It's the court's function to decide that, Mr. Scott," retorted the magistrate. "Mr. Burke."

A clean-shaven, bright-eyed, elderly man stepped forward from among a number of spectators.

"I want to thank you, Mr. Burke, for your assistance to the court in this case," said the magistrate. "Would your organisation be willing to undertake the care of this boy?"

"Dr. Barnardo's Homes are always ready to receive a destitute child, your worship," was the immediate response. "I'm sure we can do a lot for the boy."

"I feel certain you can." The magistrate glanced at his feminine colleague, who nodded, and then round to an elderly clergyman also on the bench. Satisfied, the magistrate drew forward a form and signed it. "Very well, Geoffrey goes to Dr. Barnardo's Home."

"You mean I'm not going free?" sharply cried Geoffrey.

"You're going free for as long as you deserve to be free." The magistrate looked at the boy's flushed face keenly. "But you're a ward of the Crown until you're eighteen. So this court is going to send you among boys, most of whom are orphans, like yourself. This is not a reformatory, but a home where you will have the advantages of sound Christian training, which you have missed so far. Of course, if your conduct is not what it should be, you may be recalled and sent then to a reformatory. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Geoffrey Braemer." The magistrate stood up. "The court hereby orders that you be committed to the care of Mr. Burke of Dr. Barnardo's Homes."

The boy looked fixedly at Mr. Burke as that gentleman stepped forward to claim him. Mr. Burke smiled, but Geoffrey did not return the smile, nor did he see the extended hand. Mr. Burke pointed to a door.

An enclosed car took them to a large building, over the doorway of which was a bold inscription: "No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission. Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Founded 1866."

Superintendent Burke then led the boy to a quiet, frugally furnished but business-like private office.

"Geoffrey, we're going to be friends," stated the superintendent. He noted the lad's mutinous look. "Very well, then. But you don't choose to be my friend yet, but I'm yours. That's the spirit of the founder of these homes—Dr. Barnardo. Now, you want to stand on your own feet when you're a man, to earn your own way, and learn a trade, so that you can be self-reliant."

"You teach people to be tradespeople?" questioned Geoffrey with plain disgust.

"Precisely. Now, there are a hundred of our homes—schools, really, and you may select which one you prefer." Mr. Burke smiled in his friendliest fashion. "You can become

a farmer or a carpenter, a printer or a baker, or something else."

"I don't want to be any of those things," angrily cried Geoffrey. "I want to be a gentleman."

"The first quality in a gentleman, Geoffrey, is to pull his own weight in the boat. I would rather you made the choice."

"I wish I'd been sent to prison instead," blazed the stubborn lad.

"In time you'll be glad you weren't. Since you won't decide, I must." Superintendent Burke half-closed his eyes, as if trying to measure up and decide the most suitable industry for this difficult youngster. He smiled as he found the answer. "There are no limits to where a man may rise in the Mercantile Marine."

The Nautical School

A SMALL, private motor-bus took Mr. Burke, Geoffrey and three other boys to their new home. Albert was a large-eyed, small youth with a tooth missing in front and a strong Lancashire dialect. Tommy was a big, over-grown stolid youth, whilst Benny was dark, quiet and very reserved. The superintendent seldom glanced at the boys, and if he did it was at Geoffrey, who sat apart and stared out of the window at the country with obvious boredom.

"I've never been this far from London in all my life," cried young Albert. "Must be a hundred bloomin' miles." He noted the suitcase of Geoffrey Braemer. "Hey, look at the labels. He's been a sight of places, ain't thee, lad?"

"Obviously." Geoffrey half glanced round.

"A bit of a swell, 'e is," Tommy whispered to Benny. "I wonder what it'll be like at Russell-Cotes?"

"My cousin Will says it's a wonderful place." Albert's tongue was seldom still. "And thee can become an admirable if thee stays there long enough. Wouldn't thee like to be an admirable?" He turned to Geoffrey.

Geoffrey gazed coldly at the friendly small boy.

"Certainly not!" he answered haughtily. "The one I met was a stuffy old duffer."

"If you know all them swells, what are you going to Russell-Cotes for?" Tommy demanded a shade aggressively.

"I won't stay long," was the answer. "Family reverse—you wouldn't understand."

"Get ready, boys," Mr. Burke called out. "We're coming to it."

The bus passed through some gates, over which was a brass inscription in gilded letters: "Dr. Barnardo's Homes—Russell-Cotes Nautical School."

All the boys were gazing round eagerly—with the exception of Geoffrey. The door was opened and they filed out after the superintendent. Geoffrey touched young Arthur on the shoulder and held out his suitcase.

"Carry that for me, like a good fellow."

"Aye!" agreed Albert.

A portly little man with a heavy growth of side whiskers, a smiling face that ill-fitted eyes that were morose and gloomy, stood waiting to greet them. He was garbed in the uniform of a petty officer. The superintendent held out his hand.

"Hallo, Mr. Jelks."

Mr. Jelks shook the hand and glanced at the new recruits and sniffed.

"Well, in my time we used to throw better overboard to the gulls."

"You say that about every new lot," laughed Superintendent Burke.

"Aye, and every new batch is worse

than the one before." Crusty Jelks stepped forward and eyed the new arrivals more closely. "Put down those bags and stand to attention."

Across the wide, gravelly compound a portly and tall officer was seen approaching. A very fine figure of a man. Captain Briggs, the chief of this nautical school, adjusted an eyeglass. He shook hands with the superintendent and then gave his right-hand man a sly grin.

"I suppose you've already decided they're hopeless, Mr. Jelks?"

"Aye, aye, sir. Impossible."

The captain smiled and studied the document Burke handed to him.

"Albert Baker," he called out.

The small lad, still clutching Geoffrey's case, stepped forward. "I'm him, sir," he said, touching his cap.

The captain looked at the boy.

"What happened to your tooth, Albert?" he asked.

"Me cousin's fist come too close, sir."

"Well, we'll have to get that filled up. You can step back." The captain looked again at the list. "Benny Potter."

The shy lad stepped forward smartly and the captain gave him an approving grin. "Tommy Thrums."

The stolid lad shuffled forward. The captain nodded and glanced at the remaining boy. "You're Geoffrey Braemer?"

"Yes, sir," Geoffrey said in dull tones.

"Boys, this is Bos'n Jelks." The captain indicated his assistant. "He will have immediate charge of you. So pick up your bags and follow him and he'll get you settled."

He noticed Albert struggling with the big suitcase.

"That's a smart piece of luggage, Albert."

"It's his," Albert grinned and jerked a thumb at Geoffrey.

"Why are you carrying it?"

"He asked me to, sir."

"Give it to him," the captain said sharply. "We carry our own kit here, Braemer. Every man jack stands on his own feet."

He glanced at the others.

"Well, boys, I want you to be happy here, and I'll do everything I can to help you. We all will—especially Mr. Jelks. Good luck, my lads."

The captain walked off with Superintendent Burke.

Bos'n Jelks took his small party over to the administration building, where a quartermaster dished them out with uniforms. Albert, Benny and Tommy were keenly interested, but Geoffrey kept yawning. Once or twice the eyes of Crusty Jelks rested upon him speculatively. Then he conducted the boys to an empty dormitory where there were about forty beds. He told them to stand by till he returned.

The bos'n went off to a play-room where a number of boys of all sizes and shapes were reading, talking, writing letters, playing table-tennis and other games. He watched a brisk, fiery lad who had three stripes on the arm of his blue jacket administering a hiding at table-tennis to a bigger boy.

"Terry O'Mulvaney!" he called, but the boy was so engrossed he did not hear. Mr. Jelks raised his voice. "Look alive there, Irish! Can't you hear me?"

A freckled face was turned in his direction. Small bright eyes that were shrewd and far-seeing. The mouth was firm and the chin prominent. The boy put down his bat, and with a grin hastened to the bos'n's side.

"Sorry to interrupt your game," apologized Mr. Jelks. "But I'd like

"This isn't a waste of time when a man's life or a ship's hangs on how fast you can lash a hawser," said Bos'n Jelks.



you to come along with me to the dormitory."

"Aye, aye, sir," agreed the Irish lad.

So Terence met the new arrivals and was ordered by the bos'n to help them into their uniforms and bring them down to the cookhouse when the bugle sounded. He allotted each boy a cot and then left them in Terry's hands.

"Am I supposed to sleep here with all these other people?" asked Geoffrey.

Terry looked at this boy under furrowed brows.

"The master's suite is being used just now, more's the pity," he said with heavy sarcasm.

Albert was delighted with everything.

"A soft mattress, too," he shouted gleefully. "Ee! that's grand. Me cousin and me slept on straw at 'ome."

"And we've got sheets," answered Tommy. "And all clean as a new ha'p'ny, too."

"The last lad that had your cot shipped as seaman on the *Loconia*. A bit of luck for him," Terry told Geoffrey.

"Shipped as an ordinary seaman," the boy said in disgust. "What an extraordinary achievement."

"Well, there's them that would be thinking so." Terry's jaw was set pugnaciously. "Remember this, me bucko, that England is an island kingdom and her life's blood depends upon the ordinary seaman."

"Yes, yes, I know. McKittrick's *History of England*," superciliously sneered Geoffrey. "Food for only six

weeks is at hand in the United Kingdom. Beyond that our destinies rest in the brave hands of the Royal Navy and the Merchant Marine. Like me to quote some more?"

"How would you be knowing all this?" gasped the amazed Terry.

"I once attended school—with gentlemen!"

"Aye, and put them in their place, no doubt," snapped Terry, and went off to assist Albert, who had got his uniform on backwards. Having got Albert fixed, and after giving a hand to Tommy and Benny, he came back to Geoffrey, who was almost dressed. "I'll be after showing you how to knot that cord," he said in helpful, kindly tones.

"No need to. I've worn sailor suits since I was four, and outgrew them when I was ten."

"Oh, if you're after knowing so much, what are the three stripes on the collar for?" Terry demanded with an air of triumph.

"In memory of Nelson's three great victories—Copenhagen, the Nile and Trafalgar. The kerchief is mourning for Lord Nelson."

Terry stared fixedly at this walking encyclopedia, and with a snort turned away. The other boys were almost ready when Geoffrey touched him on the arm.

"May I speak to you alone?"

"Why not?" Terry opened his eyes and pointed towards the end of the dormitory. "Step into me private office."

"I suppose you know all the ins and out here?"

"I do that. But, then, I've been here this many a year—since I was eight."

"I'd like you to be my friend." Geoffrey held out a coin. "Here, that's for you."

"Half-a-crown!" Terry looked from the coin to Geoffrey. "What would you be giving me this for?"

"You can do me a service. I don't like people reading my letters. I'd like to get hold of them before they go to headquarters."

"Well now I couldn't be doing that if I wanted to. Sure, you'll be getting your letters unopened," Terry laughed. "You've wasted your money, your Highness."

At bugle-call the party of four were marched down for cookhouse. A large, high-roofed, comfortable hall with many tables and benches. Good, wholesome food was placed before every boy by boys doing orderly duty.

"It's grand, Braemer," Albert said to Geoffrey, who was seated next to him.

"That's a matter of taste."

A kindly, buxom woman came round the tables, and she spotted Geoffrey's tin plate was hardly touched.

"No appetite?" asked Mrs. Briggs. The captain's wife was the matron at Russell-Cotes.

"No, madam, I'm not in the least hungry."

"Some of the new boys feel a bit strange for a day or so, but you'll like it here," said the kindly matron. "We're all members of one family, the largest family in the world. If anything bothers you, you come to me, and we'll talk it out."

"Thank you." Grave eyes looked at the matron keenly. "How often does the post come?"

"Every morning. You'll cheer up when you get a letter."

At the head table sat Captain Briggs and Bos'n Jelks. When the meal was almost over the captain rapped on his table for silence.

"Boys, I have some good news from Captain Cartwright." The captain paused and glanced round. "I'm sure the new boys will be interested in knowing that John Cartwright went to school here, and on his own merits has risen to be first officer of the Queen Mary. And he hasn't forgotten the old school."

There was loud cheering, but the captain's upraised hand soon restored silence.

"Through his efforts we will be able to place five Russell-Cotes boys among the crew of the Queen Mary next season. I may as well tell you that O'Mulvaney and Saunders have the windward course for two of the berths. So it's up to all of you to mind your p's and q's if you want to earn the appointment. That's all. Carry on by messes."

Geoffrey yawned, but he did look towards O'Mulvaney at the top of the table. He saw him waving a hand across to another table where a big boy, also the proud possessor of three stripes, waved back. Geoffrey guessed this was Saunders.

After the repast the boys dismissed, but Terry went across to the captain's table. The latter put down his paper and smiled a greeting.

"It's grand news, sir. And I'll be thanking you for the chance."

"You've earned it, Terry."

"Thank you, sir." The boy put the half-crown on the table. "I'll be making a contribution to the Christmas fund."

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"Quite a windfall—you must have come into money."

"That I did, sir," Terry grinned. "One of the new boys wanted to get his letters without being read. And him not knowing that's the way they'd be given to him. He's a rum sort."

"That would be Braemer, I fancy," remarked the astute captain.

"Aye, sir. He'll not be liking it here." Terry looked gloomy. "He's too good for us."

"Well, he'll have to get to like us," the captain answered, and leaned forward. "You see, Terry, he hasn't had your advantages. You've been one of this family for eight years—"

"And proud of it, sir," impulsively interrupted Terry.

"Braemer was brought up wrongly," continued the captain. "He learned the wrong things from the wrong people. If he doesn't make a go of it he'll be sent to a reform school. Now you and I don't want that, so I hope you'll help the lad by showing him the ropes."

"I will that, sir. If he'll let me."

"And, Terry, I'd rather the other boys didn't know," concluded Captain Briggs. "Just you and me. I'm sure you understand. Now you might send Braemer to me, will you?"

Tight-lipped, Geoffrey listened to a brief lecture from the captain of the gravity of trying to bribe one of the other boys. It would be overlooked this time. The captain recommended that Geoffrey forget his old associates and try to make a go of it at this school. When dismissed, Geoffrey sought out Terry O'Mulvaney.

"I always knew the Irish were informers at heart." And as he walked away did not know how close he had been to a sock in the jaw.

Geoffrey Runs Away

CRUSTY JELKS was giving lessons on the making of such knots as the half hitch, clove hitch, and sheepshank. After showing them several times each boy had to make the knot with his own piece of rope. What annoyed Crusty most about Geoffrey Braemer was the fact that the lad looked bored to tears, and yet when one hauled him out in front of the class to make a knot he would do it perfectly. The bowline was a difficult business, and he expected the boys to make a mess of it, and they did, with the exception of Geoffrey.

"Well, well, good enough!" Jelks nodded approvingly. "Why, I didn't do any better myself at your age."

"It's perfectly simple," said Geoffrey in his bland, overheating manner. "But it seems an awful waste of effort."

"Well, it won't be one day when a man's life or a ship's hangs on how fast you can lash a hawser," Jelks spoke sharply.

Geoffrey made some pretence of listening to the rest of the lesson, but all the time he was giving furtive glances round as if expecting someone. The postman came riding across the square on his bicycle, and Geoffrey decided that this was a good time to try out a fainting fit. He uttered a moan, swayed on his feet and collapsed in the arms of Terry. Crusty bent over the boy anxiously.

"You'd better go over to your cot and lie down for a few minutes," he directed. "And if you're not feeling shipshape in about half an hour I'll send you over to the sick bay."

"Thank you, sir." Geoffrey managed to stand upright and hold on to a post. "I'm sure I'll be all right in a short while."

"Maybe I'd better send O'Mulvaney with you."

"Oh, no, sir, don't bother! I can get along."

Crusty Jelks stared after the slim figure.

"I was afraid he didn't have the beam to be a seaman," he commented under his breath.

Once out of sight of the class Geoffrey walked briskly, but he could see no sign of the postman. Then he saw the man's machine reposing against a wall.

"Where did you leave the post?" Geoffrey demanded when the postman appeared.

"In the usual place. On the table in the office."

When the postman had ridden off Geoffrey pushed open the swing doors and entered. He had a plausible excuse ready if there should be anyone there, but for the moment the main office was deserted, though the post was on a large table. Geoffrey rushed forward, and was eagerly looking through it when a door opened and Mrs. Briggs appeared.

"What're you doing, Geoffrey?" "Oh, I thought there might be a letter for me!"

"Probably there is, but you must wait your turn with the rest."

"Could I sort them for you, Mrs. Briggs?" the boy suggested. "I know how to arrange them in alphabetical order."

"Certainly not!" Mrs. Briggs spoke sharply. "You may go back to your class-room."

It was unfortunate that Crusty Jelks should dismiss the class early in order that the boys could collect their post, because it earned several black marks for Geoffrey. The bos'n guessed at once the fainting fit had been a spruce. It did not do Geoffrey a bit of good because there was no letter for him. That they had not written to him seemed incredible, and he asked if any letters had been held back. Mrs. Briggs looked at Geoffrey as if she could slap him.

When the post came that night Geoffrey was first there, but he had no luck. He got through the nights because he was so certain that some morning in the first week a letter would come from the people whom he regarded as his only friends in the world, and that they would get him away from this dull, dreary nautical school. The other boys tried to be friendly, but he ignored them, and there might have been trouble but for the watchful eye of O'Mulvaney. He would not be having anything said against young Braemer. One morning he was hanging around as there was to be a special midday postal delivery when one of the boys invited him to join in a game of football.

"No, thanks, I don't care to." "Couldn't I play?" asked diminutive Albert.

"You're too small," answered Ned Saunders. "Next year, when you've grown a bit."

"Ec, but I must play to-day, Ned. I must."

"You'd only get hurt." Saunders ran off to join the others.

"I'll be hurt more if I don't play," Albert said gloomily.

"Don't let it bother you!" called out Geoffrey. "That sort of game is no fun. Why look so miserable?"

"I'm afraid like."

"Afraid? Of what?" "Captain Briggs says I must get tooth put in, if I'm not doing anything else," Albert explained with a nervous smile that showed the great gap in his

teeth. "And if they let me play I wouldn't have to go to dentist."

"Why, Albert, you'd look grand with a new tooth."

"But they grind with the buzzer. And it hurts like."

"Don't let that scare you. I've had it done," boasted Geoffrey.

"Ye have?" The large eyes stared admiringly at the boy, whom Albert had made his hero.

"Yes, I'll tell you what I'll do," Geoffrey said in dictatorial tones. "I'll go with you and wait till it's done."

"Ee, that would be champion!" cried the admiring Albert.

There were just over a hundred boys at Russell Cotes, and besides being taught all that appertained to the sea they were given ordinary lessons as well. In technical knowledge Geoffrey outshone all the other boys, but his mannerisms did not make him popular. Albert was his one great admirer. When Crusty Jelks informed his class that the four cardinal points on a compass were north, east, south and west he asked if any new boy could tell him how many points there were all told. Only Geoffrey knew the answer was thirty-two.

"East—east by north—east north east—north east by east—north east—north by east—north east by north—" recited Geoffrey.

Jelks interrupted to say he asked the number only.

"Now, when you're steering your course may be east north east"—the bos'n walked on to a miniature bridge—"you put your wheel over until the ship's head swings to that point."

Not liking being prevented from reciting the thirty-two points, Geoffrey at once informed the bos'n that the very latest compasses had degrees on them, and that orders were now given to steer fifty or sixty or whatever degrees was required.

"That's true about the very latest ships, like the Queen Mary," Jelks eyed Braemer as if he were some unpleasant insect. "But there are one or two older ships still afloat, so you'll learn the old way first." He turned to the class. "Well, lads, let's go to the masthead."

A high mast had been erected with a great deal of rigging. There was netting all round the mast to catch any boy who should lose his balance when climbing. Geoffrey went along with the class, but he kept on looking round.

"Never mind the postman, Braemer," sharply spoke Jelks. "There'll be no fainting spell to-day."

Terry O'Mulvaney, who was one of the head boys, was detailed to show the class how to climb the rigging.

"All right, boys, you've seen how it's done—have a go at it," Jelks ordered when Terry had clambered into a cross-tice. "Keep your eyes aloft and you'll have no trouble."

"I love this," Albert whispered to Geoffrey. "Me father was a steeple-jack."

"But it's such a lot of nonsense!" cried Geoffrey, who was rather pale. "There are no sailing ships left, and one doesn't climb rigging any more."

"You should drop a note to the Board of Trade," mocked Jelks, as he nodded to Albert that it was his turn. He watched approvingly as the little lad clambered nimbly up the rigging to join the others. He noted the hesitation of the remaining lad. "Up you go, Braemer!"

"I get awfully dizzy!" cried Geoffrey.

"At the very slightest—"

"Braemer, you can't dodge it all the

time," cut in the bos'n. "Hop to it, lad. Why, it's as easy as walking up-stairs." He watched Braemer go some way up and then glance down. "Tighten the nets, lad!" he called out to two able-bodied seamen who were on the staff. "When a man knows he's gonna fall—he's gonna fall."

It seemed miles to the ground as Geoffrey tried to climb towards the yard arm. The grinning, pert face of Terry and the supercilious looks of the other boys made him grit his teeth and try to climb higher.

"Look up, lad—look up!" cried Albert eagerly.

Almost to the top and then dizziness got him, and Geoffrey let go. He landed in the net, rolled about helplessly, and then sat up. The two seamen helped him to the ground.

"Are you hurt, lad?"

One could not get Geoffrey down for long.

"No, I'm not!" he cried, eyeing Jelks angrily. "But it's no thanks to you."

"There's worse hurts than a bruise or a broken bone, Braemer," was the quiet reply. "Shirking's one of them. You saved yourself from that." He raised his voice. "Class dismissed."

"Climbing rigging's one thing you can't be learning out of a book," Terry remarked to Geoffrey in conciliatory tones.

"I can see nothing wonderful about climbing," was the disdainful answer. "Monkeys can do it."

That caused some muttering among the other boys, and they did not say very polite things.

"I've been thinking it over, lads," Terry said for all to hear. "It's easy enough for us to be climbing rigging, seeing we don't get light-headed, but it must be a whole lot different when you know you're going to be getting giddy."

"Well spoken, O'Mulvaney," ap-

proved Crusty, staring in perplexity after Geoffrey Braemer.

Geoffrey created a scene that day when he had no letter. It was the last straw. If there wasn't a letter for him, then it was being kept back. Mrs. Briggs sent him in disgrace to his room. Albert came into the dormitory in great excitement to say that the boys had all been invited by folks in the town for a feed. Geoffrey said he did not want to go when there would be half a dozen instructors watching. But when he learnt that every boy would be on his own he decided to go. An instructor appeared in the dormitory and squashed that idea by saying that Braemer's liberty had been restricted. Geoffrey set his teeth and sought out Mrs. Briggs. He apologised most humbly, admitted he was a cad, and told such a heartrending tale that soft-hearted Mrs. Briggs let him go to the party.

It was young Albert who saw him sneak out of the house to which they had been invited, and went out after him.

"Braemer, are you running away from school?" he asked sorrowfully.

"Oh, so you're going to be an informer like O'Mulvaney."

"Oh, no. I wouldn't."

"Go on back, Albert!" begged Geoffrey. "I'll send you some tuck from London."

Terry noticed the depressed looks of Albert and came and sat by his side, but when Albert refused cake and ices he looked at the kid closely. Albert sneaked back into the garden, and Terry followed him.

"Albert, what's the matter with you?"

"Oh, nothing. I feel poorly like."

"You're a poor liar, Albert!" fiercely spoke Terry. "What's troubling you, lad?"

"Braemer, he's gone."

"Gone? Run away, did he?" Terry gave a jeering laugh. "Well, they'll be



Geoffrey fought with the courage of desperation and despair.

catching him and putting him in a reform school."

"Not gaol?"

"As good as, and serve the insulting beggar right."

"If you hurry, you could bring him back," hopefully murmured Albert.

"I'll not be stirring a foot after him."

"Then I'll be trying."

"No, not a bit will you!" Terry cried. "He's off to London more than likely. If he thinks I'll be bringing him back he's daft. Why, I'd be out of my mind running the risk of losing the Queen Mary." He glowered at Albert. "Oh, will you stop putting such ideas into my head before I lay the back of me hand across your mouth."

O'Mulvaney paced up and down the path, and then with a look of annoyance at the shrinking Albert he vaulted a fence and vanished into the night.

Reduced to the Ranks

TERRY set out on the road to London, and learnt from a friendly lorry-driver that he had sighted a lad in sailor's clothes. Terry went doggedly after him.

About midnight Geoffrey climbed a fence and made himself comfortable among some haystacks, but scarce had he dosed down than a shadow appeared, and that made him scramble to his feet. Terry O'Mulvaney stood over him.

"You'd be more comfortable—back at Russell Cotes."

"Oh, the informer!" sneered Geoffrey.

"You'll be going back there, too!"

"No, I won't, and you can't make me."

"That I can and will," vowed Terry. "You'll have to kill me to take me back!" shouted Geoffrey.

"It'll be a rare treat." Terry clenched his fists.

"After I've whipped you, O'Mulvaney, I'm going to London."

"If the likes of you licks the likes of me, I'll be helping ye to get to London."

"Done!" cried Geoffrey, and rushed into the fray.

Both boys were strong, but Terry was the toughest. Geoffrey fought with the courage of desperation and despair. Several times he floored Terry, but every time the game little Irishman got back on his feet. They rolled over and over on the ground, and once Geoffrey got astride, but with a wriggle and a heave Terry jerked himself free. They punched at each other, but Terry was a determined fighter. Geoffrey went down on his back and lay there panting, but when Terry asked if he had had enough, he sprang up and resumed the fight. Once he tripped Terry and tried to run away, but the other sprang on his back and brought him down. At last Geoffrey had to own defeat, but he still had a card left.

"If you come with me to London, I can get you a lot of money—twenty pounds!" cried the tempter.

"So ye'd be bribing a body again," Terry snapped out viciously. "Wou't you never be learning?" And with all his might he hit Geoffrey on the jaw.

Terry carried Geoffrey some of the way back to Russell-Cotes, but a friendly lorry-driver again came to their assistance and gave them a lift. Geoffrey made no attempt to escape when they got back to the nautical college, and obeyed Terry's orders. They climbed a fence and crept towards their dormitory. By means of a ladder Geoffrey climbed to a secondary window and entered the dor-

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mitory. Terry replaced the ladder and shinned up a pipe. Only Albert was awake when Geoffrey crept towards his bed.

"Thee come back," he hissed. "Terry fetched thee."

"He did not," answered Geoffrey. "I came back of my own free will."

Suddenly Geoffrey heard a measured tread in the corridor. It was one of the instructors having a stroll round to see that lights were out and all boys were in bed. Geoffrey dived into his bed fully dressed and drew the clothes over his head.

The instructor entered the room and looked round. In the moonlight everything was discernible. He started as a form clambered in through the window.

"O'Mulvaney!"

Terry stiffened and eyed the instructor nervously.

"Yes, sir," he replied huskily.

"You'd better get to bed," was the order.

"Where have you been?" demanded Ned Saunders, who had a bed near the window.

"You'd better be closing your eyes," rapped out the Irish lad, "or you'll be seeing more than is good for you."

In the morning Terry was told to report to Captain Briggs' office.

"O'Mulvaney, you didn't return to the dormitory with the liberty party last night."

"No, sir."

"And you were found climbing in through a window at five o'clock this morning."

"Yes, sir."

"Where were you in the meantime?" Terry held himself very straight.

"I—I can't be saying, sir," was his answer.

"You've been a boy with a fine record for eight years. Don't spoil everything now. If there is an explanation, give it."

"I'm sorry, sir, I—but I just can't be telling."

"Very well, then." Captain Briggs gave a resigned sigh. "I shall have to punish you by taking away your chevrons."

And though Terry O'Mulvaney knew that it would mean finish to his chances of joining the Queen Mary he did not tell the truth, which would have meant Braemer going to a reform school. He ripped off his chevrons and without a word handed them to the captain.

The rest of the nautical school were indignant when they saw that O'Mulvaney, the most popular lad of any, had lost his chevrons. They did not know the whole story, but they did know it was because of Geoffrey Braemer. O'Mulvaney had saved Braemer from being kicked out, and as a result had been reduced to the ranks. Ned Saunders called together a meeting of the boys, and Terry and Geoffrey were not present.

"It's Braemar's fault," Ned Saunders told them his decision, and there was a murmur of agreement. "All those in favour of putting the chill on Braemer."

Every hand was raised in assent. Braemer had been sent to Coventry.

Shortly afterwards a message came round that all boys were to assemble in the play-room. Geoffrey went there, and he looked very little the worse for his adventure. Also he was far from chastened. He asked one boy why everyone had been called, and got no answer. It was little Albert who put him wise.

"They're putting the chill on thee."

"Chill? What sort of nonsense is that?"

"Well, nobody will talk to thee as long as yer here." Albert looked round to see if he was being watched. "And if anybody does talk to you—well, there'll be nobody talking to them."

"Why aro you talking to me?"

"Because I think yer can fix things with Terry and the captain."

"Go away—mind your own business!" cried Geoffrey.

"I'm only friendly like," Albert mumbled, and backed away.

Captain Briggs was accompanied by another officer when he entered the assembly room, and at once there was loud cheering. The captain raised his hands for silence.

"I see you're as glad as I am to have Mr. Cartwright back," stated the captain. "And he knows how proud we are that the first officer of the Queen Mary is an old Russell-Cotes boy. He has a surprise for us. A splendid surprise."

"I'm down here to make a small payment on the debt I owe the old school," announced Mr. Cartwright. "In my day, you know, the greatest honour was to beat Watts Naval School in the annual lifeboat race, and this year I want to make it more tangible by putting up this cup for the winner."

At sight of the beautiful silver cup that he produced from a case the cheering was deafening.

"And you know the name of the school I want to see engraved on it first?"

"Russell-Cotes!" yelled the boys.

Captain Briggs announced that the occasion would be celebrated by a half-holiday. He suggested the idea of boat-race practice to show Mr. Cartwright what the crew could do. The idea was received enthusiastically.

Crusty Jelks had glanced several times across at Braemer, and when the boys hastened out of the assembly room for the river he beckoned Geoffrey across to him. The boy was feeling depressed and angry.

"Braemer, the crew isn't all chosen yet. We could use a smart lad as coxswain."

"I've no doubt you could." Geoffrey spoke with curled lip.

"I thought you might take a try at it," tempted Jelks. "You've done very well at boat drill whilst you've been here."

"Is it compulsory?"

"It is to-day—compulsory!" barked old Crusty.

The job of selecting the crew and aligning their positions was entrusted to Bos'n Jelks. O'Mulvaney was starboard stroke, and Saunders the port. He filled all the places except the most important—coxswain. The boys in the lifeboat at the landing-stago waited expectantly.

"Come here, Braemer!" Jelks called out, and the surprised Geoffrey, who for once had lost much of his confidence, obeyed the order. "Get in there coxswain, and take charge of your crew."

"Did you say take charge?" Geoffrey asked.

"Nothing else."

"Will I be in command?" Now there was a sparkle in Geoffrey's eyes.

"You'll be the Lord High Admiral hisself, as long as you're at that tiller."

Geoffrey jumped aboard, and he knew that every lad in the boat was looking at him. He was quite calm and unperurbed. He had regained his confidence. He untied the boat and pushed off. His crew with oars raised waited for his commands.

"Lower oars!" he sang out. "All together now, men. Stroke—stroke—stroke—stroke—"

The boys were savagely angry but for all that they obeyed Geoffrey's orders, and Captain Briggs and Mr. Cartwright had to admit that Bos'n Jelks seemed to have made a fine selection in choosing Braemer as coxswain. Later on in the play-room Mr. Cartwright played billiards and showed how a hundred break could be made, and before he left he gave a short lecture on the Queen Mary. There was a hospital, a ball-room, a florist shop, cafés; in fact, it was like London afloat.

"The lives of thousands of people depend upon the keenness of officers and men. There are people on board whom you may never see, but they trust their very existence willingly in your hands. Sometimes the responsibility is frightening." Mr. Cartwright paused, and smiled at those eager faces. "You lads are following a great calling. Because you, and you only, will keep open the paths of Empire."

"But I thought that was the job of the fleet, sir?" questioned Geoffrey, and all the boys scowled at him.

"It's both our jobs. The fleet keeps the paths of the seas open, and the Mercantile Marine follows them. We're all members of the Royal Naval Reserve, you know. Subject to his Majesty's call whenever we're needed. And we've had our heroes in battle as well as in peace. The sea rewards you more than anything else; in the joy of your work. In the happiness of bringing your ship safely into harbour, especially when you've fought fog or storm to do it. It's a glorious way to live." His keen eyes stared at Geoffrey critically. "Well, what about the race with Watts? You're the coxswain, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir—I am."
"What do you think of our chances? Shall we win?"

"I don't know how good the Watts crew is, sir, but I know everyone will do their best."

Ned Saunders glanced across at Terry O'Mulvaney. He must have understood the slight nod of the Irish lad. "We'll break our backs, sir," Saunders promised.

Geoffrey thought that this was a sign that the Coventry was over, but when Mr. Cartwright had gone he found out his error. At first he was angry, but after a while he began to think differently. He had been the cause of O'Mulvaney losing his stripes—perhaps Coventry was the right place for him.

That night Bos'n Jelks strolled out into the compound for a quiet smoke, and stopped dead still as he saw a figure by the masthead. He tiptoed nearer, and from the shadows watched Geoffrey Braemer climb alone and unaided up the rigging.

"There's good stuff in that lad if he'll only show it," he muttered. "And I think he may."

The Nocklace

IN the days that followed Geoffrey Braemer wisely avoided trouble with the other boys. Knowing that Albert would get into trouble if seen talking to him he told the small lad to give him a wide berth. He did not use his superior knowledge to make the others look small, and only on the river did he become a different person. Here he made it plain that he was in command, and he expected orders to be obeyed. There was a pleased gleam in Bos'n Jelks' eyes.

At last came the day of the great race, and there was quite a crowd on the towpath. Captain Wilson of the Royal Navy was the starter. Captain Briggs read out the rules of the race.

"Go to your posts," ordered Captain Wilson, and when the coxswain of each boat had reported everything ready he fired the gun as a signal.

"Up oars! One—two—three—four five—lower oars!" commanded Geoffrey. "Lower oars! All together now, lads! One—two—one—two—"

The Watts' boat had the better of the start, and soon had a lead of several lengths. The Russell-Cotes' supporters looked gloomy.

"Give it to me, lads!" Geoffrey cried. "I'm cutting inside of them."

The Watts boat was making rather a wide turn, and that enabled Braemer to go straight for the turning buoy, and it looked as if the two boats might collide.

"Up oars on the starboard!" came Geoffrey's prompt command. "Down oars starboard. All together now, lads!"

It was a clever move, and Geoffrey timed it splendidly. Not only did he not foul the other boat but he slithered round the buoy so that when the two boats headed for the finish he had regained all the lost distance. Terry O'Mulvaney put all he knew into his rowing, and so did the others. Fifty yards from the finish the two boats were level, and then Geoffrey yelled himself hoarse. Slowly the Russell-Cotes' boat forged ahead to win by a length.

"You didn't have to cut inside their boat," lectured Crusty after the race.

"Oh, I know it wasn't compulsory,

sir!" laughed Geoffrey. "But it was fun. Thank you for letting me be coxswain."

That evening Braemer went to the private study of Captain Briggs.

"Good work, Braemer. I'm proud of you."

"Thank you, sir."

"The disapproval of your fellows is hard to bear, Geoffrey," said the wise captain, who knew all that went on. "But I admire you for the way you are standing up to it."

"Do you know why I'm getting the chill, sir?"

"No, and I'd rather not."

"But I must tell you, sir. I should have—a long time ago."

"Very well, but I warn you, Braemer, if you tell anything to your discredit, you're doing it voluntarily. I might have to report you, and that would mean reform school."

"I want to steer the straight course, sir, if you don't mind," answered Geoffrey. "The morning that Terry was caught climbing into the dormitory it wasn't his fault. He went after me because I was running away. And he brought me back."

"I see."

"He sort of felt responsible for me, sir. You'll let him go on the Queen Mary, won't you, sir?"

"I'll reconsider his case, Braemer," promised the captain.

"And please, sir, don't tell any of the fellows how you found out about it. Please don't."

"I'll respect your wishes," agreed the captain, and smiled kindly. "Now return to your quarters."

All the next day Geoffrey expected orders to report to the Administration Building, and when an instructor informed the lads that there was a liberty party that night he was amazed that his liberty had not been curtailed. He would not have gone but for the persuasion of Mrs. Briggs. The hero of the day must go. It would not be good taste if he did not go. All the boys were expected back by six bells.

The party given in their honour was at a big house. A smart maid collected all their coats, and they were shown into the dining-room, where there was a terrific spread on the table. Geoffrey, the last to enter, was shown by the maid into a study, and he got a surprise when a door opened and a woman stood there with open arms.

"Geoffrey!"

The arms of Douis, the companion of those days when he had been Lord Braemer, went round him. He allowed her to kiss him, but his eyes were watchful and worried.

"Oh, I've missed you, Geoffrey!" cried the woman. "But now we're together again, and we'll never be separated. The first thing—we'll get rid of these." She stood back and pointed to his uniform. "We'll get you something more like what you've been used to."

"They're good clothes."

She looked at his hands.

"Callouses!" she exclaimed in horror. "Oh, what have they made you do, Geoffrey?"

"Pull an oar, splice ropes, climb rigging—the things a seaman does."

"Why, it's criminal to treat you like a common seaman!"

"No, it's not!" he said fiercely. "Seaman are responsible for hundreds of thousands of lives to-day."

"Oh, well, let them be. Come and sit down, darling. You're not resentful because we had to lie doggo."

"I waited for a letter—every day—for months."

NEXT WEEK'S THREE COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



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—IN—

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A book publisher is murdered and an innocent man arrested. An investigator and his charming wife both do some deducing and it nearly costs them their lives. A mystery thriller, starring Melvyn Douglas and Florence Rice

"STOLEN HEAVEN"

Two young people use their theatrical work as a blind for jewel thieving and, pursued by the police, they find a hide-out in a forest with a broken-down concert pianist. A drama of crooks' regeneration, starring Gene Raymond and Olympe Bradna

"We were afraid they'd open your letters. And that insurance detective was so close behind us. It made me positively ill to think of you in a horrid place like that school."

"They treated me very kindly."

"I'm glad they did. At any rate it's over now." She drew him close to her. "We've got a sale for the necklace, and you'll enjoy your share."

"I don't want any share," Geoffrey told her. "I wish I've never had anything to do with it."

Shortly afterwards Doris went up to the benevolent gentleman who was the host. It was Jim in another of his disguises. She indicated that she wished to speak with him.

"So he won't join up with us, huh?" Jim remarked after a while.

"No, he was very sweet about it, but it seems, Jim, he's been saved."

"Saved? From what?"

"From evil ways, I think they call it," Doris said with grim humour. "He wants nothing to do with us."

"He's sulking because we ran off without him."

"No, he's really changed. But I don't think we have anything to fear from Geoffrey." Her mouth twisted.

"The little fool's really proud of becoming a common seaman and wearing those clothes. He says he's going to join the crew of the Queen Mary."

"The crew of the Queen Mary?" demanded Jim. "When?"

"He hopes on the next voyage."

"Well, if he can sail on the Queen Mary, so can we. Fetch me his coat."

"What are you going to do, Jim?"

Jim showed the necklace.

"If he won't carry this to his own advantage, he will to ours." He laughed. "Get me his coat quickly and fetch your sewing-basket."

A fortnight later there was a parade of the whole nautical school for the commandant to read out the names of the boys selected.

"As I read the names, the five boys will come forward," Captain Briggs announced, and turned to a paper. "Philip Grasham." A tall boy stepped forward. "Edward Saunders." There came a faint murmur of approval, which died as Captain Briggs frowned his disapproval. "Roger Roantree." The name made O'Mulvaney blink—he had been senior to Roantree not so long ago. "Terry O'Mulvaney!" He had to have a dig in the ribs from a comrade before he realised it was his name. He staggered forward, his mouth agape. Captain Briggs looked down to hide his smiles. He folded the paper and looked at the boys, because the next name was going to be a shock for all of them.

"Geoffrey Braemer." When the rustle of excitement had died down. "I want to extend my sincere congratulations to the boys chosen, and to remind the rest of the school that their chances will come later. Parade, dis-miss!"

Captain Briggs was walking off the parade ground when Geoffrey approached him.

"I can't believe I'm really going, sir," Geoffrey blurted out.

"Well, you are, my lad."

"But the black marks for running away—aren't I going to reform school?"

"Reform school is for boys that need reforming, Geoffrey."

Geoffrey went to the play-room treading on air. The other boys glanced covertly at him. They did not know quite what to do with this Coventry boy who had won the Cartwright Cup and now had been chosen for the Queen Mary. Terry was there, and strutting

October 1st, 1938.

about because he had got his cherished chevrons back. Impulsively Geoffrey went up to the Irish lad.

"We're going to be shipmates, after all," spoke O'Mulvaney.

"I hope you won't hold it too much against me."

O'Mulvaney stuck out his hand.

"Will you put it there?" he said, for all to hear. There was a cheer as the two gripped hands.

The Queen Mary

TWO days later when Captain Briggs, his wife and Bos'n Jelks were going over the kit of the five boys appointed to the Queen Mary it was the nimble fingers of Mrs. Briggs who felt the lump in Braemer's coat. Geoffrey couldn't explain it, and Mrs. Briggs suggested that it was marbles or something that had worked through a hole in a pocket into the lining. She would soon put that right and got her work-basket. What a gasp went up when the diamond necklace was revealed.

"Where did you get this?" demanded Captain Briggs, and Geoffrey could not explain.

When the motor-bus departed twenty minutes later it contained four gloomy boys. Geoffrey had been detained, and was at that moment being questioned by the captain.

"You say you don't know how it got there. All you can tell me is that you think it is the necklace that was stolen from Moreotts. That means you have had contact with your former associates. Is that so?"

"I can't say, sir!" cried the unhappy Geoffrey.

"You've told us you never felt the necklace in your coat before the night of the party, so that it is easy to deduce where you obtained the necklace. Geoffrey, you remember when you ran away?"

"Yes, sir."

"And for such a transgression I could have returned you to the Court for probable sentence to a reformatory. You knew that, and yet you confessed. Why?" There was a pause. "Perhaps I can help you with an answer. Out of loyalty, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir, it was."

"Loyalty to Russell-Cotes?" questioned the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"Loyalty is a splendid quality, and I admire you for yours. But you have now to choose between two loyalties. Loyalty to the people who led you on the wrong path, or to Russell-Cotes. Which loyalty do you choose?"

"To Russell-Cotes, sir."

"That's the ticket," approved Jelks. "I knew you wouldn't let us down."

"Tell me." The captain looked intently at Geoffrey. "Who was the lady who entertained the boat crew on the night of the race?"

Geoffrey told them the whole story of that evening. How they had wanted him to go back with them and that he had refused. He had told them that he was finished with that sort of life. But why they had hidden the necklace in his coat he could not explain.

Captain Briggs and Crusty Jelks took a car and went down to the house, and were not surprised to find that Doris Claudon and Jim Hampstead had departed. Captain Briggs was gloomy. Naturally, he had handed over the necklace, and he wondered what the Court would do about Geoffrey Braemer. They might think the hoy was bluffing

and had been going to smuggle the necklace out of the country.

It was midday, and the Queen Mary was sailing with the afternoon tide. The four boys were on board, and First Officer Cartwright had detailed them to their duties. Bos'n Jelks had come to see them off, and naturally he told the boys all about Geoffrey. Braemer had been detained by the authorities.

A bos'n appeared and detailed Saunders to roll some canvas on one of the passenger decks.

"Why, it's one of those nice boys from Russell-Cotes."

Ned Saunders just gaped at Doris Claudon and Jim Hampstead as if he were seeing things.

"You are from Russell-Cotes, aren't you?" demanded Hampstead.

"I'm from Russell-Cotes right enough," Saunders found his voice.

"How is that nice boy who was coxswain of the boat?" casually inquired the crook. "He hoped to make the Queen Mary. I imagine that as you're here, so is he. A nice lad. Ask him to come and see us."

"You know he can't come to see you!" shouted Saunders. "He's been sent to a reformatory, and it's all your fault." He dropped the canvas and bolted down a corridor.

Hampstead knew that it was no good sailing without the necklace, and told Doris they must get off the Queen Mary at once. Moreover, this Russell-Cotes boy might make trouble. He guessed rightly. Ned rushed up to Bos'n Jelks and gasped out who he had seen on B deck.

The two passengers were about to go down a gangway when Crusty and the four boys showed up.

"Just a minute, Mr. Hampstead." Crusty barred the way. "I arrest you in the name of the law."

Hampstead sprang forward, pushed the bos'n violently and charged down the gangway. It was Terry O'Mulvaney who ran after him and hurled himself through the air in a flying tackle.

"What's the meaning of this? Assaulting a passenger?" cried Cartwright in amazement.

"I charge them with the theft of some jewellery," explained Jelks. "They're wanted by Scotland Yard."

"Quite correct," said another voice, and Inspector Scott stepped forward. "I had an idea that if the boy's coat was sailing these two would follow the cargo."

Cartwright at once got through to London, and he managed to get in touch with a power at the Admiralty. As a result Captain Briggs was informed that if Geoffrey Braemer could get to Southampton in time he could sail on the Queen Mary. A special plane was chartered, and Braemer got aboard as the last gangplank was being removed. "Seaman Braemer, reporting aboard for duty, sir!" gasped Geoffrey.

"Join the deck, Braemer." Cartwright gave him an approving and friendly grin. "And good luck to you!"

Geoffrey fairly tore up to the deck, and there were his four comrades hauling in a hawser. How they cheered him!

"Glad to see you aboard!" cried Terry, and he meant it. "Lend us a hand, lad. Heave-ho, me hearties!"

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd., starring Freddie Bartholomew as Geoffrey Braemer, and Mickey Rooney as Terry O'Mulvaney.)

The famous Konjer diamonds are stolen and Police-Commissioner Theron is sure that it is the work of 'The Gentleman,' a notorious and mysterious crook. He narrows the search down to two people, invites both to his home for the week-end, and lays a trap to catch the crook—with startling results. Starring Preston Foster and Whitney Bourne

"DOUBLE DANGER"



The Konjer Diamonds

ONE thing Police Commissioner Theron wanted to do before retiring to his rose garden—catch the gay, impudent jewel thief who styled himself the Gentleman. He believed the means was within his grasp as he admired the sparkling Konjer diamonds which had just been handed to him by Gordon Ainsley, most famous of jewellers.

"Our friend the Gentleman won't be able to resist stealing them—or, rather, their duplicates, and when he does his brilliant career will be over."

Bald-headed Ainsley snorted. "You have set enough traps, Commissioner, to retire every jewel thief in America, but he's still as free as air."

"Well, he won't get away this time," said Theron grimly. He took a white case which had just been brought in by an assistant, and gasped slightly as he examined the contents. "Why, that's unbelievable! I can't tell them apart!"

Ainsley nodded, rubbing his hands. "They're perfect. If it weren't that the real ones are in the black case, I couldn't tell them apart myself at first glance."

Theron put down the white case. "Well, I must be going. You know your part?"

"Perfectly. But, tell me, why are you so sure the Gentleman will be at your home?"

"Because," said Theron softly, "I'm going to invite him for the week-end."

"You know who he is?"

"Well, not exactly. But I've narrowed my suspects down to two, and they'll both be there."

"Then why don't you arrest them?"

"Because I haven't any evidence. But I will have before the week-end is over."

"David," said Ainsley earnestly, "you've just got to catch him this time. He has cost me a fortune, and it's getting so that every time I receive a new piece of jewellery, I might just as well have it delivered straight to him and save myself a lot of nervous indigestion and insomnia!"

Theron turned at the door. "He hasn't made my life very pleasant, either. But don't worry. The Gentleman is going out of circulation."

Ainsley was informed by an assistant that Mr. Jerome Cortland's secretary was on the telephone. He immediately became the salesman. Cortland was a rich and valuable customer.

"Hallo, Mr. Ainsley," said a girl's voice. "Mr. Cortland would like you to send over your finest diamonds. He wants to choose a wedding present for his daughter."

"It'll be a pleasure," crowed Ainsley. "I'll see to it right away." He called an assistant and gave him the Konjer diamonds. "Lawley, see that these are delivered to Mr. Jerome Cortland's home, and take the usual precautions."

The smartly uniformed messenger in the imposing delivery van with the Ainsley arms on its panels insisted on being taken direct to Mrs. Cortland, so that he could get a responsible signature for the valuable stones. She was sharp with the butler for disturbing her.

"Jewels?" she snapped. "They must be for Miss Iris," sug-

gested the maid who had been reading to her.

"Madam," said the messenger, "may I suggest you keep these in a safe place? They're the Konjer diamonds."

"Konjer diamonds?" said Mrs. Cortland without interest. "What a horrid name! Oh, just put them anywhere, Agnes."

She waved the man away and ordered the girl to continue reading. Outside, the departure of the Ainsley van was the signal for some curious action. A girl in a saloon drove slowly up to the drive, signing to a pale-faced man in uniform who came along in a van resembling Ainsley's. He got out and marched up to the Cortland home while the girl waited, and once more the butler interrupted Mrs. Cortland.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Cortland. It seems there was a mistake. A Mr. Courtney ordered the jewels, not Mr. Cortland. They've sent another man to pick them up."

"Well, give them to him! I don't like the name, anyway!"

Nonehalantly, Taylor, the fake messenger, walked down the drive to the waiting car. Carolyn Morgan hid her excitement behind a calm expression as he swiftly changed his jacket behind the delivery van, donning an ordinary chauffeur's uniform. Things seemed to be going well, but, unawares, they were being watched by two men in a black saloon parked in a side street.

Robert Crane, in lounge suit and soft hat, said dryly to the man in a policeman's uniform nervously tapping the wheel beside him:

"Relax, Gilbooley."

"Sure, and I'll do me best, sor."

said the other man in an Irish accent too good to be true. "But I'm afraid me nerves won't permit it. You see, it is me first case."

When the girl drove away, with Taylor at the wheel, the black saloon followed, and it was right behind when the crook drew up outside a block of flats. Not until they were inside, and the girl was taking off her coat, was a word spoken.

"Well, everything went off just as you said it would," grunted Taylor, handing her the jewel-case.

"You did a good job," she said calmly. "You ought to make a pretty penny out of this."

"About five grand," Taylor grinned. "Not bad for just driving a car and carrying out your instructions. You know, I never thought I'd like working for a woman, but I've got to hand it to you. Getting in with that Society crowd was a great idea!"

Carolyn's admirable eyes were studying the jewels when a tap sounded on the door. They both turned, startled.

"Don't be so jittery," she said. "It's probably the maid." Calmly she sat on the sofa while Taylor opened the door, and grated as Robert Crane and the policeman burst in: "What's the big idea?"

"Search him, Gilhooley!" snapped the tall, blue-eyed man in the lounge suit.

"What d'you mean by this?" said Carolyn sharply.

"It's a good act, sister," he grinned. "But it won't work. Where are they?"

"I don't know what you mean, and if you don't get out of here immediately I'll report you both!"

Though he thought she looked very beautiful in her anger, he snapped:

"You'll have a chance to tell the chief about it personally. You're under arrest!"

"You're making a mistake!" "You made one," he drawled. "We followed your boy friend from the Cortland home. Come on!"

She thought swiftly.

"Could I get my hat?" "He shrugged. She bent and picked up her bag, slipping the case into it while Crane strolled to Gilhooley and the sullen chauffeur.

"Find anything, Gilhooley?" "Just a gun, sor." Then Crane whirled suddenly and went to Carolyn.

"I thought you'd lead us to them. It's so nice of you to save us the trouble of a search. Come, come!"

Sulkily she handed him the case. "You're very welcome. I hope all your children are ugly and flat-footed policemen!"

"And I hope all yours are as beautiful as you are," he said gallantly, adding, when she smiled with pleasure:

"But not as dumb." He walked to the door. "Keep your eyes on them, Gilhooley. I'll see if the wagon has arrived."

Gilhooley made his prisoners sit on the sofa, politely handing the girl a case when she searched for a cigarette. Her eyebrows rose.

"You're pretty polite for a cop!" "Thank you, miss," he smiled. "I'm trying to be a credit to the Force. I only just joined to-day."

Taylor scowled.

"Well, you don't have to make a speech about it."

"Now, if it's trouble you're wanting—" began Gilhooley grimly, and was interrupted by the phone. "All right, I'll see to it." He went into the next room. "Hallo! No, this is not the Elite Café. This number is Crestwood 9098. Don't I talk English? October 1st, 1938.

Don't you call me a foreigner! I was born in County Clare!" Slyly he turned and glanced into the other room, adding in a different voice. "They've gone, sir."

"All right," said Cranc, down in the hallway. "Come on down." Chuckling over the success of their ruse, Crane and his valet met in the black saloon outside. They saw Carolyn and Taylor come running down a side alley and hail a taxi. "Well, if it isn't our old friend," Cranc grinned. "Drive close to them, Fentriss!"

The fake policeman with the fake name and the faked Irish accent accelerated. The black saloon swept up as the taxi moved away. Leaning out, Crane called cheerily to the astounded occupants:

"Thanks for the Christmas present!" Taylor's eyes bulged as the saloon tore away and disappeared round a corner.

"Imagine us falling for a trick like that!"

Angrily the girl slumped back in the seat.

"We should have known when Gilhooley was so polite!"

"Well, what do we do now?" he snarled.

"Nothing," she said icily. "Just hope we meet some time."

Neither realised at that moment that they had had the pleasure of meeting the Gentleman.

Into the Trap

CORDON AINSLEY raged up and down his office.

"Well, of all the stupid idiots!"

"Now, now, you don't have to rub it in," protested Theron. "I'm no crystal-gazer."

"No, no, no!" snapped Ainsley. "I mean my employes and the Cortlands!"

"Well, don't be too hard on them. The Gentleman was very clever, as usual."

Ainsley laughed bitterly.

"So the Gentleman won't bother us any more, eh? You were going to put him out of circulation, huh? You might just as well retire to your rose garden now! We'll never recover those diamonds!"

"I'm sure you'll have them back soon. We're going ahead with our plans."

"Aren't you afraid he'll back a van up to your house and steal all the furniture?"

Theron smiled aside the sarcasm.

"He'll be too busy opening my safe."

"He'll never do it, now that he has the diamonds!"

"I have an idea he will," said Theron, picking up his hat. "There is no reason for him to leave. He knows he left no evidence, and I know he'll be there."

"If he is," snapped Ainsley, "it will be because he had a mental relapse!"

"He'll be there," said Theron confidently. "There's just two things I want you to do. See to it that your employes keep quiet about the robbery, and don't inform the newspapers."

"Very well," said Ainsley testily. "Very well, very well."

That evening Robert Crane was sitting at a typewriter in his flat, just beginning another story. Bob Crane's stories featuring the Gentleman had made him a popular writer, and given the thief something of a Robin Hood quality. Nobody knew that Crane was really the crook he wrote about. Commissioner Theron only suspected it, and not for the first time he wondered whether he was wrong when his ring

on the bell was answered by the handsome, powerfully built writer.

"Glad you dropped in," smiled Bob Crane. "I was just thinking I'd have to ask you to come over."

"Want the old master to help you out again?" asked the Commissioner, accepting a drink.

"I certainly would appreciate it. I don't seem able to get started on my new novel."

Theron glanced at the bookcase.

"What, after scribbling all these? 'The Gentleman,' 'The Gentleman at Large,' 'The Adventures of the Gentleman'—I should think you could write them in your sleep!"

"My publisher often infers that I do," Bob grinned. "But, honestly, I'm stuck. You know, they're all based on robberies that you've told me about, and I was hoping—"

"Well, I'm sorry I haven't got a new story for you. Your old friend, the Gentleman, seems to be letting you down."

"If he doesn't get busy pretty soon," sighed Bob, "I'll have to find a new super-cracksman."

"Well, you'll never find as good a subject. He's the last of a vanishing race."

Bob looked sharply at the Commissioner.

"You sound almost sorry!"

Theron shrugged.

"Well, I shouldn't. For the last five years he's been a headache to me. But if I ever get my hands on him, I'll see that he's put away for good!" Bob's eyebrows lifted as he drank. He wondered whether his visitor was fencing, as he was. Theron shook his thoughts from him. "By the way, we're expecting you over the week-end. Now, now, I won't take no for an answer. Babs is back from school, and she's just crazy to see you again."

The writer accepted smilingly, and Theron left. Swiftly Bob flung the door of his bed-room open. The room was in darkness. He clicked on the light as a dim figure ducked behind a chair. The masked man jumped as Bob walked over and said sternly:

"Fentriss, I'm ashamed of you! You've bungled again!"

Crestfallen, Fentriss pulled off his mask.

"What errors did I commit this time, sir?"

Bob filled his pipe.

"When you opened the door, the draught rustled my papers."

The valet sighed.

"I'm afraid I'll never make an adequate cracksman, sir, even with your coaching."

"Come, come, Fentriss! You will, if you practise every chance you get."

"I'm rather tired of trying to open your safe, sir. And it will be quite difficult to practise on others, without the danger of landing in—er—clink, sir."

Bob grinned.

"Begins to look like your career has ended before it got started, doesn't it? Cheer up, you're still a good valet!"

Fentriss' sad features relaxed.

"Thank you, sir. I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with Commissioner Theron, sir. Are we really going to spend the week-end with him, sir?" Bob nodded. "Has it occurred to you, sir, that we might be emulating the rodent going after the cheese?"

"A trap?"

"Exactly, sir. Commissioner Theron is no dummy, if I may say so, and I believe he suspects that you are the Gentleman."

"You think so?"

"Yes, sir. Hadn't I better ring your excuses, sir?"

"No, no," chuckled Bob Crane. "In the words of Confucius, the safest place for a mouse is in the bed of the man who builds mouse-traps."

So the Gentleman went to the house of the man who was trying to trap him. Theron's daughter, Babs, a pretty girl still in her teens, gave him a slight shock when he met her.

"Hallo," he cried, "is this the little freckle-faced roughneck I saw four years ago? She's lovely!"

"I think you're wonderful," cried Babs excitedly. "I've read all your books. All the girls at Miss Eaton's are simply wild about the Gentleman, and when I told them that I knew him—"

Theron glanced sharply at Bob when he started.

"Hub?"

"I mean the author," said Babs. Relieved, Bob was introduced to Roy West, a tall, curly headed youth who obviously had eyes only for Babs, and couldn't restrain his jealousy at her interest in Bob.

"Isn't he simply divine?" she sighed as they stood watching Bob go up to his room.

Roy scowled.

"He looks like a turnip to me."

Upstairs Theron watched his guest dressing for dinner.

"I can give you a start for your novel now, Bob. The Gentleman got the Konjer diamonds."

Bob refused to be rattled. He turned to his quaking valet.

"Fentriss, let's have my waistcoat." To Theron: "I'm glad he did. Only for the benefit of my novel, of course!"

"You'll have to figure on giving him a partner now," drawled Theron. "A woman."

"A woman? I thought you said he worked alone."

Theron smiled.

"Well, it seems he didn't this time."

"Well, if what you say is true," Bob

grunted, "he's made his first mistake."

"Bob, have you ever thought," said Theron, "that the Gentleman might not be a gentleman?"

"What kind of pun is that?" grinned Bob.

"No pun intended. It just occurred to me that the Gentleman might be a woman."

"Well, it sounds pretty wild," the Gentleman drawled.

"Let's have a handkerchief, Fentriss."

Baffled, Theron stared at Fentriss as he suddenly sat down on the bed, as white as one of its sheets.

"What's the matter?"

Bob went to his man.

"What's happened, Fentriss?"

"Nothing, sir," Fentriss gulped. "Just a dizzy spell, sir."

"Well, don't sit there," rapped Theron. "Come over by the window."

Wildly Fentriss glanced around

"No, thank you, sir. I'd rather sit here if you don't mind." Crane rescued him, putting off Theron, who went downstairs, rather puzzled. Trembling, Fentriss rose and pointed down to the jewel-case which had fallen out when he went for the handkerchief.

"Oh, Fentriss, I'm ashamed of you! After all I've taught you!"

"I'm sorry, sir. It won't happen again, sir."

The Gentleman laughed.

"Well, it had better not, or we'll be crossing the days out on a calendar. Put them in a safe place."

Downstairs, it was Bob, not his valet, who got a shock. Theron led him to a girl who was sitting on the sofa.

"Bob, I want you to meet a very charming young lady—Carolyn, this is Bob Crane."

Electric tension seemed to pass between the pair, for Carolyn was the girl from whom the Gentleman had bluffed the Konjer diamonds.

The Police Chief's Plot

BOB was the first to recover, greeting Carolyn easily. Theron, he learned, had met her at a charity bazaar, and he wondered grimly whether the Police Commissioner knew he was entertaining a female counterpart of the Gentleman. It was lucky the crackman was able to assume a poker face. During dinner, the girl, still rankling after her defeat over the Konjer diamonds, steered the conversation into uncomfortable channels when she learned he was famous for his stories about the Gentleman.

"Oh, Mr. Crane," she said sweetly, "wherever do you get the material for your stories?"

"From the Commissioner," he said coolly. "He tells me about people who are foolish enough to go about picking up things that don't belong to them."

His thrust got home. She reddened slightly.

"Oh, I'm disappointed. I thought you might get them from the Gentleman himself."

Bob felt everybody's eyes on him. Was there a glint of mockery in those of Theron?

"It would be great publicity for my books," he said easily, and joined heartily in the toast that Babs called for the Gentleman.

Fentriss was having his uncomfortable moments, too. The butler was showing Crane's valet his room in the servant's quarters when Taylor, still in chauffeur's uniform, came along and stopped dead at sight of him.

"Oh, Taylor, this is Fentriss."

Taylor grinned nastily.

"When you played your little joke on us, your name was Gilhooley."

"You must have met my twin brother," said Fentriss sweetly. "He's a policeman."

"An Irishman and an Englishman twins!"

Fentriss smiled.

"It's true, though. My mother married twice."

"You and your brother ought to join a sideshow," snarled Taylor, and disappeared into his room.

"Quite an unpleasant person," said Theron's butler distastefully.

"You should have said worm," muttered Fentriss.

Bob was saved awkward questions during the after-dinner chat by a startling development. There sounded outside the high-pitched scream of brakes, followed by a dull crash, then silence. Roy ran to the window.

"Looks like a car smashed against a tree!"

"We'll go out and see," snapped Theron. "Come on, Bob!"

Outside in the darkness Gordon Ainsley hurried towards his car, which was



"I thought you'd lead us to them," said Crane. "It's so nice of you to save us the trouble of a search."

tilted against a tree, as his chauffeur scrambled out. "Good work, Charles!"

Charles disappeared in the darkness, while the jeweller climbed into the driving seat, placed a white jewel-case beside him and slumped back with closed eyes. Thus Theron and his two guests found him.

"It looks like he's badly hurt!" gasped Roy.

"Yeh, Bob, give me a hand here. We've got to get him into the house and get a doctor."

Finding the white case, Bob handed it to Theron.

"You'd better take care of this, David."

Silently the party stood round a divan while Mrs. Theron held a bottle of smelling salts under the nose of the supposedly unconscious man. Coughing, Ainsley opened his eyes, and Bob Crane started.

"What happened?" he moaned. "What happened?"

"Your car went off the road," said Theron quickly.

Frantically Ainsley sat up and felt through his pockets.

"My case, my case, where is it?" Silently the Commissioner handed it to him and he leaned back with a sigh of relief, though his face was twisted in a well-assumed expression of pain. "There seems to be something wrong with my leg."

"Yes, yes," said Theron soothingly. "We've sent for the doctor."

"My name is Robertson," said Gordon Ainsley without a quiver. "Henry Robertson."

"Of the Central Bank?" asked Theron, equally stolid.

"Yes," panted Ainsley. "I'm terribly sorry to have made a nuisance of myself about these! They're very valuable. You see, I bought them as a surprise for my wife. They're the Konjer diamonds."

Carolyn Morgan and Bob Crane stared unbelievably at the little baldheaded man. Theron exclaimed:

"The Konjer diamonds? But they can't be! The Konjer diamonds were stolen from the Cortland home!"

"Oh, no," said Ainsley decisively. "There's some mistake. Why, it's preposterous! Mr. Ainsley himself delivered them to my office at six o'clock this evening. Here, see for yourself!"

"Well, then," snarled Theron, gazing at the marvellous imitations of the Konjer diamonds, "what was stolen?"

"I wish I could answer that for you, Commissioner."

The Gentleman drawled calmly: "Mr. Ainsley must have had a duplicate set that he used for exhibiting."

"You may be right, Bob," muttered Theron angrily, striding to the 'phone, his face dark as thunderclouds. "He must have been out of his mind, withholding it from me." He dialed a number, and only he heard the voice of an officer in the Seventeenth Street police station. "Hallo, Mr. Ainsley," he snapped for the edification of his hearers. "This is Commissioner Theron. I've just found out that those diamonds you reported stolen were duplicates. Why didn't you tell me about it?"

O'Reilly the cop gaped to a pal: "The chief's gone batty!"

Theron went on snappishly:

"Oh, you thought that you'd recover them sooner if I thought they were the real ones? Well, of all the stupid, crazy dunderheads I've done business with, you're the worst, Ainsley!" He rang off, leaving a very puzzled policeman scratching his head, and turned to his party, none of whom saw the grin on October 1st, 1939.

Ainsley's face. "Ainsley is a stupid man!"

"He isn't dumb," muttered "Henry Robertson." "He probably figured he was smarter than the police. It's silly, of course, Commissioner."

"That is silly, all right," Theron hit back, "sending out those diamonds without checking that 'phone call! Suppose they'd been the real ones?"

Carolyn, believing all this by-play, grinned triumphantly at the man who had taken from her what she thought were the fake jewels. But Bob Crane was suspicious. Theron's plot didn't work so well with him. When Dr. Hillard arrived, the Gentleman went upstairs and caught Fentriss peering at the diamonds.

"Put them away, Fentriss!" The valet jumped.

"As a matter of fact, I was looking to see if—"

"Yes, I know," said Bob, "but don't worry. They are the real diamonds all right. Theron and Robertson are just trying to put something over on us. Did you notice how he choked the minute they put the smelling salts under his nose?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Well, unconscious people don't do that. They come out of it gradually."

Fentriss gulped.

"Yes, sir, but don't you think we had better take it on the lam, sir?"

"A good general never retreats under fire, Fentriss."

"No, sir, but supposing Commissioner Theron were to see these?"

The Gentleman grinned.

"That's the last thing he'll think of—that we brought them with us!" "I hope you're right, sir. But I wonder what they're up to?"

"We'll know before the week-end is over. And in the meantime, if you have any idea about practising on Mr. Theron's safe, forget it!"

Fentriss laughed guiltily.

"Yes, sir. I must admit, sir, that I was looking forward to it—"

He stopped suddenly, his laugh dying away as his chief's frown froze him. Gordon Ainsley, alone with Theron and the doctor in a bed-room, was in a towering rage. "First you talked me into wrecking my ear," he snarled. "Then your wife almost choked me to death with smelling salts, and now you truss me up like a mummy! It's insane, ridiculous—ouch! Stop it, stop it, you're pulling my leg off!"

Theron hid a smile. Gordon Ainsley certainly looked a comical sight, his little body stretched on a huge bed, his right leg braced up in a huge case of plaster. He tried to quieten the jeweller.

"But we've got to make it real."

"It feels real to me! I won't go through with it. Get me out of this!"

"Now, now! You want to get your diamonds back, don't you?"

"Don't be absurd," grunted Ainsley. "Of course I do!"

"All right, then, you've got to do as I say. The Gentleman is sure to check up on you, and we've got to make him believe that this accident was real."

"I think he'll live, Commissioner," the doctor grinned.

"Thanks for helping us out, doctor."

"Oh, glad to do it. I hope you catch him."

Ainsley snorted. "If he doesn't, he'll be sorry he talked me into this crazy scheme. I'll give him a dose of his own medicine. I'll have him put in a strait-jacket. I'll swear out an insanity warrant!"

He lay back, fuming, as Theron, laughing heartlessly, went downstairs

and told his guests the so-called banker was suffering from a broken leg. Everybody watched him as he put the case of imitation diamonds into a wall-safe. Bob Crane, standing near the doorway, heard a cool voice beside him.

"Interested in safes, Mr. Crane?"

"Miss Morgan," he retorted mockingly, "with your imagination, you should be a novelist." The Gentleman was feeling very amused. Theron's action in putting the diamonds away before his guests seemed very obvious. There was no doubt in the cracksman's mind now that they were duplicates, and that Theron thought he had been fooled into attempting to steal them.

The Safe Breakers

CAROLYN, meeting Taylor in the garden, found him in a bad temper. "Say," he snarled,

"you're not falling for him, are you?"

"Don't be silly! I have no more use for him than you have."

"Well, if you really feel that way," suggested Taylor, "how about beating him to the safe?"

"You'll only be wasting your time," a cool voice interposed, and they swung round to find Crane behind them.

"If you don't mind your own business," snarled Taylor, "your friend will be saying what a nice fellow you were!"

"I'm only trying to help," said the Gentleman lightly. "Those diamonds in Theron's safe are the duplicates."

"Yes, we know all about that," snapped Taylor. "Now tell us the one about the three bears."

Bob shrugged.

"Carolyn, I have the real diamonds. Don't go near the safe. It's a trap."

"Why this sudden interest in my welfare, Mr. Crane?"

"It isn't sudden. It dates way back to yesterday."

"I'd like to believe you," she said dryly, "but I did yesterday—and look what happened to me!"

"Carolyn, I assure you—" The Gentleman was interrupted by the high-pitched voice of Babs, who had dropped a squabble with Roy to come and seek him.

Groaning, Bob allowed the girl to drag him away as Carolyn joined Taylor and said coolly:

"What was that you were saying about the safe?"

"You know," he muttered uneasily, "I've been thinking it over. Maybe we'd better forget about it. It's too risky."

"Why the sudden change of mind?"

"Well, after all, a cop's house is no place to go fooling around with a safe."

"You never let the cops bother you before."

"Well, I never mixed with them socially, either. It makes me nervous."

"Those diamonds might soothe your nerves," said Carolyn.

"Listen," he urged. "We've been getting away with it for a long time now. There's no sense in pressing our luck."

She looked at him queerly in the moonlight.

"You wouldn't by any chance be thinking of getting those diamonds yourself and leaving me out in the cold?"

"Now, that's a fine thing to say," he grumbled. "If I'd wanted to double-cross you, I could have done it long ago."

"Sorry, Taylor. We'll play the game your way. We'll forget about the safe."

Taylor grinned.

(Continued on page 27)

The stirring drama of four boys and a girl who were brought up in the toughest district of New York and how Fate dealt with them when they grew up. Starring Victor McLaglen, William Gargan and Paul Kelly

The DEVIL'S PARTY



Death Avenue Cowboys

A SMALL girl came creeping towards the back entrance of a warehouse in a side street off Eleventh Avenue in New York City. It was a hot summer's night and the street was dusky quiet; no one was about as she moved, with infinite caution, into a side alley that led to the coal chute of the store. Here she felt along the iron shielding until she found what she sought—a loose nut in the bolted iron sheets.

She twiddled this nut knowingly, loosening the catch of the chute until she was able to pull the chute flap open. Then, heedless of coal dust and dirt, she sat herself squarely into the chute and slid down it into the cellar below.

A pull at a hanging chain and the flap closed. She now moved stealthily through the darkness to a shelf in the cellar, found a box of matches and lighted the stump of a candle on the shelf. She crossed the cellar to some boxes and lighted a second candle stuck upon them in its own congealed grease.

Sounds from above warned her to run back to the shelf and crouch down behind some piled up empty crates.

The chute opened and, one by one, a party of boys came sliding down. First, there was a tall boy with a shock of unkempt hair; then two boys of about nine or ten, evidently brothers by their fair curls. Then a sturdy little fellow who sported a cap. He stared at the lighted candles as he muttered:

"Someone's muscling in on our territory!"

One of the two brothers, the shorter one, offered:

"Maybe it's that Tenth Avenue gang?"

The tall boy spoke fiercely:

"Come on—we can take 'em!" They stood still, listening. A faint tell-tale sound was heard and the tall boy darted into the hiding-place behind the crates where the small girl was calmly adding her name to a list scratched on a rough piece of hanging wood.

On the board was already lettered: "Death Avenue Cowboys. Mike O'Mara, Jerry Donovan, Joe O'Mara, Marty Malone." The small girl was scratching in a last name with the aid of a rusty nail: "Helen McCoy."

She turned to give them defiant looks. "I'm here, see? And I'm in the gang. It says so right on this board!"

Mike O'Mara, the elder brother, called briefly:

"Scram!" To which the girl answered with spirit:

"Nix! I'm staying!"

"Listen, McCoy," put in Joe O'Mara, coming to her. "Dames aren't allowed."

Jerry Donovan scratched his head under his cap.

"This place is for men, Helen," he argued. "I've told you this before."

Marty Malone, tall and saturnine, now gave his vote. "This ain't a Ladies' Aide Society. Hlop it!"

They hustled her up the chute and shot her out ruthlessly.

"Now let's get down to business," said Marty. "Here's the set-up—there's a big warehouse on Tenth where a consignment of fruit has just come in. Bananas and apples is good for us—to say nothing of oranges and grapefruit. How about it?"

The others held up their right hands, thumb and forefinger touching and making a little circle. It was their secret "okay" sign. The candles were put out and the four conspirators left

the cellar in sinister silence. They went separately to the rendezvous, meeting there as if casually when they saw that the hands had not yet left work.

At last, lights were extinguished and the workmen came out. The boys scattered into corners, shadows in the night. The warehouse yard doors were closed and the place became desolate and dark, save for the glimmer of a solitary street lamp. Marty Malone came out of hiding and shinned up the fence and over it.

Presently the yard doors were opened a very little. The other boys appeared and slid in, one after the other. A policeman, coming down the street, increased his stride; but when he reached the doors, they were firmly closed against him.

He rapped on them, and, after a bit, the night watchman came out grumbly. He shook his head.

"Boys in here? Why, we only jest closed up. There can't be any one. Come on in, if you like."

Stealthily creeping between alleys of piled sweet heavy smelling crates, Marty led the gang to where he guessed they might work in safety. They found the crates difficult to open. A small voice sounded through the gloom:

"I got a screwdriver."

Marty turned. He spoke disgustedly:

"So it's you again, huh? How did you get in?"

"I sneaked in afore they closed and hid up," whispered the girl McCoy. "I heard all about your plan and I'll sure squeal if you don't let me in."

Marty's quick ears heard sounds of approach

"Gimme that screwdriver! Scatter, boys—here's a cop. Hear his flat feet?"

The three other boys fled into the

darkness, and, finding retreat cut off for the moment, crouched down behind some full sacks. The policeman, after a few minutes' search, came quietly upon them; but Donovan sensed him and gave the alarm. They shot out like three bats and, although the cop grabbed at them, they managed to make the fence and swarm over it.

The policeman, baffled, ran into the depths of the warehouse. A smell of burning had come to him. Marty Malone had accidentally fired some straw whilst lighting his stump of candle. The straw blazed up and the policeman's whistle shrilled and shrilled again as it echoed through the big inflammable place.

The next ten minutes seemed nightmare. The store was well on fire when the brigade got to it, but luckily the firemen were able to overcome and subdue the flames. There was no chance for Marty and the small girl to get out and mix with the crowd which had sprung up like magic. They ran deeper still into the recesses of the store and hid, very frightened, Helen's hand on Malone's shoulder.

The policeman came in search of them; he knew that four boys had gone in and that three only had escaped. There was still one to be found—so when the fire had been got under, he marched along in purposeful search.

"Ringleader," he told the watchman. "I know him—had me eye on him for some time. Tall for his age—regular young scallywag."

Marty whispered to Helen: "I'll run for it and he'll come after me. Then you slide out."

"Okay, Marty," she whispered. The plan succeeded, and Marty Malone was the only one of the "Death Avenue Cowboys" captured. He was brought into court next morning, and he steadfastly refused to admit that he had had anyone with him. Threats and pleadings had no effect—he persisted in his story that he alone had entered the store and had set fire to it.

He was sent to a reformatory until sixteen.

Annual Round-up

TWENTY years later, at the fashionable "Cigarette Club," a dinner and dance hall off Broadway, a table was being finally decorated in a private room for an expected party. In the centre of the table, against a vase of pink roses, a tall, heavy man was placing a rough and dirty piece of board on which was scratched: "Death Avenue Cowboys. Mike O'Mara, Jerry Donovan, Joe O'Mara, Marty Malone, Helen McCoy."

The tall, heavy man was surveying the table with pride. He turned to the head waiter.

"Father Donovan will sit on my right, and Joe O'Mara will sit on his right. And Miss McCoy will sit on my left."

"Yes, Mr. Malone. And Mr. Mike O'Mara?"

"He'll sit next to Miss McCoy. I want everything the very best. These are my real pals—we grew up together. We come together every year—an annual round-up. This is the first time we've met at this club, and I want everything perfect."

"Yes, sir. It shall be so." An oldish man with a nervous manner came to them.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Malone. I—er—Miss McCoy is ready to go on downstairs."

Malone turned "Right!" He gave final instructions to the head waiter. "Tell the doorman to admit my friends by the private door."

October 1st, 1933.

He followed the nervous man towards the dance hall, smiling all over his broad, ugly, likeable face.

"Gee, Webster, this is a great night for me!" he cried. "I feel eighteen years!"

"I'm glad, sir. Oh, while I think of it—Mr. Brewster is on the line in your private office."

Malone's smile gave way. "Okay—tell Miss McCoy to carry on. I'll be down in a minute."

He turned off the staircase into an office, lettered on the door "Private" and strode across to where the telephone receiver lay on the desk beside its stand. He spoke into it gruffly.

"That you, Brewster? Malone this end. I want that cheque for thirteen hundred and seventy-five made good. You've stopped it."

The receiver crackled and Malone's expression hardened.

"That's a lie, Brewster! My roulette wheel's dead true—the bank's percentage pays me. No, I won't sue you—I can't. It's a gambling debt—and you know I can't sue. But I have other ways of collecting—and you'd better think again!"

He slapped down the receiver to ask Webster, who had returned and was standing just inside the office door:

"Is Jim Diamond here?"

"Yes, Mr. Malone."

"Send him along to me."

Malone strode about the room, frowning and snapping his fingers impatiently. Presently two men entered, one a thin-lipped, pale fellow with eyes set too closely together; the other had a darkish, comical, frog-like face and at once seated himself at Malone's desk.

"Anything I can do?" he grinned.

The thin-lipped one, hat back of his head, snapped:

"Quiet, Sam!"

"Mr. James Brewster don't believe in paying his debts," said Malone. "I got his cheque for thirteen seventy-five, which he has had the nerve to stop. I want you boys to salt him down a bit—he's too fresh. You know, Diamond—just learn him how to write a good cheque."

Thin lips moved in a kind of snarl.

"Okay. Where does he live?"

"Circle House, top terrace."

Diamond, hands in his pockets, turned his cold eyes towards his fellow thug.

"Come on, Sam—we'll give Master What's-his-name the once over. So long, Malone. Consider it done."

Malone watched them out of his room, nodding to himself. He went light-heartedly down to the dance hall where a tall, dark, pretty girl was smiling her thanks for the applause still sounding from the crowded tables. She caught at Malone's arm.

"A fine thing! Didn't come to listen to my new number!"

"Duty, Helen. Duty first." Malone gave her a fond glance. "Come over here." He drew her aside. "There's something I got to settle with you. Will you be my wife?"

She still held on to his arm. "Listen, Marty, I've told you how I feel."

"I know. But it's how I feel, see? Do you like Mike O'Mara better than me?"

"Let's dance," she said. "I like this time, anyways."

"I'll never give up wanting you, Helen, till I'm counted out," Malone told her as they jiggled along the crowded dance floor. He suddenly glanced down at his clothes. "I must get changed—you being all dressed up so grand."

She shook her head.

"Stay as you are. The others won't sport glad rags. How can they—Mike and Joe being policemen, and Jerry a priest?"

Malone gave a great laugh. "Ain't it funny—Jerry Donovan a sky pilot! And Mike and Joe turned cops—and you a great cabaret artist! I'm the only one who's still a scallywag!"

Webster came to them, stopping their foxtrot.

"Mr. Michael O'Mara on the 'phone, sir, to say they'll be held up awhile. They've had an emergency call." He added apologetically: "And it's raining and blowing terribly, sir."

Malone laughed. "Not your fault, Webster, that it's raining, huh? Did Mike say where they've gone?"

"Yes, sir—a call to the Circle House. It seems that the big electric sign on the roof broke loose in the wind and fell on a gentleman."

Malone's smile lessened a trifle.

"Some feller passing by—that's just too bad!" He went on with their dance, holding his partner as if she were almost too precious to touch. "I wish you could make up your mind, Helen," he muttered. "I'm sure fond of you. I'd always do my best."

Two well-set-up young men in dark lounge suits drove up to the Cigarette Club an hour later. The porter came to their taxi with a large umbrella widely spread.

"Private entrance, gents. Horrible night—follow me, please."

He hurried them through the streaming rain to what seemed a solid foundation stone in the great building. He pressed a hidden spring and the stone, merely a painted wooden surface, rolled inwards, revealing a low square gap in the wall through which they entered to a small stairway. They ran up the stairs and came to the back of Malone's office, where, almost at once, they heard his big voice at the main door:

"Hi, yah! What ho, gang!"

The door burst open to let in Malone and Helen. The four friends stood still, grinning as they raised their right arms—thumb and forefinger touching to make a round "O" sign.

"Well, well!" cried Malone. "Ain't it good, meeting you again, cops!"

The two young policemen lowered their arms and came forward to grasp hands with him and the girl. The elder one whispered to her:

"The real McCoy. And prettier than ever!"

"You wanted to turn me out of the gang, Mike," Helen laughed.

"Where's Jerry Donovan?" Joe O'Mara asked.

"Expecting him every minute," answered Malone. "What's this about a feller being hurt outside Circle House?"

Joe O'Mara spoke darkly.

"Murdered, you mean! I went up to look at the gear which ought to have held up the electric sign. One of the stanchions had been part cut through. The sign was waiting for a puff of wind to blow it down and kill the man beneath just as he was going out."

"Going out?" Malone echoed. "You mean he lived there?"

"Yeah. Playboy guy named Brewster," said Joe, while his brother cried:

"Oh, can all shop! This is a party—and we don't want any budding Sherlock Holmeses around. Joe's got a snoping fit on—drop it, Joe!"

The younger O'Mara muttered: "Okay. But I'm going back later to have another look at that stanchion."

Malone's smiles had gone. He stood there awkwardly, his big frame hunched up. He suddenly pulled himself together.

"Say, I'm forgetting! How about a little drink?"

"Lead me to it!" Mike laughed.

Glasses were filled and raised on high.

"Cheers," said Malone in a rather subdued way. They were drinking to each other when the head waiter opened the door to announce:

"The Reverend Jeremiah Donovan!"

An upstanding, pleasant, clean-shaven young man in clerical attire entered. He was greeted with great enthusiasm.

"How's everybody?" he inquired cheerily. "No need to ask! No, thanks, Marty—no cocktail for me. Half-glass of sherry."

The head waiter at the door reappeared.

"Dinner is served, Miss McCoy and gentlemen."

After dinner they adjourned to Malone's parlour. They stood around the piano, and, when Mike had seated himself beside Helen at the instrument, they sang in fairly good style "Auld lang syne."

"I've got to be hurrying along, Helen and pals all," Jerry excused himself. "A sermon to prepare."

Joe O'Mara moved across to Malone. "And I must be going. I've a little business to attend to."

Malone walked with them to the main entrance of the club. When Joe had gone the big fellow thrust a folded paper into Jerry's hand.

"What's this, Marty?"

"Look, Jerry, it's about that West Side Boys' Club of yours. I've had a good year and I thought the kids could do with a gymnasium."

The priest glanced at the cheque.

"Five thousand dollars! Why, Marty—"

He hesitated, a cloud on his pleasant face. "I'm afraid I can't accept it, Marty. You see—"

"Don't say that!" Malone broke in. "It's honest money—I'm not a gaolbird, Jerry. You don't approve of this place, I know; but don't turn down what'll keep the kids off the streets. Think of it, old man—punching-bags, hot and cold shower-baths, boxing gloves, bars—not the sort I have here. Lockers and dressing-rooms. Oh, Jerry, take it, my dear pal of old!"

Donovan nodded as he put the cheque in his pocket.

"I guess you're speaking from the heart, Marty. And I don't forget you saved us all. You showed us that boys' mischief might easily lead to—something else. I'll take it and use it to the best of my ability. I'll call it the 'Martin Malone Gym.' Good-night, old friend."

Joe Goes on an Adventure

MALONE went back to his other guests. Downstairs, the little orchestra was discoursing jazz music and many couples were dancing. In a very private side room the roulette wheel was in full swing, much money being staked and won—and lost. It was a lively, prosperous place, this Cigarette Club.

Malone told Webster on his way up: "Get Diamond over here right away. And let me know when he arrives."

Back in his offices, he asked Helen and Mike:

"Like to dance, wouldn't you? Get going, then—make a night of it."

He was just his old self; confident, strong and full of life. But, left alone, his smile faded and a worried look was in his dark eyes. Presently Webster came up.

"That—er—gentleman is here, sir—with his friend."

"Show 'em up," Malone ordered. Diamond, thin-lipped and cold as ice, walked in with Sam at his heels.

"Don't get in a lather, Marty!" Diamond said at once. "It just happened. Maybe we were a little rough, but you didn't say he had a weak ticker."

Sam, with a smirk, added:

"And we covered it all up. Made it look as if the sign had fallen and couked him out."

"Murder isn't in my line," Malone said fiercely. "I never told you to go and kill him."

"I'm sorry," Diamond shrugged.

"You're sorry, huh?" Malone stormed.

"Yeah, because you won't collect that cheque. See here, Marty," Diamond went on. "The wind was blowing a gale—and that sign was creaking a lot just outside his window. To make it look good I got him down to the door and Sam helped the sign to tumble. Personally, it seemed a good gag."

Malone snapped his fingers.

"It was marvellous. You would pick out a way to involve the Emergency Squad, with two of my best pals in it. Let me tell you one of 'em's on to it—found the cut staunchion."

Diamond glared at his fellow-thug.

"Cut? I told you to spread the wire strands. You fool!"

Sam, unmoved, only grinned.

"Let's go back and fuse the cut with a blowpipe. Then who's to know?"

"Get to it, you dumb idiots!" Malone growled. "By the way, where's that cheque?"

"Brewster's?" queried Diamond.

"Oh, I burned it. No use keeping it. Dangerous for all of us." He gave Malone a dirty look. "Okay—we'll get it right this time."

Joe O'Mara had gone to Circle House, after signing off at H.Q. of the Emergency Squad. Sergeant Enders told him that no further reports had come in and that he was to forget all about that electric sign fall.

"Stop playing detective, Joe. Leave



"Now listen, Mike," began Marty, "you've got it all wrong—"

detecting to the precinct boys. They've been and are satisfied Brewster met his death by accident."

Joe said nothing, but thought a lot. He was sure the stanchion had been cut or sawn. He was going to have another look, despite the rain. The doorman at Circle House passed him through—merely remarking that two Press men had gone up to Brewster's flat.

"But they can't get in," he added smirkingly. "Door is locked and sealed."

Joe went up the stairs, frowning. These newspaper boys were every sort of trouble to the police. He thought so all the more when he found the door seal broken.

He tried the handle—yes, they were in all right. He crossed the dark hall, entered the parlour and could tell, by the current of cold air, that the window was open. He stepped out on the leads cautiously into the streaming rain and wind.

Two men were at the broken sign gear, bending over it. Although in deep shadow they were revealed to him by the upfling of the street lights. Joe stood very still, trying to see what they were at.

One man had a blowpipe, the other a short-handled hammer. They were not members of the Press, nor could they be plumbers mending the sign. No one may touch anything after a door has been sealed by the police.

Joe drew his gun and crept behind them—one of the pair muttered:

"That's got it. I guess we're all serene now."

"That's what you think," said Joe quietly. He covered them with his gun as they turned startled, rain-swept faces towards him. One of them suddenly ducked as Joe moved forward over the slipperly leads—a swift grab at his foot by the fellow who had ducked brought Joe down with a crash, and the gun flew out of his hands.

The pair made a dash for the open window, but Joe was up and at them like a flash. A three-handed desperate fight began, in which Diamond was knocked down sideways.

Sam got Joe by the throat; they struggled in a fierce silence, Joe gradually working free. He raised his fist for a smashing punch in that frog-like face when Diamond came back at him, and Sam got the young policeman again—this time around the middle. With surprising strength he lifted and flung Joe clear of the gear right over the leads to fall headlong into the street, five floors below.

Malone had stepped out into the rain, after seeing off the last of his guests and had hailed a taxi. He planned to go to Circle House, but the taxi was stopped just short of it by a policeman. There was a crowd gathered round the doorway of Circle House, and, as Malone elbowed his way through it, he met a squad of ambulance men carrying a stretcher on which lay a covered-up shape. The officer in charge, recognising Malone, saluted.

"Horrible thing happened just now—one of our boys killed. He fell right off the roof leads up there. Decent young fellow named O'Mara."

Marty recoiled as if struck.
"O'Mara? You don't mean—"
"Joe O'Mara, sir, the younger of two brothers in the Emergency. Make way, please, folks—make way!"

When Rogues Fall Out

MIKE O'MARA had it out with the inspector; but got nowhere. His chief told him:

October 1st, 1933.

"We have checked and double-checked every angle in regard to your brother's death. There is no evidence whatever that he met with foul play."

"I've told the precinct what Joe found at Circle House," put in Mike heatedly. "The stanchion was clean cut."

The inspector rose from his desk. "There was no cut stanchion. It was just a break with frayed wires rusted in the rain." He gave O'Mara a nod of dismissal. "The case is closed."

Mike came down to the court entrance hall where Helen was waiting. He told her:

"Stone-walled. The case is closed." Helen spoke with feeling.

"Mike, you ought to drop it—don't let this become an obsession. Come out into the air and let's be reasonable."

Mike answered through set teeth: "I'm going to see this thing through."

They walked in silence awhile; then Mike pulled himself together.

"Forgive me, Helen, for being so lumpy. I'll drive you to the Cigarette Club and try to forget things."

While they were getting out of his police car a shattering explosion sounded, followed by a tinkling smash of glass. One of Malone's windows had been blown out by a bomb.

At once there was a scattering of people on the side walk; then, alarm past, a crowd gathered round. Malone came out, very annoyed.

"Get inside, Helen—I'll come to you presently," he told her, then went in with Mike to where the house detective was examining some charred objects held gingerly in his hands.

"What's left of a time bomb, sir," he stated.

Marty looked for himself, growled and grunted.

"Tell 'em to clear up." He strode along to the dance floor, calling out:

"Carry on, ladies and gentlemen! No one's hurt—nothing is wrong!" Then turned to Mike. "See you later."

He went to Helen's dressing-room and rapped:

"Carry on, Helen. Give 'em your song and dance."

Presently Webster came to him, nervously apologetic.

"Excuse me, sir—I must tell you that when I came along the corridor this early morning I saw Mr. Diamond and that other person talking to the painters. And, although there's no harm done here that isn't covered by insurance, sir—the jeweller's shop down street has just been cleaned out from the back. It seems they ran out to see what had happened here—"

Malone's smashed a great fist into the open palm of his other hand.

"Jim Diamond, huh? Mightier guessed it!"

He dashed for his hat and went along to Diamond's hide-out; waiting there in a white heat of rage.

Friends Fall Out

A DAY later Father Donovan came to O'Mara's apartment in reply to a telephone-call. Mike was dressed in plain clothes and greeted him with:

"Sorry I rang you, Jerry. I've got to go out."

Donovan glanced at the gun in Mike's hand.

"Is that necessary?"

"Yeah," O'Mara's mouth was set in hard lines. "I got to see Malone. What would you say if I told you he was a thief?"

"I'd say you were crazy."

"Crazy? Think back, Jerry—a bunch of kids raiding a warehouse. Remember what he did to distract attention? Started a fire. Well, he's pulling the same gag—yesterday had a bomb thrown in his windows, so as to cover up a robbery down the street."

"I don't believe it," Donovan told him. "Nor do you."

O'Mara thrust the gun into his pocket and pulled out a letter. He gave the ill-scrawled thing to Donovan, who read it aloud:

"You know what happens to welschers. Brewster wouldn't pay, stopped his cheque. So Malone had him put on the spot. Your brother found out—so he was knocked off, too.—A FRIEND."

Donovan put the letter down. "A friend? An enemy, Mike."

"No!" cried O'Mara fiercely. "I believe it—I know it. Marty knew that Joe suspected—and it's right that Brewster lost a pile at the Cigarette Club—I've got the cheque he stopped. What was Marty doing out in the rain that night? Right at the moment Joe was killed? Who knew that Joe was bound to be going to the Circle House to verify the cut stanchion? Malone, of course!"

Donovan spoke quietly. "Give me that gun, Mike."

"I will not! Get out of my way, Jerry."

"You're not going there. Give me that gun."

They faced each other, O'Mara flushed with anger, Donovan very pale. Mike spoke hoarsely:

"You're asking for it, Jerry—"

And struck out at his friend. The priest parried the blow and shot out a clenched fist that caught O'Mara on the chin, knocking him backwards flat on his back; then, without hesitation, Donovan stooped and took the pistol from Mike's pocket.

"Sorry, Mike," he muttered, and left O'Mara to get back his scattered senses by himself.

Donovan hurried off to the Cigarette Club. The doorman told him that Malone was in his office.

"Don't let in O'Mara if he comes along," Donovan ordered.

Five minutes later Mike drove up. He threatened the doorman with a gun—he had managed to get another—and the doorman had to let him in. He rushed up to Malone's room, where he found Donovan with Marty.

"Stand aside, Jerry!" came the sharp command, but the priest remained between the two men, steady and cool. He said, over his shoulder:

"Put that gun away, Mike."

"Now, listen, Mike," began Marty. "You've got it all wrong—"

"I've got it straight," Mike checked him. "And this is Joe's gun. It's going to avenge him."

Donovan turned about, still between them.

"I said—put that gun away!"

An official voice sounded from the back door.

"Turn around, mister, and turn slow. And gimme that gun."

It was the policeman on point duty. Beside him was the almost frantic doorman, shouting:

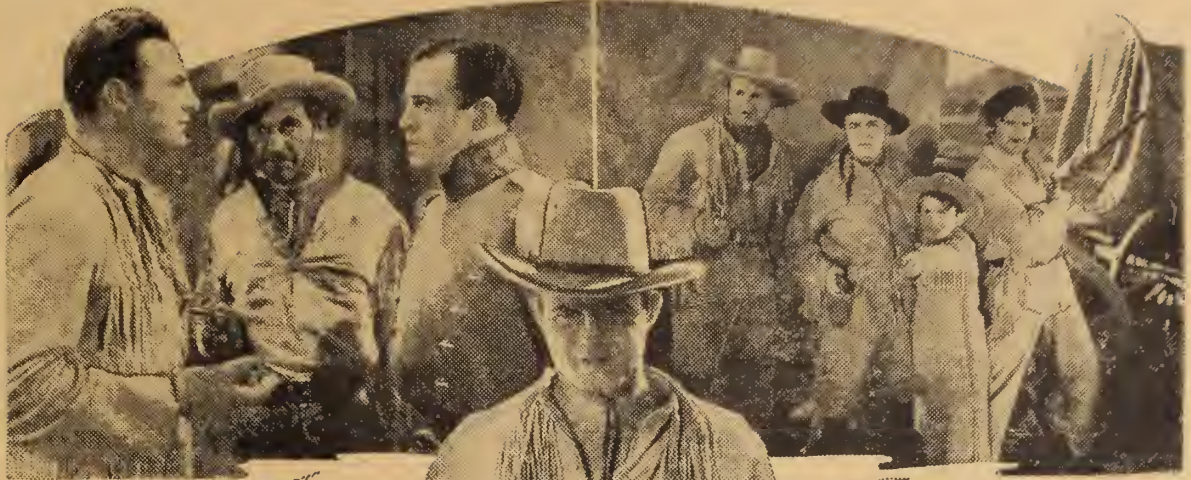
"He forced his way in! He was going to kill the boss!"

Malone stepped forward. "It's all right, officer. O'Mara's an old friend. It's just a bit of fun."

But Mike at the door, gunless now, wouldn't have it.

(Continued on page 20)

The Concluding Chapters Of:



THE PAINTED STALLION

Prisoners

AT Dupray's instructions the outlaws set their shoulders against the massive crag that was balanced so precariously on the edge of the terrace-like trail, and in an instant the huge rock was tumbling into space.

Below, in the very mouth of the box-canyon, little Kit Carson was seated in the saddle of his diminutive pony and was watching Jamison, Bowie, Davy Crockett and their fellow pioneers struggling up that part of the ravine wall which was possible of ascent. His attention was wholly confined, indeed, to that swarm of resolute men who were bent on reaching the ledge occupied by the Dupray gang, and for an instant it seemed as if he and his horse must be crushed to pulp under the impact of the falling crag that the renegades had dislodged.

In the nick of time, however, Kit chanced to switch his eyes towards that portion of the trail on which the crag had stood, and he saw the enormous stone hurtling from aloft. Next moment he gave vent to a sharp cry of alarm, and, digging his heels into his mount's flanks in the same moment, he sent the animal bounding forward into the depths of the canyon.

He was scarcely clear of the ravine's narrow entrance when the crag smashed down on the spot where he had been located, completely blocking the elf.

Meanwhile two of the Jamison party had almost gained the summit of the slope which gave access to the position held by the outlaws. These two were Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett, and, more agile than their comrades and more lightly clad, they were well ahead of the rest of the attacking force when they scrambled between the smaller boulders that dotted the rim of the terrace trail.

Hardly had they reached the broad,

rock-strewn ledge when they saw Clark Stuart lying half-stunned there, with Topek, Dupray's Indian servitor, standing over him in hostile attitude.

Clark's felt sombrero had spared him the full force of the blow that had stretched him on the ground, but his hat had rolled aside and Topek was preparing to strike again with the chunk of stone he was clutching in his bronze fist. But before the Indian could bring down his uplifted arm Davy Crockett shot him through the body, and next second the Redskin was keeling over in a lifeless heap.

Immediately after Davy's gun had spoken Escobedo Dupray and his surviving accomplices were upon him and Jim Bowie, and, though the two friends battled like Titans, they were borne to the dust by weight of numbers and were quickly made secure. Then, at a sharp command from Santa Fe's deposed lieutenant governor, the renegades opened fire on the rest of the Jamison band, who were now only thirty or forty paces from the terrace that fronted the outlaw hide-away.

Crouching amongst the boulders, the bandits held a positional advantage that off-set the numerical superiority of the attackers, and under the withering blasts of gunfire directed at them, the men on the slope gave way—despite the exhortations of Jamison. Nevertheless, the wagon boss succeeded in rallying them near the foot of the declivity, and, although they had suffered heavy casualties, he inspired them with a determination to stage a

fresh onset in the hope of carrying the renegades' line of defence by storm.

It was an onset that might have proved effective, but it was not destined to take place there and then, for up on the terrace Dupray resorted to a device that balked it.

Turning to his henchman Zamora and two or three other members of the outlaw band, he spoke to them crisply. "Get hold of Clark Stuart," he ordered. "Tie his hands behind his back and set him up in full view of the Jamison crowd, together with those two men Bowie and Crockett. Hurry now—there is no time to lose."

His instructions were speedily obeyed, and within a few seconds Clark, Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie were being forced towards the very rim of the terrace, the first-named still dazed as a result of the blow that the ill-fated Topek had dealt him.

Exposed to the gaze of their friends below, they were compelled to stand there with the guns of the renegades trained upon them. Then, in the silence that now settled upon the box-canyon and its barren walls, Dupray raised his voice and called to Jamison, keeping under cover as he did so.

"Jamison," he sang out, "I am advising you and your companions down there to hold your fire and remain where you are. Let one of you discharge a single shot or make the slightest attempt to climb to this trail, and we will retaliate by slaying Stuart, Bowie and Crockett in cold blood."

The encompassing slopes and cliff-faces of the ravine took up the echoes of his voice, and as those echoes subsided a deathly quiet settled upon the locality—a quiet broken only by a scuffle of feet as a boyish figure suddenly hastened across the bed of the canyon.

EPISODE 12:—

"Human Targets"

It was the figure of Kit Carson. He had dismounted and left his pony beside the bunch of horses from which Jamison and the other pioneers had alighted some time previously, and with an expression of acute anxiety on his youthful countenance he ran forward to join the wagon boss and his men.

"Mr. Jamison," Kit panted, as he came up, "Mr. Jamison, don't let them outlaws kill Davy an' Clark and Jim Bowie! Don't let 'em do it, Mr. Jamison!"

The lad was almost in tears, his agitation testifying to his deep affection for those three frontiersmen up there whose lives were in jeopardy, and it was with an involuntary movement of sympathy and understanding that Jamison drew the little fellow close to him with his free arm.

"Son," the wagon boss declared huskily, "Clark an' Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie ain't gonna come to no harm if we can help it. They mean just as much to me as they mean to you, and you can depend on it that we'll make no move that's calculated to cost 'em their lives."

He glanced around amongst his men, and addressed them collectively—in a tone that was intended for the outlaws' ears as well as theirs.

"You heard Dupray, boys," he announced loudly, "and we're callin' a truce. We stay where we are, and we hold our fire. Is that clear?"

There was a mutter of assent from his companions. As for Dupray and the rogues on the terrace away above, they exchanged glances of smug satisfaction. Then the leader of the bandits called out to the party on the canyon's bed once more.

"Senor Jamison," he hailed, "we are collecting our loot and departing from here, and I warn you not to interfere with us, or it will be just too bad for these three prisoners whom we are holding as hostages."

"I hear you, Dupray," was Jamison's answer, "an' we'll make no play against you so long as Clark Stuart and Bowie and Crockett don't meet with any hurt at the hands o' you or your side-kickers. But get this, an' get it straight—if you harm a hair o' their heads we'll hound you down mercilessly and wipe out every mother's son of you."

Dupray offered no response to that threat. He merely turned to Zamora and his cronies and spoke to them complacently.

"Make your way to the cache and start moving the loot," he said. "Take it through the cave and out via the tunnel that leads to the north side of the ridge."

The cache to which he had referred was situated at a point about a hundred yards along the terrace. It was a black, yawning aperture in a rock-face that rose abruptly from the trail, and in approaching it Zamora and the gangsters had to expose themselves to the view of the Jamison party—a circumstance which they did not relish.

Seeing them hesitate, Dupray made a gesture of impatience.

"Come, do as I say," he snapped. "You have nothing to dread from those fellows down there in the canyon. They won't try to pick you off for fear of what would happen to their three friends if they did."

"I hope you're right," Zamora breathed. "But if they double-cross us—"

"They won't dare to double-cross us," Dupray interrupted viciously. "Go on, get busy. In the meantime, I'll look after Stuart, Bowie and Crockett."

Tentatively Zamora began to proceed

along the terrace, and the remainder of Dupray's hirelings edged after him in single file, passing the cave that was the gang's lair and wending their way onward in the direction of the fissure where the spoils of many a raid and hold-up were stored. Nor was it long before the line of crooks were within the scope of the Jamison party's vision, as a section of the trail between cave and cache was devoid of cover.

No shot challenged the gangsters, however, and without incident they reached their objective and vanished from sight. Then after an interval they reappeared and began to retrace their steps, each rogue being heavily laden with plunder.

They made tracks for the cave with that first consignment of spoil, and at the mouth of the hide-out Zamora directed a glance at Dupray. A revolver grasped in one fist, the latter was covering Bowie, Crockett and Clark Stuart—the three captives being visible to their friends below, though the Spaniard was not, for he was taking no chances and was standing well back.

"Do you think it wise that we should leave you alone with the hostages, Dupray?" Zamora queried.

"I shall be all right, amigo," was the response. "You and your compadres attend to the loot. Tell me, have you got all of it there?"

Zamora shook his head.

"No," he said, "but one more trip will see the cache emptied."

A moment later he and his associates were trooping into the cavern, and in a body they marched past the lamp-lit compartment which had served the gang as living quarters. They passed, too, the bunch of horses that belonged to them, and pushed on through the sombre tunnel that had its outlet at the far side of the ridge.

Marching forward along that passage through the strata of the mountain, they had travelled a distance of several hundred yards when they saw daylight ahead of them, and then all at once Zamora halted abruptly, uttering a terse exclamation that brought his accomplices to a standstill behind him.

"Stop!" he jerked.

He was peering towards the tunnel's exit, and, staring in the same direction, his cronies espied a familiar figure limned there—a figure attired in buckskin and wearing the plumed head-dress of a Red Indian.

It was the figure of the Painted Stallion the Rider, that mysterious personality who had frustrated the outlaws' plans on so many occasions in the past—that girl who had befriended the men of the Jamison wagon train, and who had to-day revealed to Clark Stuart this rear entrance to the Dupray gang's hide-away.

When Clark had left her she had been mounted on the powerful black and white steed which was her constant companion, and before separating from her he had urged her to remain where she was, out of harm's way, while he investigated the tunnel and satisfied himself that it actually did communicate with the renegades' lair. But the strain and suspense of awaiting his return had proved too irksome for her, and, having slid from her horse, she was now advancing alone into the tunnel.

The stallion could be seen hovering outside the tunnel-mouth, and so far as Zamora and his confederates were concerned its presence was a betrayal of the buckskin clad interloper's identity.

"The Rider!" whispered the Dago.

One of the other ruffians laid a hand on his arm.

"Yeah, the Rider sure enough, Zamora! An' unless I'm mistaken that self-same Rider is a girl! Can yuh beat that? It's a dame that's been makin' things tough for us all this long time past."

Zamora's eyes narrowed as he scrutinised the oncoming figure more keenly, and a malicious expression dawned on his swarthy face.

"Por dios!" he muttered. "You are right! A girl it is!"

There was no doubting it. Never had the outlaws been in such close proximity to their inveterate and hitherto mysterious foe, and, though they themselves were at present invisible to the Rider by reason of the gloom that reigned within the tunnel's depths, she was clearly portrayed to their sinister gaze.

"Si," Zamora went on in a low tone, "it is a girl whom we have to deal with, but if I know Escobedo Dupray that fact will not prevail on him to show any mercy. Come on, let's get her and take her to him."

With one accord the bandits let fall the plunder they were carrying, and next second they were bearing down on the Rider, who checked as she heard the swift scuffle of their feet in the darkness before her. Then she saw them loom up out of the shadows, and, recognising them, she uttered a half-stifled cry of alarm and wheeled in an attempt to make her escape.

Ere she could take to her heels the outlaws were upon her, and rough hands seized her, holding her in spite of her frantic efforts to wrench free. Then her arms were forced behind her back, and, her wrists having been lashed together by a kerchief, Zamora rapped out a harsh command.

"Back to the terrace with her, amigos," he ordered. "Dupray is going to enjoy meeting her."

Surrounded by the pack of desperadoes, the Rider was hustled along the tunnel unceremoniously, and after a hurried journey through that inky passage-way she was thrust out on to the ledge where Dupray stood covering Clark Stuart, Bowie and Davy Crockett.

Clark was the first of the quartet to set eyes on the captive girl, and a dismayed ejaculation broke from him as he did so. It was an ejaculation that was echoed by Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie as they, too, recognised her, and then Dupray turned his head.

He looked hard at the young woman who had been propelled forth on to the terrace, and after staring at her piercingly he glanced at the men around her, singling out Zamora.

"Who is this?" he demanded.

His chief henchman answered him grimly:

"The Rider, Dupray," he said. "The Rider of the Painted Stallion. The accursed meddler who has been such a stumbling block to us for the last two or three years."

"The Rider?" Escobedo Dupray reiterated the name in an amazed fashion. "A girl—and a white girl at that?"

"Si, a girl," Zamora rejoined. "We found her skulking in the tunnel-mouth, and the Painted Stallion was not far away. What do we do with her, hein?"

Dupray focused his evil gaze on the Rider and studied her malevolently for a brief space. Then he transferred his attention to Zamora again and indicated Clark, Bowie and Crockett with a nod of his head.

"Line her up with the other prisoners," he instructed.

Zamora caught the girl by the shoulder and sent her reclining across the

terrace. She finished up beside Clark, and Dupray juggled significantly with the revolver he was clutching in his fist.

"Now, Zamora," he observed, "you and the men fetch the rest of our loot from the cache."

The gangsters moved off along the trail, filing once more into the view of Jamison and his party, who had seen the Rider totter to the rim of the slope, and within another five minutes Dupray's satellites had brought the remainder of the spoil to the cavern by which they and their leader planned to retreat.

"We've cleaned out the cache, Dupray," Zamora announced. "What now? Do we take the prisoners with us as a guarantee against Jamison and those hombres down there trying to catch up with us?"

Dupray's sallow features seemed to tighten.

"Jamison and his men will not be able to follow us," he stated. "There is gunpowder in our quarters back there in the cave. Plant it in the middle of the cavern and attach a fuse to one of the casks. Don't light that fuse yet, but report to me as soon as you have fixed it."

Zamora set down a strong-box he was carrying, and disappeared into the cave. He was gone for fully a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time he showed up on the terrace again.

"Everything is set, amigo," he told Dupray.

"Good!" the other Spaniard rejoined. "Now we can make ourselves scarce. We'll put a match to that fuse, mount our horses and ride for the north outlet with the last of our spoil. We should be close to the far end of the tunnel by the time the blast takes place. We'll be well out of the danger zone, at any rate."

He paused, and smiled a twisted smile. "Now that the entrance to the box-canyon has been blocked," he drawled,

"there will be no question of Jamison and his party pursuing us when we blow up the cave-mouth. They can climb over the crag that we dislodged, but they will not be able to take their horses with them, and can only regain open ground on foot. That means we need have no fear of them circling round the ridge in time to intercept us, and we can make a clear getaway and seek fresh headquarters at our leisure."

Over on the rim of the terrace, Clark Stuart looked bitterly at Crockett and Bowie, who, like himself and the Rider, were standing with their hands tied securely behind their backs.

"Dupray and those rats will make a clear getaway all right," he said in an undertone. "Gee, if I only had myself to think about I'd give Jamison and the boys a hail an' tell 'em to come on up, regardless of what happened to me."

"If I only had myself to think about I'd feel like doin' the same," breathed Davy Crockett.

"Me, too," put in Bowie. "But Jamison an' the boys would stay where they was. You can lay to that. They'd never consent to sacrifice us by tryin' to rush the gang."

It was at this juncture that Dupray interrupted the brief discussion of the three frontiersmen. He had not heard what had passed between them, but the mutter of their voices had reached his ears, and he was eyeing them through contracted lids.

"My friends," he drawled in mocking accents, "it is indeed gratifying to me to see you lined up there. Clark Stuart, Bowie, Crockett and the Rider of the Painted Stallion—in one way or another all four of you have caused me and my men a vast amount of trouble. But I fancy that you realise now you were playing a losing game when you matched wits with Esecobedo Dupray, hein?"

Clark answered the Spaniard. The

expression on the big scout's handsome features was one of defiance, and he spoke in a strain that was grimly prophetic.

"Dupray," he said, "right now you're congratulatin' yourself on havin' worned your way out of a tight spot, and I'll grant you that it looks as if you're on the winning end of the deal. But you're gonna fall in the finish, and fall hard—like enough with a noose around your neck and a gallows trap-door under your feet. You, Esecobedo Dupray, some day Law and Order will catch up with you, and the Trade Treaty between the Mexican Republic and the United States' Government will go through over the wreck of this bandit organisation of yours."

The Spaniard's upper lip curled in an ugly sneer, and he addressed the younger man scoffingly.

"You think so?" he taunted. "Well, I have an idea that whatever happens in the future I shall never bid farewell to this world with a hangman's rope against my throat. In any event, I am certain of one thing, Clark Stuart. Neither you nor your two compatriots who are standing there with you will live to see my finish, whether I die by violence or otherwise."

With a sudden change of mien he brought up the revolver he was holding, and, his face assuming a look of savage hostility, he took a step nearer to the prisoners, still being careful however to avoid exposing himself to the view of Jamison and the latter's followers.

"Stuart," he added viciously, "you and Bowie and Crockett have served your purpose as far as I am concerned. I have used you to keep Jamison and his crowd at bay, but now I have no further need of you, and your hour is at hand. Yes, amigos, your hour is at hand, and it will be a pleasure to blast each one of you out of existence with this gun of mine!"



"Señor Stuart," Don Luis told Clark, "I am very happy that circumstances have permitted me to sign this much-deserved trade agreement between your country and mine."

Nemesis

THE heavy revolver grasped tightly in his fingers, Escobedo Dupray ran his evil gaze over the countenances of his intended victims, scrutinising the three men intently and watching perhaps for some dawning hint of apprehension. But if he expected to see any sign of fear he was disappointed, for not one of the trio flinched, and the eyes that met his were steadfastly impassive.

Clark Stuart spoke:

"Go ahead, Dupray," he said. "Get it over with. But let me tell you something before you cut loose with that 'iron.' Jamison warned you a while back that he and the boys would hound you and your gang down and wipe out every mother's son of you if any harm came to us at your hands, and if I know anything of Jamison he'll make good that threat."

The Spaniard favoured Clark with a sneer once more.

"Jamison, eh?" he remarked. "Carai, do you think I am scared of Jamison? I only hope I have the opportunity of meeting him at some future date so that I can serve him as I am about to serve you—for he, too, has been a thorn in my side. Indeed, it is my one regret that he is absent from this little farewell party we are staging up here—although the presence of the Rider of the Painted Stallion more than compensates for the fact that he is not included in it. It will be good to know that she will never interfere with my plans again."

Clark stiffened at that, and the colour seemed to drain from his cheeks.

"You mean—you're condemning her to share the same fate as Bowie and Crockett and me?"

"And why not, Senor Stuart?"

Clark gritted his teeth.

"Dupray," he lunged at the black-guard, "I knew you for a low-down coyote, but I figured there were some things that even a man of your calibre wouldn't set your hand to—and shooting a girl in cold blood was one of them."

A look of devilish amusement crossed the sallow features of Santa Fe's one-time Lieutenant Governor, and in that moment Clark wished desperately that his hands were free so that he could have driven his bunched knuckles into the scoundrel's grinning mouth.

"You have a deep regard for the Rider, eh, Stuart?" the Spaniard said softly. "Well, amigo, do not misjudge me. I am not altogether blind to the charms of a pretty face myself, and because of that I will spare her the distress of watching me make an end of you and Crockett and Bowie. In short, I will let her take first place."

The Rider was staring at him in horror, and as he deliberately levelled the revolver at her she closed her eyes and waited for the smash of the shot, believing that she was doomed. Nor was Dupray trifling. The man was in deadly earnest, and was fully resolved to take vengeance upon her for the campaign she had waged against his outlaw organisation, and in another instant she must have fallen under a bullet from the six-gun he was clutching.

But even as Escobedo Dupray's right forefinger was curling around the trigger of the weapon Clark Stuart jerked himself towards the Rider of the Painted Stallion to thrust her out of the line of fire.

It was a forlorn impulse on his part—an impulse which seemed destined at best to achieve nothing except some brief delay in the carrying out of the Spaniard's infamous purpose. And cer-

tainly it brought about such a delay, for Clark's shoulder came into contact with the girl a split second before Dupray discharged the gun, and she went reeling along the terrace for a distance of several yards as the forty-five belched flame from its muzzle.

Clark himself was almost drilled by the leaden slug that had been meant for her, and had he been drawn up to his full height he would assuredly have been struck by it. But he was in a lunging posture, and, ripping through the crown of his sombrero and grazing his scalp, the bullet merely snatched the hat from his head and cast it down the slope behind him.

Almost simultaneously a chorus of shouts arose from the canyon below, where Kit Carson and the men of the wagon train had heard the report of Dupray's revolver, and the stentorian voice of Jamison rang out above that medley of cries.

"Those skunks up there are gonna massacre Clark an' the others!" the leader of the pioneer freighters roared. "Come on, fellers, up the slope! The Dupray gang are goin' back on their bargain, but they'll answer to us for it!"

On the terrace aloft the former Lieutenant Governor of Santa Fe heard those words as clearly as did Clark and the latter's companions in misfortune, and the Spaniard quickly trained his forty-five on the U.S. agent from Washington.

"You don't want to see the Rider shot down, eh?" he snarled. "All right, Stuart, have it your own way. You'll be the first to go. But, believe me, when the Jamison crowd arrive here they'll find Bowie, Crockett and the Rider lying dead as well!"

It was as he uttered that terse speech that a movement in the nearby cave-mouth attracted the attention of the girl whose execution Clark had deferred, and all at once she made out a familiar form. It was the form of the Painted Stallion—the half-tamed horse that had borne her so faithfully over the trackless wilds of the West in her strange career—and as she clapped eyes on the animal she realised that it must have wandered into the tunnel from the north side of the ridge and found its way to the renegade hide-out, perhaps sensing that she was in danger.

Dupray and his hirelings did not observe the creature, and neither did Clark, Bowie and Davy Crockett. The Rider alone perceived the stallion, and on a sudden a gleam of hope appeared in her eyes.

Next moment she was calling out to the bronc in the Comanche Indian dialect—calling out in a tone of imperative command—and at the sound of her voice the horse immediately bounded forward from the mouth of the cavern.

The scuffle of its feet caused Dupray's accomplices to whip round them, but in the very instant that they turned they were scattered by the Painted Stallion's onrush and were thrown to the ground with the plunder they were carrying. Meanwhile Escobedo Dupray had likewise wheeled, and, planted in the path of the horse, he let out a frightened exclamation and tried to bring his gun to bear on it.

He fired the revolver, but his shot went wide—whistled past the stallion's left flank and served only to enrage the creature and to mark out the gang-leader as a foe who must be stamped down. And then, rearing up on its hind-legs, the bronc lashed at the Spaniard with its forefeet.

A flying hoof struck Dupray's wrist and snapped it, so that the revolver lie had been gripping fell to the dust from nerveless fingers. At the same time the luckless man rent the air with a scream of pain—a scream that ended in a blood-curdling gasp as a second blow from the stallion caught him in the chest and stove in his breastbone.

Dupray measured his length, his body rigid with agony, his face distorted and ghastly, and as he lay there the Painted Stallion bestrode him, trampling, trampling, battering the prone wretch till the crook was smothered in dirt and blood, and his carcass a mangled, unrecognisable thing that bobbed and recoiled with grotesque motions under every impact of those relentless hoofs.

As for Dupray's confederates, they were scrambling up in an alarmed fashion, but so great was their disorder that they scarcely seemed to know which way to turn once they had gained their feet, and, colliding with one another, they presented to the eyes of Clark, Bowie, Davy Crockett and the Rider a spectacle that portrayed tempestuous indecision.

Several had a mind to pump lead at the stallion; others, seeing at a glance that Santa Fe's deposed Lieutenant Governor was already beyond human aid, were bent on making off through the cave; Zamora, with shrill tongue, called upon every man to open fire on the Jamison party, who were swarming up to the terrace. But Zamora's cries failed to rally the gangsters, and merely had the effect of adding to their confusion, and the rogues were still in a state of disorganisation when the Painted Stallion took it into its head to abandon Dupray's shattered remains and launch itself at the milling band of outlaws.

Once more they were scattered by the bronc's onslaught, and they were dodging to and fro in a panic when Jamison and the men of the wagon train surged on to the terrace.

The renegades made a belated attempt to show fight now, but the attacking pioneers poured a volley into them at close range, and all but three of the bandits were annihilated by that crashing blast of gunplay, Zamora being among those who dropped lifeless before the storm of lead.

The three survivors took to their heels and tried to dash for the cave, but were shot down ere they could reach the darkness of it and the horses that were waiting there. In the meantime the Painted Stallion appeared to have gone berserk, and looked as if it were ready to assail Jamison and his men, but at a word from the girl who was known as the Rider it became docile, and it was standing motionless on the trail when she and her fellow-prisoners were released.

Their hands free, the rescued captives moved over to the trampled body of Dupray with Jamison and the rest of the freighters, and they were looking down on the dead gang-leader when little Kit Carson arrived on the scene.

"Well," Clark Stuart was saying as the boy joined the group, "you can call it Nemesis, retribution or any other term that suits your fancy, men, but this coyote has met his just deserts."

Jim Bowie spoke solemnly.

"Yeah, you're right, Clark," he stated. "He had a mighty cruel end—worse than he would've had if he'd finished up with a noose around his neck, I guess. But nobody's gonna feel sorry he's handed in his checks, along with the rest of his cut-throat crew."

The country between here an' Independence is well rid o' varmints such as Escobedo Dupray."

Seated at his desk, quill pen in hand, Mexico's new representative in Santa Fe, Don Luis Alvarez, was attaching his signature to a document that embraced the clauses of the Trade Treaty which Clark Stuart had been authorised to negotiate on behalf of the U.S. Government.

The stalwart frontiersman was present in Don Luis' study. So were Jamison, Bowie, Davy Crockett and Kit Carson, and, the Treaty having been ratified, Clark's companions directed congratulatory glances at the frontiersman as he received the document from the Mexican official.

"Senor Stuart," Don Luis told Clark, "I am very happy that circumstances have permitted me to sign this much-desired trade agreement between your country and mine, and I might add that I am immensely grateful to you and your friends for having stamped out the Dupray gang, whose presence was a barrier to our negotiations."

He paused, and turned towards Jamison.

"And you, senor," he proceeded, "you can rest assured that you and all other lawful American traders will receive adequate protection against the Indians while you are in Mexican territory. The Indians I can guarantee to hold in check with the troops under my control, now that Escobedo Dupray and his renegades have been removed."

Jamison smiled, and toyed with an arrow that he was holding in his hand. It was a whistling arrow from the quiver of the girl known as the Rider of the Painted Stallion.

"I reckon we won't have much to fear from the Injuns, your Excellency," the wagon boss stated. "I understand from Clark Stuart here that a certain little lady who exercises a heap of influence over the Redskins in this section has made it pretty clear to the headmen of the tribes that they're to lay off all Palefaces."

"You mean the Rider," Don Luis murmured. "H'm, I have been hearing about her. The story goes that she was the daughter of an American couple who migrated to this country years ago and who were murdered by Indians during her childhood. It seems that she herself was spared and brought up by the savages, but the memory of her parents' fate persisted in her mind, and when she grew up she resolved to do her utmost to bring peace to the wilds and dispel the hatred between Paleface and Red Man in this frontier province."

Clark broke in on the conversation. "That's right, your Excellency," he mentioned. "She told me she cut adrift from the Indians, took to living alone and gradually built up a reputation for herself among the tribes as a supernatural figure whose word it would be well to obey. Then she started a campaign against the Dupray gang, realising that those renegades were a whole lot worse than the Indians, whom they often incited to massacre and bloodshed."

Don Luis eyed him inquiringly. "You are in her confidence, eh?" he observed. "And what of her murdered father and mother? Does she know who they were? All record of their name and origin seems to have been lost so far as the people of Santa Fe are concerned—except that they were definitely Americans."

Clark leaned forward on the Mexican official's desk.

"The Rider doesn't know her name, your Excellency," he answered. "But I've a rendezvous with her to-morrow and she's takin' me up into the mountains to a spot where she has some trinkets that belonged to her mother—includin' what sounds to me like a miniature in a locket. I'm aimin' to carry those trinkets back to Independence, and once in U.S. territory there's just a chance they'll help me to find out the Rider's identity. She may have relatives that would be willin' to look after her."

Jamison looked at him quickly. "Clark, we're pullin' up stakes for Independence to-morrow mornin'," he ejaculated. "Does this mean you ain't goin' back with us?"

"I've got to deliver this Trade Treaty to Washington, haven't I?" the younger man rejoined. "Sure I'm goin' back with you, Jamison, but I won't be leavin' Santa Fe with the column. I'll catch up with you on the trail. And, by the way, Bowie and Kit Carson tell me they won't be leavin' with the wagon train, either. In fact, they won't be goin' back with you at all."

Davy Crockett grinned sheepishly at Jamison.

"That's right," he said. "I kinda persuaded 'em to stay out here with me. Kit was all for it, and Bowie and me intend ter take the young 'un under our wing. We sorta figure that Kit Carson might make a pretty good scout one o' these days."

Sure enough the Jamison column moved eastward from Santa Fe the following morning without Clark, Kit or Bowie riding in attendance—though, in company with Davy Crockett, Kit and Bowie watched its departure.

Not so Clark Stuart. He was spurring in a northerly direction to keep his rendezvous with the Rider of the Painted Stallion, and when the Jamison wagon train had passed out of view the thoughts of little Kit Carson and his two companions turned upon the project that the U.S. Government agent had elected to undertake.

"I wonder if Clark will trace where the Rider came from and find out her name," Kit mused.

Jim Bowie glanced at the boy in a knowing fashion.

"There's no tellin', son," he drawled, chewing on a wad of tobacco. "But I got a hunch that whether he ever finds out her name or not he'll make it Mrs. Clark Stuart some day or other, for a scen the look in his eyes when he thought Dupray was gonna put a bullet through her."

THE END.

(By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)

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"DOUBLE DANGER"

(Continued from page 14)

"Now I think you're being smart. If you don't mind, I'll turn in. Good night."

Carolyn watched him go. Her mind was made up. She'd have a show at that safe herself. She didn't believe Bob Crane when he said it contained duplicates, and she didn't believe Taylor when he announced his intention of leaving it alone. She might as well do a bit of double-crossing herself.

The Gentleman, having shaken off the adoring Babs and bidden his host good-night, went to his room and switched on the light. Then he stood still in amazement. Sitting on his bed, holding a large revolver, was Roy West, looking very fierce.

"Hallo, Roy," he said easily, "why the pop-gun? Don't tell me the mosquitoes are that bad up here."

Roy approached him angrily. "You can't fool me, even if you have the others! I know what you really are."

Bob frowned. "You do?"

"I know your kind," snarled Roy accusingly. "You think it's smart to play with the affections of a sweet, innocent girl!"

Bob relaxed and the wary expression went out of his eyes as he tried hard not to smile.

"You mean Babs? Well, I can assure you there's absolutely nothing between us."

"Don't try to lie out of it! I saw you kiss her."

"Well, it doesn't sound very chivalrous," said Bob dryly, "but you saw her kissing me."

"You can't talk like that about her! Why, she's the sweetest, most wonderful girl in the world!"

"And a very idealistic and romantic one, to boot," said Bob. "Roy, she's not in love with me."

"Then why did she kiss you?" Roy scowled.

"Because she thinks she's in love with the Gentleman," said Bob gently, "and she hero-worships anything connected with him. I just happen to write about him, that's all."

"Well, she is kinda batty about those books," muttered Roy indelicately, "and she's always talking about suave, clever burglars—"

"Look," said Bob suddenly, "why don't you be one?"

Roy gaped. "I don't know anything about being a crook!"

"Neither does Babs, so it shouldn't be difficult to fool her."

Roy waved his gun dangerously. "Well—hey, that does sound like a pretty swell idea! Thanks, Mr. Crane, you're a regular guy, and any time I can do anything for you—"

Bob grinned, wincing. "You can put that thing away, if you don't mind."

"I'm sorry. I guess I got you wrong," growled Roy, flushing.

"Don't worry about it," said the Gentleman, ducking as the gun swung in his direction, and Roy, awkwardly apologising, bade him good-night and left. Sighing with relief at the departure of the lethal weapon, Bob Crane sat down on his bed. Just as well he had got Roy out of the way. He expected some excitement during the night.

The first to attack the safe was Taylor. Creeping cautiously into the room, he started as he trod on a loose board just outside the door. By the light of a flashlamp he started on the dial—but he was still fingering it when the board creaked again. With a muttered imprecation he flicked off his light, dashed to the french windows and crouched outside.

He couldn't see the new intruder. It was Carolyn, breathing fast with excitement. She was more successful than Taylor, being on the point of opening the safe when she, too, was interrupted by the creak of the board. Stamping her foot angrily, she tiptoed across the room and crawled under the knee-hole of a desk. In this cramped position she saw Fentriss come in clumsily, knocking into tables and chairs, with a lighted candle in his hand. It was soon obvious the valet was no expert cracksmen.

Carolyn began to yawn as he fiddled interminably with the dial and his candle began to burn low. To her horror she woke with a start and found that she had been asleep. Fentriss was jumping with pain. He had dozed against the safe and the candle had burned down to his hand.

Cursing him, the girl stifled an exclamation of joy when he gave it up as a bad job and crept out of the room.

Swiftly she went to the safe, opened it expertly and took out the jewels. Her eyes gleaming with triumph, she crept out of the room while Taylor still crouched outside.

Bob Crane, dozing on his bed, was awakened by a slight noise. He sat up suddenly.

"Wait a minute! You ought to be careful, walking around like that in your sleep. You're liable to hurt yourself!"

"It's an awful habit," came Carolyn's cool voice. "Even as a tiny baby I used to crawl all over the house in my sleep."

Crane put on his dressing-gown and followed her out on to the balcony.

"I'll bet you were a beautiful baby, and you haven't changed."

"By the way," she drawled, ignoring him, "you were right about those diamonds being the duplicates."

Gravely he shook his head. "You shouldn't have tried to open the safe. You should have believed me."

"Don't Bob," she said with a catch in her voice. "You'll make me feel sorry I—"

"Sorry for what?"

"Well, I hid the duplicates in your room, and I'll see that Theron finds them unless you give me the real diamonds."

She gazed at him wide-eyed, expecting anger; but he only smiled.

"No you won't, because I hid the real ones in your room!"

"You're bluffing!" Carolyn gasped.

"No I'm not."

"You're contemptible!" Furiously she flung the words at him and darted back to her own room. The Gentleman swung back into his room and began a swift search for the duplicates she had planted. Each drawer of the dressing-table came out. Working fast, he found the jewel-case, jammed behind the top one. No sooner had he done so than knocks sounded on his door. He started, put the case into his dressing-gown pocket, and drawled sleepily:

"Yeh?"

"Bob! Open up! The safe's been robbed!"

It was Theron, who had gone to the safe and noted with satisfaction that

October 1st, 1933.

his trap had been sprung. Taking off his dressing-gown, Bob, rubbing his eyes, let him in.

"Come on," said Theron, "we've got to rouse the others."

"I'll get some clothes on," said Bob. Theron gave him no chance to get rid of the duplicates.

"Just put on your robe."

Shrugging, Bob followed him as he knocked thunderously and went into Roy's room.

"Wake up, Roy!"

"G'way," mumbled Roy. "Lemme 'lone."

"Come on, get up," snapped Theron. "Someone has stolen the Konjer diamonds!"

Roy sat up.

"What? How did you discover it?"

"Never mind that. I want everybody downstairs."

Roy, all excitement now, huddled into his dressing-gown and dashed out after his host. Bob, grinning, seized his chance. Under Roy's bedclothes went the embarrassing case.

The Gentleman Wins

"DAVID, it's preposterous!" said Mrs. Theron, speaking for the rudely awakened group in the library. "Why, Carolyn, Bob, and Roy are our friends, and I'm sure that the servants—"

"I'm sorry, dear," said Theron firmly, "but I'm right. Whichever of you opened the safe left evidence that will convict you. I had a camera focused on the safe from over here." He walked to a bookcase facing it. Carolyn paled slightly, Fentriss gulped, and Taylor frowned as he placed a camera on the table.

"David, how could you take a picture in the dark?"

"Infra-red rays. They're invisible to the human eye, but not to the film. The camera and the rays operated whenever the safe was touched. The rays came from between the books. Now, the guilty party might just as well confess."

Sternly he looked around. Bob caught his valet's eye. Fentriss nodded, winked, and edged to the light-switch near by.

"Come on," snapped Theron. "I have the picture right here. Which one of you—"

Then the women screamed as the lights went out. There was a general mix-up in the darkness. When Theron had snapped on the lights again he swiftly eyed everybody. Babs was clinging to Bob Crane. Roy was sprawling on an overturned chair. Angriely the Commissioner picked up the plate in his handkerchief. It had been wrenched out of the camera.

"Exposed!" he snarled disgustedly. And added wearily: "Well, you can all go back to your rooms."

Bob Crane grinned. Babs looked up at him adoringly.

"Isn't it exciting?"

"You'd better watch Roy," he suggested.

Her eyes widened.

"Why, he couldn't have!"

"You never can tell," said the Gentleman portentously.

Handling the plate carefully, Theron went up to Ainsley's room and told him the events of the night.

"And I didn't have a picture after all."

Ainsley jerked upright.

"You didn't!"

"No," grinned Theron. "It isn't practical. Even with infra-red you have to take a time exposure. Besides, all I wanted was finger-prints, and I got them."

"David, I owe you an apology."

said the jeweller admiringly. "Your plan was sheer genius! You're a brilliant man."

While the Commissioner was dusting the plate with grey powder, Roy West was having the shock of his life. Something hard in his bed soon made itself evident. With amazement he pulled out the jewel-case, and Babs, outside on the terrace, following up the idea put into her head by the Gentleman, saw him in the act. Roy guiltily hid the case as she stepped into the room.

"Roy West, how could you deceive me all this time?"

The youth laughed self-consciously.

"Oh, you mean this! I just found it."

"Don't make it worse by lying," said Babs dramatically. "I know you're the Gentleman!"

Roy swallowed hard.

"The Gentleman? Are you out of your mind?"

"And to think," she said tragically, "that I'm in love with a crook!"

"Are you in love with me?" gulped Roy, jumping up.

"Don't touch me," she whispered intensely, "not until you've told me about your life of crime."

Roy grinned, then assumed a vicious scowl.

"Well, it seems I started when I was but a mere boy, robbing my little baby brother's bank, and—"

"How dreadful!" gasped Babs, fascinated.

"And stealing pennies from poor old blind men, and— Should I go on?"

Babs shuddered delightedly.

"Oh, go on, please!"

Roy gulped, frowning grimly.

"And then it was a road of crime from one end to the other. I was about sixteen years old when I blew up my first bank. Then I was only Public Enemy No. 18, and in about three years I was Public Enemy No. 13—"

While Babs was drinking in this terrible tale of crime, her father, his face tragic, was handing the plate and a magnifying-glass to Gordon Ainsley.

"Why, there are four different kinds of prints here!"

"What?" roared Ainsley. "Let me congratulate you on being the world's worst jackass!"

"But I didn't think four people would make a grab for it!" protested Theron miserably.

Ainsley stumped to and fro on his plaster cast.

"Think! Ha, if you think you can think, you're labouring under a delusion! If you had any brains you'd have—"

"Now, now, don't get all wrought up. We can still catch him."

"You couldn't catch a pickpocket stealing your own wallet! What you need is a correspondence course on how to become a detective! I'm going back to town. Here, help me to get this anchor off!"

Slumping furiously on the bed, he wrestled with the huge cast. Theron, full of disappointment, helped him.

In the Gentleman's room, Fentriss was urging his boss to make a run for it. Crane smiled.

"I wouldn't think of leaving here. I'm having a very good time."

"I'd hardly call it that, sir," muttered Fentriss. "This place will be overrun with police in an hour."

"Relax, Fentriss. Think of the laughs we'll have. What are you worrying about? We're in the clear."

"I—I—oh, nothing, sir. It's just my nerves, I suppose—" He broke off with a slight yelp and ducked behind the bed as the door opened. Grim-

facéd, Taylor came in and glared at the nonchalant Gentleman.

"I want those diamonds,"
 "What diamonds?" said Bob.
 "The ones you took from the safe."
 "You sound very confident," drawled Bob.

"I am," grinned Taylor. "If I don't get them, I'm going to have a little talk with Theron."

"You'll talk yourself right into gaol."

"That's right," Taylor scowled. "But I'll take Carolyn with me."

That got home. Bob's eyes narrowed. Then Taylor swung round as Fentriss popped into sight, covering him with a gun.

"Stiek 'em up, dogface!"

"Put that away, Fentriss," said Bob quietly.

"It's our only chance, sir," protested the valet.

"Do as I tell you!" Crane turned to Taylor. "All right, but you'll have to give me time to get them."

"Why, where are they?" demanded Taylor, eyes gleaming.

"In Theron's room," said Bob, "under his mattress."

Taylor sauntered to the door.

"I have to hand it to you—you have a lot of nerve. But get them! I'll be back in fifteen minutes."

Fentriss gaped at his master.

"Couldn't we pull a fast one on him, sir?"

"We are," Bob grunted. "We'll give him exactly what he asked for—the duplicates, if I can find them."

He was thinking about looking for the fakes when Babs came in, pulling the sheepish Roy with her.

"Bob, something awful has happened, and we need your help!"

"What's wrong?" The girl glanced at Fentriss. Taking the hint, Bob said:

"That will be all, Fentriss."

"Bob, it's dreadful," Babs whispered. "It just breaks my heart to tell you this—but Roy is the Gentleman!"

"The Gentleman?" gasped Bob, while Roy smirked and winked at him. "I can't believe it!"

"Yes, it's true," said Roy manfully. "Here are the diamonds." And he handed the delighted crackman the case containing the duplicates.

"Bob, please be brave," said Babs earnestly. "I love Roy, not you."

The Gentleman sighed gustily.

"Well, I guess I shall have to bear it for your sake, but it won't be easy. Are you sure you are in love with this—this thief?"

Ardently Babs replied:
 "Oh, yes, and he's promised to reform, all for me."

"And we're going to be married right away!" exclaimed Roy.

"Congratulations to you both."

Roy shuffled his feet.

"Thanks for everything, Mr. Crane."

"Thank you," said Bob with deep meaning, glancing down at the duplicates. When he had got rid of the young love-birds, having promised to return the diamonds to Theron, to divert suspicion from Roy, Fentriss came in, smiling dreamily. "Isn't love a wonderful thing, sir?"

"What do you know about it?"

"I listened at the keyhole, sir," said Fentriss shamelessly. "Everything is hotsy-totsy now, sir, isn't it?"

"Meaning what?" asked Bob.

"Well, sir, we give Commissioner Theron the duplicates, make him think Mr. West is guilty, and retain the real ones."

"You forget," said Bob dryly, "that we have only two sets of diamonds. If we don't give Taylor one he'll talk,

and if we don't give Theron one Roy and Babs will make a fuss."

"But, sir," groaned the valet, "that leaves us without any diamonds!"

Crane nodded.

"That's nice headwork, Fentriss! And may I suggest that you look about for a new instructor? You see, I've about decided to retire the Gentleman and just be Robert Crane."

Fentriss swayed against the wall.

"But you've done very well in your profession, sir. The police haven't

—"

"I'm not thinking of the police. I'm thinking about Miss Morgan." A knock sounded at the door. "Taylor must be worried. He's ahead of time."

It was not Taylor, but Carolyn who came in agitatedly.

"Bob, the Commissioner is coming to pay you a visit!"

"It's getting to be a habit with him," Bob grumbled.

"He just came to my room," she said, "and told me he had my fingerprints on the plate-holder."

"You didn't admit anything!"

She smiled at him.

"No, I thought he was bluffing, because he would have yours, too, when you pulled it out of the camera. I want to thank you," she said, lowering her eyes, "for ruining that negative."

"Oh, I had a selfish motive," Bob grinned. "I've always imagined it would be rather boring spending my honeymoon alone."

Flushing, Carolyn laughed gaily. Then Taylor came in, shutting the door carefully behind him.

"So I was right about you two love-birds! Well, it doesn't matter. Did you get them?"

"I did," said the Gentleman.

Carolyn stared icily at Taylor.

"What is the meaning of this?"

Fentriss blurted:
 "This crook threatened to expose you unless Mr. Crane gives up the real diamonds."

Carolyn smiled.

"It's a pretty big price to pay, Bob."

"It might be worth it," he said lightly.

"Come on, break it up!" interrupted Taylor. "Where are they?"

Bob handed him the duplicates. Taylor turned to the door, opening the box.

Then a thought struck him. Grinning, he swung

round. "If you don't mind, I'll take the other set, too."

Bob sat on the edge of the table.

"Oh, you think you will, do you? I haven't got them."

"I'm ashamed of you, professor," grated Taylor. "You wouldn't want to see this little girl slaving in a laundry, washing socks for a warden?"

Crane shrugged.

"Get them, Fentriss."

Grumbling, the valet went to a picture of Theron hanging on the wall and took the case containing the Konjer diamonds from behind it.

"Not bad," said Bob. "I would never have thought of hiding them right under the Commissioner's nose!"

Taylor scowled.

"Come on, Gilhooley. Give! Thanks—and I hope she can't cook!"

"It doesn't matter," Bob grinned. "I

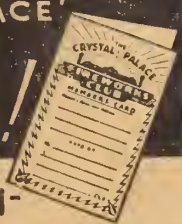
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can." He grinned more widely when Taylor opened the door and was confronted by Commissioner Theron. The police chief's eyes narrowed. He snapped to the crook: "Let me have them!"

With that, the room exploded into action. Taylor lashed out, smashing Theron back with a blow on the jaw. Bob, with one leap, grabbed Taylor and flung him right across the room. As the crook went over with the table, Bob went after him. Fighting madly, they rolled over and over on the floor. Taylor fought like a wild cat, but when the doorway filled with startled servants Bob had got him pinned down.

"What is it, Mr. Theron?" gasped the butler.

Holding his jaw, Theron snapped:

"We've caught the Gentleman, that's all!"

"You can't pin that on me!" screamed Taylor. "He's the Gentleman!"

"That's right, David," said Bob quietly, releasing Taylor. "I'm the Gentleman."

"He's trying to get publicity for his books," cried Carolyn. "I'm the Gentleman!"

"Nothing of the sort, sir," said Fentriss stoutly. "She's in love with him, sir. She's trying to protect him. I'm the Gentleman, sir!"

Babs cut in shrilly:

"Oh, you're all lying! Roy is the Gentleman, aren't you, dearest?"

Roy looked brave.

"Yes, sure I am!"

"That's ridiculous!" growled Bob Crane. "I'm the one you want."

The babel of confessions started again. Theron grasped his forehead.

"Stop it! Stop it! You're driving me crazy!"

Ainsley pushed his way in.

"Here, give me those diamonds before I find out you're the Gentleman!"

"Your confessions aren't worth a nickel," said Theron grimly, nodding to Taylor. "I caught him with the diamonds."

"You can't convict me!" howled Taylor. "That's circumstantial evidence!"

"Well, that's good enough for me!" snarled the harassed commissioner. "And you'd better shut up, or you'll get life! Now, take him downstairs. I want to talk to Carolyn and Bob alone." When Taylor, protesting loudly, had been dragged away, Theron turned to the silent pair meaningly. "Did I hear you say you were going to settle down on the Riviera?"

"Yes," said Bob swiftly, "and I'm going to write a book entitled, 'The End of The Gentleman.'"

"Yes? Well, I want to suggest you take Fentriss along and that you leave immediately." Theron turned at the door. "And, oh, yes—send me a copy of the book, will you? I'll be interested to know how the Gentleman comes to his end."

When the smiling Commissioner had gone, Fentriss groaned:

"Are you really going to the Riviera, sir?"

Bob turned to Carolyn.

"Are we?"

"What d'you think?" she said softly.

Bob clasped her in his arms.

"I think we're practically there, as soon as I straighten things out with the Commissioner!"

(By permission of RKO Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Preston Foster and Whitney Bourne.)

October 1st, 1938.

"THE DEVIL'S PARTY"

(Continued from page 18)

"I'm going, Malone," he said, "but we'll meet again."

Alone with Marty, Donovan said sadly:

"I wish we could make him see what a great wrong he's doing you, old friend."

Malone shook his big head like some puzzled dog.

"He isn't wrong, really. If it hadn't been for me, Joe would be here right now. I didn't kill him, Jerry—but my hired hoodlums did. Joe caught them covering up dirty work I was responsible for— He snapped his fingers in that way he had when vexed or impatient. "What am I going to do, Jerry?"

Donovan received the confession in his usual quiet way. He had half guessed at it. He spoke unhurriedly:

"Bad, Marty—bad. But maybe I can help you both. I'll try." He thought of Helen—perhaps she might become peacemaker?

But Mike laid a formal charge against Malone at H.Q., and the newspapers got hold of it.

Marty was glaring at his copy of the paper. Great block headlines:

"BROTHER DECLARES JOE O'MARA KILLED TO COVER MURDER OF PLAYBOY BREWSTER."

Below in block print was the rest of it.

"Martin Malone, big-shot night-club owner, is to be charged by Michael O'Mara with the murders of Joseph

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE BOY FROM BARNARD'S"

Geoffrey Braemar

Freddie Bartholomew

Terry O'Mulvaney . . . Mickey Rooney

Captain Briggs . . . Charles Coburn

"Crusty" Jelks . . . Herbert Mundin

Albert Baker . . . Terry Kilburn

Doris Clandon . . . Gale Sondergaard

Benny Potter . . . Peter Lawford

Tommy Thrums . . . Walter Tetley

Ned Saunders . . . Peter Ellis

Jim Hampstead . . . George Zucco

Inspector Scott . . . Matthew Boulton

John Cartwright . . . John Burton

Mrs. Briggs . . . Emma Dunn

Mr. Burke . . . Charles Irwin

"DOUBLE DANGER"

Bob Crane . . . Preston Foster

Carolyn Morgan . . . Whitney Bourne

Gordon Ainsley . . . Donald Meek

Commissioner Theron

Samuel S. Hinds

Taylor . . . Paul Guilfoyle

Fentriss . . . Cecil Kellaway

Babs Theron . . . June Johnson

Roy West . . . Arthur Lake

Mrs. Theron . . . Edythe Elliott

"THE DEVIL'S PARTY"

Marty Malone . . . Victor McLaglen

Mike O'Hara . . . William Gargan

Jerry Donovan . . . Paul Kelly

Helen McCoy . . . Beatrice Roberts

Sam . . . Frank Jelks

Joe O'Mara . . . John Gallaudet

Jim Diamond . . . Joseph Downing

Webster . . . Arthur Hoyt

Hank Andrews . . . David Oliver

Sergeant Ender . . . Ed Gargan

James Brewster . . . Gordon Elliott

O'Mara, Emergency Squad patrolman, and James Brewster, wealthy playboy of this city."

Traps—and Trapped

LATE that evening a call came for Helen and she went to the phone, thinking and hoping it might be from Mike to say he would withdraw the charges. A friendly voice sounded: "Is that Miss McCoy, who knows Mike O'Mara?"

Helen answered eagerly. "Yes, Helen McCoy speaking. What is it?"

The friendly voice continued: "O'Mara's over at my place in pretty bad shape. Went sick on duty and seems kinder delirious. He's calling for you, Miss McCoy, to leave the Cigarette Club and come right along. It's Hotel Emerald, room one-seven-one."

"I'll come right away," Helen answered.

She waited for the line to clear, then rang up Donovan.

"Jerry—Mike's ill. He's at Hotel Emerald—room one-seven-one. I'm going right away, and want you to meet me there. Thanks, Jerry!"

Soon after this call, Diamond and his fellow thugs walked in on Malone. There were four of them; but they were tidily dressed and well behaved. One was carrying a suitcase—Diamond asked for Malone, who came down to them in the lounge. He gave them a comprehensive glance.

"I was just going to bed," he said. "Tiring sort of day. Have a drink, anybody?"

"No, thanks," Diamond replied for all. "We alone here, Marty? Right! We've got a soft touch lined up and want to cut you in on it. We want to make friends again."

"Always thinking of my welfare," said Malone, sitting down.

Diamond took no notice. "Listen, Marty—they're holding a big Ice Carnival for charity at the Polar Gardens to-night."

"I know it. What's that to me?"

"At midnight they transfer the box-office take to an armoured car for the bank," spoke Diamond in purring tones. "Well, here's the idea. They freeze their ice at the Polar, and there's a big ammonia plant in the basement. Sam's got something here in the bag"—he jerked a hand towards Sam—"gas masks, see? Those in the armoured car can't take the fumes when we open up the plant. But we can."

Malone chuckled throatily. "You must think me a sap! First, you frame O'Mara to bump me off—then you think up a erude idea like this to finish me. Nothing doing!"

Diamond smiled thinly. "Then I've got to play Miss McCoy. She dropped in for a chat at a friend's place. Like to call her?"

Malone got up. "What's all this?"

"Ring up Hotel Emerald—Hank Andrews, room one-seven-one," Diamond told him. "We won't listen."

Malone hurried to the call-box, got the number and rang through. He shouted:

"I'm Martin Malone! Miss McCoy there?"

At once he heard Helen.

"Marty, that you? They're holding me here—"

The line went dead, someone had stopped the call. Diamond's cold eyes were fixed on Malone's as he came back to them.

"We've nothing against McCoy.

(Continued on page 28)

ARE YOU IN THE GREAT STAMP GAME ?

500 FREE FOOTBALLS



for Scoring "Goals" with FOOTER-STAMPS

LOOK! GREAT NEWS! The October "Footer-Stamps" competition starts this week, and you should start with it, because the number of Free Footballs to be won this month has been increased to FIVE HUNDRED!

"Footer-Stamps" are being given every week in "BOY'S CINEMA"—they're just pictures of six different actions on the football field, and as in previous months, the object of this great competition stamp-game is to score as many "goals" as possible—and by the end of October for this month's prizes.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.** (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal," you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score, and there are ten more stamps here to start you off for this month's competition. Cut them out—there's one good "goal" among them straight away, and the other stamps may fit in with some you had already: or you can swap them with pals, and so on!—then keep your collection until you get some more goal-scoring stamps in next week's issue. If you have any odd stamps left over from the two previous competitions they can be included, too.

If you want to score some other quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in such papers as **SPORTS BUDGET** and **TRIUMPH** each week. There are more "goals" waiting in those papers this very week!

"Footer-Stamps" are being collected all over the country—see that you're in it. 500 Footballs are going to be awarded in the October competition for the readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. So don't send any stamps yet, wait until we tell you how and where at the end of the month. There's nothing to pay remember

RULES: 500 Footballs will be awarded in the October contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given later). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B. "Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "GEM," "MAGNET," "MODERN BOY," "DETECTIVE WEEKLY," "TRIUMPH," "WILD WEST WEEKLY," "THRILLER," "SPORTS BUDGET" and "CHAMPION.")

OVERSEAS READERS! Your pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

TEN MORE "FOOTER-STAMPS!"



And More Free Footer-Stamps Coming in Next Week's "Boy's Cinema"!

"THE DEVIL'S PARTY"

(Continued from page 26)

She'll be let go—soon as the job's done, Marty."

Malone thought for a moment, glancing at the clock.

"You win. Let's go."

At H.Q. Emergency Squad a call came for O'Mara. A cheery voice asked him:

"You O'Mara? Good! I'm the guy who sent you that letter and Brewster's stopped cheque. Hot news for you, pal—your friend Malone is going to stick up Polar Gardens to-night at just after twelve. There's going to be fun."

"I'll check up on that," Mike said. "Okay, pal," laughed the cheery voice. "Be seeing you!"

Just at this moment Jerry Donovan was tapping at the door of room one-seven-one at Hotel Emerald. A round-face gentleman answered him.

"I'm looking for Miss McCoy," said Jerry.

"Not here, sir. This is my room—Hank Andrews, traveller in silks."

"Oh, sorry!" said Jerry. "I must have made a mistake." He smiled at Mr. Andrews and moved away. He walked down a flight to the next floor, went quietly to the wall telephone and rang up.

"Operator, give me the house detective quickly. That the house detective? Right! There's a little trouble in room one-seven-one, a Mister Andrews, whom I recognise as a convict just out of prison. I'm Father Donovan. Yes, bring someone up with you."

A few minutes later Mr. Hank Andrews, travelling in silk, was being escorted with another prisoner to the police car called to the hotel door. Jerry was in "one-seven-one" hearing Helen's frantic story.

"They've set a trap for Mike and Marty at the Polar Gardens! It's a pay-off for the gang. They plan to get them both killed in a hold-up. They're going to open the ammonia plant—"

"Tell me as we go," said Jerry, always calm and unhurried.

Inside the back yard of the ice rink, Diamond and his four thugs were standing at an iron shed-like building lettered "Danger. Ammonia Plant. Keep out!" Malone stood a little apart, watchful and wary. Diamond knocked at the closed door of the shed.

"Can I see you a moment?" he called. "It's from the management." The engineer, in leather jacket and overalls, came out. At once one of the thugs had an arm about his neck and

a grip of his right hand. Another caught and wrenched his left arm; then, choking in agony, he was knocked on the head by the waiting Sam and flung down unconscious. The gang ran into the plant-room, and Diamond spoke hissing to the fourth man.

"Listen, Sullivan—that door there leads to the back corridor. When I give the word open it. When the fumes get good and thick, you yell and start the panic. Then we'll rush the armoured car—" He checked himself. "There it is, just come into the yard. Run back for your mask."

"Okay, I got it," came the surly answer. "Don't talk so much."

Diamond turned to Sam. "Sam, when I give the word—burst the pipes open. Put on your mask." He spoke low: "Here comes O'Mara—now we've got 'em both!"

He gave the signal—a wave of his hand and a low whistle. Sullivan opened the corridor door, waiting for the first puff of gas. Sam, spanner fixed, wrenched the feed pipes apart, and a pungent smell was followed by dusky clouds of vapour. The fourth man crept up behind the watching Malone and lifted a thick rubber stick.

But Malone had eyes in the back of his head seemingly—he turned swiftly and smashed his great fist in the fellow's face, felling him like a log. The fumes surged upwards, and Malone, maskless, felt his eyes fill with water; he plucked out his handkerchief and held it over nose and mouth just as Mike O'Hara, beside the armoured car, spotted him and drew his gun. He stepped up close, speaking gruffly.

"Okay, Marty. I got you this time."

The fumes were rising now and enveloping all in a kind of dense, stinging fog. Mike aimed at Malone's breast, point blank; then felt a quick grip on his wrist from someone behind him. He guessed at once.

"Let go, Jerry!"

"No!"

They struggled in the increasing mist, while Diamond, aware that his plans had gone wrong, drew his gun and fired at random. His chance shot caught Malone, who was descending upon him, a great fist clenched ready to smash in that white sneering mouth. The bullet did nothing to save Diamond, who was battered down, just as Sam, mask awry, ran out of the shed to fall flat at their feet.

Through the mist came shouts and cries—the guard at the armoured car tried to see and understand what was going on; then, when the fumes reached them, they stood back, guns drawn. Jerry twisted the pistol out of Mike's hand, and it fell with a clatter near Diamond's pawing hand as he strove to free himself from Malone.

Snake-like fingers closed on the gun, got it, and held it. The shot at close range went right through Malone's body, bringing him down with a gurgling, dreadful groan.

"Mike!" came Jerry's agonised cry. "Get to him—help me pull him away!"

Their enmity forgotten, they gaspingly stooped to pull Malone out of the fumes, thinning now since someone had managed to turn off the main tap of the great container. The two friends drew Malone out of the poisonous vapours into the clean night air at the far end of the yard.

"Gently," whispered Jerry. "He's badly hurt."

They heard Helen calling to the guard; then calling them all three in quick, terrified accents:

"Marty! Marty! Mike—Jerry!"

Donovan whispered, as Malone's eyes opened a little.

"How are you, Marty?"

Helen found them; she knelt by Malone—his dying glances took them in one by one. He couldn't speak; his breath was failing; his heart pounding in his breast towards its last beating throb. But his unflinching courage remained—his right hand twitched upward, thumb tip to the tip of his forefinger—the old "okay" sign of long, long ago.

The others, grouped on their knees around him, gave the sign in response, trying to smile down on the flickering soul still manifest in those slowly dimming eyes.

Jerry's lips moved in prayer as Marty Malone, hard living yet soft-hearted, passed to the other life.

A throng of happy boys in a big gymnasium; jumping, playing ball, swinging on parallel bars, boxing, and laughing as they punched and missed, or punched and got home. Donovan smiling at them from the door as he comes in. He raises his right hand, thumb tip to tip of forefinger.

"How's that, boys?"

Comes a chorus of young, happy voices:

"Okay, Father!"

Over the door is a bronze plaque on which is lettered:

THE MARTIN MALONE
MEMORIAL PLAYGROUND FOR
BOYS OF ALL AGES.

(A New Universal Picture controlled throughout the United Kingdom and Eire by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Victor McLaglen with William Gargan and Paul Kelly.)

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

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Boy's CINEMA

2^d
EVERY
TUESDAY
N° 997
JAN. 21st 1939



A LONG
COMPLETE STORY

Starring WALLACE BEERY & MICKEY ROONEY



Stablemates

A young stable boy becomes the owner of a horse that always goes lame when racing. One night a drunken old hobo insists upon dossing in the stall, and he tells the boy what is wrong with the animal—he was once a famous veterinary surgeon—and thus began the strange and exciting friendship of a man, a boy and a horse. Starring Wallace Beery and Mickey Rooney



A Final Try-out

YOUNG MICKEY, the stable lad, was busy bandaging a horse's front legs. His freckle-face was very serious and intent, because he was a hard working youngster with a passion for horses.

The racing for the second day of the Spring Meeting at a famous track was not due to start for some hours, and the place, except for a few owners, trainers and those employed as cleaners and clearers-up, was deserted. Amazing the amount of paper, orange-peel and other debris that spectators leave around after a meeting. A thick-set, stooping figure was shuffling through the stands with a sack. A battered old felt hat was pulled anyhow over his mass of tousled sandy hair; his shirt was patched, and his dirty calico trousers had seen better days; whilst the dusty old boots were all hursting out at the toes.

The stooping figure straightened for a moment, and one saw a large red face, heavy, bloodshot eyes, an immense nose and bushy eyebrows. The old fellow gave a furtive look round because he was not one of the regular staff of cleaners and was expecting any minute to get chucked out. He was scrounging round for cigarette-ends, bits of food and anything that he could find. Any thing of use he dropped into a very dirty looking sack.

Young Mickey appeared from the stables, and he was proudly leading a horse. He was met near the rails by the owner and the latter's chief jockey. Mickey was helped to the saddle and at a given signal was told to run the course. The apprentice—he had never been allowed to ride in a real race—touched the animal and was off to a good start. Gale, the thin-faced man

with the furtive manner sniffed as he glanced at his stop watch.

"She was the best two-year-old I'd ever seen," he announced. "Then she started stopping and it cost me my shirt." The jockey gave an understanding nod, but wisely made no comment.

"Come on, honey!" Mickey was shouting to the horse. "Show the boss how good you are."

"She's moving along this morning, Mr. Gale." Cliff, the jockey, dared to remark when the horse had travelled three-quarters of the track.

"She'd better show something this morning," viciously said Gale, his face ugly, "or she'll be in the glue factory this afternoon."

"Don't stop, honey don't stop this morning." Young Mickey sobbed as he felt the horse falter and weaken in her stride. "Make another effort, baby." The horse seemed to understand and began striding out once more. "That's the girl—keep it going!"

The horse seemed to come down the straight at a terrific pace. The owner and the jockey were amazed at this burst of speed, which was due mainly to the seductive tongue of the clever young apprentice. When Mickey pulled up he patted the sweating neck.

"You did it, baby—you did it!" he chucked. "I'll bet the boss' eyes are popping out of his head this morning."

The old wastrel had ceased scrounging among the litter to watch the try-out, and once or twice he nodded his head as if he understood a lot more about this trial than anybody else. He sniffed, scratched his head, muttered something to himself when the try-out was finished and went back to his foraging.

Gale was enthusiastic. One-thirty-eight! It was marvellous time. It looked as if the horse after that treatment by the vet had regained her old form. Gale had lost a small fortune at this meeting, and here was a chance to get it all back and plenty more besides. Both the owner and the jockey were amazed when Mickey asked for the ride.

"She knows me, and she likes me." "We can't take any chances on you," gruffly retorted Gale, and turned to the jockey. "Do you think you can keep her moving?"

"I'll keep her moving if I have to tear her apart."

"Don't use a whip on her, Cliff," Mickey cried, his eyes blazing. "She'll give you everything."

"You trying to tell me how to ride a horse?" snarled Cliff.

"I'm not trying to tell you how to ride her, but I know Lady Q."

"All right all right!" Gale cried testily, pushing the jockey and the apprentice apart. "I won't have all this arguing. Of course Cliff gets the ride, but you won't be overlooked if you keep your mouth shut about this time to-day. Don't feed her much to night, and nothing at all to-morrow. Give her a little water every hour or so, and check her plates."

The owner and the jockey walked away, and the boy's small face was screwed up into a vicious scowl as he stared after them.

"If he uses a whip on you, Lady Q," was his vow, "I'll punch him right in the nose."

Gale left his jockey near one of the dressing-rooms and made his way through one of the stands towards the

car park. At the gate, Terry, the wastrel, was lounging.

"Mr. Gale, excuse me." His voice was thick. "Can I speak to you a minute?"

"What about?" Gale asked, turning up his nose in disgust.

"Your horse." Terry grinned from ear to ear. "She ran that mile in pretty good time, didn't she?"

"Yes—if you call one-forty-five good."

"About one-thirty-nine or thereabouts." Terry shook his head. "But that's no guarantee that she'll repeat. You gonna run her to-morrow?"

"What if I am?"

"I can ensure her winning."

"How could you?"

Again that grin.

"Well, I've got a little service I render horse-owners now and then." A quiet chuckle. "Works like magic."

"I'm afraid my plans for the future don't include going to gaol," sneered Gale.

"Oh, there ain't a chance of that happening," Terry answered, with several decisive shakes of his big head. "It don't even show in the saliva. It's a special formula all my own. The only cost to you is that you put ten bucks on her nose for me, that's all."

"I'll think it over." Gale was partly convinced by the man's tone and assurance. "Where could I find you in the morning?"

"I'll meet you over at—" Terry glanced furtively sideways as he heard footfalls, and saw a clean-shaven, elderly man approaching. "Thanks ever so ranch for the information," he said loudly. "I'll get a bet down, Mr. Gale. Thank you!" He shuffled away.

The owner glanced round, and his furtive face was creased with an assumed smile.

"Hallo, Barney!" he called out to the race-track detective.

"Morning, Mr. Gale!" answered Barney Donovan. "Who is that fellow?"

"I don't know. Is there anything wrong?"

"No—just haven't seen him around here before. Something familiar about him."

"He stopped me and wanted the usual thing—a tip."

"Did you give it to him?"

"I could use one myself," laughed Gale, and hastened away, thankful that Barney Donovan had not overheard all the conversation.

The Also-ran

MICKEY got Lady Q to bed early. He was a young enthusiast where this horse was concerned. He regarded her as the pick of all horse-flesh, and he was going to do his level best to see that she won on the morrow.

"You get yourself a good night's sleep," the boy was saying. "There'll be a lot of people looking at you to-morrow. When we prance into the winner's circle we don't want any circles under your eyes."

"Does she sleep any better if you tell her a bed-time story?" a lazy voice drawled.

"What do you want?" Mickey whipped round and gazed angrily at the big fellow lounging over the lower flap of the stable door.

"Where can I find Mr. Gale?"

"Well, I couldn't say. He's liable to be around here most any time. What do you want with him?"

"Oh, me and him's got a little business together."

"He'll be around in the morning." Mickey moved forward to close up the stable. "You can see him then."

But Terry anticipated such a move, and reaching over opened the lower flap. Calmly he walked in and slung a heavy bundle on the straw.

"Okay—I'll wait."

"Not in here, you won't!" stormed Mickey. "You can come round at seven in the morning."

"Hey, listen—I'm busted!" Terry argued in his mild yet determined manner. "Do you want me to sleep out there in the cold? Would you mind giving a guy a flop?"

"To-night I do. She's going to run to-morrow, and strangers make her nervous."

"Well, she won't mind me, I don't snore," Terry studied the horse speculatively. "Besides, I'm here to help her win."

"She don't need no help."

Terry grinned.

"She don't?" he asked, and then laughed in a manner that irritated the stable-lad. "The only way she could win would be for all the other horses to drop dead."

"Now, look here!" Mickey made a futile effort to push the big fellow out of the stall. "You get out of here, or I'll call a stable cop."

"Yeah?" Terry glanced towards the rough hammock slung against the wall. "Does the cop know that you and the lady are keeping house here? Now, listen, buddy, if Mr. Gale knew that you were rude to me he'd be pretty sore. You just calm down and I'll promise not to tell him. Also I'll promise not to break every bone in your body." His tone had become aggressive. "Now

Terry dragged off another old boot to reveal an even more offensive sock.

come on, Shrimp, and make up that straw."

Realising that the tramp had the better of him, Mickey could do nothing, so he told his unwelcome visitor to make up his own bed. Terry just grinned, and, picking up his old sack, slung it on to the hammock. He announced that as the youngster was so inhospitable he would sleep in his bed. Mickey argued and threatened, but in vain, and at last Terry grew tired.

"Oh, go pound your ear before I pound it for you."

Terry then climbed into the hammock and proceeded to divest himself of his boots. Mickey glowered his disgust at the sight of the socks with the toes bulging through.

"You dirty, rotten old tramp!"

"Now ain't that nice coming from a little fellow like you!" Terry dragged off another old boot to reveal an even more offensive sock. "You're looking at yourself thirty years from now. That's what comes of following the race-horses."

"Oh, yeah?" Mickey said with a sneer. "Well, the best thing that ever happened to me since I left school was getting that horse to take care of."

"Cut out the cracks and hit the hay," growled Terry, as he flopped back in the hammock. "Nighty-nighty, little boy!"

But the hammock was not made for vast bulks like Terry, and the rotten old rope gave with a snap and the tramp crashed down on the floor. Mickey laughed derisively, but his hope that the



tramp would now depart was short-lived because Terry proceeded to gather a lot of straw together and make himself a bed on the floor.

Mickey made himself comfortable as far away from the tramp as possible, and just before he switched out the lights he saw his companion take out a bottle and take a hearty swig. The boy snorted his disgust, and a few minutes later was fast asleep.

The boy was the first to wake, and with a look of loathing at the tramp grabbed up his coat and tiptoed to the door. He was going to have a wash. In his haste to be gone he did not notice the dollar note and the few odd coins that slid from his coat-pocket. Some minutes later Terry woke, rubbed his big face and sat up, and the first thing he saw was the dollar note. His fingers went out towards the money, hesitated, and then slowly closed round the bill. He was gone by the time the boy got back to the stall.

Gale was pleased to hear that his horse had passed a good night, and when Cliff reported that the animal seemed in fine fettle decided to have a final gamble against his losing streak. When the tote was opened he lunged around and watched the figures. Nobody was backing Lady Q, so at the last minute he took out his note-case and put every cent he had managed to raise on his horse. A thousand bucks and the tote ought to pay about a hundred to one. At the same moment Terry was investing the dollar he had lifted. There was a horse in the same race as Lady Q named Yellow Jack, and a darkie bookie gave him twenty to one. With a satisfied grin Terry ambled down to the rails to watch the race.

The big fellow was lounging there with his old hat over his eyes when small elbows heat a tattoo on his ribs, and he grinned when he saw it was Mickey. The youngster stuck out his lower lip in his vicious way.

"Now you're gonna see how wrong a guy can be. Lady Q's gonna romp home alone."

"Yeah. Alone—last!"

The horses got away to a good start, and at once Mickey began yelling encouragement.

"Come on, Lady Q—come on, Lady Q!"

Almost as if he were bored Terry watched the race and showed no excitement that Lady Q should be in the lead several lengths ahead of all the other horses. Yellow Jack was lying fourth. The announcer boomed forth that at the first turn Lady Q was leading by four lengths. Mr. Gale in the stand was yelling himself hoarse as he saw wealth within his grasp.

"Lady Q is still in front," stated the announcer.

Terry nudged the small stable-lad.

"She's stopping," was his comment.

And from that very moment Lady Q began to falter. Cliff gave the horse the whip most unmercifully, but Lady Q seemed run out, and, coming into the straight, only held the lead from Blue Coat by a nose.

"Yellow Jack is just getting ready to make his move," Terry shouted in Mickey's ear. "Your sweetheart is beginning to wobble."

Mickey glared at the tramp as if he would like to kill him, and then he was bellowing hysterically at Lady Q to make another effort. But the horse was done. The whole field seemed to flash past her, with Blue Coat and Yellow Jack struggling for the lead, and it was the last-named that flashed past the post a winner by two clear lengths.

"Trouble with that horse is that she's

January 21st, 1939.

sick." Terry laid a hand not unkindly on the crestfallen youngster's shoulder.

Terry walked away and sought out the bookie.

"Yellow Jack was my baby," he said gleefully to the bookie, when he had collected his winnings.

Mickey took over the horse from the disgruntled Cliff, and was taking the animal off to the stables when he encountered the owner. The latter was looking as if he had just taken a bad dose of physic.

"I won't need you any more, kid."

"You won't need me any more?"

Mickey reiterated as if this meant the end of the world. "But Mr. Gale, Lady Q can't get along without me."

"She'll get along all right where she's going," Gale cried, his thin lips twisted into an ugly grin. "She won't need any attention in the boneyard."

"You mean you're gonna destroy her?" gasped Mickey, and a mocking laugh from Cliff, who had come into the scene, made him realise that it was only too true.

"I am certainly not going to feed her another meal!" Gale shouted angrily. "She's cost me a fortune."

"Oh, gee, that's murder!" Mickey was sobbing now. "Why, it's almost like killing a human, Mr. Gale. You couldn't do that. She's only a horse; she doesn't understand. What did she ever do to you?"

"Nothing but rob me of my bank-roll."

"Mr. Gale, I've saved up eighty-six dollars and you owe me six weeks' pay—that's thirty dollars more," the boy cried. "I'll give you all that if you'll let me take her."

Even the hardened race-horse owner was touched.

"What would you do with her?" he asked. "How do you expect to feed her? Or are you going to eat her yourself?"

"Well, you don't care what happens to her?" demanded Mickey, his eyes bright and his mop of hair almost standing on end.

"No!" Gale muttered as he fingered his chin. He did not want the horse, and he did owe this stable-lad thirty dollars; this was one way of settling that debt. "All right, take her."

"Gee, thanks!" gasped Mickey, scarcely daring to believe his good fortune.

"And I don't want to see either of you again," Gale called out as he walked away with his jockey. "You're jinks, both of you!"

But Mickey was not listening. His arms were round the horse's neck.

"Gee, girl, you're mine." He stroked the glossy neck, and the lady shot out a pink tongue. "Come on, honey, let's get going before the boss changes his mind."

A keen lover of horses might have noticed that though Lady Q went willingly enough she walked with a slight limp.

The Tumour in the Hoof

BEING young and of a contented disposition, Mickey soon forgot about the tragic failure of Lady Q that afternoon. Probably the joy of ownership wiped out everything. In fact, the boy was so happy that same evening that he sat outside the stall and played quietly on his mouth organ. A big white board proclaimed in black letters that stables must be vacated not later than midnight. How this was going to be done certainly had not occurred to Mickey, but he was not worrying—something would turn up. Something did turn up.

There was shouting in the distance and what seemed like a crash. Mickey went on playing, but when he heard some of the stable lads yelling he scrambled to his feet to see what was happening. Lady Q poked her head out of the stall for she was of an enquiring frame of mind.

A rickety car came rattling towards the many lines of stables. It was going much too fast, steam was spurting from the radiator, and the course of that car was definitely erratic. It lurched across a path, went on to a piece of lawn, demolished a small tree, knocked down some railing and lurched back again. It headed straight for some stalls, and the stable hands callously left their charges to their fate to save their own hides, but the driver managed to swing the wheel, for the car skidded round, charged through some more railings and continued on its dangerous way.

A big fellow clutched at the wheel, and did a lot of fumbling under the dash-board. It was this fumbling for the handbrake, and trying to steer when in an intoxicated condition that was causing the erratic course of the car. Needless to say, sheer panic and inability to stop this chariot was clearing Terry's head more rapidly than anything else could have done. It was not so much his own safety that he was concerned with as the horses. If he knocked over a few stable lads it did not matter much, but the horses must not be hurt. A slight gradient, a fence, a shallow pond that was ornamental until Terry went through it, and a water butt finally brought the car to a stop. The engine was racing wide open, and frantically Terry moved spark and throttle levers until he thought finally of switching off the ignition.

Mickey, who had been standing guard over his stall, prepared to let this atrocity of a car charge him before it could get at Lady Q, stalked forward, and with hands on hips surveyed the man who hopped his brow with a large bandanna handkerchief.

"Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!" croaked the exhausted Terry. "Why didn't they tell me that the brakes were loose?"

"Where did you steal it?"

Terry removed the handkerchief to stare at his accuser.

"Oh, so it's you, is it? Well, this car cost heavy sugar—heavy sugar. She's only gone 86,000 miles, and her engine's as tight as a drum."

Terry got out of the old car, waved a hand at Mickey, and staggered towards the stall.

"Where you going?" the boy demanded.

"I'm going to change my shirt and then I'm going to hit the road."

"I oughta throw your kit on the rubbish heap," cried the boy as he accompanied Terry to the stall. "I suppose you pinched that buck outa my pocket this morning."

"Oh!" Terry looked at Mickey with almost childish surprise. "Was that your buck? Now, ain't that funny—just as I was leaving there's that buck laying right there in the straw on the doorstep and I wasn't sure whether it was your dough blowing out or somebody else's dough blowing in." He beamed at Mickey, who was eyeing him balefully.

"So I says, I says, I'll look after this till I finds the owner."

"Yeah, I know." Mickey stuck out his hand. "Come on—give it over!"

Terry fumbled in his shirt and brought out a greasy roll of notes. The velocipede had cost him five bucks, booze had cost him five more, so that he still had quite a fortune left. He handed a dollar note to Mickey, who examined it suspiciously.

"If Mr. Gale had done what I told

him to do—why, he'd be in the money like I am." Terry laughed as he pushed the money back into a pocket. "Anyway, if he comes around here asking for me—you just tell him I got other plans now."

"Well, he won't be around," Mickey answered, and his tough little face became quite smug as he added: "She don't belong to him no more."

Terry had been fumbling with his kit, kneeling on the floor, and feeling inside an old leather hold-all as if he expected the boy had been at his belongings. He looked up now in surprise.

"Who's stuck with her now?"

"She's mine. Mr. Gale owed me money and so he paid the debt that way."

"Givo me half of what she earns and I'll fix her so she'll win a race," huskily suggested the old rascal.

"I don't care if she races or not." Mickey put an affectionate arm round his pet. "He was gonna send her to the glue factory." He looked intently at Terry. "How could you fix her up?"

"Give her a little shot of ginger juice in the leg—make her faster than lightning."

"You mean that you'd dope her?" Mickey was incredulous, and then indignant. "You'd do a dirty thing like that to an animal. Pack up yer stuff and get outa here, so that me and Lady Q can breathe."

"Okay, okay." Terry took it all with unruffled good temper. "I was only trying to help you out."

"She's champion material." Mickey patted Lady Q. "Look at that rangy neck and that short back and straight clean legs. She's a champ, I tell you."

"And I'll tell you something—she's sick." Terry approached the horse, who seemed quite docile—a fact that quite annoyed Mickey—and gently raised a hoof. He prodded the pad and immedi-

ately the animal's leg seemed to jerk back as if the touch had hurt her. Terry got to his feet. "Just as I thought. You heard of Skee-ball, ain't cha?"

"Who ain't heard of him. Holds the all time record for the mile and a quarter."

"Yeah, that's right. Well, I figure that she's got the same thing that he had."

"What same thing?"

"Well, when Skee-ball was a two-year-old he had a tumour as big as a marble right under his left front hoof—and every time he put his hoof down it hurt him. Just like I think it hurts her."

"But how did he win so many stakes?" questioned Mickey.

"Oh, there was a—" The big fellow rubbed his cheeks with his large hand. A habit when uncertain of an answer. "There was a vet around there—young fella and smart as a whip—till he got in with a lot of gamblers and they got him in a jam."

"Yeah, but what happened?"

"This young vet, he operated on Skee-ball. It was a tough operation, too. First he had to remove a section from the wall of the hoof." With his hands, Terry gestured as if demonstrating an operation. "And then there was that growth. Now the trick was slicing that off without injuring the nerve, you see. If he cut the thousandth part of an inch too much they'da had to send a hundred thousand dollar horse to the glue factory."

"Did he do it?"

"Sure he did it," Terry chuckled. "Then he nursed that old horse through the fever that follows an operation like that, and the next year they won more money with Skee-ball than you and me could even count."

Mickey went and stood by the hoof that Terry thought contained a tumour. He looked at the foot as if he wished

his eyes had X-ray powers. The old tramp had fished a grubby towel out of his kit.

"Do you think it hurts Lady Q just to walk on it?"

"Well, how does it feel when you got a pebble in your shoe?"

"Where is that vet now?"

Terry fingered his face and licked his lips.

"Hum!" he mumbled, and cleared his throat. "Oh—yes, he's dead." He waved the towel. "Well, I gotta get washed up."

When the tramp had gone for his wash the boy walked to the open door of the stall. It was unkind to tag a horse around that couldn't walk—what could he do about it? He felt more kindly disposed towards the old wreck of a tramp, and somehow he knew that this diagnosis of Lady Q was correct. On the straw lay the old fellow's kit, and Mickey decided that he would move it away from Lady Q's hoofs. The kit bag opened and Mickey found his gaze riveted on some instruments. He stooped down and looked more closely—this was a veterinary's instrument set. The youngster covered them up and was stroking his horse when Terry got back. Out of the corner of his eye Mickey watched the big fellow packing his kit.

At last Terry was done, and getting to his feet slung the pack over his shoulder. He nodded to Mickey.

"Thanks for the Southern hospitality." He pointed to Lady Q. "Keep her feet off the ground."

Mickey made no answer, but watched Terry go out to the old car, and the brakeless vehicle had a self-starter that worked. The youngster hastened forward.

"I'm going to celebrate," Terry called out. "And then hey-ho for the open road."

"Wait a minute, I'm going with you."

"Not where I'm going." Terry shook



"Come on, Lady Q—come on, Lady gal!" Mickey yelled encouragement.

his head decisively. "They don't sell to minors."

"I could drink lemonade."

Terry shuddered from head to foot.

"That sounds to me worse than water." He shooped the boy from the car. "Go away—go away."

It chanced that Donovan was prowling round the stables, and seeing the old tramp in the car he came forward to investigate. Also, he wanted a closer look because he had been searching his memory to think where he had seen the old fellow before.

"Good-evening."

Terry gave Donovan a furtive glance, and kept his hand over his chin so that some of his face was hidden.

"Hallo?" Terry muttered.

"Haven't been around the track long, have you?"

"No, and I ain't gonna be here much longer either," Terry called out, revving the engine. "Well, so long, kid."

The old car rattled and roared as Terry managed to get into gear, then Terry fairly shot off in spite of having no brakes.

"I know that guy," the race track detective said to Mickey. "I must be getting old—I can't remember who he is—or when—or where? What's his name, kid?"

"Search me, Barney," Mickey answered, staring after the departing car. "I never did bother to ask him. Say, excuse me, will you? I'm gonna see somebody about something."

Mickey ran to the stall, closed the flaps and then went pelting through the stables towards the main road. He guessed it would be easy enough to find the old tramp in the town, which only possessed about thirty saloons, and he intended to start with the cheaper ones and work upwards.

A Touch-and-go Operation

IT was in the second low dive that Mickey found Terry. The tramp was squatting on a stool with his elbows on a counter. For some reason the gin did not taste so good this evening, and when he ordered a third drink a shrill voice clipped in with a demand for a lemonade.

"How you doing, doe?"

"What did you call me?" Terry demanded.

"Oh, you can't kid me." Mickey drew a stool close to the man. "That vet you were talking about—you're him."

"Where'd you get that idea?"

"Well, you got a set of vet's tools."

"Who—who has?"

"You have!" retorted the boy. "I saw 'em—I went through your bundle."

"Don't you know it's against the law to go through a man's private possessions?" rasped Terry, his eyes bulging and the veins on his neck sticking out like roots.

"All right, we'll put it this way."

Mickey grinned back defiantly. "They were on the doorstep, and they started to blow in or out—I don't know which so—"

Terry gulped at his drink.

"I won 'em shooting craps," he lied. "I was just going to pawn 'em if things got real tough."

"That's a lot of baloney. They're yours. You know too much about horses to be one of them ordinary gavs. You knew what was the matter with Lady Q the first time you saw her."

"I was kidding you," Terry had hunched in now against the counter. He was rather like a cowed big dog, who is in a corner and trying hard to get out of it.

"You even said she had a tumour under her hoof like Skeeball."

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"I was lying," Terry shouted.

"You weren't lying."

"I was lying," contended Terry even louder in his desperation. "Skeeball didn't have nothing under her hoof."

The bartender interposed.

"Hey, you guys!" he called their attention. "If you want to argue, go hire a hall."

"You keep away from me," hissed Terry, when the bartender had gone. "Go jump in that lemonade and drown."

But Mickey stuck like a limpet. He apologised for thinking that Terry was a vet and that those tools were his. He hoped they had belonged because he had a great respect for vets. All vets were right guys—they loved animals. Old Terry kept on giving the boy suspicious looks and telling him to go back to Lady Q, but it had no effect, and so he ordered another gin and another lemonade. They tried another saloon, and by this time Terry did not mind if a hundred Mickeys were with him.

"I'm going to be a great vet when I grow up," Mickey informed him.

"Does it take much studying?"

"It certainly does," answered Terry. "You've got to study and study, then you've got practical exams—"

He paused as he saw the triumph gleam in the boy's eyes. "Oh, how do I know?"

In one place Terry would decide to play pool. He would show Mickey some fancy shots. He did—he swayed on to the table, and with his cue removed a nice portion of cloth. That sobered Terry and scared Mickey. Like criminals they worked their way towards the exit, and when they heard a bellow of rage from a marker they charged through the door and just ran.

"Gee, that was a narrow squeak," chuckled Mickey, when they were in the car and driving away.

"He didn't scare me at all," Terry lay back at peace, for this young imp was now at the wheel.

"Say, how did you cure that fever of Skeeball's after the operation?"

"Oh, how did I cure him?" Terry yawned and decided it was not a bit of good trying to bluff this kid. "I sat up with him nights and put cold-water packs on him, that's how." He yawned.

"Take me some place where we can get a drink."

"Okay!" agreed Mickey, and noted that Terry had closed his eyes. The boy set his jaw and drove the old car back to the stables, and Terry slept the whole way.

Terry was lugged out of the car and he allowed Mickey to guide him. Then he blinked his eyes and demanded loudly to know why he had been brought back here.

"Will you do it, doe—will you, please?"

"Do what?"

"Will you operate on Lady Q—please, doe?"

Terry pushed the boy away.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded. "You're crazy!"

"I'll pay you, doe. How much do you want?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"I'll get it—I'll steal it!" cried the boy. "I swear I'll get it somehow."

"Well, you'd better steal a lot more while you're at it, because my price has just gone up to five thousand dollars."

Mickey was cunning, and he tried fresh tactics.

"Why, that operation probably wouldn't be worth five cents," he cried, with a sneer. "I wouldn't let you do it if you wanted to." He made a really ugly grimace. "An old gin-soaked has-been like you—you'd probably kill

her if you got close enough to breathe on her."

"Say, I got a mind to—" Terry raged.

"Ah, you ain't got a mind. The only mind you got is swimming around in alcohol. Why, your hands are slaking like jelly. You couldn't even operate on a slot machine. You're through—you're washed up—you're a has-been!"

"Who's a has-been?" demanded the tramp, a glint in his eye. "I can do just as good now as I did then. I'm no has—" He grinned suddenly. "You're a pretty smart kid, ain't you? You think you'll get me mad and then I'll do the operation. Well, I got more sense. I won't do it."

"Oh, why won't you help us, doe?" pleaded Mickey, his face all wistful and his attitude one of despair.

"Because that horse don't mean nothing to me, and you mean less—that's why."

"Doe, you got a chance to do something great. She was good once, and you can make her good again. It—it—it's like a big shot riding on top of the world. And all of a sudden gets a tough break and goes down. Along comes a good guy like yourself, doe, and pulls this fellow up and puts him back on his feet again. You know, if you've ever had a tough break in your life, doe, you might realise what a tough break she's having now. I'll bet this growth is killing her with pain. But she'd run her heart out for me if I only asked. I guess that's what you call a thoroughbred—only thoroughbreds got hearts like that. And if we don't help her—we ain't got any at all. I'm not asking you for myself, doe; you can even have her if you'll only do something for her."

Terry wiped his big face with his hands and then stared at the boy solemnly, then he dived into his pockets and fished out all the money he had left.

"You go and get some chloroform and some bandages and some cotton and some of that there canned heat, and stop on your way back and pick up a feed bag."

"All right, I'll go."

"I'll cure your horse, but I ain't forgotten how disrespectful you spoke to me." Terry took off his coat. "And after it's all over I'm going to give you a beating you'll remember the rest of your life." He dragged out a bottle of gin. "Now you hurry."

"Don't you think you'd better lay off that?"

"All right." Reluctantly Terry put the bottle back in his pocket. "Scram!"

Mickey soon got back with all the required things, and found Terry cleaning his instruments. The old fellow sent him out for a pail of drinking water, and when the boy did as ordered he made him shut the door because they did not want anybody peering in and seeing what was going on. When the boy's back was turned Terry emptied his bottle of gin into the pail of drinking water.

Terry used a nosebag to administer the chloroform, and soon Lady Q was surrendering to his will. When the chloroform had taken effect, Terry started his operation. It was terribly hot in the stall and perspiration streamed down their faces. Several times Terry glanced at the pail, and after a while the temptation was too much. He put a dipper into the pail and drank deeply. At last he paused and beckoned the boy to look at the hoof.

"There it is—the growth—and just like I said it was."

"You got to hurry, doc. The chloroform's getting low."

Another drink and back to work, and when everything was going well they heard a loud voice:

"Everybody out!"

It was the watchman, and the only thing to do was to turn out the lights. Mickey wanted to turn them on again when the man had gone.

"Do you want me to land in gaol?" whined Terry. "That guy will come back."

"But you ain't doing nothing wrong," sobbed Mickey. "You can't leave her like this."

Mickey had a toreh, and once more Terry went back to his operation. Once he sank back on his heels and said he had lost the touch. Then he asked for a drink, and the stimulant of the gin seemed to lend him strength.

"Now hand me that seidel," whispered Terry. "And keep that light still."

Several times Terry's eyes closed as if dead weary. The gin was having the opposite effect now, but the insistent urging of Mickey kept the older man going, and at last he laid down the knife.

"It's done!" he cried. "Don't think I touched the nerve at all."

"Gee, doc."

"Got that bandage ready?"

"I think she's coming out of it," cried Mickey.

"That's all right—all right—she's all right now," Terry mumbled. "We gotta watch out for fever. Get that blanket and those gunny sacks and put 'em all over her and keep her warm." Mechanically he drew the pail of gin water towards him. He drank deeply, but the fiery spirit did not revive him. He flopped back on the straw—out!

Mickey shook him violently, but nothing could wake Terry, and after a while the boy tried to attend to the horse as the old man had instructed. He fussed round and piled straw so that the horse should be comfortable, and every hour or so he dressed the hoof. The horse seemed content, for she slept quite calmly, and about four in the morning Mickey fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

The boy was the first awake in the morning, and he was going out to get some fresh water when his nostrils twitched and he raised the pail. Now he knew why the doc had passed out. Terry awoke about seven and seemed little the worse, though it was some time before he could realise what had happened in the night. He examined the hoof and grinned like a schoolboy—it was a neat job. He made the boy take a rest for a while, and when the boy was asleep, placed his own coat over him. Satisfied the lad was dead off, Terry sneaked out and got into his old car. He drove into town, and at the only pawnshop he raised money on his tools—he wouldn't need them any more. When he got back to the stables he had an old horse trailer in tow and plenty of good feed.

"Gee, doc, I thought you'd run out on me!" gasped Mickey.

"I got that beating to give you," was the answer. "Now you get busy, because we gotta get going."

"Ought we to move her?"

"She's gonna have salt-water treatment, the same as we gave Skee-ball," Terry grinned. "We'll have her right in no time, and then I'm going to beat the hide off you for saying my hands shook like jelly. Get going!"

And so a few hours later the old car was on the road, and in the trailer behind Lady Q placidly surveyed the countryside. There was a grin on the

lady's face, for though her hoof felt very sore, the dull ache and throbb had gone.

Terry picked out a quiet piece of rocky coast, with sandy beaches, near Monterey. With bits of old sacking, waterproofs and part of a tent, they made a camp near a cave. The weather was glorious, and most of the day Mickey had to exercise Lady Q in the shallows, whilst Terry sat on the rocks, watching with a grin of approval.

"Look at her, doc!" Mickey shouted one day, as he sat bare-backed across the horse. "She's raring to go."

"Then let her go."

Lady Q went down that stretch of beach like a flash, and there was no sign of a limp when she came back.

"She'll be the death of more book-makers than you can bury in an afternoon," was Terry's gloating, jubilant prophecy.

Mickey was wearing short bathing trunks, and now he turned his back.

"Okay, doc. I'm ready."

"What's the idea?"

"Well, that harking you were gonna give me. I guess I deserve it now."

Whereupon Terry removed his leather belt, fingered it, gave the boy a scowl and then turned towards their tent.

"I guess I'll go and change my clothes." Old Terry was smiling. "I've got a bit wet from this sea spray."

The old chap seemed very quiet the rest of that day, and Mickey asked what was on his mind. Terry announced that on the morrow he was moving off on his own. Naturally, the boy wanted to know why, and Terry was very evasive in his answers. He would only be in the way.

"But you and me are partners," argued Mickey. "You gotta come to Burlington and help me race Lady Q."

"I don't hook up with nobody," groused Terry. "I'll go with you as far as the next big town and then I'll blow."

"But what shall I do without you?"

cried Mickey. "How about t. dy Q?"

"Oh, she'll be all right. All she needs is racing, and you'll sure see that she gets that. We'd only get in each other's hair, like a lot of dandruff."

"Maybe we wouldn't," contended the boy. "Maybe it's natural for us to be together, like like ham and eggs, and pork and beans."

"And frankfurters and sauerkraut." The sudden smile vanished. "No, I couldn't get hooked up with a kid like you. I ain't dependable, and then—then I'm liable to bring you a lot of grief."

"You can't run out on us," decided Mickey. "Why, you and me—we're gonna make a lot of dough, see? Well, if Lady Q wins a race—why, maybe I could go to school and be a vet."

"Are you serious about that?"

Mickey was so serious that Terry decided to give the experiment a trial.

They were packing up to leave when Mickey, instead of calling Terry by the name of "doc," changed this to "pop," and the old vet asked if he were being disrespectful again.

"It wouldn't be a bad idea if we kinda made it legal," suggested this astute youngster. "I ain't got no folks, and you ain't got no kids."

"And where would that get us?"

"Well, it would make our partnership all the closer."

"You figure that if we adopted each other then I wouldn't be able to run out on you if I wanted to—that's the way you think, huh?"

"No, that ain't it," quietly answered Mickey. "Okay, let's drop it."

"Do you really mean that you'd like to have me be your old man?" Terry asked in wonderment.

"Yeah—I'd like that."

"All right—give me your mitt." Terry gripped the boy's hand. "I, Tom Terry, do legally adopt you as my legal son till death do us part. Now you say it."

And so these two, over clasped hands,



Terry used a nose bag to administer the chloroform.



From the direction of the paddock appeared a horse and rider going like the wind.

adopted each other. Terry told his new son that they would run Lady Q, win some dough, and the dough would be used to send Mickey to school.

"Can I ride her, pop?"

"Well, now—yeah, I guess you can." He shook a big hand at Mickey. "But listen. When that is over you're gonna quit fooling around race-tracks and get yourself an education, so you can be a vet."

The bond between the two was linked all the closer by the unkind action of the sea. It chose that evening for a very high tide, and the two were arguing about what they were going to do at Burlington when a large wave came right over their encampment. They were struggling out of the folds of the tent when several waves pounded down on them in rapid succession. The sea did its best to drag them into the depths, but they managed to cling to the rocks, and eventually struggle up the beach to safety. It was a relief to hear a whinny and find Lady Q anxiously waiting for them. The sea gathered into its coils the motor-car, the horse trailer, and all their bits and pieces.

"We're sunk!" cried Mickey in despair. "How we gonna get to Burlington now, pop?"

"Did you ever hear about walking?"

And so a man, a boy and a horse set out to trudge towards Burlington. Terry made Mickey have an occasional ride, but the boy would only stay up for a short while, as he was scared of injuring that hoof. And then, to make matters worse, it began to rain.

On the Land

It seemed to rain incessantly that night and the next day. And when darkness descended on the second day they trudged on in a vain endeavour of getting to Burlington before morning. They lost their way and wasted a lot of time before they got

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back to the main road, and then they came to a signpost which announced that Burlington was still twenty-three miles distant.

"Son, we can't get there to-night," Terry decided. "What's more, we oughta get Lady Q in the dry."

"I'll ask them in there." The shivering lad pointed to a gate and some buildings beyond. "Maybe they'll let us use the barn."

"They might say no." Terry pushed open the gate. "Nobody's likely to be snooping around on a night like this."

They found a comfortable barn and there was a lantern. Lady Q had a rub down, and after that they thought about their own attire. The water they rung out of their clothing. They found some old horse blankets and were able to fix up the horse and themselves. Terry was fixing his son a bed in the hay when the door of the barn was flung open and a thin, hawk-like female stalked in with a gun.

It needed a certain amount of persuasion to prevent the lady from shooting and, then sending for the sheriff. Finally she decided only to get the sheriff, until Mickey called out that they weren't afraid to work and earn their night's lodging that way.

"Very well, you harrow a field for me to-morrow morning," snapped the owner of the farm. "All three of you. I shouldn't be doing this. I certainly don't like the looks of you."

"Well, we've been out in the rain," explained Terry in his most conciliatory manner. "I bet you look a hundred per cent when you're all spruced up?"

Mrs. Beulah Flanders did not look her best in oilskins, a sou'-wester from beneath which strayed bits of hair in curlers, a long nightgown that protruded beneath the oilskins and gumboots. Never at any time could one call Beulah beautiful as her nose was like a beak, and her eyes were dark and fierce. One might describe her as a

woman of great personality and much determination. Terry's honeyed words had no effect on her.

"I look just the same—wet or dry," was her sharp retort. "I'll call you to-morrow morning at five o'clock and expect you to be ready."

Directly she had gone the rain ceased like magic, but Beulah was there to call them at five. They did harness Lady Q to a harrow, but when out of sight of the farmhouse they put Lady Q in a grassy meadow whilst they raked that field. It was a whale of a task, but Terry and Mickey were tough and strong. Now and again they would rest and watch Lady Q gambolling about in the meadow.

"I bet this country air is sure doing her a lot of good," opined Mickey.

"You know what I think we ought to do?" answered his new father. "We ought to enter her right away in a stakes race, such as the Brewster Handicap on the opening day."

"Do you think she's good enough, pop?"

"Sure she's good enough." Then Terry rubbed his face. "The entry fee is seventy-five bucks."

"What are we going to do—rob a bank?"

"No." Terry pointed towards the distant farmhouse. "I think maybe I can talk that old mummy into giving us a job around here. This farm certainly needs some attention. Look at these fences, this old plough, and did you see those outhouses? With a pail of white-wash we could make the barn look a bit brighter. We oughta get ten bucks for a job like that."

Beulah was a hard task-master. She told them the farm was heavily mortgaged and that she was a very poor woman. Among other things she told them that she had had five husbands. They had all died a natural death, poor fellows. By this time Terry was not so sure he was going to twist this dame round his finger as he had promised Mickey he could do. She offered them five dollars for the barn and two for the fences—take it or leave it. As her cooking was good they took it.

Some weeks later they counted out their wealth. In a month they had earned sixty-two dollars and forty cents, but they were still twelve dollars and sixty cents short of the stake money, and it was only a few days before the meeting opened.

"I'll get that money some way or other," decided Terry, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "The widow ain't so poor as she makes out. I'll find a way. What I want you to do is to hitch hike right up to Burlington and get an entry blank right away."

"Starting this minute. It'll be a great day, pop, when she wins her first race for us." The boy sighed. "And it'll be an even greater day when they hand out those vet's diplomas and you'll be sitting there—"

"Right in the front," chuckled his adopted father.

"And then the guy with a square piece of cardboard on his bean says: 'Doctor Michael Terry, come up here and get yours. And if you try real hard you might be half the vet. that your old man is.'"

"Go easy on the boloney," Terry said in husky accents, and then grinned proudly at his son. "I'll give you that beating if you don't get going."

"Well, what are you making me hang around here for?" retorted Mickey. "I could have been half-way to Burlington by now."

When the boy had gone Terry went over to the stall which housed Lady Q. She made a playful snap at him.

"Jealous, uh?" Terry chuckled. "You kinda like him, don't you? So do I. He's a great kid." He noticed one hoof off the ground. "Hallo, what's the matter with that foot of yours?" He knelt and lifted it, then touched it gently. "A little tender, huh, baby? Well, a bar shoe will fix that up all right."

His opportunity for getting the rest of the entry money came that very night. Benlah, who had taken a great fancy to this ill-assorted pair, came down to seek Terry's services. She was a member of a glee society and it was her turn to entertain. She needed a bass voice. If he helped her out he could have a suit of her last husband's clothes. Terry did not like the idea, nor did he like the gleam in Benlah's eyes as she smiled at him, but he thought it wisest to go to this sing-song.

Donovan Re-appears

MICKEY made short work of that walk because he was able with his engaging smile to get several useful lifts from lorry drivers. He had started soon after breakfast and at midday he walked into the offices of the Burlington Jockey Club. Mr. Gale had done the right thing by the boy and legally transferred the ownership, so that there was no trouble about obtaining an entry form.

Mickey sauntered out of the offices. "Hi yah, Mickey?" hailed a voice. "Well, if it ain't Sherlock Holmes," Mickey jeered, as he recognised Detective Donovan of the racing association. "How's the snoopy business?" "Good enough," was the laughing answer. "How's the stable-boy racket?"

"Oh, I wouldn't know. You see, I'm

an owner now." Mickey stuck out his chest proudly. "Say, remember Gale's horse, Lady Q?"

"Sure—the short stop," Donovan retorted with a nod.

"Well, she quit stopping. She belongs to me now, and we're going to enter her in the Brewster Handicap and walk away with it."

"Great stuff!" The detective patted the boy on the shoulder. "Who is 'We'?"

"Me and my old man."

"Why, I didn't know you had a father."

The detective suddenly remembered something that had been worrying him for a long time.

"Say, did you ever run into that fellow again? You know, the one I talked to at the other track?"

"Well, that's my——" began Mickey, but Donovan interrupted him.

"I finally remembered who he was. I looked him up in the wanted file at headquarters—it was Doc. Terry all right."

"What?" Mickey said in amazed accents.

"Thomas Terry is his full name, and he used to be a vet." The detective shrugged his shoulders and laughed. "He owes the State about eight years. You haven't bumped into him, have you?"

"No, what's he wanted for?"

"There was a horse called Grand Sheik which was one of the finest horses that the track has ever known. Well, booze had got Terry, and he fell into the hands of a bunch of rascals who wanted Grand Sheik to lose, so they got Terry to do the old sponge act."

"Booze will make a guy do a lot of funny things," Mickey answered, looking round for a way to escape.

"This wasn't funny," was the serious reply. "The horse dropped dead in the middle of the race, and the jock riding him went to hospital with a broken leg. We nabbed Terry all right."

"Then he served his term?" eagerly questioned Mickey.

"No, he skipped bail." Donovan snapped his fingers impatiently. "I think I had him right in my hand, and let him get away."

"Guess I gotta be goin'."

"See you opening day?"

"Maybe not, Barney. Maybe her hoof ain't right yet. Maybe it's too soon after the operation."

"Operation on her hoof?" Donovan was interested at once. "Who did it?"

"A vet," stammered Mickey. "A young fellow I found."

"Terry did a marvellous operation on a horse once," Donovan remarked, his eyes watching the boy closely. "Also cured him of stopping."

"Oh, this was nothing like the Skee-ball operation," the boy answered, and regretted his foolish tongue directly he'd said it.

"I didn't mention the horse's name," Donovan rapped out. "How do you know about it?"

"I read about it."

"Thought you told me you didn't have any folks. Where'd you find your father?"

"I bumped into him accidentally."

"Hadh't seen each other for years, had you?" was the next question.

"Not since I was a baby."

"Then how'd you recognise each other? Why are you lying to me, Mickey."

"I ain't lying to you," the boy rapped out sharply.

"I know you love horses. You wouldn't deliberately shield a man who



Pete the trainer was very dubious when he examined Lady Q's hoof.

"doped" a horse and injured a jockey for life, would you?"

"Quit putting the needles on me," Mickey wrenched himself free of the detective's restraining grip. "I don't know anything; why don't you do your own snooping?" The boy turned and sprang away.

The detective ran a few steps after the youngster, and then hesitated. Perhaps it would not be wise to take any action now, but he would most certainly be on the look-out for Mickey if he dared to show up at the racecourse. It would be odds on that this so-called father would accompany his son.

Mickey's Strange Behaviour

At the sing-song Terry felt rather out of place amongst all these country folks, and the fact that whenever he looked round Beulah Flanders always seemed to be watching him, did not make him feel any happier. When she went out at the interval to get some ice cream for the other glee singers she ordered Terry to pass the plates round.

That gave Terry an idea. He informed the singers that Mrs. Flanders had asked him to make a collection for the church steeple which needed a new spire and he started off the collection by tossing a dollar note into the plate. Like sheep they all followed suit, and by the time Beulah returned with the ice cream he had collected the required sum that made it possible for Lady Q to be entered at the Burlington racecourse.

Meanwhile, Mickey had returned to the farm. The sound of singing drew him to the house, and he saw his adopted father surrounded by a number of rather dreadful-looking singers. At any other time the boy would have been amused, but now it did not bring a smile. Warily he made his way to the barn, where for consolation he went into the stall of Lady Q.

"Lady, what am I going to do?" he murmured in dejected tones. "If pop goes near the track they'll nab him for sure. I gotta keep him away from Burlington, but how am I goin' to do that? He's all set on going. I can't tell him that I know all that he's done—if he'd wanted me to know he'd have told me. Maybe he's ashamed of me knowing it. I gotta find some way to keep him away from Burlington."

When Terry managed to get away from the house he ran towards the barn and gave a grunt of relief at seeing Mickey. He was so worried that he did not notice the strained look on the boy's face.

"We gotta get away," Terry blurted out. "That widow wants me to marry her whether I like it or not, and she wants the ceremony to-morrow afternoon. So we're getting out while the going's good."

"Don't do anything hasty, pop," Mickey said. "It's beautiful out here in the country, she's a good sort, and we could be awfully happy."

"What's the matter with you?" Terry demanded in amazement.

"What about racing Lady Q and getting the dough for your schooling?"

"Oh, we don't have to race her," argued the boy. "We don't need the dough; you could teach me. Why, I bet you know more than all the vet schools put together."

"Two things I ain't—a teacher and a husband," Terry announced definitely. "We're moving on. We can make Burlington by morning."

Realising that he had failed to shake his adopted father's decision about leaving the farm, he adopted the only method that he thought would keep January 21st, 1939.

him away from Burlington. He announced without daring to look at his father, that he had changed his mind about going to Burlington and racing Lady Q. He did not think the horse was ready, and he reckoned his father was right in warning him to stay away from race tracks. He would much prefer to stick around on the farm.

Terry retorted that he wasn't sticking around this farm or any other farm, and ordered Mickey to start packing.

"I ain't going to Burlington," stubbornly replied the boy.

"Why not?"

"You're liable to start drinking again."

"I ain't had a drink in months." "That's because it's hard to get around here. There's a lot of booze around the track." And the boy hesitated, at a loss for words. "Guess I'd better come clean with you—I've been thinking over this father and son business, and I reckon you and me are a lot different."

"Have you gone out of your head?" Terry demanded.

"We don't belong together," Mickey shouted, hating the part he was playing. "You said at the beach we'd try it. Well, we've tried it and I don't think it works out."

When Terry tried to argue, Mickey became almost hysterical and sobbed out that he didn't want to see his adopted father any more, and all he wanted was to get away from the farm and take his horse with him.

So Mickey left the farm that night taking Lady Q with him, and he hoped that Terry would stay and work for Mrs. Flanders; but when that good lady came down in the morning to the barn both the hired man and his son had vanished.

The next morning Mickey walked into the Burlington Jockey Club, where the steward and his assistant were busy accepting entries and discussing arrangements with owners and other people connected with the race-track. Patiently the boy waited his turn, and at last the steward beckoned him forward.

"What is it, young man?"

"Is there any chance of a fellow getting any credit around here?"

"Credit?" questioned the steward.

"Why not?" demanded Mickey truculently. "Suppose a fellow had a great horse that should be in the handicap, but he didn't have enough money to enter it, why not let him run her, and then you guys can take the money out of her winnings?"

The steward was amused. "There's always a small possibility of the animal losing, you know," he said kindly.

"There ain't a chance of this horse ever losing."

The steward was paying little attention as a beautifully dressed woman had come through the swing doors. She was accompanied by a thin, horsey-looking individual who was her trainer.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Shephard!" the steward beamed. "Very happy to see you again."

"Thank you," murmured the lady, with a charming smile.

"What can we do for you?"

"Let me have your condition book," answered Mrs. Shephard, with a gay laugh, "and please point out the soft spots in it, so my horses can pick up a lot of worth-while stakes; I'm a poor woman this year."

"What?" questioned the steward, shaking his head disbelievingly. "After all the money Miracle Lad has made

for you? When will we see Miracle Lad?"

"We're going to work him in a little while," was the guarded reply.

"I suppose the horse is still running true to form?" the assistant steward remarked to the trainer.

"He's the finest piece of horseflesh you'll ever see around here," boasted the trainer. "And one of the fastest."

The impetuous Mickey stepped forward.

"I'll race my horse against him any time, any place," he stated.

"Here, here, young man!" rebuked the steward. "You run along—we're busy."

But Mrs. Shephard was intrigued by the determined manner of this very poorly garbed youngster.

"Wait, wait," she said to the steward, with a disarming smile.

The official gave a little bow, and then the woman looked at Mickey.

"Are you an owner?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," the boy said boastfully. "My horse is as good as any on the track. Bring on your Miracle Lad and we'll show you what racing is."

"Well, we might do that some time, but not right now," Mrs. Shephard answered in her pleasant way. "He's just been shipped down from a farm and has had a long, tiring journey."

"I had to walk Lady Q twenty-three miles last night to get her. I guess that just about makes us even."

"Suppose you give her a rest?" suggested Mrs. Shephard. "And then soon we'll have a private race all our own."

"And in the meantime, young man, you'd better get back to her," decided the steward, with an obvious air of command. "She probably misses you by now."

The Try-out

THAT afternoon Mrs. Shephard arranged for Miracle Lad to have a try-out, and Mickey expecting this had hung around the stables with Lady Q. Mrs. Shephard went with the steward and her trainer to the judge's stand in order to get a good view. An assistant trainer timed the start, but Miracle Lad had not gone more than a furlong when from the direction of the paddock appeared a horse and rider going like the wind. Everybody in the judge's stand gaped as this unknown rider drew up alongside Miracle Lad with the obvious intention of giving the champion horse a race.

Needless to say, the jockey riding Miracle Lad was astounded when there was a thunder of hoofs and the filly flashed alongside.

"Hey, you!" he shouted. "What's the idea?"

"Go on, let that hothouse flower out!" jeered Mickey.

"Get out of here, you mug!" ordered the jockey. "This is Miracle Lad."

"And this is Lady Q," was the retort.

Naturally, this challenge was more than the jockey of Miracle Lad could stand, and, urging his mount to a faster pace, swept ahead. But if he imagined he was going to throw off Lady Q and leave the filly standing he was doomed to disappointment. At the half-mile post Lady Q lay a half a length behind Miracle Lad, but coming into the straight the horses were running neck and neck.

The steward was most indignant. He would have the impertinent person barred from the race-track and even sent to prison, but Mrs. Shephard was a woman with a keen sense of humour and a great understanding. She could not recognise the rider, yet she had a

(Continued on page 26)

With his dying breath Pete Haley tells his brother Ted—a stranger to the district—that a man named Rothert knifed him. Ted sets out to avenge his brother's murder, but it is not till there have been sensational attempts on his own life that the killer is unmasked. An action-packed story of the West, starring Charles Starrett



In the Moonlight

DARKNESS had enveloped the hills and valleys of the Texan Panhandle before Ted Haley deserted the coach road at Pointed Rocks for the rough trail that led downwards to his brother's ranch-house; but a full moon was high in the starry sky, and the quiet night gave no hint of the tragedy that lay ahead.

Pete Haley's letter, asking Ted to join him as a partner, was in his pocket, but he had memorised the directions it contained. At the foot of a long, steep slope he turned into a tree-fringed lane along which he rode for half a mile and so came to a rail fence, enclosing sheds, stables, yard, and rather a neglected garden in which the house itself stood.

Outside the fence, on its southern side, but in a direct line with the porch of the house, an ugly fellow named Cal Hinks was hiding in the heart of a bush. He had a nose like the beak of some bird of prey, and a long, lean and unshaven face. As Ted stopped his white horse just inside a gateway, Cal Hinks parted some branches to peer out at him.

There was no light in any window of the ranch-house, and this seemed strange to the tall and handsome young cowboy who had travelled the better part of two hundred miles in response to a pressing invitation.

He shouted his brother's name, but only his own voice disturbed the silence of the place. He dismounted wonderingly, hitched the horse to a rail and unsaddled it, hung the saddle over another rail, and walked towards the porch.

"Pete!" he shouted, as he reached the steps. "You there, Pete?"

Still the ominous silence persisted, and he drew his six-gun before he mounted the steps, and it was with his left hand that he raised the latch of the front door.

The door opened easily enough, and he looked into a living-room full of shadows. Just at first he thought the room was untenanted, but as he entered it and moved cautiously round a table he stopped short and caught at his breath; for there lay his brother in a pool of moonlight on the floor, and in the pool of moonlight was another pool that looked black although it was red.

"Pete!" he gasped. And then he put away his gun and dropped on one knee to raise a dying man's head and shoulders in strong arms.

"Pete," he said brokenly. "Pete, it's your brother, Ted. Look at me."

Slowly a pair of glazing eyes were opened, and there was a struggle for breath. Ted knew the end was near.

"Who did this?" he asked.

Bloodless lips moved, trying to shape words.

"It—was—"

"Who?" Ted put an ear close to the lips.

"Sol—" The name was barely audible. "Sol—"

"Yes?" urged Ted. "Yes?"

"Roth—Roth-ert. Sol—"

Pete Haley's head fell back and his dreadful breathing ceased.

"Sol Rothert." Still holding his brother, Ted put the two names together, uttering them aloud in a voice that boded ill for their owner; and for

a few minutes the ticking of a clock was the only sound in the room.

A wooden bunk was set against one of the walls, and it was upon this bunk that Ted presently laid dead Pete, covering him with a blanket. He stood bare-headed, gazing sorrowfully down at the shrouded figure, then went to the door.

It was not till he was out on the porch that he put his ten-gallon sombrero back on his head. Cal Hinks watched him do it, from the bush that concealed him, and saw him go to the rail and unfasten the horse.

A girl in riding-breeches and a shirt-like blouse had ridden along the lane from the south-west, on the broad back of a sorrel, while Ted was in the ranch-house. She had dismounted under a tree near a little gate in the fence, and she was in the shadows at the back of the ranch-house when Ted emerged from the front of it. Entirely unaware of her presence, he was re-saddling his horse when she reached the porch and went in at the door.

In the living-room she lit an oil-lamp that was standing on the table, and it was the light of the lamp that he noticed in the act of fastening a girth. Instantly his gun was out, and he went racing across an untidy lawn to the porch. But as he raised the latch of the door the light was blown out, and as he looked into the living-room a door on the far side of it was being opened by a dark figure he took to be that of a man.

"Stop, or I'll shoot!" he threatened harshly.

Across the room a six-gun spat flame, and a bullet sang past his head and

buried itself in the top panel of the door behind him. He fired twice; but his bullets were wasted, too, for the girl had got out at the other door, and he reached it to find it bolted.

He put his shoulder to the door, and the bolt gave way. He dived across a moonlit kitchen and out at the back of the house in time to see a boyish figure making for the little gate near the tree under which the sorrel had been left.

He fired, and as he did so the girl stumbled and fell.

She was lying on a gravel path when he reached her, and he looked down at her in utter consternation.

"Holy mackerel, a girl!" he exclaimed.

Her eyes were closed; she was motionless on her side, and there was blood upon her forehead above her left eyebrow. Ted decided that water was the first essential, and he hastened back to a well he had noticed not far from the back door.

A bucket was standing there, and he lowered it on a rope. But while he was filling the bucket and hauling it up the girl got to her feet and made for her horse, and she was galloping off along the lane when he turned towards the spot where she had fallen.

Down went the bucket, spilling its contents, and Ted whipped out his gun. But as he was about to shoot he remembered that it was a girl who had played a trick on him, and he thrust the gun back into its holster and walked away to the fence to finish saddling his own horse.

A signboard at the side of the coach road at Pointed Rocks had informed him that the town of Shanley was seven miles south of the spot where it stood. He judged that the town would be about ten miles across country from the ranch-house, and from the lane he set off through a patch of woodland.

As soon as he had disappeared from sight Cal Hinks deserted his hiding-place and mounted a horse he had tethered to a tree at some distance from the bush. He galloped along the lane in the direction taken by the girl, but turned out from it on to rising grassland after he had covered a couple of miles, and from the top of a hill swept down to a big ranch-house.

A letter-box on a post near the open gateway of a yard bore the name "Sol Rothert" upon its metal front. He rode in at the gateway, hitched his horse to the rail of a corral, and went along a path to the front of the house.

The man who opened the door to him looked more like a clerk than a servant. He was dressed in a dark lounge suit, and his thin brown hair was brushed well back from his forehead. As Cal Hinks had not knocked it was obvious that the man had witnessed his arrival.

"Mr. Sol wants to see you right away," he said.

"Sure," nodded Cal Hinks, stepping into a hall of considerable size out of which stairs ascended. "Where is he, John?"

John Shend pointed to a door, and was leading the way to it, when Cal thrust him aside and stalked into a room furnished partly as a sitting-room and partly as an office.

A grey-haired man of fifty or so, heavy of build, was sitting at a flat-topped desk in a wheel-chair with a rug over his knees, and he glared at the intruder, his mouth an ugly line beneath a clipped brown moustache.

"Oh, it's you!" he rasped. "How many times have I told you to knock?"

Cal advanced to the desk and perched himself on a corner of it with all the assurance in the world.

January 21st, 1939.

"You're gonna have to get rid of that little wild-cat in some better way," he said gruffly. "She don't scare none too easy."

"Did you do what I told you?" demanded Sol Rothert.

"Oh, sure! Put on masks and—"

"Well?"

"She lit out like a jack-rabbit. Made a bee-line for the very place we didn't want her to go."

Rothert's piercing brown eyes narrowed.

"Did she see anything?"

"Everything! And some jasper I never seen before poked his nose in, too!"

Rothert gripped the arms of his wheel-chair.

"What happened?"

"Sol, she ups and shoots at him, and he shoots at her!"

"Anything else?"

"Nope." Cal shook his head. "So I loped on home."

"I'll pack her off to-morrow—or wring her little neck!"

"Might be a good idea," drawled Cal, "and, again, it might've been a better idea if you hadn't let her come here."

"You know I didn't have anything to do with that," snapped Rothert. "She came on her own account. I couldn't stop her."

Cal grinned, and the grin did not improve his appearance.

"Sorta upsets things, don't it?" he suggested.

Rothert looked down at the barrel of a .45 projecting from some papers on the desk.

"Which way did the man go?" he asked abruptly.

"I couldn't tell," was the reply, "but if he's got any sense he'll line out for town."

Unnoticed by either of them the door of the room had been opened again, and the girl who had escaped from Ted was standing there.

"Who's going to town?" she inquired.

"Anyone I know?"

Rothert had started visibly at the sound of her voice, but he summoned a smile for her.

"No, nobody you know, honey," he said smoothly.

She ran over to him and sat on an arm of his wheel-chair. Her hazel eyes were large and luminous; her golden-brown hair, parted on the left, had been combed and brushed since her tumble.

"How are you, Uncle Sol?" she said, putting a hand on his shoulder. "Feeling better to-night?"

"Much better now that you're back safe and sound," he replied, patting the hand.

Cal had walked round the desk to the other side of the chair and he was leaning at her. Rothert looked round and he said:

"Oh, I don't believe you've met Cal. He's an old codger squats back in the hills, but comes down sometimes when I need extra help. This is Adele Rothert, Cal, my brother's daughter. Came out to pay her old uncle a visit. Just lost her father."

"Pleased to meet you," said Cal. But she turned her head away because she saw evil in his screwed-up eyes, and Rothert caught sight of a scratch over her left eyebrow.

"Why, what's the matter, honey?" he asked, pointing a finger. "Did you have an accident?"

"No, I just slipped over a stone and took a little tumble," she explained.

"That's why I asked you not to ride around at night," he rebuked. "This

country's too rough for you, Adele. I think you'd better go back home."

"Oh, please, Uncle Sol, don't send me away!" she cried. "I like it here!"

Cal shifted from one side of his jaw to the other a wad of tobacco he was chewing. Rothert glanced sideways at him.

"I'd feel much better if you were safe back East," he said. "Don't you think so, Cal?"

"Sure do," confirmed the chewer.

"But, Uncle Sol, you know I have no place to go," protested Adele.

"We'll talk about it in the morning," decided Rothert. "Now, you run along to bed like a good girl. I've got a little business I want to discuss with Cal."

She rose meekly and went out from the room, closing the door behind her.

"The sooner she's gone," began Cal viciously, "the better I—"

"I'll take care of her," snarled Rothert, in a fashion that would have astonished his niece. "Now let's get back to this fellow. D'you think he'll report it to the sheriff?"

"Yeah. He'll probably start talkin' his head off."

"Then why don't you ride?"

Cal shrugged.

"Just waitin' for orders," he said. And he tilted the cow-hat that had been on his head all the time and went to the door.

Trouble in Town

THE town of Shanley was situated in a valley, and in the daytime it presented quite an attractive appearance to the eye of a stranger, with verdant hills rising to the sky on every side of it. But Ted found it larger than he had anticipated and its thoroughfares ill-lit.

Oil lamps in brackets that projected from the wooden walls of buildings provided less illumination at night than the moon, now sinking towards the south, and in the main street the Pioneer Saloon was conspicuous because of the light that streamed through its numerous windows.

Ted decided that he might obtain information in the saloon that would save a search in the town, and he left his horse at a hitching-rail below the veranda of the establishment, crossed the veranda, and went in at an open door.

A reek of smoke assailed his nostrils as he entered a long and fairly crowded bar-room. Just inside the door a nickelodeon was in full blast because someone had put a coin in its slot. He made his way past several tables at which men were seated, and he reached the bar.

"Good-evenin'," said the shirt-sleeved man behind the bar.

Ted touched the brim of his ten-gallon hat with a gloved hand.

"Who's the law in this town?" he inquired.

"Bill Ashley's the sheriff," was the reply. "What'll you have to drink?"

Ted ignored the question.

"Who's Sol Rothert?" he asked.

"Rancher up country." The bartender seemed to be getting impatient.

"What'll you have?"

Ted glanced about the long room, and many pairs of eyes were turned in his direction. Two heavyweights at a table between the bar and the door were well within earshot and were staring.

"Is he around town to-night?" asked Ted.

"You're a stranger here, ain't you?" rapped the bartender; and then, as the questioner nodded: "Thought so, 'cuz you wouldn't be askin' if he was in town."

"Well," persisted Ted, "is he?"

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"No. Are you drinkin' or ain't you?"

"No!" snapped Ted in a voice to match; and he was making for the door when one of the heavyweights shouted after him:

"Hi, wait a minute!"

He stopped and turned, and both men rose from their table and slouched over to him. They might almost have been twins, for they were of the same height and breadth; burly fellows, dressed as cow-punchers, and both had heavy features and each had a small moustache. But one was swarthier than the other, and it was he who had spoken.

"Stranger hereabouts, ain't you?" he demanded, looking Ted up and down.

"That's right."

"Your face looks sorta familiar. Ain't I seen you somewhere before?"

"I don't think so," said Ted, "but lots of people think I look like my brother, Pete Haley."

"Sure," nodded the swarthy one; "now I get it."

"Yeah, me, too," said his companion.

"My name's Britt—Ike Britt. This is Moose Nelson." Britt extended a hand. "Just a couple o' cowpokes wantin' to be friendly."

Ted looked at the hand, but did not accept it.

"I'm Ted Haley," he said; "but what of it?"

"How come you inquired for the sheriff?" Britt's voice was eager.

"Anything happened?"

"What would be likely to happen?" challenged Ted.

"Don't ask me." The rejected hand was dropped. "How come you to ask about Sol Rothert?"

Ted frowned.

"For total strangers," he said sharply, "you're about the nosiest pair I ever ran across."

"Wait a minute!" Britt caught at his left arm. "You're jest like your brother, ain't you?" he sneered.

"Always lookin' for trouble! Well, let me tell you somethin', young fellow—

me and Peto Haley has been on the edge of a show-down for a long time, and I'd jest as soon take it out on you, if you've got the nerve—"

Ted's right fist blotted out whatever else Britt had intended to say, and though the fist was gloved the strength of the blow to the mouth sent the traducer of a dead man stumbling sideways against a table. Moose Nelson instantly reached for his gun, but before he could draw it Ted's was out and Ted rapped at him:

"I wouldn't try it, partner! Stay where you are!"

In at the door from the street came a round-faced and bull-necked man, clean-shaven and fierce of aspect. In his right hand was a six-shooter, and on the front of his shirt was a metal star. He was Bill Ashley, Sheriff of Shanley County, and in a voice of authority he roared:

"Put up your irons!"

The bar-tender, who had snatched up a hammer, replaced the thing in haste. Britt and Nelson looked a trifle sheepish. Ted put away his six-shooter and said:

"It's all-over, sheriff. Nobody hurt. Take me to your office, will you? I want to talk to you private."

"Come on!" said the sheriff grimly; and Ted went out from the saloon with him, crossed the street, proceeded some little way down it on the opposite boardwalk, and came to a building of brick and stone.

The sheriff's office faced the street, and at the back of the oddly shaped

room were iron-barred cells. Bill Ashley motioned to a chair at the end of a roll-top desk and lowered himself into a swivel-chair which creaked as he leaned back in it, to eye his visitor in the light of an oil lamp on the top of the desk.

Ted described what had happened in the saloon.

"That's all there was to it, sheriff," he wound up. "They started trouble and I finished it. Now, what I want to know is who are these two hombres? Where do they come from?"

"I can't say," replied the sheriff, rubbing his chin, "and it ain't healthy to ask too many questions in this district. Just consider yourself lucky, son. That's a dangerous pair. Britt's got the brains and Moose throws lead like a whirlwind."

"If they're that bad," said Ted, "why don't you pick 'em up?"

"They ain't done nuthin' yet. They get drunk and ugly sometimes, but say, why are you askin' me all this?"

"Because my brother was murdered to-night."

The sheriff swung round in the chair and his blue eyes bulged.

"Pete Haley murdered?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied Ted gravely, "I got there just before he died."

"Did he say who done it?"

"Yes."

Ted was sitting opposite a window, and at that moment he saw to his amazement a six-gun almost touching one of its panes and a cow hat and a pair of beady eyes behind the gun. With a bound he was on his feet, and his left arm swept the lamp flying from the top of the desk to the floor as he whipped out his own gun and fired.

Two shots rang out almost simultaneously and two panes of the window were broken. The glass container of the lamp had been smashed by its fall, and in the darkness the sheriff pitched headlong from his swivel-chair.

A Surprise for Ted

IKE BRITT and Moose Nelson were on the veranda of the saloon when they heard the shot. They were talking to Tom Haggard, the lean and lanky deputy-sheriff, who had just mounted the steps.

"That was the sheriff's office!" exclaimed Britt.

With one accord the three ran, and another man in the street ran with them. Cal Hinks, who had crouched below the window-sill of the office to shoot at Ted, had made his escape through an alleyway at the side of the building. Ted had just opened the door, gun in hand, when Britt and the others reached it, and Britt grabbed hold of him and the deputy-sheriff snatched at his gun.

"Let me go!" cried Ted. "He'll get away!"

"Shut up!" commanded the deputy harshly, and Ted was bundled back into the room, and Britt stooped over the body on the floor.

"He got Ashley!" he announced.

"Fetch a light!" barked the deputy.

"Call a doctor!"

Slim Brinley, the man who had joined the others in the roadway, rushed off to get a doctor. Moose Nelson struck a match, found another lamp on a shelf and lit it.

"Help me get him on the couch," said Britt, who had ascertained that the sheriff was still breathing, though unconscious.

"Watch him, Moose!"

Moose Nelson stood guard over Ted while the wounded man was carried to an old-fashioned couch set against a brick wall close to one of the cells.

"Looks like his chest," remarked Britt, pointing to a crimson stain on the sheriff's shirt, and the deputy unfastened the neck of the shirt, exposing a patch of ploughed-up flesh, and discovered a bullet that had been stopped by the back of the metal star.

"Creased by a forty-five," he commented, studying the bullet.

"Yeah," said Britt, with a jerk of his head in Ted's direction, "and that is a forty-five."

"What about it, fellow?" demanded the deputy harshly.

"It wasn't me," Ted responded.

"That shot was fired from the outside." He walked across the room. "Here, take a look at this window. That shot was meant for me, not Ashley!"

The others gathered round to look at the jagged hole in one of the panes.

"How can you tell which way a bullet comes?" challenged Britt.

"Take a look at the glass on the floor!"

Broken fragments of the pane were mostly in a line with the chair Ted had occupied at the end of the desk; but Tom Haggard, the deputy, stared at the hole in the adjoining pane.

"How about that?" he snapped.

"That's the shot I fired" replied Ted.

"You'll find most of the glass on the sill outside."

The door swung de and Slim

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Brinley crossed the threshold with a portly white-haired man, full-faced and full-lipped, who was carrying a black bag. Nearly a dozen other men—mostly from the saloon—surged into the room behind these two.

"Here's the doctor!" shouted Brinley.

The deputy ejected the crowd and conducted the doctor over to the couch. Harrington was the old doctor's name, and he was very well acquainted with gunshot wounds. He proceeded to deal expertly with the sheriff's chest.

"What d'you say, doc?" asked Britt, with seeming anxiety.

Dr. Harrington did not hear the question, or else he ignored it, and Britt turned to Tom Haggard.

"You'd better stick him in the cooler, Tom," he said, "unless you want a necktie party on your hands!"

The men who had been ejected were peering in at the windows, and quite a crowd had congregated round the building.

"How do we know you didn't do it?" challenged Ted, facing his accuser stormily.

"Take it easy!" rasped the deputy, taking hold of his arm.

"I tell you I didn't do it!"

"Come on!"

Ted was being marched towards a cell when Bill Ashley opened his eyes and saw what was happening. He had recovered consciousness a minute or two before, and the voices had just become intelligible to him.

"Stop," he said feebly, and raised a hand. "The cowboy didn't do it. The shot came from outside."

"All right, Bill."

The deputy let go of his prisoner and handed back the gun he had confiscated.

The flesh wound in the sheriff's chest was dressed and bandaged and his shirt refastened; but the doctor still sat on the edge of the couch, nursing his bag.

"Well," said Britt, "I guess you don't need me any more. I'll jest nosey along."

Nobody tried to stop him, and he went off with Moose Nelson. Slim Brinley followed, and the deputy closed the door. The crowd, on hearing that some person unknown had shot the sheriff from outside the building, drifted back to the saloon.

"Feeling any better, Bill?" inquired the doctor, as the sheriff moved his head and drew a long breath.

"Good enough to hear the rest o' what this cowhov was tryin' to tell me," was the reply. "Go ahead, son. Who was the man? You haven't told me."

Ted shifted a chair to the head of the couch and sat down on it.

"Sol Rothert?" he said.

"Sol Rothert?" echoed the sheriff incredulously. "Your brother said that Sol Rothert knifed him?"

"Those were his last words."

"Impossible!" exploded the doctor.

"There must be some mistake," said the sheriff. "because Sol Rothert is a helpless cripple."

"What?" Ted could hardly believe his ears.

"Paralysed from the waist down. Never gets out of a wheel-chair."

"Oh!"

"Your brother must've been tryin' to tell you something else, and couldn't make it. Pete and Sol were good friends. Forget it, son."

Ted looked at the old doctor, but his mind was grappling with the problem. His brother had said that Sol Rothert "did it."

"If he's paralysed," he asked abruptly, "how does he run his ranch?"

"He's got some pretty good boys up there," the sheriff replied.

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"I suppose his daughter helps him?"

"His daughter?" It was the sheriff's turn to be astonished. "Sol hasn't got any daughter!"

"Wife, then?"

"What're you gettin' at?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing."

"You must have something on your mind. Come clean, Haley."

"Well," said Ted slowly, "I saw a girl up at Pete's ranch-house."

"A girl?" The sheriff blinked at him. "What'd she look like?"

"Blonde. About twenty. City bred, I'd say."

"I don't know anybody like that."

The sheriff looked at Harrington. "Do you, doc?"

"Not in this country," was the emphatic reply. "unless she came from the North in the past few days."

Tom Haggard walked in at the door. "The wagon's ready," he said.

"You'd better come along, doc. And you, too, Haley. We're goin' up to your brother's place."

The deputy had harnessed horses to a wagon with a view to bringing the body of Pete Haley to the town mortuary, and he wanted the doctor to make a post-mortem examination. The three men set off on the vehicle, the deputy driving, and it was after midnight when the ranch-house was reached.

Ike Britt and Moose Nelson were in the living-room, bending over the bunk, on which the dead man lay, when the rumble of wheels in the lane reached their ears.

"What's that?" asked Moose, straightening his back to listen.

Britt ran to a window.

"They're comin'!" he said. "Douse that light!"

Moose blew out the lamp that was standing on the table, and Britt whisked a similar lamp from a shelf in the light of a match.

"Put that lamp on the shelf," he directed, "and I'll leave this cool one in its place."

The exchange was effected, and the two heavyweights crept out through the kitchen to the back door.

They were behind the bush Cal Hinks had used, some hours earlier, when Ted opened the front door and the deputy and the doctor followed him into the living-room. The deputy lit the lamp that was on the table, the doctor went to the bunk. Ted gazed about the room, and then he joined the doctor.

"Have you touched anything, doc?" he questioned.

"No," was the reply.

"Then someone's been here!"

"What d'you mean?" asked the deputy.

Ted pointed to the blanket, which was in a heap at the bottom of the bunk.

"I'm positive I covered Pete before I left," he declared. "Was that lamp hot when you lit it?"

"No, stone cold," said the deputy.

Ted went to the lamp that was on the shelf, stripped off a glove, and put a hand on the glass chimney.

"This one isn't!" he cried. "That murderer's been back here! We've gotta find him!"

He drew his gun and darted out at the door. But there was not a sound in the moonlight, except his own foot falls, and after he had circled the building he re-entered the living-room and thrust his gun back into its holster.

"Nobody around," he growled, "but we've gotta find him!"

"I'll do everything I can to help," promised the deputy, "but it's gonna be a lot tougher than you think."

"What Tom means," expounded the doctor gravely, "is that they've knocked

off your brother and they'll get you. This isn't the first murder we've had. They've been goin' on steady for a year past. And cattle thievin', too, and banks. It's got so that nobody's life is safe now—let alone property!"

Ted turned to the deputy with frowning eyes.

"Hasn't anybody been able to buck this gang?" he demanded.

"Well, we'd know how to handle 'em all right if we could only find out who they are," said the deputy defensively.

"Here's one man who's goin' to find out!" raged Ted.

"You can see by what Tom says," warned the doctor, "that it might be smart to get out while you can."

But Ted shook his head.

"Can't you understand, doc?" he asked passionately. "I've got to find the man who killed my brother!"

"That's fine, son, but I was only thinkin' about you." The old doctor shrugged his shoulders. "Well, you know what you're doing."

"I think so," gritted Ted.

Ted Pays a Call

DEAD Pete Haley needed little examination to determine the cause of his end; the knife with which he had been stabbed in the back had penetrated the left lung. But the knife itself could not be found, though a thorough search was made for it.

Ted rode back in the wagon to Shanley, with his brother's body beside him, and after it had been deposited in the mortuary he stabled his horse at the rear of the local hotel and spent none too restful a night in a strange bed on the first floor of that very unpretentious establishment.

Next morning he interviewed an undertaker, then paid a visit to the sheriff's office to see how Bill Ashley was progressing. Dr. Harrington was with his patient, and he stated that Bill very soon would be up and about again as usual.

Ted and the doctor parted company on the boardwalk outside the office, and Ted was crossing the roadway to get his horse when Ike Britt hailed him from the veranda of the saloon. Moose Nelson was squatting on the top step of the veranda, whittling a piece of wood, but he rose and walked with Britt to Ted, who stopped short.

"Howdy, Haley?" greeted the swarthy one.

He held out his hand, but the hand was scorned.

"Take it easy, cowboy," he said gruffly. "I come to apologise. Last night, when I made that crack about your brother, I didn't know that he was dead."

"Well?" barked Ted.

"I don't blame you for bein' mad. Besides, I was a bit drunk and ornery."

"Go on."

"Me and Moose come in peace. Want to be friends and I want to tell you we'll do everything we can to help you catch the skunk that knifed your brother."

"Buy you a drink?" suggested Moose.

"No, thanks."

"I understand you inherit that little spread of your brother's," said Britt. "Want to sell it?"

"Oh, I don't know." Ted rubbed his chin. "Haven't had time to think about such matters. Why do you know anybody who wants to buy it?"

"Nobody I know of—unless you could interest Sol Rothert. His land joins yours on the west."

That interested Ted.

"You acquainted with Rothert?" he asked.

"Nope, never met him," Britt replied. "But one o' the boys was guessin', last night, that maybe he'd buy a little place for his gal, in case she got married."

Ted's eyes narrowed. "Has Sol got a daughter, then?" "No, not exactly—just some relative, came in about a week ago. He's kept her pretty close to home, and not many people know she's here."

"Well, thanks, boys," Ted flipped a hand. "I might drop in and see Rothert some time."

Ho sauntered on to the hotel, farther down the street, and Cal Hinks stepped out from the open door of the saloon behind which he had been straining his ears to catch some of the conversation. He leaned over the rail of the veranda, and he heard Moose say:

"D'you think he fell for it?" "Didn't you see his eyes?" exclaimed Britt. "He's goin' to Sol right now, and that'll give us plenty of time to finish our little business."

Ted came riding out from the stable-yard of the hotel, and three pairs of eyes watched him as he entered up the street and turned west at the top of it. Cal Hinks promptly descended from the veranda to the hitching-rail, mounted his horse there, and set off to trail the man he had tried to shoot the night before.

Rothert's ranch-house was twelve miles away from the town, and on the road that led uphill and downhill to the distant village of Blue Creek Cal kept well behind his quarry. But after Ted had turned into a private lane on the rancher's property, and his destination became assured, the unshaven crook spurred his horse to greater effort, and he passed Ted half-way along the lane.

Sol Rothert, that morning, had summoned all the members of his outfit to the room that was his office, and they were gathered round the desk at which he sat in his wheel-chair, a rough-looking crew numbering about a dozen.

One of them, a fellow with a ragged moustache and the beginnings of a chin-beard, evidently did not like a scheme Rothert had outlined, for he growled:

"I ain't sayin' I won't do it. All I'm sayin' is that it seems to me like we oughta go kind of easy. Folks around here are gettin' nervous, and you can't ever tell what a nervous man's gonna do. He might bust loose any minute."

"I've already explained that this is our last job," rasped Rothert. "We're going to make one big clean-up, and then scatter to some other place. Now, Troope, do you still want to quit?"

"I don't feel like stickin' my head out when it ain't necessary," grumbled the man.

Rothert swung the wheel-chair round so that he faced him.

"One more crack like that," he threatened, "and I'll turn you over to Kansas City. There's a rope waitin' for you up there that'll just about fit that thick neck o' yours!"

Troope flinched, and a grumpy hand went to his throat as though he could feel the rope there already. Rothert swung the chair to address the others.

"And that goes for the rest of you, too," he said, his fierce eyes ranging the group. "There ain't a man here that ain't wanted, and I've got what it takes to put you away. Now what about it? Are you with me?"

A half-breed at the end of the desk—named Boyle—answered because the eyes rested on him as the alleged foreman of the outfit.

"Oh, of course we are, boss," he mut-

tered. "B-but it's still sort o' bad havin' that gal around."

"Forget it!" snapped Rothert. "She's leavin' to-morrow. Now it doesn't matter what happens to any of you—I want that money!"

Adele, in riding-breeches and a plaid blouse, had descended the stairs, and she was about to open the door of the room when John Shend dived across the hall to intercept her.

"Mr. Sol is busy," he cried, "you can't go in!"

"Uncle Sol won't mind," she retorted, and before the servant could stop her the door was open and she was in the room.

Hands that had reached for guns were dropped, and Sol Rothert became an entirely different person.

"All right, boys," he said cheerfully, "go back to your work, and don't forget to mend that fence on the upper sixty."

The men trooped out past the girl, and she advanced to the desk.

"Hallo, Uncle Sol!" she said. "Am I interrupting?"

"Not at all, honey," he assured her. "I was just givin' the boys a goin' over. Some of them need it."

Cal Hinks burst into the room, stopped to scowl at Adele, then went to Rothert and whispered in his ear.

"Is tha, so?" said Rothert. "Well, pick up that coat and get out of here."

Cal went off with a coat one of the members of the outfit had dropped in a chair, and Adele asked what had happened.

"A stranger, Ted Haley, is coming to talk about some land," her uncle replied. "We don't want him to think we live like pigs in a pen. Straighten things up, honey, will you?"

The room was being tidied when Ted rode into the yard from the lane, dismounted, and made his way to the porch. The watchful John saw him from a window and sped to his employer.

"He's coming," he reported. "Show him in," Rothert said to his

niece as there came a knock at the front door, and she ran out and opened the front door.

She and Ted looked at one another, and recognition was mutual.

"I'm Adele Rothert," she said. "Won't you come in? Uncle Sol is expecting you. This way, please."

Ted was surprised to hear that he was expected, but he followed her without comment. Rothert had wheeled his chair round the desk and an ordinary chair had been placed near it.

"You're Ted Haley?" he asked, studying the tall, lithe and handsome young man who stood before him.

"That's right," nodded Ted. "And you're Sol Rothert?"

Rothert inclined his head.

"You've met my niece?" It was more of a statement than a question, but Ted merely murmured a "How d'you do?" to the girl, and she responded with equal formality.

"Perhaps Mr. Haley would like a drink?" suggested Rothert.

"No, thanks," said Ted.

"Then tell John to bring me one," Rothert motioned to the chair. "Sit down, Mr. Haley."

John Shend was listening at the door, but he skipped aside as Adele opened it.

"A bottle of wine and two glasses for Uncle Sol," she said, and went back into the room.

Rothert was saying:

"Much as I'd like to have it, I can't pay anything like that."

"I didn't think you would," Ted quietly informed him.

"Then why did you come?"

"To get a look at you." Ted's gaze was steady, but Rothert's did not waver.

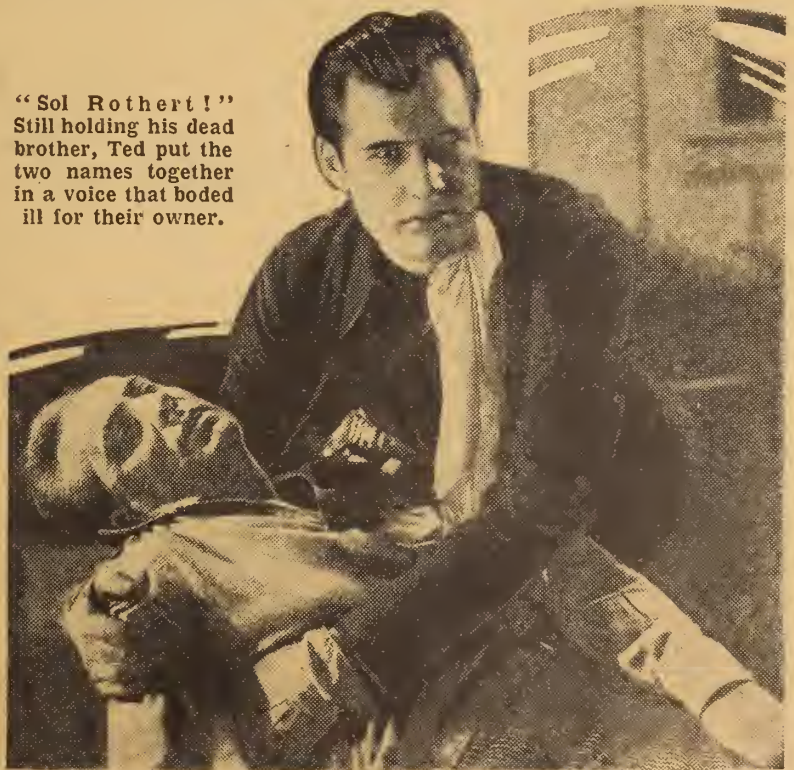
"In connection with something my brother said before he died."

Adele leaned against the desk, watching their two faces.

"Oh, then you got there before he passed away?"

"Yes." John entered with a bottle and two wine-glasses on a tray.

"Sol Rothert!" Still holding his dead brother, Ted put the two names together in a voice that boded ill for their owner.



"Excuse me," he said, and he put the tray on the desk and went out again.

"What did your brother say?" It was Adele who asked the question.

"He told me who killed him," replied Ted, without shifting his gaze.

"Yes?" said Rothert. "Who?"

"You, Mr. Rothert."

The rancher drew back his head as though astounded.

"Did I hear you right?" he demanded.

"You certainly did. He told me Sol Rothert knifed him."

Adele put a hand on her uncle's shoulder.

"But that's ridiculous!" she cried. "Uncle Sol's a cripple. He can't move out of this chair."

"Quiet honey," said Rothert. "Don't let's get excited."

He pushed the rug off his knees, and slowly but significantly he lifted one leg with both hands and let it fall like a dead weight, then he lifted the other and let that drop. He lay back in his wheel chair as though exhausted by the effort, and Ted bit his lip.

"I'm afraid I owe you an apology, Mr. Rothert," he said with honest regret.

"Why, Pete was one of the best friends I ever had," declared Rothert, still breathing heavily.

"Maybe that's what he had in mind," said Ted; and he rose and offered his hand.

Rothert gripped it in seeming friendliness.

"I hope we'll see more of you," he said.

"You bet you will!"

Adele escorted the visitor to the door and went with him down the steps from the porch to the post where his horse was tethered. In the distance the members of Rothert's outfit were riding across a vast meadow.

"So you're the man who almost scared me to death," said Adele. "I hope you don't think I act like that all the time."

Her beauty had made a deep impression on Ted, a deeper one than he realised. But he was curious, and he asked point-blank:

"Just why were you snooping around my brother's ranch last night?"

"I wasn't snooping," she told him without any sign of indignation. "I went to get help. You see, I'd been for a ride. Uncle Sol didn't want me to, but I went, anyway. It got dark, and some men almost grabbed me. I had to fly for help, and your brother's house was the nearest."

Ted raised his brows.

"Who were these men?" he questioned. "Ever see them before?"

"I don't know," she replied. "They wore masks."

"Masks? People don't wear masks these days."

"Well, these men did. And then I—I found your brother. And when you came along into the dark house naturally I was ready to fight."

"Well I don't blame you for taking a shot at me. What did your uncle say about it?"

"I didn't tell him," she confessed. "I was afraid to. I thought if he knew he might really send me away. He's been talking about it."

Suspicion was reborn in Ted's mind. "Why should he want to do that?" he asked quickly.

"I'm not quite sure, but—well, he says it's because the country's too wild."

"I certainly hope he doesn't."

While these two were talking by the post, Cal Hinks had returned to Sol Rothert's room with Boyle and Troope, who had not ridden with the Troope.

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"I don't care how you handle it," Rothert said masterfully to them, "but I want that pay-roll. When it's all over we'll meet here for the pay-off and then scatter. You understand? And by the way, don't forget to attend to that other little matter first. We'll leave at midnight."

Ted was about to swing himself up into the saddle of his horse when Adele asked him, with quite a note of anxiety in her voice, where he was going to stay that night.

"At my brother's ranch-house," he replied without the slightest hesitation.

"Are you staying there permanently?"

"At least until I get this mystery cleared up."

"But after what happened to your brother don't you think that place is dangerous? They might attack you."

"Don't worry about me," he laughed. "I'll be all right."

He mounted his horse and rode out on it into the lane, and she stood waving to him till he had disappeared from sight under the trees.

The Bank Robbery

THAT afternoon Ted attended the funeral of his brother, who was laid to rest in a little wind-swept graveyard on the side of a hill to the south of the town; and afterwards he rode out to the ranch-house which now had become his, and went through all the papers he could find in the hope of discovering some clue to the mystery of his brother's murder.

Adele went to bed early that night, but she wakened with a start to hear a champing of bits and the sound of hoofs down in the yard below the open window of her room. She struck a match and looked at a clock on a little table beside her bed. It was midnight, and down in the hall another clock was chiming.

She crept to the window and peered over the sill. There were riders in the yard, a full dozen of them, evidently ready to start off somewhere, and she believed they were her uncle's men. But a cloud was over the moon, and she could not be certain.

She put on a dressing-gown and slippers, and she crept out to the stairs and down them. The door of the room her uncle used for an office was wide open and a light was burning in there. She stole towards it. The wheel-chair was near the desk, but it was empty, and in her surprise she uttered an involuntary "Oh!"

John Shend came ruzzing from a room across the hall.

"What do you want, miss?" he asked sharply.

"A glass of water," she replied on the spur of the moment.

"I'll get you a pitcher," he said, but he did not budge, because she was trying to look into the office.

"Where's Uncle Sol?" she inquired in a voice as natural as she could make it.

"Mr. Sol is sleepin' in bed to-night. You go to your room, miss. I'll bring you a pitcher of water."

He was only a servant, but he spoke peremptorily, and she went back up the stairs to her room. But in her room, after the pitcher had been delivered, she dressed herself in her riding clothes.

The horsemen, by this time, had reached the mouth of the lane where it joined the road that led from Shanley to Blue Creek. There the whole party halted, and Cal Hinks called Boyle and Troope aside.

"As soon as we've settled with Haley," he confided to them, "we'll high-tail it to the bank. Come on."

The three turned in a north-easterly direction and rode through a gap on to the open range, headed for the ranch-house that had been Pete Haley's home. The gateway in the fence was reached, but Cal remained outside it on his horse while Boyle and Troope dismounted and flitted away to the building, their guns in their hands.

The whole place was in darkness, but the moon was shining brightly again, and at a window of the living-room they had a fair, clear view of the bunk against the wall inside.

"He's there," whispered Boyle; and then they both fired through the glass at what they assumed to be a figure in the bunk, and raced back to their horses.

"Everything's all right, Cal." Troope reported callously, and he and Boyle scrambled into their saddles and all three went speeding through the woodland.

They believed that they had made an end of Ted; but they were mistaken. Ted was fast asleep on a couch, covered with a blanket, when the shots rang out, mingling with the noise of shattered glass. He had screened the exposed side of the couch with a table and some chairs, and he was fully dressed.

He bounded to his feet, looked at the window, and ran to the back door. But he could see nothing of his would-be murderers, and he returned to the living-room. Flinging aside a blanket in the bunk he exposed pillows and cushions which had sufficed to suggest a sleeping figure. Two bullet-holes in the second pillow he examined.

He threw the pillow down, and he went out to saddle his horse; and he was riding the range when Cal and his two companions reached a spot from which they could see the rest of the gang, waiting for them down in a gap, and Rothert's ranch-house away to the right. Cal looked towards the lane and he saw Adele flying along it.

"You go on!" he shouted, and he turned his own horse and went streaking across the turf to reach the lane ahead of the girl. Ted caught sight of him and gave chase, and Ted was behind a hedge when Adele was intercepted.

"Your uncle told you not to ride at night!" Cal reprimanded.

"I know," she began rebelliously, "but—"

"Where are you goin'?"

"To Ted Haley's."

"Why?"

"Something's happened. There were a lot of men around the house, and Uncle Sol isn't in his chair."

Cal smothered an imprecation.

"Well maybe he's sleepin' in bed to-night," he said as though it were a matter of no particular importance.

"That's what John said, but I didn't believe him."

"Your uncle's gonna be all right." Cal caught hold of her bridle. "And you're gonna be all right, too, miss. But come on, we've gotta go back."

He turned her horse and rode with her back to the ranch-house. Ted watched them till they had entered the yard, and then he went on down to the road and trailed Rothert's gang into the town.

Except for the moonlight the town was in darkness when the main street was reached and the gang proceeded to surround the Shanley National Bank, a brick building which occupied an island site at a corner. Ike Britt and Moose Nelson were on their horses in a wide alleyway diagonally opposite the bank, on its northern side, when Ted dismounted at the other end of it

and crept forward to see what was going to happen.

Gunfire broke out up the street, to cover the efforts of one of the crooks to open the door of the bank. Members of the gang rode around the building, discharging their firearms into the air after the manner of old-time cowboys filled with liquor. Britt and Moose were off their horses, and lurking on either side of the alleyway when Ted emerged cautiously from it.

Instantly the two pounced and seized him.

"Stand still and keep quiet!" hissed Britt. "Take his gun."

"So you're in on this," said Ted scathingly.

"Shut up!" snapped Britt. "Take a look, Moose."

Moose ventured out into the street. All along both sides of it upstairs windows had been raised and heads thrust forth.

"What's goin' on down there?" asked an anxious voice from a window above a hardware store right opposite the bank. And Boyle, who was on watch beneath the window, looked up to reply:

"Oh, just some cowpokes celebratin'."

"Well, get it over!" shouted a man at another window angrily. "We want to sleep."

The din became louder than ever. Britt craned his neck round the corner of the alleyway, and Ted sprang at Moose, recovered his gun, then whirled about on Britt.

Britt would have fired, but his gun was sent spinning, and at that moment there was an explosion inside the bank that blew all its windows out of their frames.

"They're robbing the bank!" screamed a woman.

Britt and Moose, evading Ted, went rushing up the street. Tom Haggard, the deputy sheriff, had appeared with a number of law-abiding townsmen, and a battle had broken out in the immediate vicinity of the bank. Ted, in hot pursuit of Britt and Moose, saw the latter go down in the roadway from a blow aimed at him by an enormous fellow who leapt on to a horse and sent men scattering to right and left as he plunged into a side turning, and then he saw Britt stooping over his fallen companion.

The two were some little way off, but Ted covered the ground in seconds, and he flung himself bodily upon Britt and bore him to the ground. They rose together, fighting furiously, and Moose got to his feet and would have joined issue, but a sweep of Ted's arm sent him staggering backwards. A straight left to Britt's jaw sent him down again, and then Ted snatched up a gun and a cow-hat from the roadway and said fiercely:

"Hoist 'em, quick!"

Obediently Britt and Moose raised their hands. The

bank-robbers had disappeared on their horses, with the deputy and a posse after them, but an excited crowd was congregating round the bank.

"All right," said Ted, "cross the street. You, too, Britt! Keep your hands up!"

His two captives walked before him to the boardwalk.

"Now down to the sheriff's office!" he commanded. "Go on!"

The sheriff's office was reached, and Bill Ashley stared in astonishment from the couch on which he was lying as Britt and Moose entered it with their hands above their heads, and Ted brought up the rear with a cow-hat under his arm and a six-gun in each hand.

Dr. Harrington rose from the end of the couch with a pipe in his mouth.

"All right, sheriff," said Ted, kicking the door shut behind him. "I'll take charge o' this if you'll let me handle things in my own way."

"Go right ahead," said the sheriff. "What do you want me to do with this pair?"

"First, I'd like to ask a couple o' questions." Ted made the two sit down on chairs against a wall, and then he held out the cow-hat, through the crown of which a bullet had passed. "Is this your hat?"

Moose, who was bareheaded, confessed that it was.

"I picked it up in the street, sheriff," said Ted, and he pointed to the bullet-holes.

"One o' the bandits did that when I took after them," growled Moose.

"Oh!" said Ted, and he threw the hat on to the sheriff's desk. "You couldn't have been tryin' to get away with them?" He held out the gun by its barrel. "This iron—is it yours?"

"No," declared Moose. "A fellow dropped that when I winged him."

"What kind of a man was he?"

"He was a big fellow, almost a giant."

Ted looked across at the sheriff. "Know any giants around here?"

"There's a big fellow named Boyle, or Hoyle, or something like that, workin' for Rothert," was the reply.

"We know Boyle," put in Britt.

"Was it him?"

"Aw," said Moose, "you couldn't tell nuthin' at night. Besides, the fellow I winged looked bigger."

Ted turned to the sheriff again. "Know anybody bigger than Boyle?"

The sheriff scratched his chin, which he had shaved with some difficulty a few hours before.

"Sol Rothert," he said. "Never saw him standu' up, but I'll bet he's over six feet. Still, we know Sol can't ride."

The deputy sheriff entered the office. The bank robbers had got away in a dozen different directions, and he had come to the conclusion that pursuit was hopeless.

"But the people are shontin' their heads off for somebody's blood," he stated.

"Then you boys won't mind stayin' locked up until I get a line on things?" Ted suggested to his captives.

"Not if that's the way the crowd outside are feelin'," responded Britt.

"All right, lock 'em up, Tom."

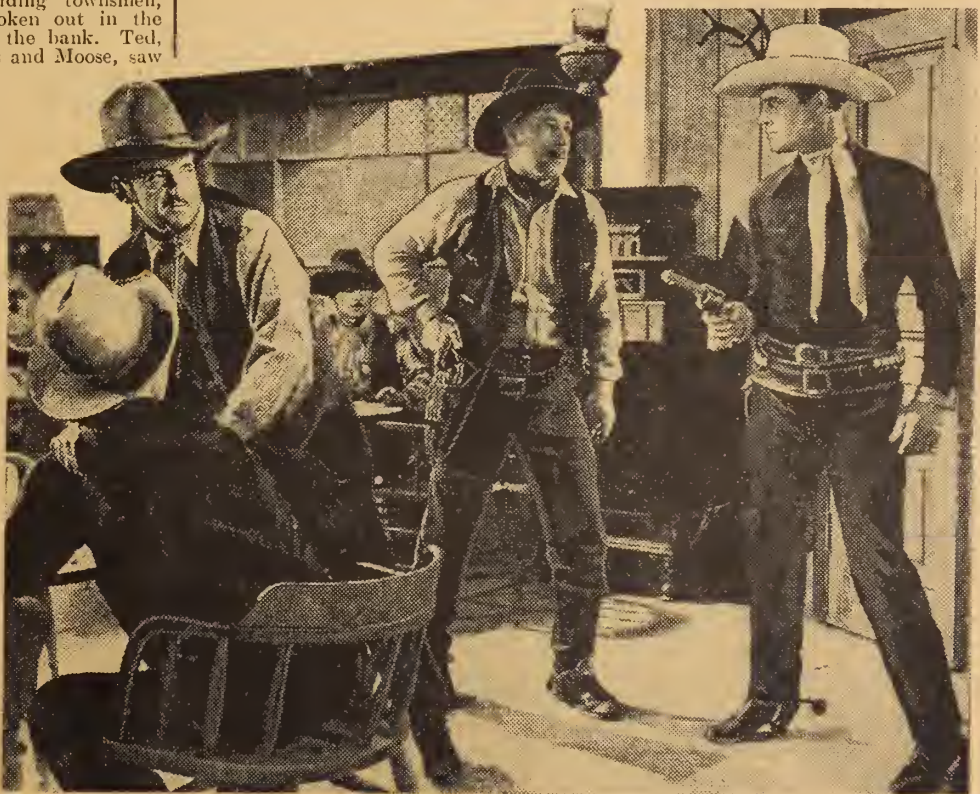
Britt and Moose were shut away in one of the cells and stood looking out between the bars.

"Now what I want, sheriff," said Ted, "is a posse. Where will I find about fifteen reliable men?"

"Any of the ranchers around here are all right," Bill Ashley told him.

"How about Sol Rothert? Will he furnish any men?"

"Sol's always been willin' to help every time I've asked him."



Moose Nelson instantly reached for his gun, but before he could draw it Ted's was out, and Ted rapped at him: "I wouldn't try it, partner!"

"Good. Then I'll go along there first."

"How about goin' with you?" offered the deputy; but Ted shook his head.

"No," he said, "you go out and round up as many ranchers as you can trust. We'll need everybody we can get."

"Be careful," warned Ashley. "You've got a big job on your hands."

"Come on, Tom." Ted moved towards the door. "I'm goin' to call at my place after I leave Sol Rothert's—then I'll come back here."

He and the deputy went out, and Dr. Harrington rose and put on his hat.

"Well, I'm glad all that commotion's over," he remarked. "Now you can take a little snooze, Bill."

"I guess it wouldn't do me any harm," said the sheriff, and he stretched his legs on the couch and rested his head upon a cushion.

But the doctor had been gone no more than a couple of minutes when Britt called to him and he raised his head.

"Yeah?"

"Can you trust him?" asked Britt.

"Why, yes," said the sheriff. "Why?"

"Take a look at that!"

Slowly the sheriff got up from the couch and walked over to the cell. Britt was exhibiting, in the palm of his hand, a metal badge which proclaimed him to be an authorised agent of the Cattle-men's Protective Association. Moose was displaying a similar badge.

"Well, I'll be danged!" exclaimed the sheriff. "Association men! What d'you want me to do?"

"Open up here before somebody comes," replied Britt.

Tom Haggard had given the sheriff the key of the cell, and it was in his pocket. He unlocked and opened the door of bars, and the two men stepped forth.

"Been on this case for months," said Moose. "Had to keep under cover, or they'd have knocked us off."

The sheriff asked if Ted Haley knew anything about it.

"Not yet," Britt replied. "Didn't trust him until to-day. Come on, Moose—we're headin' for Haley's. That kid may get into a mess o' trouble!"

A Timely Warning

DAYLIGHT had come, but the sun had not yet risen over the hills when Adele was awakened from uneasy slumber by a banging on the door of her bed-room and was told by John Shend that her uncle wanted to see her at once.

She dressed and descended to find Rothert in his wheel-chair, behind his desk, and she was told curtly that she was to pack her things forthwith because she was going to leave the ranch within an hour.

"But, Uncle Sol," she protested, "I like it here. I don't want—"

"I'm not goin' to have any argument!" he thundered at her. "You're leavin' the ranch—go and pack! John will help you, if you need any help."

She went up to her room, and a suitcase was open upon her bed, and she was taking some garments from a drawer of a dressing-table when she chanced to look out at the window between the dressing-table and the bed and saw Ted cantering along the lane.

She sped to the door and opened it; but John Shend was on guard outside, and she knew it would be useless to try to pass him.

"Oh, John," she said in haste, "ask Uncle Sol if—if I'm to take my trunk."

John descended, but he moved slowly, and Ted was fastening his horse to the

post out in the yard by the time he entered Rothert's presence.

"Miss Adele," he began, "she said —" He reached the wheel-chair, and he whispered: "He's back!"

"Let him in," directed Rothert.

Adele was listening just inside her room when Ted knocked at the front door of the house and was conducted by the servant across the hall into the office.

Rothert looked up with a friendly gesture, but Ted uttered no greeting.

"Mr. Rothert," he said crisply, "the bank at Shanley has been robbed."

"The bank robbed?" Rothert sounded incredulous.

"Cleaned out last night!"

"Was anybody killed?"

"Quite a few, I understand."

"I can't believe it. There's been a lot of crime in the district, and this is a wild country, but— Are there any clues?"

"This!" From the front of his shirt Ted produced the six-gun Moose had disowned, and Rothert shrank back in his chair as it was pointed in his direction.

"It isn't loaded," Ted reassured him. "I found it in the street. One of the bandits must have dropped it. Ever seen it before?"

Rothert looked at the long-barrelled .45, but he did not touch it.

"No, I don't believe I have," he said. "Still, all guns look alike to me. It's been years since I used one."

Ted put the gun back inside his shirt.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I should have realised that. Well, Mr. Rothert, the sheriff sent me up to see if you would loan some of your men to form a posse."

"I'll do better than that, Mr. Haley," declared Rothert. "I'll send all of them! It's a terrible thing, the crimes that are bein' committed around here. Something must be done."

He sounded sincere enough, but Ted was not wholly convinced that he had had no hand in the affair.

"It will!" he gritted.

Rothert frowned.

"The only difficulty," he said, "is that one of my herds stampeded last night, and the men are all off to the upper range. But I'll send for them. Where will you be?"

"Over at my place," Ted replied.

"Good. They'll be over for you sooner than you think."

It seemed to Ted that two very different interpretations might be derived from that statement.

"I'll be waitin' for them," he returned.

"I'll see you to the door."

That made Ted blink, but with a dexterity born of long practice Rothert propelled his wheel-chair out through the doorway and across to the front door.

Adele was leaning over the banisters on the floor above, but she ran back into her room as Ted went out from the house to the yard, and from the window she watched him ride out at the gate.

Rothert, in his wheel-chair, remained at the open front door till Ted had gone, and the expression on his face was murderous when John Shend hurried forward to close the door and wheel him back into his room.

"Shut that door!" he snapped; and the door of the room was closed. "Now, listen—go get the men down at the line camp and send them after Haley. And tell them that this time they're not to miss. You'll find a horse in the corral. Be on your way!"

Up in her room, Adele had flung on her riding clothes, and she had put on a belt with a holster, and in the holster

was a loaded .38. But she was down in the hallway and listening at the key-hole when Rothert issued his cold-blooded instructions. She slipped out from the house, and she was behind a shed when John entered the corral and mounted a saddled horse that was in it. She watched him ride away to the south, and then she made for the stables.

In frantic haste she saddled the sorrel, and not very long afterwards she was out in the lane on it and making for the Haley ranch.

Moose Nelson and Ike Britt had ridden straight from the sheriff's office to that ranch, and they had invaded the living-room of the house and were waiting there.

"No sign of Haley yet," Moose reported from a window that commanded a view of the lane and trees and hill.

Britt, sprawling on the couch, was rolling himself a cigarette.

"You know, he's a smart guy," he said. "He won't be as easy to fool as the sheriff. Maybe we should have gone on to Rothert's, after all."

"Wouldn't make any difference," growled Moose. "If Sol's ready to show his hand we'd simply be two more dead 'uns."

Britt lit the cigarette and rose to his feet. Moose had turned away from the window, but over his shoulder Britt saw a rider approaching the fence.

"There's Haley now!" he exclaimed.

Moose swung round to a pane.

"Yeah," he said, "and he's alone."

Ted was alone, on his white horse, but Adele was travelling as fast as the sorrel could carry her, and she was not far behind when Ted turned in at the gateway.

"Ted!" she cried.

"Who's that comin' across the yard?" questioned Moose.

"Sol's niece," Britt replied; and at that moment Ted heard the girl's voice, swung his horse about, and met her opposite the porch.

"Ted," she burst out frantically. "Something terrible has happened!"

"Now, wait a minute," he enjoined. "It can't be as bad as all that."

His words failed to allay her agitation.

"Listen. I've always known there was something strange about Uncle Sol—he's been too pleasant. And now he's done something that proves I was right."

Ted's eyes narrowed.

"What was it?" he asked.

"He sent John for the cowboys and told him to tell them to kill you on sight!"

Ted hadn't the slightest doubt that she was speaking the truth.

"They're on the upper range," he said, remembering what Rothert had told him. "That'll give us a little time."

"Oh, but they're not up there!" she cried. "They're hiding out down at the line camp, and that's only twelve miles down Black Canyon—I know, because I rode that way once. Oh, Ted, I'm frightened! They may be here any minute! What'll we do?"

"Come on," said Ted, and they rode out together into the lane and along it over the ground they had just covered.

In the living-room of the ranch-house Moose looked rather blankly at Britt.

"Hope we don't have any trouble in trailin' him," he said.

"Only place he can go is back to Rothert's," Britt decided. "Come on!"

Where the lane twisted off to the right, Ted said urgently to Adele:

"I'm going to your uncle's. He'll be alone, and that's what I want. You

head for town and bring the posse." She was still frightened for him, but she nodded bravely, and she set off across the range to reach the road that led to the town while he went on to Rotherth's.

Unmasked:

JOHN SHEND had delivered Rotherth's message to the members of the gang in their hideaway in Black Canyon, and he was riding with them up from the depths of that rock-bound valley when Cal Hinks, descending from his own retreat in the hills, caught sight of Ted and started to follow him.

He was out on the open range, in long grass, when a cloud of dust in the road at the foot of the hill engaged his attention and he reined his horse. At first he thought a posse from the town was causing the dust, but he decided to investigate and he rode cautiously downwards.

The dust settled, and he saw that the horsemen had crossed the road from the gulch that led up from the canyon, and he knew then that they were Rotherth's men. He increased his speed, and he met the gang as they were ascending in the direction of the Haley ranch.

"Where're you headin'?" he inquired. John Shend, who had been about to leave the others and return to his employer, explained matters.

"No use headin' that way, boys," said Cal. "Haley's headed back to the boss. Come on, we'd better get over there!"

Alone in his room at the ranch-house, Sol Rotherth had wheeled his chair to a cupboard, and from the cupboard had fished out a brown leather bag. With the bag on his knees he propelled himself to the fireplace, and there he reached up to a framed picture that was flat with the wall above the mantelpiece.

He put a thumb under the bottom of the frame, and the picture swung away from the wall like a little door because it was hinged on one side.

In the portion of the wall it had concealed there was a circular safe, and this he opened. The bag also he opened, and he was transferring banknotes from the safe to the bag when the door behind him crashed back against a chair, and he looked round with a start to see Ted close beside him with a six-gun ready for use.

With a stifled exclamation he let the bag fall to the floor, reached down as though to pick it up, and was about to slip his left hand under the rug that was upon his knees when Ted rapped at him:

"It's too late for that, Rotherth, unless you can move that chair faster than I think you can!"

Still covering the crook with his gun, he looked down into the bag.

"What d'you mean by breakin' in on me this way?" blared Rotherth.

"We'll get to that in a minute. Keep your hands from under that rug!"

With his left hand Ted caught hold of the rug and threw it across the room—and then he took possession of a long-barrelled .45 that had

been hidden very carefully beneath it. Rotherth gritted his teeth and his eyes were evil.

"Why do you come here?" he snarled. "To put you under arrest for implication in the bank robbery," Ted grimly replied, "and maybe my brother's murder as well."

"You're a fool, Haley, and I won't forget this!"

Without in any way relaxing his vigilance, Ted swept over to the safe in the wall, and from it brought out a packet of banknotes that never had been unfastened.

"Maybe this will explain something," he said; and Rotherth's face told its own story. "I thought so! This will be enough evidence to hold you until the posse comes. Where's the rest of it?"

Believing that he had only a disarmed cripple to deal with, Ted dropped on one knee to examine the contents of the bag. But Rotherth's paralysis was a mere pretence—a fiction he had created to cover his criminal activities. His legs were as sound as any man's, and with a bound he was on them and his right arm swept round at Ted's throat while his left hand imprisoned Ted's right wrist.

It was then that the cowboy realised the enormous strength of his enemy. He himself was strong, but it was only with a superhuman effort that he managed to break away from that choking grip, and the gun was wrested from him as he did it.

On his feet, however, he was far more agile than the older man, and before the gun could be used it was sent spinning across the room. Rotherth rushed at him like a bull, but received an uppercut to the jaw that sent him thudding against the wall, and before he had recovered from that blow Ted was at him with a thump between the eyes that caused him to fall across the desk.

A dagger-like paper-knife was on the desk, and Rotherth's hand closed round its haft as he sprawled, panting, across

the blotting pad. Then, suddenly, he was upright again, and a Ted rushed at him the knife was raised above his head to strike.

The hand that held the knife was seized in a vice-like grip, but Rotherth strove with all his might to bring it down and plunge the blade into Ted's heart.

For minutes the issue remained uncertain, while with their free hands the two clawed and struck at one another. Then Rotherth stumbled against the wheel-chair, and as it rolled away from him fell upon his knees.

The paper-knife clattered into the hearth, and Ted flung himself upon his brother's murderer. But Rotherth caught him round the knees and threw him, and he was straddling his chest, and choking the life out of him, when Ike Britt appeared in the doorway with a gun in his hand and the trigger cocked.

At a glance he took in the situation, and his gun spat venomously. The hands at Ted's throat relaxed, and Sol Rotherth fell sideways upon the carpet with a bullet in his heart.

Ted, gasping noisily for breath, struggled to his knees and saw Britt standing there with the smoking gun. His right hand went to his holster, but the holster was empty, and Britt cried out:

"Take it easy, Haley, take it easy, boy! I'm an officer!"

He put away his gun and he exhibited his badge, and Ted gaped at it as he got shakily to his feet, gulping breath into his tortured lungs.

"Huh," he panted. "Well—I'll—So—so that's what—you two—were doin' around—the—bank."

"That's right," nodded Britt.

"Where's—your—pardner?"

"I sent him for help."

"I've already—sent—for a posse."

Ted was breathing more easily when



Rotherth looked round with a start to see Ted close beside him with a six-gun ready for use.

a thudding of hoofs sent him and Britt to a window.

"Guess that's them now," said Ted. But Britt had his doubts, and as a party of horsemen drew nearer he recognised several of them.

"They're Rotherth's gunmen!" he exclaimed.

The riders reached the gateway of the yard.

"Looks like we're in for a fight," said Ted. "Throw a shot at 'em. Keep 'em back."

Britt opened the window a little way, dropped on his knees at the sill, and fired a shot. Cal Hinks fired back, and then he and the gang scattered about the yard, dismounted, and took cover behind trees and bushes, outhouses, wagons, and a water-trough. Their guns blazed, the two windows of the room sprayed broken glass, and bullet-holes appeared in the walls.

On one of the walls there was a shield-shaped board to which five shooting-irons of various patterns and a couple of shot-guns were clipped. While Britt was firing at the window Ted collected all these weapons, and in a drawer of the desk he found boxes of cartridges. Having provided Britt with a veritable armory he pushed the heavy desk against the door of the room and piled chairs upon it to form a barricade against the attackers, and then he crouched below the second window to pick off any ruffian fool enough to expose himself.

A Fight to the Finish

TOM HAGGARD, with the help of men he could trust, had rounded up a number of ranchers and had arranged for them to meet him at the sheriff's office with members of their outfits.

He was in the office with the sheriff, and a score of mounted men were already outside it, when Adele came galloping along the street.

Hardly conscious of the questions that were shouted at her by a crowd of men and women as she pulled up in front of the building of brick and stone, she slid from the saddle and rushed in over the doorstep.

"I've come for help!" she cried. "Sheriff, come quickly! Ted Haley sent me!"

The sheriff was sitting up on the couch, feeling more or less himself again. His deputy said exultingly:

"We got 'em, Bill! See you later!"

Out to his own horse he ran, and Adele scrambled up on to hers.

"Ready to ride?" he shouted. "Follow me, boys!"

Off went the posse, and the sheriff stood in the doorway watching their departure.

"What's it all about?" asked a woman.

"Doggone it if they're gonna leave me behind!" howled the sheriff; and he turned back into the office to struggle into a coat, and then flew out from it to heave himself up on a horse that belonged to one of the gaping bystanders.

He had caught up with the posse, and was riding in front with Tom Haggard and Adele, when Ted was saved from strangulation by the timely appearance of Britt. But the posse was still a good way from the ranch-house when Cal Hinks, from behind the water-trough, bellowed to Troope, who was firing round a corner of a shed at the window guarded by Ted:

"We ain't gettin' nowhere, Troope!"

A bullet from Ted's gun pierced the cow-hat on his head, and John Shend fell wounded beside him.

Cal emptied a gun at the window with more fury than aim, and then he yelled

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to Boyle, who, with three other men, was using a wagon as a shield:

"Boyle, you and the boys use that thing to bust in the back door!"

The wagon was pushed across the yard towards the rear of the house, and Britt fired again and again at the men it screened till it was out of sight.

"They're makin' a break for the house!" he cried.

"Keep firing!" returned Ted.

Above the din of firearms came the sound of a door being battered. Suddenly there was quiet in the yard, and Ted's attention became concentrated on the door of the room as it shook from the blows that were aimed at it.

Cal had sneaked from the water-trough to a tree and from the tree to the porch. Others joined him, one at a time, and he directed operations.

The blade of an axe pierced a panel of the door, and the door itself gave way; but the table and the piled-up

GRAND FREE GIFTS COMING SHORTLY!

chairs held it. The axe was withdrawn, struck again, and a gaping hole appeared in the panel. The barrel of a gun was projected through the gap, and behind it Ted saw an ugly face.

The gun jetted flame, and a bullet grazed his left shoulder; but he himself had fired at the same instant, and his aim was true. Cal Hinks collapsed, on the other side of the door, with a bullet in his brain.

But chairs were falling from the desk, and the desk itself was moving. The attackers were firing round both sides of the falling door. Ted made for a window, jumped its sill, and raced round to the front door with a gun in each hand to make a flank attack from the porch.

The bandits were going down like nincpins when Moose Nelson arrived on the scene with half a dozen cowpunchers he had brought from the nearest ranch. Britt was lying on the floor of Rotherth's

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"STABLEMATES"

Thomas Terry Wallace Beery
Mickey Mickey Rooney
Mr. Gale Arthur Hohl
Beulah Flanders Margaret Hamilton
Barney Donovan Minor Watson
Mrs. Shephard Marjorie Gateson
Peter Whalen Oscar O'Shea

"TRAPPED"

Ted Haley Charles Starrett
Adele Rotherth Peggy Stratford
Sol Rotherth Robert Middlemass
Cal Hinks Allan Sears
Ike Britt Ted Oliver
Moose Nelson Lew Mechan
Sheriff Bill Ashley Edward Peil, Senr.
Deputy Tom Haggard Jack Rockwell
Dr. Harrington Edward Le Saint
John Shend Francis Saylor

"BAR 20 JUSTICE"

Hopalong Cassidy William Boyd
Lucky Jenkins Russell Hayden
Windy Holliday George Hayes
Ann Dennis Gwen Gaze
Buck Peters William Duncan
Frazier Pat O'Brien
Slade Paul Sutton
Dennis John Beach
Perkins Joseph de Stefani

room, wounded in the shoulder, but he heard a shout of warning from a ruffian who had taken shelter in a tool-shed, and the broken door became deserted.

Two of the cowpunchers climbed into the room through the windows and went out at that door. Moose joined Ted on the porch, and the rest raced round the house to cover the back of it.

The crooks were at bay, fighting desperately, when the posse swept into the yard.

Adele, at a harsh command from the sheriff, remained in the lane while the house was surrounded by the posse, with the sheriff and his deputy directing operations; and after that there was very little more shooting.

The only member of Rotherth's gang who had not been wounded was the coward who had hidden in the tool-shed, and his associates knew better than to prolong a battle against hopeless odds, and surrendered.

They were taken off to the town gaol, some of them on their own horses, the more badly wounded and the dead in wagons and on buckboards; but the sheriff remained at the ranch-house because he was feeling the effects of too much exertion, and Britt was in no shape to travel. Moose stayed with his colleague, Ted elected to stay with Adele, and the deputy promised to send Dr. Harrington along as soon as he reached Shanley.

Moose tied up Britt's wound; Adele prepared a meal.

In course of time the doctor arrived, and Ted and Adele went out to a seat on the porch while Britt's shoulder was examined, dressed, and properly bandaged. The doctor then insisted upon taking the sheriff's temperature; and his face became so grave as he studied the thermometer that his patient asked in alarm:

"What's it read?"

"Very bad," said the doctor, with a shake of his head. "Don't look like you're going to pull through."

"Let me see that thing!" The sheriff snatched at the thermometer, but it was pocketed before he could get his hand on it, and from another pocket a well-seasoned pipe was produced in company with a pouch of tobacco.

"You're doin' all right, Bill," said the doctor, filling the pipe from the pouch and bestowing a wink on Moose. "But Britt's in a bad way."

"Aw, go on," scoffed Britt. "I'll be runnin' around in two days!"

"The fact is you fellows just can't take it," drawled Moose. "Look at me—I eat lead and like it."

The doctor turned to him.

"Want me to take your temperature?" he inquired.

"Not me!" said Moose; and then he jerked a thumb towards the porch. "But I'd like to know about them," he chuckled.

Ted was very close to Adele, on the seat out there, and he was saying wistfully:

"Sort o' nice round here, now it's peaceful, isn't it? Wish I could stay."

"Why don't you?" Adele murmured.

"Lonely," he replied. "I like lots of people."

She put her face very close to his, and she said softly:

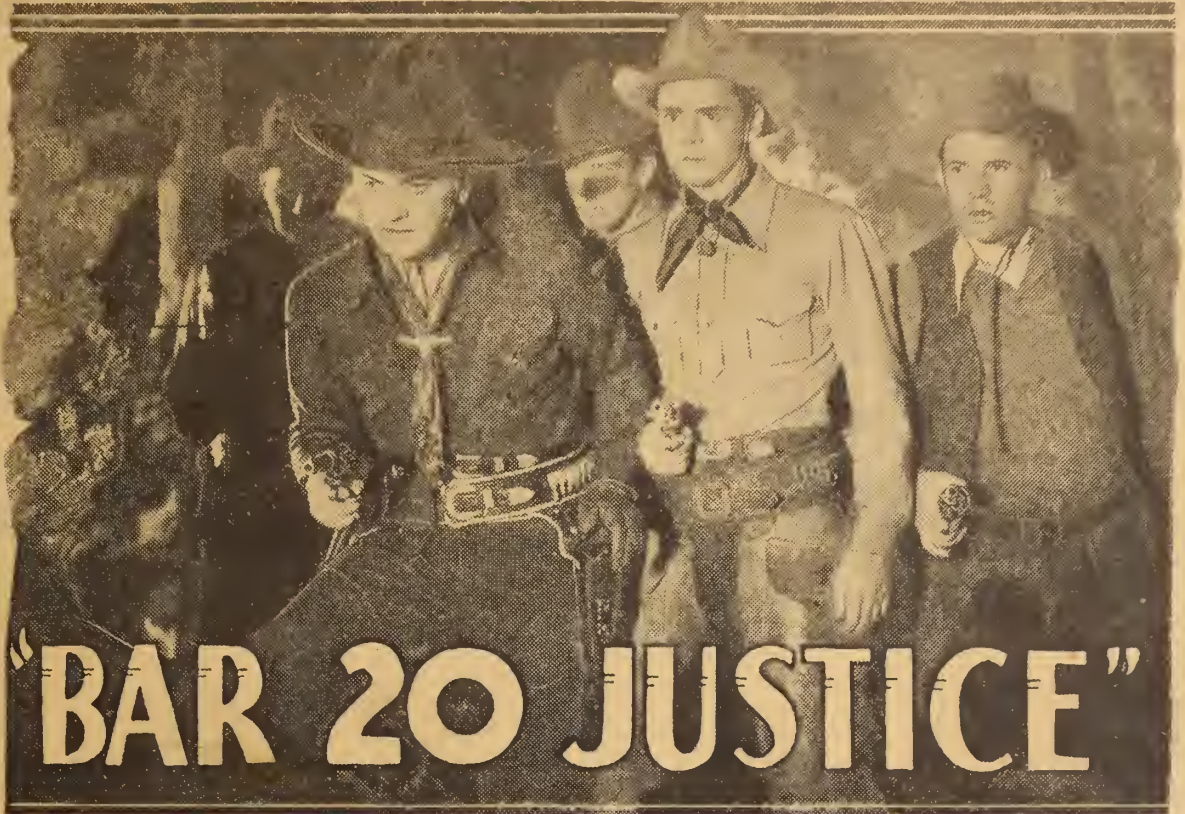
"But I can be lots of people. You wouldn't be lonely with me."

Ted, thus encouraged, slipped an arm round her shoulder and kissed her. Whereupon the doctor remarked:

"Well, things are goin' to be different from now on!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Charles Starrett.)

A scoundrelly mine owner and his bunch of crooks resort to murder and trickery to deprive a neighbouring mine of its gold, but Hopalong Cassidy steps in with fist and six-gun to bring the miscreants to Justice. Starring William Boyd



The "Accident" at the Freeze-Out Mine
IN an assay office in a small mining town of Arizona a man sat at a table examining samples of ore. He was an elderly man with greying hair, a hard mouth and rather shifty eyes. As he sorted and studied the samples a rather grim smile came to his lips.

As the door opened he looked up to see a man enter, a tall, clean-shaven, dark man who dropped into a chair with the air of an old acquaintance.

"Hallo, Frazier," exclaimed the man in the chair whose name was Perkins. "I reckon this is pretty good stuff. It runs over six hundred dollars to the ton."

"I had an idea it was pretty high grade," replied Frazier. "This seems to be my lucky day. I'm getting all the breaks."

"What now?" asked the other curiously.

"Cassidy pulled out this morning." Perkins whistled. He knew that for months past Frazier had been doing his best to gain possession of the Freeze Out mine which adjoined his own, the Devil-May-Care. But Dennis, the owner, and Ann, his wife, had persistently refused to sell. Certainly this was indeed a lucky break. With Hopalong Cassidy out of the way for some months it would be a strange thing if he and Frazier couldn't now get hold of the Freeze Out mine for good and all.

"I'll bet ten to one," he chuckled, "that the Freeze Out has a new owner in a month."

Frazier laughed carelessly.

"Well, maybe you wouldn't lose," he rejoined.

He leaned over the table, lowering his voice as he went on.

"Tell Slade," he said, "that I'm expecting to see an unfortunate accident happen to Dennis—and the sooner the better."

For a moment or two their eyes met in silence. Then Perkins nodded.

"O.K.," he replied laconically.

A man stood at the little railway-station waiting for the New York train to come in. He was a well-built, thick-set man of medium size. Whitening hair showed under his slouch hat, and it was easy to see that he had reached the prime of life. But there was that about the clean-shaven face, the firm jaw and those keen blue eyes that suggested a man who could never really grow old in heart. You had the impression as you looked at him that his sense of humour lay very close to the surface. If you could visualise him as a very formidable foe you could most certainly imagine him to be an exceedingly staunch friend.

And indeed it was so with Hopalong Cassidy. Wherever men drank in saloons in those wild parts, wherever they sat yarning round camp fires, the name of Hopalong Cassidy would bring an appreciative gleam into the eyes of those who ranged themselves on the side of law and order, and an angry frown to the foreheads of those who held to the shady paths. A hundred tales were told of this quiet, cool man who risked his life as readily as he roped a steer; of his strength, his contempt of danger, his complete indifference to women, yet his unflinching courtesy to them at all times and under all conditions. A hundred of them had tried to throw a rope over him but

without success. It had become a by-word now in that wild country that no woman could ever capture Hopalong Cassidy, and no man could beat him on the "draw."

He stood at the little station office now taking his ticket and exchanging pleasantries with the old man who handed it to him.

"Not often you take a holiday, Mr. Cassidy."

"Well, it's all the nicer now it comes," said Hopalong with a smile. "I've been promising myself this trip for quite a while."

"And Windy and Lucky?" queried the old man, for Cassidy had been almost inseparable from these two friends of his for years past. "How did they come to let you go all alone?"

Cassidy grinned. He would have liked to have had them both with him and he knew it.

"Mother's got to go away sometimes and leave her kids," he retorted. "I know Windy ain't old enough yet to be left—"

But the rest of the speech was drowned in the old man's delighted laughter. For Windy was a hard-bitten old-timer who would never see seventy again.

He sobered up, however, for Cassidy had suddenly swung round and a worried look had come to his eyes.

"Why, darned if it ain't Lucky!" he murmured. "Why, Lucky what's the trouble?"

The young man had flung himself from his horse.

"Sure glad I caught you in time, Hoppy," he said. He drew him to one side, lowering his voice when next he spoke.

"Dennis has been killed," he said.

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"Dennis? How?" he demanded, his eyes narrowing to mere pinpoints.

"Working in the mine. A timber fell on him. Slade calls it an accident. But it strikes me as a mighty funny thing that it's the third accident that's happened in the same way. The men have stopped work—they're scared."

"H'm!" Cassidy was reflecting.

"What about Ann?"

Lucky Jenkins shrugged.

"Hit her pretty hard, though she's takin' it swell," he answered. "Frazier's been up to see her and offered to buy the mine, but she's stubborn and refuses to sell. She told Windy and me that she's sure Dennis' death wasn't accidental."

"Mebbe she's right," replied the other slowly. "I guess New York's off this trip."

"I rather fancied you'd see it that way, Hoppy. It's tough on you havin' to cancel your holiday."

"But it's tougher on Ann," interrupted Cassidy. "Come on, let's get goin'."

Hopalong Gets Busy

FRAZIER, owner of the Devil-May-Care Mine, and Slade, manager of the Freeze Out, were just coming out of the assay office followed by Perkins when Cassidy and Lucky came riding swiftly through the town. The three drew back in a moment. Frazier swore viciously under his breath.

"Now what in hades has brought Cassidy back?" he exclaimed.

"Jenkins was with him and that looks as if he'd fetched him back," said Slade. "But I'll lay six to four it isn't to help us."

Frazier scowled.

"It's too late to back out now," he snapped. "We're in too deep. But if Mr. Cassidy thinks he's ruinin' this town he'll find himself mistaken. We'll let him make the first move and think he's got things his own way. Then when the time comes—"

He broke off and laughed contemptuously.

"I'll take care of Mr. Cassidy when the time comes," he finished.

In the meanwhile Cassidy had reached Ann Dennis' house and was climbing the steps when she came out.

"Hoppy! I told them they weren't to—"

"My lads have a way of breakin' orders once in a while, Ann," he smiled; "but I shouldn't hold it up against 'em. Now can you spare me a minute or two and let's hear just what's been goin' on? You know we'll do anything we can to help you."

"But I haven't any right in the world to ask you to get mixed up in my troubles," she protested.

"You ain't askin' me. I'm doin' it of my own accord. Now let's hear exactly what happened."

In her little sitting-room she told them how both she and her husband had struck a new pay streak. How under Slade's advice they had cut a new tunnel. Her husband had been there alone and had been found dead with a timber across him.

"The pay streak had petered out in some strange way," she concluded, "and Dennis had gone down alone trying to locate it in the new tunnel they had cut. I can't believe it was just an accident. It's the third death that's happened since they started the new tunnel—and all of them the same way."

"The Devil-May-Care mine is right next to yours, isn't it?" asked Hopalong after a brief pause.

She nodded.

"That's right. It's Frazier's."

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"He's offered to buy you out, hasn't he?" queried Hopalong.

"That's right, too. He was very nice and sympathetic about it. He said it wasn't worth anything, but he had known my husband well, and if a few hundred dollars would help—"

She stopped suddenly. Hopalong's eyes had narrowed rather ominously.

"Hoppy, you don't think that Frazier—"

His face was grave as her voice trailed away. His reply came slowly.

"I don't know what to think, Ann. The first thing we've got to do is to find what happened to that pay streak. If that's still there it might tell us things."

"But you're not goin' to try to work the Freeze Out yourself?"

He shrugged.

"It's the only way I can see of findin' out anythin'."

"But more men might get killed?" she urged. "Perhaps—you!"

His old lazy smile came up then.

"I guess no one goes till his time comes, Ann," he answered. "Besides, folks say I don't kill easy. I'm goin' to ride over and see Buck Peters."

"May I ride with you?" she asked eagerly.

"I don't know any better company," he replied with a smile.

An hour or so later the two of them were with Buck Peters the owner of the Bar 20 ranch.

"And so, Buck," concluded Cassidy. "I've made up my mind that instead of takin' a holiday I'm goin' to look into this business. The only thing I'm asking of you is that you and the boys will back me up if I need you."

But the old man frowned. He had been close friends with Hopalong for years, but he fancied he could see trouble ahead and he wasn't too eager to be in it.

"Hoppy," he answered, "I'm a cattle man—always have been, and I don't want nothin' to do with miners or mines. 'Sides, I'm aimin' at livin' in this town and to stay clear of any trouble that don't concern me."

Hopalong nodded, though obviously a shade disappointed.

"Well, I reckon you've got a right to do as you like, Buck," he replied.

"Thanks for listenin' to me."

But as he and Ann got to the door Peters spoke again.

"Are you goin' through with this thing by yourself, Hoppy?" he queried.

"Dennis was a pal of mine," said Hopalong simply.

He opened the door for the girl, but Peters stayed them both.

"Oh, all right," he said. "I'm a dauged soft-hearted idiot for givin' in to you, but you always did have a way of makin' me see things your way."

Hopalong chuckled broadly.

"Never tried to make you in my life," he retorted. "I just shoves down things in front of you and your common sense does the rest. Thanks a lot, Buck, though. Now I'm off, Ann, to get a bunch of boys who'll work the mine for you. We'll soon get to the bottom of this."

Hopalong Makes a Discovery

SLADE walked into the assay office to find Perkins and Frazier sitting there. Both men looked up as he came in.

"Well, what's goin' on?" demanded Frazier.

"Plenty," replied the other. "Cassidy's up at the Freeze Out gettin' a bunch of miners together. He's figurin' on openin' up the mine again."

Frazier swore fiercely.

"Get up there quick then, and keep an eye on him. Get him to sign you on even if you have to dig rock yourself. We must have someone inside."

"I thought of offerin' myself as foreman again," rejoined the other with a grin. "I naturally quit, same as all the others did, when that unfortunate accident happened to the boss. But I reckon it would be a real treat to help the little lady and work under a fine guy like Cassidy."

While he had been speaking a smile had come to Frazier's face. Perkins, too, was grinning.

"Not a bad idea," replied Frazier.

"Cassidy's likely to fall for that sort of stuff if you hand it to him properly. Get goin', Slade, and keep in touch with me."

Slade arrived at the mine just in time to see Hopalong haranguing a group of men; but a group of men who were obviously not too keen to resume work after what had happened.

"Well, I've had my say," Slade heard him say. "If none of you guys have got the nerve to go in with me I guess I'll have to work the mine myself."

Up spoke a grizzled old miner.

"Say, mister, if you're willin' to go, I am, too—so long as I get paid for it."

It only needed that. To have their courage called into question was a thing that these rough men would have none of. A dozen hands shot up in a flash.

"So am I!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

Slade stepped forward with an ingratiating smile on his face.

"Count me in, too, Mr. Cassidy," he said, "if I can be of any use. The name's Slade, and I was foreman here, but I couldn't go on for nothin'. All the same, if there's anythin' now that I can do for you and the little lady who owns the outfit I'll be glad to do it."

"Fine!" replied Hopalong. "I'll be right glad to have you as foreman. Get the boys started."

Later on he strolled through the mine, stood watching the men at work. Slade came up.

"I reckon you'd be wise, Mr. Cassidy, to keep 'em here," he said. "There's some likely looking rock around here."

Cassidy nodded approval and passed on. He addressed one of the men.

"I can see you know your work all right," he said.

"Sure ought to. Been workin' mines all my life."

"I'm lucky to have men like you and Slade around," was the reply. "Guess he knows his job, too. Was he foreman here when they struck that rich streak?"

"Yeah."

"You, too?"

"Nope. Slade had another bunch. Had trouble with them and fired 'em."

Hopalong strolled on, rubbing his chin. It struck him as curious that Slade insisted on keeping the men at work several hundred yards from where the pay streak had been struck. As he came to the deserted spot he stopped and stood frowning at the timbered walls around him.

"They look strong enough," he mused.

Suddenly he stooped and picked up a sample of ore that lay at his feet. But even as he studied it suspicion leaped into his eyes.

"That's mighty queer," he murmured.

Once more he glanced round. Ahead of him lay the spot where Dennis had met his death. He could see where

the timber had fallen and had been replaced.

For the next ten minutes he walked to and from pressing against the timbers and tapping them and listening intently.

When he eventually started to retrace his steps his face was grave. But he was his old careless self when he reached Slade.

"Slade," he said, "it occurs to me that we ought to have a night watchman about here. I'm goin' into town to get one."

It was only the most fleeting look of annoyance that flashed into the other's eyes, but Cassidy saw it because he was looking for it. Yet it passed as quickly as it had come, and when Slade spoke his voice was quite normal.

"Oh, don't trouble, Mr. Cassidy. I've got just the man for you."

"Trust him?"

"Sure. I wouldn't have him around if I didn't."

"O.K.," answered Hopalong carelessly. "Hire him, and keep the boys busy. I'll be seein' you."

But he sought out Lucky and Windy all the same half an hour later and detailed to them his suspicions of Slade.

To Lucky he said:

"There's gonna be a watchman at the Freeze Out mine to-night, and I want you to invite him out to the ranch for a little visit. You may have to invite him real hard."

Lucky grinned, but Windy broke in.

"What about me? Ain't I in this, too?"

"Not on your life, old-timer," replied Cassidy. "You're goin' to take the night watchman's place presently."

"Me?" queried the old man incredulously.

"Sure," replied Cassidy cheerfully. "You're goin' to offer yourself for the job to-morrow, and as you're goin' to be very deaf, I'll reckon they're goin' to jump at you. Incidentally, old-timer, you and I are strangers when we meet."

Actually the whole affair was so

neatly done that even Slade had no idea of what was going forward. The night watchman was missing the next morning and there was not one single sign to suggest that he had left except of his own accord. Old Windy hobbled up to the entrance of the mine when Cassidy was actually discussing the whole thing with Slade.

"Any jobs goin', mister?" he squeaked.

His pretended deafness got him the vacant post. Slade had to bellow every question at him half a dozen times, but Windy ignored Cassidy, and Cassidy made sarcastic remarks about the "old fool"; and Slade knew that a deaf old man would be eminently suitable for such a post. A keen-eared stranger might hear suspicious noises during the night, but this old man, he was sure, would never hear one sound.

"I should give the poor old mutt a job," said Hopalong carelessly. "It don't matter a lot if he is a bit deaf."

Slade thought it mattered a great deal to himself and his partners. But he didn't say so. And Windy was promptly engaged.

Windy Makes a Bigger Discovery

It was the middle of the night and Hopalong was fast asleep when Windy burst into his room.

"Hoppy," he exclaimed excitedly, "I've found out everything."

Hopalong was awake in a flash and listening intently as the old man went on.

"Thought I'd do a bit of prospectin'," he said. "Went into the mine; thought I heard funny noises, and, by jabbers, I did! A dozen miners from the Devil-May-Care workin' away in our mine! What d'you think of that?"

"And they never came in past you?"

"No, sir. Not even a cat passed me after I went on duty."

"Where did you find 'em workin'?"

"In the tunnel on the right—where Dennis met his death."

Hopalong whistled softly.

"Windy," he said, "I'm makin' a guess. It is that there's another tunnel still behind all them timbers leading from the Devil-May-Care mine to ours; and that Slade's hand-in-glove with Frazier."

The old man's eyes bulged. "Are we roundin' the dirty skunks up to-night?" he asked.

Hopalong shook his head. "No, we're first goin' to make sure. Now you'd better get back to the mine, quick. I'll be seein' you."

Hopalong strolled into the mine the next day as though nothing had happened. After a few words with Slade and the men he pursued his way along to the tunnel on the right. After a few quick glances round and some very close examination of the timbering, he knocked boldly and loudly on the wood.

Breathlessly he waited. His quick ear, glued to the wood, had caught a sound on the other side. Then suddenly, to his amazement, the heavy timbers seemed to slide open and a gun came through.

"That you, Slade?" whispered a voice.

In a flash Hopalong sprang, caught the gun in his hand, and as he slipped round the timber had a quick vision of a fist flying towards his head. But even as he ducked he loosed a vicious uppercut with all the force in his body, and the man slid to the floor.

Hopalong stood panting. The other man's gun had fallen to the floor, but he was making no attempt to get it, for Hopalong's was in his hand. Slade came running up and gave a sharp exclamation.

"What's—what's the meanin' of this?" he managed to get out. But it seemed to Hopalong that there was something more than surprise underlying his voice.

"I want to know—" began the man on the ground, but Hopalong snapped in roughly.

"Shut up! I'm askin' the questions."

"Well, I ain't talkin'."



Frazier was gazing at Hopalong Cassidy in a dazed fashion.

Hopalong addressed Slade.

"There's no more mystery now about the Freeze Out mine, Slade," he said steadily. "Our neighbour here lets him self in through this door, steals our gold and kills anyone who gets in his way."

Slade swallowed.

"Nice work," he said. "We'll take our prisoner down to the assay office and explain things to Perkins. If the gold from the Devil-May-Care matches the gold in the vein we lost, then we trap the whole outfit."

Possibly at any other time Hopalong might have been impressed by the glibness of the answer. But he had seen the quick glances that had passed between the two men, and he realised that Slade was accepting an awkward situation without question and was playing for time.

"Good idea, Slade," he replied. "We'll get 'em."

His suspicions were confirmed when they reached Perkins' office with their prisoner. The swift fear that sprang into Perkins' eyes told Hopalong all he wanted to know, and though Perkins endeavoured to show merely surprise and concern as he examined the two samples of ore, Cassidy was satisfied that the assayer's brain was busy.

Perkins leaned back in his chair a length.

"I'll take an oath that those two rocks are from the same place," he said.

"O.K.," replied Cassidy. "I'll have that in writing, please, Perkins."

"You can trust me, Cassidy—"

"Sure I can, but I like to have things on paper—in case of accidents. I figure on turnin' this guy over to the sheriff until we round up the others. Got any better ideas?"

Perkins spoke slowly and thoughtfully.

"I shouldn't do that, Cassidy," he said. "The rest of the gang will see you're on to 'em then, and they'll stay away from the Freeze Out."

"Quite right," urged Slade. "We ought to hide this guy some place. There's a deserted shack out in Sandstone Gulch. We could hold him safely there."

"And loose him the moment my back's turned," mused Hopalong. "I wonder what they're after?"

Aloud he said:

"Fine. Let's get 'em."

Perkins handed him the paper that he signed and Hopalong accepted it without comment.

But he was more sure than ever now that the pair of them were laying a trap for him.

A Fight in the Shack

DURING the ride to the shack Hopalong did some hard thinking, for it was coming to him very forcibly now that the paper which he held signed by Perkins was—if his suspicions were correct—a very definite danger to both the assayer and Slade.

"However, we'll very soon see," he reflected, as they approached the shack.

Slade hustled his prisoner into the place.

"Sit down," he commanded roughly.

The man sat down. Hopalong sat down, too—but he was taking good care to keep Slade in front of him.

"If you were to talk, Pierce," he said, "we might get a court to go a little easier on you for turnin' State's evidence."

"Evidence against who?" retorted the other sullenly.

"Evidence against your boss—the one who planned this whole thing," said Hopalong quietly.

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"I'm not talkin', snapped the man. "Better tie him up, Cassidy," suggested Slade. "We want to make sure of him."

Instinct warned Hopalong then. He knew.

"I'm goin' to let you tie him up, Slade," he said.

A fractional pause. Once more Hopalong saw the swift suspicion leap into Slade's eyes.

"What d'you mean?"

"Just this," replied Hopalong. "Unless I'm mighty mistaken, you're as deep in this as anyone, and—"

But as Slade's hand dived to his gun, his fist crashed out, hurling him to the ground.

"And don't you move, either," he went on, addressing Pierce, who had sprung to his feet, but stopped as he found himself looking into Hopalong's gun. "Now line up, the pair of you, and—"

"Drop that gun, Cassidy, and drop it quick!"

Hopalong's heart missed a beat. He knew that cool voice, and he felt the gun in his back. His own clattered to the floor.

Frazier, for it was he, came round and surveyed him with a contemptuous smile. But he still held his gun in his hand, and Hopalong knew that if he moved that gun would speak.

"I had an idea I might be wanted," he went on coolly, "when Perkins told me a quarter of an hour ago what was goin' forward here. Tie him up, boys."

"And I had an idea that you were at the head of this outfit," retorted Hopalong, as Slade and Pierce fastened the ropes tightly round him.

"Afraid you're too late to tell it to anyone," retorted the other with a brutal laugh.

"Give me that gun and I'll finish him, boss," urged Pierce. But Frazier hook his head.

"Don't be a fool," he replied. "If he was found with lead in him his pals would never rest until they'd tracked us down. No! I reckon I know a far better way than that."

With a laugh he took a box of matches from his pocket and, having struck one, deliberately applied it to the dirty curtains that hung before the window. As they flamed up he turned. "Come on, boys!" he said.

At the door he turned and waved his hand pleasantly.

"You've always reckoned yourself a mighty clever guy, Cassidy," he said with a bitter sneer. "Think your way out of this one. But"—he glanced at the flames, which had now reached the roof and were burning hungrily—"I reckon you'll have to think mighty quick. S'long!"

Hopalong's indomitable pluck nearly vanished altogether, then, as he heard them ride away. The flames had caught the roof and were already licking round the room. Billows of smoke were eddying round him, sending him coughing and spluttering. But though he writhed and fought and struggled with the cords that bound him, all he could do was just to roll over nearer to the flames. Yet even as he felt them and tried to roll back out of their reach, he paused. For in a flash he had realised that his only hope to get free was to stay within reach of those flames in the vain hope that they might catch the cords that bound him and set him free that way. Though even as the idea came to him he hesitated at what he might have to endure with only a sliver's chance of success.

He felt the flames scorching his wrists, bit deeply into his lip to pre-

vent himself from screaming at the pain. The perspiration was pouring down his forehead, the smoke was suffocating him. The flames were burning his wrists, he felt them at his legs. He writhed and struggled as he felt his bonds weakening. With a supreme effort he felt them at last give way, got to his knees, caught at a table and staggered to his feet. As in a dream he heard his name called, tried to answer but without avail.

"This is the end," he thought, and the floor seemed to rise up at him.

He opened his eyes; blinked dazedly. The sun was shining above him, and Windy was bending over him.

"Are you all right, Hoppy?" asked the old man anxiously.

"A little—singed. How—did you—get here? No, let me stay here a bit."

"Saw Frazier leave Perkins' office ridin' like hell. When I saw him headin' this way I wondered what was up, and followed him. Why in hades do you do these darn fool things, Hoppy?"

"Worth it, Windy," he replied with a smile. "I've got the whole gang now where I want 'em."

"And what's the next move?"

Hopalong struggled into a sitting position.

"They reckon I'm dead," he replied after a few moments of thought, "so I'll stay dead, and maybe they'll go ahead just as usual to-night. First of all, you've got to get hold of Buck and the boys and tell 'em we want 'em for to-night. Tell 'em to meet me on the hill north of the Devil-May-Care mine. From there we can see the entrance to both of the mines. As soon as Frazier's lot go in at their entrance we'll slip down and have a chat with the night watchman there. But the moment you give us the signal from your end that Slade has gone in I'll send some of the boys along from the hill to guard your entrance. We shall go in, of course, from the other end, and when we come through to the Freeze Out they may try to make a bolt for it out at your end."

Old Windy chuckled broadly.

"They won't get far," he rejoined. "What signal do I give you, Hoppy, to show you when Slade's gone in?"

"Strike a match and light your pipe, old timer. We'll have the glasses trained on you."

Hopalong Makes His Move

HOPALONG slipped stealthily down the hill in the direction of the entrance to the Devil-May-Care mine. For they had seen the men go in, and at the other end they had seen old Windy light his pipe.

Hopalong worked his way noiselessly towards the mine entrance. He could just see the night watchman sitting reading.

Hopalong crept nearer, but as he did so he dislodged a pebble which clattered noisily down. He saw the watchman pick up his gun from the table, saw him come out and glance right and left. He himself was crouching behind a boulder, but as he saw the other turn he sprang, and the next minute had him by the throat forcing him backwards.

The fight didn't last very long, and it was only a matter of seconds before Hopalong had him helpless on the ground.

There were few, if any, men in those parts who could hold their own with Hopalong either with gun play or fist-cuffs. Holding the watchman down he had a rope round him in a few moments, and in a few more moments Buck and the boys joined him in response to his whistle.

"Lucky, you and the others stay here and guard this guy," said Hopalong. "Buck, you and two more come with me."

Frazier and Perkins were sitting in the latter's office. A bottle and glasses were on the table. Frazier had been relating once again with considerable relish his episode with Hopalong at the shack.

"If they find bits of him," he finished with a grim chuckle. "I reckon those bits can't talk. Slade's prepared to swear that he rode out with Cassidy and Pierce in the direction of the shack and left 'em there because Cassidy said he could do the job alone and wanted a little heart to heart talk with Pierce. And as Pierce will be missin'—I'll pack him off if there's trouble—any jury's likely to return an open verdict."

"Fine," retorted Perkins, rubbing his hands. "With Cassidy out of the way we ought to have clear sailin' from now onward."

Frazier picked up the bottle and filled two glasses. "Here's to a good clean-up," he said. Both lifted their glasses. But they never reached their mouths. They stayed arrested half-way, for a voice spoke from the open door sharply. And Perkins could only stare.

"Maybe I should let you two finish your drinks, because they'll be the last ones you'll have for a long time. Put your hands on the table and keep 'em there."

Frazier's eyes were on Hopalong, for he it was. He was gazing at him in an almost dazed condition. He had left him not many hours ago tightly bound in a locked and burning shack. Yet here he was once more as cool and nonchalant as ever, a gun in his hand and three armed men with him.

And Frazier realised with dull fury that the game was up at last.

He moistened his dry lips. He wanted to speak, but no words would come. He wanted to leap up and hurl himself at those four stern-looking men. But swift death lay that way and he was afraid.

Almost as if reading his thoughts, Hopalong spoke. "I take quite a lot of killin', Frazier," he said. "It was not a bad idea of yours to tunnel a way through from your mine to the Freeze Out. It may interest you to know that my boys are holding both entrances at the moment. When I go back to them we're goin' in to see just what's goin' on. Sorry you won't be there to see the fun."

Frazier didn't say a word. Hope died within him. He knew that Hopalong never boasted and that every word he had spoken was true. They would creep into the mine, they would find all the men at work in the Freeze Out, Slade among them. To save their miserable skins they would confess everything. A rope was waiting for him—Frazier—and only a miracle could save him from it now. He clenched his hands in impotent rage, but Hopalong seemed to sense what was in his mind.

"Better not try any funny stuff, Frazier," he said. "I'm shootin' to kill this time. I'm not forgettin' Dennis."

And then he went on. "Buck, you three wait here and look after these guys. I want to get back to the boys and finish this little round-up."

For nearly two hours after he had gone deathly silence reigned in the room. Perkins was sitting gazing blankly in front of him, rage and despair in his face. Frazier, with his hands in his lap, was lying back in his chair. But three pairs of eyes were watching both of those two men intently, and three hands were holding their guns tightly.

Frazier spoke at last, addressing Buck: "Mind if I smoke, Peters? Haven't had one all night and I'm just dying for a cigar."

The other answered him quietly. "You can take one of those I see on the table, Frazier," he replied. "But if I see your hand go near your belt you may never live to regret it."

"O.K. by me," retorted the other with a hard laugh. "With three guns trained on me I'm not likely to attempt any funny stuff."

Nonchalantly he bent forward to pick up the cigar in front of him, but even as he did so his hand swept the lamp from the table, hurling the room into darkness. As three guns spoke simultaneously he flung himself at the window.

The rest was confusion inside the room. Glass was breaking, flames licking upwards, men tumbling over each other unable to distinguish between friend and foe. Buck had seen Frazier as he flung himself through the window and had fired simultaneously. But in the darkness he realised that his shot had gone wide. He rushed to the window. But even as he peered out into the darkness he saw a figure rise up from the veranda and push into the street, and his gun spoke twice.

He saw the man stagger and fall. "Come on, boys," he shouted. "I've got one of 'em."

Meanwhile, Hopalong had reached the entrance to the Devil-May-Care mine.

(Continued on page 27)



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"STABLEMATES"

(Continued from page 10)

very good idea that this was the young man who had spoken to her that morning. Moreover, it was obvious that this unknown horse had a very fine turn of speed, and that not only was she running level with a horse that had cost Mrs. Shephard many thousands of dollars, but seemed to have a fair chance of gaining the victory.

Actually, the horses flashed by the winning-post, and only a photograph could have given the verdict as to which had won, but Mrs. Shephard knew from her own stop-watch that both horses had almost beaten the track record.

When Mickey trotted back to the grand stand he found a steward, almost red in the face with rage, and a smiling Mrs. Shephard waiting for him.

"Young man, get down off that horse!" shouted the steward.

"So it was you?" laughed Mrs. Shephard.

"Yes, ma'am."

"So this is your wonder horse?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the boy, "I thought we better have that little race right away. I hope you ain't angry?"

"Not after a performance like that," replied the just woman, with a glance at the steward that signified she wished to deal with the young man.

"Then will you do something for me?" begged Mickey. "Will you race her under your colours?"

The steward and the trainer nearly expired at such brazen impertinence.

"I ain't got the fee," hastily continued Mickey. "And there's a guy I owe a lot of dough to for an operation. I gotta feeling he'll be needing the dough pretty badly."

"I'll enter her on one condition."

"What's that?"

"That none of my horses has to run against her."

"How about the Brewster Handicap to-morrow?" Mickey dared to suggest.

Mrs. Shephard agreed, not only to the horse being entered in the Brewster Handicap, but gave Mickey permission to ride. Also, she instructed her trainer to house the horse in one of their loose boxes.

Noticing that the steward was dying to say a few words on this unconventional incident, Mrs. Shephard linked her arm in his and said she'd be so grateful for a cup of coffee.

Mickey was accommodated in a luxurious stall, and he was grooming down his horse when Barney Donovan appeared on the scene.

"Hallo, Mickey!" he called out. "I thought you weren't going to run her?"

"Well, I put it up to her, and she started cryin' and carryin' on something awful!" mocked the young rascal. "So I thought I ought to bring her up here so she could at least watch the race."

"Now there's no use being sore just because we had a little misunderstanding," said Donovan, trying to be tactful. "How's your father?"

"Well, didn't you hear?" Mickey cried with a loud laugh. "That guy wasn't my father at all. He was a third cousin or something on my grandmother's side, through a marriage of an aunt. We finally had to shoot him."

"Sounds only fair enough," agreed Donovan, and then added: "I'm still your friend, kid."

"Sorry, Barney, but we've got nothing to be friendly about any more."

January 21st, 1939

There was no laughter now on the boy's face. "We don't like the same things."

In the excitement of his new surroundings Mickey was able for a little while to forget about his father. But the boy had little sleep that night, because he dreaded that Terry might go back on the booze.

If only he could win this race then he would seek out the old man and explain why he'd had to behave so strangely.

Lady Q Goes Lame

IT was a glorious day that greeted Mickey when he did wake from a troubled sleep. The morning seemed to drag, but at last there came the afternoon, and within a short while he would be out on the race-track. A little nigger boy brought him his racing silks, and though there was no need to change he got dressed at once.

Everything seemed grand until Mickey noticed that Lady Q had the treated hoof off the ground. With a cry of alarm he went down on his knees to examine the hoof, and to his horror Lady Q gave a whinny of pain when he pressed the pad.

"Does it hurt you much, Lady?" he asked in distressed tones. He looked at the soulful eyes. "Yes, I see it does. Well, you can't run like that. If you can't run, what's pop goin' to do?"

The horse seemed to understand, for she gave a shrill whinny, and shook her head as if to say there was nothing the matter with her, but Pete the trainer was very dubious when he made his examination. After a consultation with Mrs. Shephard he decided to go over to the stewards and take her out of the race.

For the first time in his life Mickey really gave way to tears, and he flung himself in his glorious silks into a corner. It was Mrs. Shephard who found him in this dejected attitude. She was most kind, and did her best to cheer him up. The horse should be treated and run at some other time.

"She should be running to-day," sobbed Mickey. "Some other time will be too late. To-day's when she should be running."

"She'll run to-day," said a husky voice.

Mrs. Shephard was amazed when a thick-set elderly man walked into the stalls and stooped down to lift up the hoof of Lady Q. She glanced at the boy, and his expression puzzled her even more. It was fear, and there was yearning in the youngster's eyes.

"Her hoof's a little bit tender to-day," Terry pronounced, and from his pocket produced an object. "I brought along a bar shoe that'll protect it. With that on she'll run over anything on the track."

"Who are you, please?" asked Mrs. Shephard.

A whimsical smile.

"I used to take care of her," Terry nodded towards the speechless youngster. "For him, ma'am."

"If you're sure she's going to be all right I'll ston Pete from taking her out of the race."

"She'll be all right, lady," Terry promised. "You can have no hesitation about running her."

"I'm glad," Mrs. Shephard turned eagerly to the boy. "Your worries are all over."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Mickey; but when the good lady had gone he turned fiercely on his adopted father. "Get out of here—beat it before that cop nabs you."

Old Terry had just finished fixing the shoe, and he straightened his back to look at the boy.

"What are you talking about?" he asked in surprise.

"That Detective Donovan," Mickey blurted out. "He told me all about you when I went there to get the entry form. He's probably watching me now to see if he can nab you."

"So Donovan told you." The drawn expression on Terry's face vanished as if by magic. "So now I understand why you acted so strangely, and why you didn't want me to come to Burlington."

"What other reason would I have?" demanded Mickey. "I had to keep you away from here. Gee, I'd rather lose my right arm than lose you."

"Gee-whizz!" Terry's voice was husky with emotion. "And I thought you were through with me."

Mickey feverishly begged Terry to get out of the stalls at once, and to keep his hat over his eyes and his collar well turned up. He was to go back to the widow's, pretend that he couldn't get married until his boy was at the ceremony, and Mickey reckoned that he could get down to the farm within two or three days. He even suggested that Terry let his beard grow. When Terry hinted that he would like to stop and watch the race Mickey became quite angry. If his father didn't get going he wouldn't race Lady Q at all. Naturally, Doc Terry had no intention of leaving the race track without seeing the boy ride, but he did heed the advice about keeping his collar turned up and his hat pulled down. He found a quiet spot on the rails. Now Mickey, knowing his old man, gazed anxiously along the packed crowds, and his fears were realised when he noted that familiar figure. He made violent signals with his hands for Doc Terry to go away, but the old fellow paid no heed, and as a result when the starting-gate went up Lady Q was very badly left.

Lady Q was seven or eight lengths behind the field, and it seemed perfectly hopeless for her to have a chance. Doc Terry was upset, and, forgetting his need for precaution, began to shout for Lady Q.

A moment later a hand fell on his shoulder, and he turned to find Detective Donovan by his side.

"Hallo, Doc?"

"Mind waiting until the race is over?" quietly requested Terry.

"O.K.," the detective agreed. "I'd like to watch the race myself."

"At the far turn Duke Arthur, still leading by four lengths," boomed the voice of the announcer. "Bondi is second. The pace is a cracker. Bondi is creeping up, and is now half a length behind Duke Arthur. Blonde Betty's third, with Mad Power fourth."

And out there on the rack track Mickey was shouting encouragingly to Lady Q.

"We can't let pop down, Lady," he was crying. "So let's go!"

The horse that seemed out of the race seemed to leap forward, and flushed by a number of the stragglers to reach the rear of the pack leaders. Duke Arthur still had the lead with Bondi close up, whilst a length behind were four horses bunched together. And this was the barrier that was shutting out Lady Q.

"You're making it, honey!" Mickey cried to the horse. "Keep going, keep going, baby!"

Mickey got past those four horses on the outside, to get into third place. It was now the straight with the winning-post but a furlong away. Duke Arthur and Bondi were running level, but when Lady Q tried to break through the gap

between the two leaders, the jockey on Boudi at once closed in.

"Oh, no, you don't!" the jockey cried viciously.

"I'm coming through!" defiantly answered Mickey.

This dirty-riding jockey tried to check Mickey by putting his foot in front of Mickey's stirrup, and only once during that race did the boy use his whip, and then it was to crack it across the crooked jockey's ankles.

"Lady Q has got through!" excitedly shouted the announcer. "Duke Arthur holds a slight lead. Lady Q has caught the leader. Now it's Duke Arthur. Now Lady Q. They're neck and neck and nose to nose." But it was Lady Q who possessed that extra ounce of stamina that told, and she forged ahead to win by a neck.

Terry, directly the race was won, asked Donovan to take him away, so that Mickey, when he trotted back towards the weighing-in room, should see that he had gone and think that he had made good his escape.

Back in the stall with Lady Q the triumphant young jockey was planning what he should do with the 3,500 dollars at his disposal when Donovan turned up, and as gently as possible told the boy that Terry was under arrest. He regretted that he'd had to carry out his duty, for it was obvious that Terry was a reformed character. Moreover, it was due entirely to Doc Terry that Lady Q had managed to win the race. Then Mrs. Shephard appeared and put her arms round the heartbroken boy and begged him to be brave. Mickey called Donovan a sneaking cop, and would not be comforted.

Lurking all this time was Terry, and the boy's distress was more than he could bear. When he showed up at the open door of the stall Mickey flung himself into his adopted father's arms, and eventually Terry prevailed on the boy to listen to him.

"It's only a little bit that's coming to me. It won't last long—a couple of years, and then it'll be all over, and there won't be nothing hanging over our heads."

"If you're going away, I'm going with you."

"Stop that foolish talk," Terry managed a laugh. "You aren't even invited."

"I'll get myself invited. I'll do something. I'll steal so they'll have to send me up there," cried Mickey. "You can't leave me behind, pop."

"Stop that foolish talk. You're only making it the tougher for both of us," rebuked Doc Terry. "Keep your chin up. Ain't you proud to have me as your old man?"

"What else have I got?"

"Well, then keep that chin up so I'll know you're proud of me. And take that glum look off your face. Come on—get a grin on your face. And when you say good-bye—why smile!" He lagged his son. "Before you have a chance to wipe that smile off, I'll be right back again."

And when Donovan led away his prisoner, who went with a happy smile on his face, a boy waved farewell and did his best to smile.

"We'll work for him, Mickey!" soothed Mrs. Shephard. "Donovan is certain it'll only be a few months, perhaps a year at the most."

Mickey straightened his shoulders.

"Gee, that ain't such a long time, after all, for Lady Q and me to wait for pop."

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Ltd., starring Wallace Beery as Doc Terry, and Mickey Rooney as Mickey.)

"BAR 20 JUSTICE"

(Continued from page 25)

"We've got Frazier and Perkins," he said laconically. "This lot should be pretty simple now, for if we go quietly we can surprise 'em at work. But Slade will be the trouble. He knows he's deep in it and State's evidence won't save him. Come on, boys, but go steady."

With their guns in their hands they set out along the tunnel.

They needed no telling that work was in full progress in the mine. Lights were on everywhere in the tunnel as they crept noiselessly along. But as they came towards the spot where they knew the Devil-May-Care mine ended and the Freeze Out began, Hopalong held up his hand in warning. Faintly the sound of picks and shovels at work came to their ears. Hopalong crept softly forward, but even as he rounded the corner they saw him duck swiftly as a gun spoke and a bullet flattened itself against a rock at his side. Then they heard his gun flash out twice.

"Come on, boys!" he shouted. "I missed him and he's rushed through to warn the others. But careful how you go."

All the same, he scarcely seemed to be careful himself as he slipped quickly forward.

They followed close on his heels. In the distance they could hear the sounds of swiftly retreating steps. Then silence once more.

They halted. Hopalong was holding them back. Lucky was just behind him. Hopalong's eyes were intent on the tunnel, for they had now passed through the entrance and were in the Freeze Out mine.

"With any luck," he said quietly, "they've run straight into the trap at the other end. But take it easy. I'm suspicious of Slade."

With scarcely a sound they crept forward. Hopalong was listening intently. Every step he took was measured. Then suddenly he halted. For a moment or two they all stood rigid flattening themselves against the rocks as they saw him do. And then suddenly Lucky caught his breath.

From behind a big rock that lay ahead almost in the middle of their path he saw something slowly lifting. But even as it did so Hopalong's gun rang out and they heard a thud and then stillness once more.

They ran forward after Hopalong. As they reached the rock they stopped gazing down on the figure that lay there with all the stillness of death on him. Slade!

And then from ahead they heard old Windy's excited voice.

"Hoppy, Hoppy, are you there? I've got 'em all."

Hopalong and Lucky rode back into the town at easy speed. They had left a bunch of sullen men all safely guarded. Now, all that remained was to put Perkins and Frazier into safe custody and their troubles were at an end.

Hopalong was humming softly to himself as he rode along. He felt that at last Dennis' death was avenged and happiness and wealth awaiting him.

But even as he and Lucky swept into the town street Hopalong gave a sharp exclamation as he reined in his horse. And at that moment Peters rushed up to him.

"What happened, Buck?" asked Hopalong.

"Perkins is dead, but Frazier got away. I'm sorry, Hoppy, but—"

Hopalong broke in swiftly. Bitter disappointment was his, for with Frazier still free all his work remained to be done over again.

"Which way did he ride?" he demanded.

Buck pointed and Hopalong swung his horse round.

"Wait a moment, Hoppy. I'm coming with—"

"You're not. This is a personal matter, and I'm ridin' alone. How long's he been gone?"

"Barely three minutes. He turned our horses adrift."

Hopalong waited for no more. He was off like a streak. Frazier he guessed, would be making for the border, and his only hope was to catch him before he crossed it.

It was nearly a quarter of an hour before he caught sight of his quarry in the distance, but his heart went up with a bound as he did so. For though he could see that the man ahead was riding for his life he knew in a flash that his own horse was far faster for him to have caught up with him.

"Come on, old lady!" he murmured as he patted his horse's neck. "There's big work for both of us ahead."

He was smiling now as he felt his horse respond. They were decreasing the distance between them. And presently he saw Frazier whip out his gun and fire. But the bullet sang by him and he laughed.

"Have to shoot better'n that, Frazier, to get me," he ejaculated as he swept on.

Then suddenly he saw the man throw himself from his horse and start to climb swiftly the rocky slope that lay at his side.

"If you want it that way you shall have it," he said grimly as he urged his horse onwards.

He was off his horse in a flash as he reached the spot where Frazier stood. He saw Frazier fire as he ran towards the slope, and ducked as he drew his gun and clicked the trigger.

But he swore softly as he realised that his gun was empty, and tossed it aside as he rushed upwards to the shelter of the next rock. He was unarmed against a desperate armed man, but his fierce determination was blinding him to all sense of danger.

"I've come out to get him," he muttered. "And I'm not goin' back without him."

But his brain was working busily now. Frazier he could see was making his way round the slope, firing as he went. But each time his shots were going wild, and Hopalong realised that he was getting to the end of his tether.

"I'll have to get above him," he ejaculated between his clenched teeth. "It's my only chance."

It was nearly half an hour before Hopalong could gain the higher ground, but it seemed to him to be half a lifetime. Frazier he could see was puzzled. He had taken shelter behind a huge boulder. But Hopalong lying behind another one was smiling. For he had flung a stone down to a spot forty yards away, and in a flash Frazier's gun had spoken, the bullet striking the earth just by the spot where the stone had fallen.

"He's lost me—thinks I'm down there. Well, we're not going so badly."

But it took him nearly a quarter of an hour of slow, painful and laborious climbing to reach the spot that his eye had marked down. And when he had reached it it was a few minutes before he could summon up his courage to peer over the edge of the ledge on which he lay. For he knew that if Frazier was

expecting him there the bullet that would follow swiftly was hardly likely to miss him at that short distance.

He peered over. But even as he did so his heart gave a leap. Fifteen feet below lay Frazier lying on the ground, his gun in his hand, his eyes ranging backwards and forwards over the ground below.

Stealthily Hopalong picked up a stone, flinging it to a spot fifty yards ahead of Frazier. Then as Frazier's gun moved in a flash to the spot, Hopalong leaped.

He wasn't entirely sure of those next few minutes except that he was finding Frazier very far from an exhausted man. He landed on top of him, and it was with some relief that he saw Frazier's gun slip from his hand and roll down the slope.

For some minutes, that seemed like hours to Hopalong, they fought. Twice Frazier had him on the ground with his hands at his throat, but twice Hopalong with a supreme effort swerved, and with all the strength he could muster his fist crashed out.

It caught Frazier on the point of the jaw almost lifting him from the ground. Then Hopalong saw him stagger and collapse as a tree falls, and lie very still.

Hopalong stood there breathing heavily. Down below him among the rocks he saw Frazier's gun. He managed somehow to get down to it. But as his hand closed over it and he began to climb wearily back there was a grim smile on his face.

He sat down on the ground opposite the still unconscious man. His strength was spent, but now he had a gun in his hand once more.

Down below in the valley he saw horsemen spurring towards him, and saw it was the boys from the Bar 20.

As Frazier stirred and opened his eyes Hopalong spoke in his old lazy tones:

"Shouldn't bother to move, Frazier," he said. "There's a special guard of honour callin' for you. I can see 'em comin'."

The crowd of horsemen, lead by Lucky, swept up and soon had Frazier on a horse and heading back for town. "Nice work, Hoppy," said Lucky. "What now?"

Hopalong smiled. "New York—and a little excitement. I guess!" he drawled.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring William Boyd.)



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to **BOY'S CINEMA**, Room 194 The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The New Chan's New Son

Sidney Toler, the new Charlie Chan, has solved his first case.

He has found his No. 1 son, Lee Chan, in the person of Sen Yew Cheung, twenty-three, a Chinese born in San Francisco.

The quest for a Lee Chan was almost as arduous as the search for a successor to the late Warner Oland, which ended with the selection of Toler.

Scouts from 20th Century-Fox sifted the Chinatowns of San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as Californian colleges. Scores of young Chinese were interviewed and dozens tested. Since the part is almost of equal importance with the title rôle, no effort was spared to find the youth best qualified to fit it.

Sen, a salesman for a chemical company, heard of the search during a business trip to Los Angeles, came out to 20th Century-Fox and applied for the job. He was given a test with Toler, who apparently sensed the young man's possibilities, and personally coached him. Toler showed some real Charlie Chan intuition, because Production Chief Darryl F. Zanuck took one look at the test and exclaimed: "That's Lee Chan."

Loretta K.O.'s Baxter

Knocked out by a terrific blow to the jaw which Loretta Young delivered, Warner Baxter finished a perfect scene for his current 20th Century-Fox picture, "Wife, Husband and Friend," in a state of unconsciousness.

The person responsible for this semi-accidental knockout was Director Gregory Ratoff who thought he would achieve more realism by avoiding too much rehearsal. The fact of the matter was that he wanted no rehearsal at all, and his instructions to Loretta Young were to make the blow look as real as possible when she was to come from behind a door and sock Baxter in the face.

Loretta's blow, given with full force,

was aimed at a safe place above the shoulder, but landed squarely on the point of the jaw. The rest of the scene went according to the script, without anyone being aware that it was more real than was ordered.

Warner Baxter went out cold, knocking over a lamp as he fell to the floor. Loretta jumped on him and pummelled him still further while she went through the rest of the dialogue she had to do in the scene.

When it was over, Baxter remained prone of the floor. He was still out when he was carried to his dressing-room and revived there. He did not know what had happened after the beginning of the scene when Loretta socked him, and his only consolation was that the rest of the scene had gone off perfectly while he was there in body only.

Due to his groggy condition and the welt Loretta had raised on his jaw he had to be driven home by his stand-in, Frank McGrath, and discontinuance work until the following day.

Do You Know That

Donald O'Connor and Billy Cook, the Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer in Paramount's "Tom Sawyer, Detective," had over twenty pounds of dirt daubed on them while working in one sequence of the picture? The dirt was for make-up.

Anna May Wong bobbed her hair just before she was due to start work in "King of Chinatown?" Paramount told her to let it grow and never cut it again.

Two hundred railroad men who never worked for the movies before, now have screen assignments? One crew is laying six miles of track at Iron Springs, Utah, for Cecil B. DeMille's New Paramount spectacle, "Union Pacific." The other is laying five spur tracks of about a mile each in Holly-wood for the same picture.

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at Nothing to
Clean up Crime
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"I am
THE LAW"

Instead of going abroad with his wife for his first holiday in seven years, John Lindsay, a mild-mannered law professor, becomes Special Prosecutor to wage war against organised crime—and the man who persuades him to take the post is himself a clever crook. A powerful drama, starring Edward G. Robinson



In the Way

IT was the last day of term, and in the lecture hall of the College of Law, at Burlington University, Professor John Lindsay was addressing a few parting words to his pupils.

Students filled the body of the hall; former students occupied chairs on the platform to right and left of the black-haired and middle-aged teacher of law who gave one the impression of being a little man, although, in point of fact, he stood five feet eight inches in his shoes.

"My friends," he said in his soft and well-modulated voice, "the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, so I'll come directly to the point." A smile flickered across his very wide mouth and his brown eyes twinkled.

"Some of you will end up by being ambulance chasers," he informed those in front of him. "Some of you may wind up in the Supreme Court of the United States. But whatever you do, I warn you, don't become a law professor. If you do, the same terrible thing will happen to you that's happened to me!"

He spread his hands, and a sudden gravity of expression on his sensitive, clean-shaven face banished the smile.

"At the end of every six years," he lamented, "just when you're beginning to get into your stride and are enjoying your work, you are handed a reward—a vacation with pay for a whole year. They call it a Sabbatical Year."

He paused, and it was with a note of wistfulness in his voice that he went on:

"In leaving you I leave not only my students but my friends. I'll miss you."

He turned to the young men on his right and to the young men on his left.

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all of whom had been pupils of his in the past.

"And I shall miss you most of all," he declared. "In the years since you've graduated I've kept in touch with you. It has been a great joy to me to visit you in your offices, to help you with your first cases, to sit with you occasionally in court."

He sighed.

"And now," he added regretfully, "for a whole year I shall be out of it. I suppose you will survive—I'm not so sure that I will. Good-bye, my friends. Good-bye to you all."

With one accord the students rose and sang the song of their University; and ten minutes afterwards John Lindsay walked out from the building into the brilliant sunshine of a June day, a briar pipe in one hand, a leather portfolio in the other.

Beside him walked Paul Ferguson, a tallish and rather handsome young man who had been a very promising student and now was a budding attorney, and the two descended wide, stone steps in silence to a roadway of the campus. There they stopped as though about to part company, and John Lindsay said:

"My boy, the only time a man should start on a leave of absence is right after rigor mortis has set in."

Paul Ferguson laughed.

"Well, you won't mind it once you get on the boat," he remarked.

"That's what I dread the most!" John Lindsay gave a little shiver.

"Paul, come home with me, will you? Perhaps you can help me persuade my wife that we can have a wonderful vacation right here in town."

"I'd love to, John," Paul responded, "but I've got a court hearing at eleven."

"I'll go with you. Perhaps I could be of some assistance."

But Paul shook his head.

"No, thanks," he said firmly. "Your wife would never forgive me for taking you away on the last day. I'll see you off at the boat, though. So-long, professor."

"Good-bye," said John bleakly.

Paul got into an open two-seater at the kerb and drove off in the general direction of the city of Burlington, and John took a path across a lawn and turned into another road that led past halls and cultivated grounds to the house in which he lived.

His wife Geraldine—who had been known as "Jerry" from her childhood—was busy packing for the projected trip to Europe, and trunks were in the large and attractively furnished sitting-room as well as in the hall. Those in the hall were ready for dispatch, but those in the sitting-room were being filled—under the watchful eyes of an Irish terrier.

Jerry had been a pupil of John's before she had become his wife, and she was a full ten years his junior. The trip that did not appeal to him at all appealed to her intensely. She had suggested it; she had insisted upon it; she had made all the arrangements for it; and she was immersed in the details of packing when he entered the house.

After several ineffectual attempts at conversation, he discarded the jacket of his suit in favour of an old tweed coat and wandered about the sitting-room smoking his pipe.

A wardrobe trunk was closed and locked, and the terrier was induced to lick a label for it. John turned away from a window, where he had been gazing wistfully out upon a familiar and pleasing prospect, to inquire plaintively:

"Jerry, why are people continually trapesing around? Why is some other part of the world more interesting than the part you're in?"

Jerry did not reply to either question, but she said:

"You haven't had a day off in seven years. You've got to renew yourself."

He walked over to her, and he put his arms round her shoulders.

"Now, look, Jerry," he pleaded, "why couldn't I renew myself without going away?"

"No!" She shook her head.

"We could have a wonderful time together, you and I, right here in town."

"Oh, no, John! If we stayed here, you'd be over at school every day telling the dean how to run things."

"No, I wouldn't," he protested.

"Oh, yes, you would! Or else you'd be at the offices of all your graduates telling them how to run their practices!"

"I wouldn't!" He tried to coax her with a kiss. "I'd stay home with you, darling, all day long, and renew myself till I was blue in the face."

His entreaties had no effect upon ears steeled against them.

"Oh, John, please!" Jerry cried. "Let go of me so that I can finish packing!"

She broke away from him and went down on her knees at an open trunk, but he straightway went down on his knees beside her and put his arms round her again.

"I will, if you'll let me help you," he said.

"Oh, please go away and let me pack!"

It sounded as though she had reached the end of her patience, and he released her and got to his feet.

"Well, where shall I go?" he inquired, putting his pipe in his pocket.

"Go to a movie," she suggested. "They're playing 'Snow White' down the street."

"But I saw that Monday," he objected.

"Oh, see it again!"

He took out his watch and found that the time was five minutes to eleven.

"Well," he complained, "the theatre doesn't open until noon. Where can I go until then?"

"Take a walk." She glanced up at him from the trunk. "Window shop."

Smoke was issuing from the side of his coat and she viewed it with alarm.

"Your pocket!" she exclaimed.

He snatched forth his pipe, which was still alight, and he patted the pocket till its lining ceased to smoulder.

"Oh, John, you've burned the pockets out of almost every coat you own!" she chided. "Now, please get out of here before you set the house on fire!"

"Yes, dear," he murmured meekly, and was gone.

The Intruder

MANY people find "window-shopping" a pleasant way of spending an odd half-hour without expense, but John Lindsay tired of it very quickly. There were a number of excellent bookshops in Lincoln Avenue, only a little way from the colleges, and into one of these he drifted.

Like other possible customers, he took volumes from the shelves, examined them, and put them back in their places; but a law book interested him so much that he lost all count of time while browsing amongst its pages, and it was considerably after noon when he went out from the shop without having made a purchase.

The cinema to which his wife had referred was in Lincoln Avenue, and he hurried towards it. But as he reached its ornate entrance he was swept aside by a crowd of people who came rushing out as in a panic.

When the crowd had gone he entered the foyer and made straight for the ticket-office. The girl behind the little window lookèd terrified; the bald-

hended proprietor of the place was beside her, dialing a number on a telephone. Smoke was billowing out from the doorways of the auditorium, and the smoke stunk.

"What's the matter?" asked John in astonishment. "What is it, Mr. Roberts?"

Mr. Roberts spoke frantically into the telephone.

"Hallo, Police Department! Somebody just threw a stench-bomb in my theatre! Send over— You'd better send over a lot of police right away!"

A quarter of an hour afterwards, John invaded the private office of the managing editor of the "Burlington Daily Press," and Mr. Roberts was with him—though none too willingly. The two had travelled in a taxicab from the cinema to the newspaper building.

The managing editor, a man of substantial build, with a full and rather florid face and a pair of prominent blue eyes, was in his shirt-sleeves at a littered desk, and he was blaring into a dictograph.

John waited till the storm had subsided and the blue eyes were staring at him, then effected introductions.

"This is my brother-in-law, Mr. Tom Ross," he said to Roberts. "He's the managing editor. He'll do something for you. This is Mr. Roberts, Tom."

"How d'you do, Mr. Roberts?" The blue eyes enveloped the shrinking form of the cinema proprietor. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"Well," hesitated the man, "I—"

"Mr. Roberts runs the University Theatre," John interposed. "He's the victim of a vicious conspiracy. Outrageous!"

"What happened, Mr. Roberts?" questioned the managing editor.

"Mr. Ross, I—I—"

"You know, you made a mistake when you signed up with the Theatre Owners' Protective Association," said John; and then, to his brother-in-law: "The moment he did sign up, Tom, the other outfit started to make trouble."



"'Murder at Café as Special Prosecutor dances the Big Apple!' " roared Leander, stabbing a finger at headlines on the front page of the newspaper.

"What other outfit?"

The question was addressed to Roberts, but it was John who replied:

"The Theatre Owners' Mutual Aid Association," he stated. "They started to throw stench-bombs, too, but the first outfit objected. So, threatened by the second outfit—"

"Now, wait a minute, John!" rapped Tom Ross. "Suppose you let Mr. Roberts tell me the story."

"But I don't want to talk," quavered Roberts.

"Then what's the idea of coming here?"

"Because he insisted," Roberts pointed to John. "I haven't anything to say. I'd rather have stench-bombs thrown in my cinema than dynamite-bombs in my home!"

John became quite indignant.

"If Mr. Roberts won't give you the facts," he said, "then I will. I'm going to see this thing through!"

"Oh, for heaven's sake, John!" exploded his brother-in-law. "You act as if this was the first stench-bomb that was ever thrown!"

"How can you talk like that, Tom?" stormed John. "There was a panic in the theatre. People might have been hurt—maybe killed!"

"Well, what do you expect me to do about it?"

"Headline it! Get some action!"

"Be your age, John." The editor flipped a hand with scorn. "There's nothing we can do about it. This town is infested with every conceivable racket. No attention is paid to the law. What'll one headline, more or less, mean to them?"

Mr. Roberts had taken advantage of this altercation to sneak out from the room, and neither editor nor professor had noticed his departure.

"Well, something ought to be done about it by somebody," contended John. "This poor man— Why, he's gone!"

"That's fine," drawled Tom Ross.

"Now, if you get out of here, maybe I can get some work done. Go tell your story to the governor's civic committee. If you drop in there, you'll hear about rackets that will make stench-bombs smell like violets!"

"Where do they meet?"

John sounded quite eager.

"State House. Hi, wait a minute! You're not really going there?"

"You bet I am!"

"But I was only kidding. It's a private meeting."

"I don't care about that," retorted John; and off he went.

State House, a stone-faced public building of considerable size, was situated in a tree-lined avenue to the south of the business centre of the city. John knew it well by sight, and after he had entered it he experienced little difficulty in finding the room—on the first floor—in which the members of the civic committee were in session.

A card attached to one of the double doors provided him with the information, but the card also stated (in large letters): "No Admittance." A police officer was on guard outside, but John paid as little attention to him as to the warning, and he opened one of the doors and stepped into a big, half-panelled room without being challenged.

Nine men were seated at a very long table, four at each side and one at the top, and they were so busy discussing the organised crime racket from which the city was suffering that not one of them noticed the intruder, who made himself comfortable on a hide-covered couch set against one of the walls.

For a full hour he listened to things that amazed him; things that filled him with righteous anger; and then the spectacled chairman rose from his seat

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at the top of the table. He was a lean-faced man with an aggressive jaw and a bald patch on the top of his head across which a few long strands of hair were carefully plastered. His name was George Leander.

"Intimidation of witnesses," he said bitterly, "has made it impossible for the grand jury to get anybody to testify. Corruption and bribery have sabotaged this investigation from the start. The governor has threatened to call out the Militia, and I have information that the Federal Government intends to take a hand unless we show some results. It's up to you, Mr. District Attorney!"

Herbert Berry, the District Attorney, was on Leander's right, a man of heavy build with a fat face and a thick neck. His hair was going grey, his clipped moustache had gone that colour completely.

"It's always up to the District Attorney," he growled.

"What have you done?" challenged a fair-haired and distinguished-looking man next to him. "The governor has authorised the appointment of a Special Prosecutor. Why hasn't one been appointed?"

"For the simple reason," replied the District Attorney, "that I can't find anyone to take the job."

"Can you blame them?" demanded another member of the committee. "What man in his right senses would step into a spot like that, when the District Attorney himself admits that he can't cope with the situation?"

John rose from the hide-covered couch and walked over to the table.

"Gentlemen," he said, depositing his hat on the table between the District Attorney and the fair-haired man, "the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. I've been listening to you now for over an hour, and really aren't you making a mountain out of a molehill?"

Nine pairs of startled eyes stared at him.

"How did you get in here?" snapped the chairman.

"I walked in," he replied.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Lindsay. I'm a Professor of Law. I think I have a good grasp of the situation. I'm sure you don't need any State Militia, Federal men, or outside help of any kind."

"I quite agree with you," said Leander stiffly; "but since this is a private meeting—"

"Oh, I don't mind that at all." John moved round the table much as though he were dealing with one of his own classes at the College of Law. "New York had trouble like this," he said, "and cleaned it up. Now, I'm sure we can do the same thing. After all, who are these racketeers that you've been talking about?"

George Leander went out from the room, but the others listened in silence, the fair-haired man with obvious interest.

"They're a very low order of people, from all I can gather," John went on, "while you gentlemen have everything in your favour—the forces of law, money, and public opinion."

George Leander re-entered the room, and with him was the officer who had been on guard. But John's back was turned towards the double doors, and he was engrossed in his subject.

"Now, I'm sure that if you tackle this problem in a scientific way—"

"Sergeant," interrupted Leander loudly, "will you kindly inform this gentleman that this is a private meeting?"

The sergeant clamped a hand upon

John's right shoulder and, without any loss of dignity, John accepted the inevitable.

"All right," he said, and he picked up his hat and went out with the officer. "Well, I'm afraid I was in the wrong," he commented drily in the corridor. "I had no business intruding. After all, I'm only a taxpayer, and everybody knows taxpayers have no rights."

The fair-haired man emerged from the room.

"Oh, professor, I'd like a word with you," he said pleasantly, and he walked beside John to the stairs. "My name is Eugene Ferguson. My son was one of your law students—graduated a couple of years ago."

"Not Paul Ferguson?" exclaimed John.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm delighted to meet you. He's spoken to me about you a great many times."

"Not half as many times as he's spoken to me about you," Ferguson asserted. "He thinks you're the greatest authority on law in the country."

"And I think he's the best student I ever had," declared John. "I predict a brilliant future for him in the law."

"Well, that rates a drink."

"Oh, I rarely indulge in the afternoon," demurred John. "Besides, your meeting—"

"Aw," laughed Ferguson, "they can get along without me. If they won't listen to you I will."

The Ardmore Hotel was only a few hundred yards away from State House, and its cocktail bar was highly popular with business men. The two sauntered along to it, chatting together, and they became perched on stools at a horse-shoe of mahogany and were served with cocktails.

"You know," said John, lighting his pipe and puffing at it, "the right man could step in and clean out the whole nest of these racketeers in thirty days."

Eugene Ferguson emptied his glass and lit a cigarette.

"I know just the man," he confided with a smile, "but unfortunately he's going away on a Sabbath leave."

John's brown eyes widened.

"You mean me?"

"Why not? But, of course, if you've made all your plans to leave—"

"Mr. Ferguson, I'll make a confession to you. I'd consider it no hardship to postpone my trip for a few weeks."

"A few weeks?" Ferguson looked amused. "Now come, professor, it may take longer than that!"

"No," John shook his head. "No, it wouldn't."

"Oh, it wouldn't be fair. You've probably looked forward to your vacation for a long time."

"Mr. Ferguson, I have an awful fear of an ocean trip."

Ferguson ordered two more cocktails, and absent-mindedly John pocketed his pipe.

"Of course, I don't know how much the job will pay," Ferguson remarked.

"But that doesn't interest me in the least," John assured him. "The University pays my salary. You know, the mere sight of a steamer funnel makes me ill."

Ferguson stroked the little moustache that decorated his upper lip.

"I'm sure I could sell the committee," he said. "They've got to find somebody pretty soon."

"I get seasick just thinking of a steamer," encouraged John. He



“Now it's my intention to beat your head off,” John stated grimly. “Perhaps it will be the other way round. Anyway, we're going to find out!”

screwed up his face and he sniffed. “Do you smell anything burning?” Out came his pipe, and the lining of his pocket proved to be on fire.

John Takes Office

WHEN Eugene Ferguson went back to the meeting of the Civic Committee he was accompanied by John as far as the corridor on the first floor, and after an interval of a quarter of an hour John was invited into the room from which he had been ejected.

At seven o'clock in the evening both men were in the Ardmore Hotel once more, John at a table in the grill-room, Ferguson in a telephone-box in the lounge. John had been appointed Special Prosecutor to deal with the racketeers, and Ferguson had rung up a man named Moss Kitchell to inform him of the circumstance.

“We don't have to worry about the State Militia or the G-men,” he stated gleefully. “I've just landed a fish that will swim down-stream.”

Moss Kitchell, a massive middle-aged man with beady brown eyes and a nose like the beak of a hawk, was in the sitting-room of his own elaborate flat in Sheridan Avenue, and a fellow with a pock-marked face was with him. He said that he was glad to hear it.

“Because,” he added, “even we can't cope with G-men.”

“Kitchell,” exulted Ferguson, “I've got a Special Prosecutor that'll fit right into my vest pocket. Call the boys together and tell them we have nothing else to worry about.”

The boat for Europe was due to leave Burlington Harbour at ten o'clock that night, and long before sailing time Jerry Lindsay was on Pier 6 with the Irish terrier in her arms, waiting for her husband. Her brother, Tom Ross, was with her; Paul Ferguson arrived, with flowers, at twenty minutes to ten.

Students accumulated in considerable

force to see their professor off, but at ten minutes to ten there was still no sign of him, and Jerry was beginning to show her agitation.

“Don't get excited,” urged her brother. “You've got plenty of time.” “Yes, plenty of time,” she said dolefully. “Ten minutes!”

“Mrs. Lindsay,” suggested Paul, “perhaps the professor's waiting at the house.”

“No,” she responded, “he telephoned me at seven and told me he'd meet me at the pier. He was with your father, Paul—said he was having dinner with him. Will you 'phone your father?”

Paul rushed off to do so, and while he was gone there came a warning blast from the siren of the ship and voices on deck were heard shouting:

“All ashore that's going ashore!” Jerry almost dropped the dog; Tom Ross took charge of it.

“Now, now, Jerry,” he enjoined, “don't be worried.”

“Oh, I'm too worried to be worried,” she cried. “If he isn't dead already I'll kill him when I see him!”

Paul returned to announce that his father had not as yet arrived home; and then, quite jauntily, John himself came hurrying on to the pier.

“Hallo!” he boomed. “Hallo, everybody! Well, my dear, I have a great deal to tell you.”

“Yes,” retorted Jerry, with an air of long-suffering, “and I've a great deal to tell you, too!”

“Most curious chain of events, this morning. You know when I left to see ‘Snow White’?”

“I know,” she derided, “the wicked queen! Now you come on before they pull up the gangplank. You can tell me all about it on the boat.”

“No, wait a minute!” John raised a hand. “That's just what I wanted to tell you. We're not taking the boat. I'm afraid we're going to have to postpone the trip.”

“Wh-wh-what?” gasped Jerry. “I've been appointed Special Prosecutor.”

That was the last straw. Jerry fell fainting into the ready arms of her brother.

Next morning John took office as Special Prosecutor in a suite of rooms at the Criminal Courts building, provided for him by the District Attorney, who provided him with a staff as well. Paul Ferguson had insisted on dropping his own practice to join forces with John, and he was given a room to himself.

Paul was in the long general office, however, when a clerk informed him that his father had called to see him, and he returned to his newly acquired room to find Eugene Ferguson doing his best to wear out its carpet.

“Hallo, dad,” he greeted. “They just told me you were in here.”

Ferguson stopped his restless pacing.

“Paul,” he said reproachfully, “I wish you'd consulted me before you accepted this position.”

“I wanted to spring it on you as a surprise,” said Paul. “I thought you'd be tickled to death.”

“I'm not keen about your going into politics.”

“Well, this isn't politics, dad. It's a job—a swell job.”

“It's a dangerous job!” Ferguson looked very grave. “If you fail, it's a mark against you; if you succeed, you're a target for trouble.”

Paul frowned at his parent.

“Well, if you feel that way about it,” he challenged, “why did you recommend Lindsay?”

“Lindsay isn't my son! You're all I have, Paul. You've got a nice law practice and I can help you a lot. I think I can fix it with Lindsay to let you out.”

He moved towards the door, but Paul caught at his arm.

"No, dad," he said in a voice of quiet determination. "No, you're not going to try to do that. Listen, dad, I've enlisted for the duration of this war. We're going to clean out the rackets—all of them—from the top to the bottom!"

Special editions of the newspaper next morning announced that the new Special Prosecutor would broadcast a message to the public at eight o'clock in the evening, and just before that hour John and the members of the Civic Committee entered a studio of the Associated Broadcasting Company in Madison Street.

Paul was there as a matter of course, but he did not sit with his father. Newspaper men were present in considerable numbers, and flashlamps blazed and camera shutters clicked as John stood before a microphone.

Herbert Berry, the District Attorney, introduced the newly appointed Special Prosecutor to his unseen audience, and then John began to speak.

"This is the first time I have ever addressed you," he said, "and I hope it will be the last. The motto of this country used to be 'Millions for defence and not a cent for tribute,' but something alien and Un-American has come along and tried to change that motto to 'Millions for tribute and not a cent for defence.'"

It seemed that the racketeers of the city had chosen the hour of the broadcast for a demonstration of their power. In a cigar store only a very little way from the broadcasting company's premises a number of people were clustered round a radio set, when a car stopped opposite the open doorway and a brick was hurled through one of the plate-glass windows.

The crowd scattered, but the voice of John went on:

"I am addressing myself not only to the victims and potential victims of rackets, but to the organised mob of criminals who have knocked over your ballot-boxes and taken over your government. I hope that some of them are tuning in, because I think we should all understand each other."

There were three men in the car that had stopped outside the cigar store, and one of them was Eddie Girard, the peck-marked fellow who had been with Moss Kitchell when Ferguson had telephoned the news of John's appointment. John's voice issued from a loud-speaker under the dashboard of the car as they sped on to a fresh scene of destruction:

"The rackets started as petty larceny, but they're big business now. They have their friends and servants in the police department and in the city government—everybody knows that without such a tie-up they couldn't exist for a minute! We've got to break up that alliance! The racketeers pay their political hirelings bigger salaries than the city does. They can afford to! It is estimated that the tribute exacted by this invisible government last year alone—"

Eddie Girard switched off the set, and a few minutes later he and one of his companions invaded a little snack bar whose customers were listening to the broadcast.

"What's the idea of refusing to install our slot machines?" he demanded harshly of the proprietor, who was busy cutting sandwiches behind a counter.

"I told your man why," the proprietor replied. "We have a high school across the street. It's no place for gambling."

"Quit stallin'!" gasped Girard. "I want an order to install some machines right now."

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"Well, you won't get it!"

Girard grabbed up a chair, and with it swept urns and glass-covered cases from the counter. His companion riddled mirrors with bullets, and the frightened customers fled out into the street.

In all parts of the city, and its suburbs, similar acts of violence were committed that night, and worse things happened during the first three weeks of John's appointment. Motor-trucks, loaded with produce, were blown up or set on fire. Milk-cans were overturned in the streets; milk-bottles were shot from women's hands at the doors of their own homes. Poultry was ruined with paraffin; and men who tried to protect their own property were shot down in cold blood.

So many plate-glass windows were smashed that reputable insurance companies became alarmed at the drain on their resources and increased their premiums.

John realised that he had undertaken a formidable task, but he still believed that he could clean out the rackets; and one of the first things he did was to have brought to his office thirty men who had suffered at the hands of the racketeers.

"You refused to testify before the Grand Jury," he said to them, "because you've been threatened and intimidated. Now if you, who are the victims of these rackets, won't co-operate by offering frank and complete statements, how am I going to make any headway? I'm sure you want to help."

Twenty-nine of the men sat obstinately silent in the chairs that had been placed for them round John's desk, but the thirtieth rose to his feet.

"Maybe we're not thinking of ourselves," he said gruffly. "Maybe some of us are thinking of our families. I've got a wife and two children. Last week I tried to take out some life insurance. I was asked if I intended to testify, and I was told that if I did I couldn't get a policy."

He was a superior type of man, with a fine, clean-shaven face and a lofty brow. John admired him for having even a measure of courage.

"What's the name of that company?" he inquired.

"The Acme Insurance Company."

John made a note of the name.

"We'll see about that, Mr.—"

"Butler," the man supplied. "James William Butler."

John thanked him, jotted down the name, and went over to a door which he opened.

"Brophy!" he called. "Mallin!"

Two stalwart men appeared. They might have been prizefighters.

"Gentlemen," said John, "these men are detailed as my bodyguards. Now, I'll be glad to assign them to the first one of you who will agree to testify. They'll act as your bodyguards night and day. I'll assign two men to anybody else who testifies. Now surely that should remove your fears? That'll do, boys!"

Brophy and Mallins vanished; not one of the thirty had spoken, Paul—who had been present all the time—tried to rally them.

"Are you going to knuckle down to those crooks, or will you help us fight them?" he cried.

Still the thirty were mute.

"All right, gentlemen," said John. "you're excused."

Ferguson's Emissary

AFTER the thirty had departed John re-seated himself at his desk and summoned one of his assistants from the general office.

"Simpson," he said, "you have the names of those men who were in here just now, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir, I have," was the reply.

"You must have dug them up from under a stone," commented Paul, who was standing beside John's chair.

"They were the men on the list given us by the Grand Jury," said Simpson.

"Well, I want you to get me a complete set of their books," John informed him.

The clerk looked horrified.

"But how am I going to do that?"

"Mr. Simpson," rapped John, "how long were you employed in the District Attorney's office?"

"Six years."

"Well, didn't you learn anything? Every time I ask you to do something you ask me how."

"You're supposed to be an assistant around here," added Paul sharply. "You know what an assistant is? One who assists. To assist means to help."

Simpson blinked.

"I know," he mumbled, "but under the law—"

"Are you trying to teach the law to Professor Lindsay?" thundered Paul.

"No, sir, b-but in order to get the books—"

"I'll show you how to get them! I'll have them here inside of twenty-four hours."

Simpson, thus dismissed, went down to the room he had occupied when he was working for the District Attorney and from it he rang up Moss Kitchell.

"Oh, Mr. Kitchell," he said, "they're going to grab the books of those witnesses!"

"All right, Simpson," returned Kitchell calmly. "I'll 'phone you back."

Late in the afternoon of the next day, Eugene Ferguson was playing one of Chopin's nocturnes on a piano in the sitting-room of an expensively furnished flat when a telephone-bell rang.

He left off playing, but he did not move from the piano-stool. It was a beautiful, but very self-possessed girl who rose from a chesterfield and went to a bureau on which the telephone stood, and he watched her appreciatively while she answered the call.

Her blue eyes widened.

"What?" she exclaimed. "Oh, well, thanks!"

"Who was it?" asked Ferguson, as she dropped the instrument back into its cradle.

"Simpson," she replied sourly. "He says a couple of Lindsay's men are out looking for me. What goes on here?"

Ferguson laughed.

"Oh, yes, I took care of that," he said. "I thought somebody ought to tip Lindsay off to get in touch with you."

She stared at him and returned to the chesterfield.

"Why?" she demanded, leaning back against the cushions.

"We got him his job—it's time we were using him to help us clean out some of the riff-raff—boys like Con Cronin and his bunch. All the undesirable elements."

He walked round to the back of the chesterfield and stooped to kiss her on the lips.

"You know something?" he said.

"When we get this thing organised it'll be a recognised industry. You mark my words, some day we'll be listed on the Stock Exchange."

About an hour after this conversation, John's two bodyguards followed one another into his room at the Criminal Courts Building with a somewhat sheepish expression upon their respective faces.

"Well?" John barked at them. "Where's Miss Ballou?"

"Disappeared," said Brophy.

"She must have left town," said Mallin.

"Left town?" John frowned at the pair. "I can't understand it. Whenever I send for people they always leave town! How do you explain that? Do they know when I'm going to send for them?"

"I don't know, Mr. Lindsay," grunted Mallin, "but we looked high and low for her."

"Searched every inch of the town," declared Brophy.

The telephone-bell rang.

"Yes?" said John into the instrument on his desk.

"Miss Frankie Ballou," announced the voice of a girl in the outer office.

"Send her in."

It was Eugene Ferguson's beautiful companion who sailed serenely into the room. Her name was Frances, but she preferred to be known as "Frankie."

"Hallo!" she said with all the assurance in the world. "Looking for me?"

"Yes," said John, "have a seat, Miss Ballou." He turned to the crestfallen bodyguards. "All right, boys, you can have the rest of the week off. Next time I want you to find somebody, look behind you to see if they're following you."

The two went out, and Frankie Ballou sat down in a chair at the side of the desk and loosened the furs round her neck.

"The next time you want to see me," she said, "just 'phone, and I'll come right down."

"Oh, thanks for the tip," bowed John. "You know, I'm sort of a greenhorn in this business."

"Oh, that's all right," she returned complacently. "You won't be in it long."

"What's that?"

"I said you won't be in it long. Unless, of course, you start to get busy and prosecute some of those nasty racketeers."

"Well, I'd really like to prosecute a few—if I could find any to prosecute."

"Intend to go after me?" she inquired archly.

"Oh, no, not at all, Miss Ballou." He opened a drawer of the desk and took out a box tied with ribbon. "Have some candy."

"Candy?" She looked at the box and she looked at him. "Oh, now that's no way to get finger-prints. Wait a minute—let me see."

She reached across the desk to a rubber-stamp pad and a sheet of paper, and she provided him with perfect impressions of her thumbs and forefingers.

"There," she said, "if you want something, just ask for it."

"Well, thank you. I'll try to remember." John put the sheet of paper away in a drawer together with the box of chocolates she had scorned. "I suspect you're a very intelligent young woman."

"Oh, I know my way around," she admitted.

"I don't," he sighed. "I'm afraid that's the trouble."

"You'll never get anywhere chained to a desk." She took a cigarette from her handbag and lit it. "You know, if you're going to throw people in gaol, the least you can do is to meet them."

"I call that invincible logic."

She accepted the compliment as though she deserved it.

"I know where quite a few of the bodies are buried," she informed him. "How would you like a personally conducted tour?"

"I'd like nothing better, if you could spare the time one evening."

"How about to-night?"

"To-night?" he exclaimed. "You mean it?"

"Uh-h."

Through a dictograph he asked the girl in the outer office to get him Mrs. Lindsay on the telephone.

"Tell me, do we dress?" he asked.

"Oh, no," she replied. "Most of the joints are informal."

The telephone-bell rang, and Jerry was on the other end of the line.

"Hallo, darling!" he said to her.

"I'm afraid I'll have to beg out of dinner to-night. Yes, yes, I know I've worked late every night this week, but you must remember I only have thirty days. This is something that must be done to-night. Well, I'll call you later."

He put down the telephone.

"The best wife in the world," he confided to Frankie Ballou.

Murder at the Café Martin

IT was to the Café Martin that Frankie Ballou took John that evening; a sumptuous resort, in Columbus Square, with a domed ceiling over its circular dining-room and a pool of polished mahogany for dancers on a level slightly lower than that of the surrounding tables.

A band was playing, and couples were dancing, as the two were conducted to a table by a waiter Frankie addressed as "Jimmy." The place was fairly crowded.

"Who—er—who protects this place?" asked John, after he had gazed about him for a while.

"Con Cronin," Frankie replied. "He owns several places. In fact, he's got the café racket pretty well sewed up."

Martin Morgan, proprietor of the café, was sitting at one of the tables with a girl, and while John was ordering food and wine, Eddie Girard entered the

place and went over to that table. Morgan, who was quite a handsome man and in evening clothes, eyed the pock-marked fellow with disfavour.

"You want to see me, Girard?" he asked curtly.

Girard pulled up a chair and sat down between him and the girl.

"Is it all right if I buy the proprietor of the place a drink?" he drawled.

"I don't drink," snapped Morgan, and started to rise.

"Well, sit down—I want to talk to you." Girard pushed him back into his chair and turned to the girl. "Baby your nose needs powdering."

"I get you," said the girl with a nod, and she left them together.

At almost the same moment John said to Frankie:

"By the way, I promised to 'phone my wife. Will you excuse me?"

There were telephone-boxes in the vestibule, and he went off to one of them. Girard said to Martin Morgan:

"You've got a nice place here, Marty. I hear you make two grand a week profit."

"I don't want any trouble with you, Girard," retorted the proprietor frigidly. "I don't need protection. I made a deal with Con Cronin."

"Oh, that's too bad—too bad, Marty," drawled Girard. "You've got a nice place here. You know, I'm in the wreckin' business."

He caught sight of Frankie, and he made his way towards her across the dance floor.

"H'ya, Frankie?" he greeted over the rail that divided the pool of polished mahogany from the carpeted floor on which the tables were ranged.

"What's the idea of patronising one of Con Cronin's places?" she asked, with a little flip of her hand.

"What about you?" he countered. "I'm here on business."

"So am I." He ducked under the rail and sat down in the chair John had vacated. "I was just talkin' to Martin."



John was knocked into a corner by a terrific right to the point of the jaw.

You know, I think we're workin' this thing all wrong. Instead of takin' these places away from Cronin we oughta take Cronin away from these places. I—I think I'll hang around here to-night, and if Cronin drops in, I'll—"

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" Frankie interrupted in a tone of authority. "We don't want any rough stuff here to-night. Did you see the man I came in with?"

"Uhuh."

"That's the Honourable John Lindsay. The man who's going to clean up this town."

Girard made a scornful noise in his throat.

"With what?"

"With our help. Orders, Eddie!"

He made a grimace, and then he got to his feet because John had just re-entered the dining-room.

"Here he comes now," he said, and drifted away.

John reached the table and resumed his seat.

"Well, there's no answer," he stated. "I suppose Mrs. Lindsay has retired."

"That means you won't have to hurry home, eh?" suggested Frankie. "You might even have time to learn the Big Apple."

"Oh, yes," said John, "the Big Apple. You know, that's always been my secret ambition, but I don't believe I'll ever get the hang of it."

"Sure you will," she declared. "No time like the present. Come on!"

The band was playing the music of the Big Apple, and other people were dancing it. She matched him off to the floor, and though he made several false steps in the early stages of the dance he proved a particularly apt pupil, and he was thoroughly enjoying himself when Jerry entered the vestibule from the street with Paul.

"This place ought to be fun," Jerry said, after Paul had deposited his hat and stick with the girl behind the counter of the cloak-room.

"Yes," he agreed, "but, you know, I feel sort of guilty, with John at the office up to his ears in work."

"I don't," she declared. "I'm sorry you're the goat, but this is going to happen every time he misses dinner at home!"

They entered the dining-room, and Jerry stood as one transfixed at the spectacle of her spouse prancing about with a beautiful stranger.

"Research!" she exclaimed, when she had recovered the power of speech.

Paul could not get her away from the rail till the dance was over, and by then John had seen her. He led his partner towards the two, and he said:

"Oh, Miss Ballou, this can be none other than my wife. And this is my assistant—very much my assistant—Mr. Paul Ferguson."

Jerry was quite gracious, and when a waiter would have escorted her and Paul to a table she asked John, quite politely, if he would mind their joining him and his fair companion.

John assured her that he didn't mind at all, and all four became seated at his table.

"Paul," said Jerry, "I didn't know the professor could dance so well, did you?"

"No," said Paul, who was feeling considerably embarrassed, "it's as much of a surprise to me as it is to you."

"Well, I'll give you my word of honour I've never danced the Big Apple before in all my life," said John.

"Oh, he learns quickly, Mrs. Lindsay," stated Frankie. "He took to February 11th, 1833."

it like a duck to water. Your husband's just full of rhythm."

"So you've noticed?" purred Jerry. Dishes were served, and the coffee stage had been reached, when a hook-nosed man of about forty approached the table and greeted Frankie.

"Oh, hallo, Con," said the girl. "I want you to meet my friend, Mr. Lindsay." She smiled at John. "This is Con Cronin."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Prosecutor," said Con Cronin, with a curious expression on his ugly face.

John declared that the pleasure was mutual.

"We were discussing you earlier in the evening," he added, and introduced his wife and Paul.

"Ferguson?" Cronin eyed the young man narrowly as he repeated the name. "Any relation to Eugene Ferguson?"

"My father," Paul replied.

"Well, well." The expression on Cronin's face became more curious than ever. "You know, I'm glad I ran into you to-night, Mr. Lindsay."

John invited him to sit down, and an attentive waiter brought a chair.

"I've been very anxious to get in touch with you."

"Yes?" questioned John.

"Yes," Cronin nodded. "You see, I run a legitimate business. All my clients will tell you so. But I've been having a little trouble lately with some imported hoodlums who have been trying to move in, and they're not going to get away with it. Make a note of that, Frankie."

"I certainly will, Con," returned Frankie silkily. "Does anyone here happen to have a piece of paper?"

Paul produced a notebook, and she wrote on one of its pages with a pencil from her handbag, tore out the page, and folded it several times.

While she was doing this Cronin said:

"You'd be surprised to know the set-up in this town, Mr. Prosecutor. And you'd be surprised, too, Mr. Ferguson. I'd like to make an appointment with you in your office to-morrow."

"Well, I keep open house at my office," John assured him. "Anybody who wants may walk in."

Frankie tucked the note she had written into the neck of her frock and pushed back her chair.

"Con, let's dance," she said.

Cronin declared that he would love to do so, and he rose.

"I'll see you in your office to-morrow, Mr. Prosecutor."

John said that he would expect him, and then Cronin went off with Frankie on his arm. The band was playing a waltz, and they mingled with the other couples on the floor. Eddie Girard was sitting at a table close to the rail and he watched them with narrowed eyes.

"Want to take a tip from me, Cronin?" murmured Frankie, her red-gold head against the racketeer's shoulder as they danced together. "Leave town to-night!"

"How can I do that," objected her partner, "when I have a date in the Criminal Courts Building to-morrow?"

"It will be a mistake for you to call on Lindsay."

"Oh, I'm not going to see Lindsay. I'm going to see his assistant, Paul Ferguson."

"Why Paul?" she challenged.

"I think maybe I can get him to see the situation a little clearer than Lindsay." He smiled down at her from his superior height. "Understand?"

"Yes," she said quietly, "I understand."

She retrieved the note from the neck of her frock, and as they danced past Eddie Girard's table she threw it from behind her back to the watchful crook.

Jerry, smoking a cigarette and studying her husband's face, said softly:

"I'm wondering where you dug up Miss Ballou. She looks like a Greek goddess."

"She is a Greek goddess," John averred, "and she came bearing gifts."

"Beware!"

"You beware." John grinned broadly. "I've been playing baby-face all right."

Cronin and Frankie danced into view again. They had circled the pool of polished mahogany and were drawing near to Girard's table again.

"You know, I can't understand the sudden burst of co-operation," John confessed to Paul. "First the young lady, and now Mr. Cronin. But I'll know more about them before another day is over."

All the lights in the dining-room were extinguished abruptly, and only a spotlight streaked across the dance floor. A jet of flame pierced the darkness beyond the rail, but nobody heard the sound of a shot because a silencer was attached to the barrel of Eddie Girard's gun.

Con Cronin thudded to the floor, bringing down several other dancers as he fell, and women screamed.

The spotlight shone upon the face of a dead man.

The Newspaper Clipping

AT nine o'clock next morning John was in his office when George Leander burst in upon him with Eugene Ferguson and the District Attorney. He was in his shirt-sleeves at his desk, studying a big loose-leaf ledger, but he pushed back his chair as Leander swept over to him with a newspaper in his hands and rage disfiguring his lean face.

The District Attorney sat, Ferguson leaned against a table near a window, and then the storm broke.

"Murder at Café as Special Prosecutor dances Big Apple," roared Leander, stabbing a finger at headlines on the front page of the newspaper. "Big Apple! A murder is committed right under your nose, and you're dancing! No wonder we've had complaints!"

"Well," said John mildly, "I assure you, Mr. Leander, it was all in the line of duty."

"I think it would be more in the line of duty if you made some arrests and got a few indictments!" blazed the irate chairman of the civic committee.

"Arrests and indictments will come when I'm ready."

"When you're ready?"

John nodded. "I couldn't get anything out of the witnesses I sent for, and so we seized their books. But every one of them has erasures."

"The very people we're trying to help are the least inclined to cooperate," complained the District Attorney.

"Yes, and we're not getting any help from the board of supervisors," said John. "We need more funds to carry on the work. Why aren't we getting any?"

"Lindsay," snapped Leander, "the reason they're holding up appropriations is because you're not getting results!"

Eugene Ferguson put a hand on John's shoulder.

"I think it's an outrage," he declared, with every appearance of sincerity, "to give a man a job like this and expect miracles. We owe Mr. Lindsay all our confidence and support, and as far as I'm concerned he's got it."

John thanked him.

"And now, if you don't mind, gentlemen," he said, "I have a lot of work to do."

They took their departure, Leander in no way mollified, and in the outer office they passed Frankie Ballou, who had just entered it. She and Ferguson exchanged glances, and the girl at the inquiry desk said:

"Go right in, Miss Ballou. Mr. Lindsay is expecting you."

Frankie went right in, and John rose to greet her.

"You know you're the only man in the world who could get me up at this time in the morning," she said; and she tucked her handbag under her arm to straighten his tie because it was hanging over the top of his waistcoat.

"Pardon my appearance, Frankie," he murmured. "I've been here all night, working."

"That's what I call keeping your nose to the grindstone," she laughed.

"Well, it's one way of keeping your nose clean! Sit down, Frankie. Did you notice those three men who just left here?"

She took the chair the District Attorney had occupied, and she nodded.

"Acquainted with any of them?"

"No," she lied.

"All right. You know Eddie Girard?"

She repeated the name as though it were strange to her, but John was not deceived.

"Yes," he said, "think hard—I'm sure you'll remember. He was close to the dance floor last night when Cronin was killed. You must have seen him."

"Well," she shrugged, "as I told the police, I was dancing at the time, and I always dance with my eyes closed."

He put a hand on the back of her chair, and he pointed a finger at her.

"Eddie Girard came over to our table last night, when I went out to 'phone. Now what did he want?"

"He thought I was a movie star, and he wanted my autograph."

It was very glib, but it was not in the least convincing.

"Is that why you borrowed that notebook from Paul Ferguson—to write your autograph?"

"Yes." She was a trifle too eager.

"Yes, that's it."

"Eddie Girard killed Cronin, didn't he? Now you know he did, and I know it, too!"

"Well, if you know it," said she, "why don't you pinch Eddie?"

"Because I can't prove it. As a matter of fact, I'm not interested in who killed Cronin, but I would like to know why he was killed. And I've got a hunch you know."

He looked her straight in the eyes, but he could read nothing there.

"I think, myself," she said, "that Cronin died of softening of the arteries. How that slug ever got into him I couldn't tell you. Of course, when it happened I was dancing—"

"Yes, I know—with your eyes closed. Tell me this: who's taken over Mr. Cronin's business?"

"What business?" She followed him with her eyes as he moved round the desk, and noticed a litter of newspaper cuttings on the blotting-pad.

"Oh, I see you've been raiding the 'Daily Press' morgue!"



John rushed to the window with the automatic in his hand and peered round one of the curtains, and Jerry crouched behind him.

"H'm." John had picked up one of the cuttings. "Oh yes, yes. I spent many hours, after I left you last night, going over these clippings. And I was interested to find that you were in several of them."

"Those were the days when I was a little girl reporter."

"Yes." He held up the cutting. "I see you had a by-line, 'By Frances Ballou—an interview.' And whom do you suppose it's with?"

"Oh, might be anyone from Einstein to Babe Ruth," she said lightly.

"It was with Eugene Ferguson."

That brought her to her feet, and for a moment he saw beneath her mask of beauty. Then she snatched the cutting from him, tore it to shreds, tossed the shreds into the air and stalked out from the room.

Eugene Ferguson was waiting for her in a dark grey saloon round the corner from the Criminal Courts Building. She got in beside him, and he motioned to the chauffeur, who drove off.

"Well?" he questioned.

"He wanted to find out if I knew you or not," she said, "and he found out. He's been reading newspaper clippings, and he dug up that old interview."

Ferguson did not seem as disturbed as she had expected him to be.

"What does that prove?" he shrugged.

"It proves he has a hunch—and so have I, Gene. He's a whole lot smarter than you think he is!"

"He's so smart," scoffed Ferguson, "that he can't get the board of supervisors to give him another nickel. He's on his way out, Frankie!"

The End of a Witness

JERRY had decided overnight that it was time she provided her husband with active help. She knew of his disappointment with the

witnesses he had called before him, and she set off to try her powers of persuasion on the wife of James William Butler.

Mrs. Butler proved to be a homely little woman, and she was quite sympathetic about the postponed trip to Europe, but she was not very willing to try to sway her husband to give evidence. She said that he had received death-threats.

"So has my husband," said Jerry, "but he's not paying the slightest attention to them. Why should your husband?"

"He has two good reasons," Mrs. Butler replied. "I'll show them to you." And she took Jerry into a sunny room where a little boy and a little girl were at play.

The interview was over, and Jerry was on her way to the Criminal Courts Building when John rang up her brother at the "Daily Press" office.

"Now, Tom, I've got the books of the Aeme Insurance Company right here," he said, "and I'm convinced that they make a business of breaking windows in order to sell insurance. You promised to find out for me who controls that company."

"I've got it for you," Tom Ross responded in his gruff way, "and you won't like it. Ninety per cent of the stock of the Aeme Company is owned by Eugene Ferguson under a fictitious name!"

"Eugene?" exclaimed John in dismay. "You mean Paul's father? Are you sure of that?"

Simpson was listening to the conversation at the switchboard in the outer office, the girl being out at luncheon, but he lost the end of it because Paul rang from his own room.

"Oh, Simpson," he said, "will you call up my father and tell him I won't be able to have dinner with him tonight? Thank you."

John was immersed in the books of the Acme Insurance Company when Paul looked in on him.

"Want me to go over those with you?" asked the young man.

"No," said John, very curtly for him, "I'm quite able to go over these myself."

"You've been up all night, John. You'd better go home and get some sleep." Paul helped himself to one of the books, but it was immediately snatched away from him.

"You'd better get out and let me work!" John snapped at him. "When I need your advice I'll ask for it!"

Paul went out, and he was so upset that he had barely a word for Jerry, who was about to enter the room. She gazed after him in surprise, and then she closed the door and walked over to a chair beside her husband's desk.

"Well, and what have you done to your chief assistant?" she asked. "What's happened, John?"

John sighed. "I've just gone over the books of the Acme Insurance Company," he said. "They've done a terrific business lately in plate-glass insurance; and every plate-glass policy on their books was applied for right after the applicant had had his shop window smashed."

"Well, what's that got to do with Paul?"

"Nothing," he replied bitterly, "except that Eugene Ferguson happens to be the principal stockholder of Acme."

"No?" she gasped.

"Yes, and he's in deeper than that! He knows Frankie Ballou. I believe she works for him." John leaned back in his chair, biting his lip. "This is the trail I've been looking for, but how can I follow it? Maybe I ought to ask Paul to resign. Maybe I ought to resign myself." He threw out his hands. "Oh, I was a fool to take this job in the first place!"

"You were not!" she maintained. "Well, haven't you been nagging me ever since to chuck it?"

"Not chuck it," she corrected, "finish it!"

"But how can I finish it now?" He deserted his chair to stride about the room. "The cards are stacked. If I go after Ferguson it'll wreck Paul. And I can't do that, Jerry. Why, he's like a son to me."

The telephone-bell rang, and she answered the call.

"John," she said delightedly, "it's Mr. Butler."

"Well, tell him I'm not in!"

"Don't you think you'd better talk to him?"

John declared that it would be a waste of time.

"I broke my back to get those people to open up," he growled, "and not one of them offered to help."

"Perhaps Mr. Butler will," she persisted, and he accepted the telephone receiver from her.

"Yes? What is it?" he said ungraciously; and to his utter surprise the voice of Butler responded:

"I've just had a talk with my wife. If you can assure me protection, I'm willing to come to your office and testify."

"Assure you?" said John. "Why, Mr. Butler, I'll guarantee you protection. Just hold on a minute." He spoke into the dictograph. "Ask Mr. Paul Ferguson to come to my office right away."

"The things I'm going to tell you, Mr. Lindsay," said Butler, "will open your eyes."

"Well, that's fine, Mr. Butler," said John, "and I'm sure you won't regret it. Look, I'll send a man—the best man I have. He'll be right over to February 11th, 1933.

pick you up and see you get safely to my office."

Paul entered the room as he was replacing the instrument.

"Oh, Paul, I've just heard from Butler," he said. "He's ready to testify. Now you go right along to his house and bring him down here before he changes his mind."

Paul turned apologetically to Jerry, but John gave him no time for speech. "Come on, come on!" he said imperiously, and bundled him over to the door.

A quarter of an hour afterwards a saloon car drew up outside the Butlers' home in a northern suburb of Burlington—but it was Eddie Girard who got out from it and rang the door-bell.

Butler opened the door in person, and his wife was with him.

"I'm from Mr. Lindsay's office," stated Girard.

"Oh, he phoned me you were coming," said the unsuspecting tradesman. "I'll be right with you."

He kissed his wife, who handed him his hat, and he walked with Girard to the car.

"Now that I've made up my mind," he confided, "it's a kind of relief. There's a lot I've got to tell Mr. Lindsay."

"I know just how you feel," nodded the gunman.

Five minutes after the saloon had gone off with Butler and Girard in the back of it, and another ruffian at the wheel, Paul arrived at the house in a taxicab, and he informed Mrs. Butler that he had come to take her husband to Mr. Lindsay's office.

"Oh, but he's just left with someone from Mr. Lindsay's office!" she exclaimed.

As fast as the taxicab could take him, Paul returned to the Criminal Courts Building, and he rushed into John's room.

"Butler wasn't there!" he cried.

"What's that?" John stared at him blankly.

"He'd already gone! Some man, who said he was from your office, had come for him before I got there!"

"From my office? But we're the only ones who knew anything—" He broke off to pick up the telephone because its bell had begun to ring. "Yes?"

Tom Ross was on the other end of the line, speaking from his den at the "Daily Press" office.

"Say, John, one of those witnesses who refused to testify has just been killed!" he said. "Butler. He was shot and thrown from a car. They just found him."

John slammed down the telephone and stood up, clenching his fists.

"Paul," he said in a strained voice, "they've killed Butler! How could they have known? Why, only you and I and Jerry knew he was coming here! Nobody could possibly have known, unless— Yes, unless— My staff!"

He strode out into the general office, followed by Paul, and in a very few minutes he had every member of the staff lined up in it. His fierceness amazed them; he was no longer a mild professor, but a human volcano.

"Now listen to me!" he roared. "I sent Paul Ferguson to bring Butler to my office. Somebody got to Butler's house before he did, and now Butler's dead! He was coming here to testify, and nobody knew but my wife, Paul, and me—until some stool-pigeon in this office sent out the information!"

He moved along from one man to another, his brown eyes blazing.

"The grapevine started right here! One of my staff killed Butler! Staff! Why, before I started this investigation I should have sent for the street-

cleaning department to clean up the whole pack of you!"

He stopped in front of Simpson. "You! You've got shifty eyes. I don't like your face—never did like it!" Simpson shrank away from him, and he turned to Brophy and Mallin.

"And you two flat-footed morons!" he said scathingly. "I'd have done a whole lot better to get myself a couple of poodles!"

He flung out his hands. "You're all a bunch of blithering, double-crossing incompetents!" he blazed. "I don't know which one of you sent out the tip that killed Butler, but I'm going to find out! And in the meantime you're fired—the pack of you! Come on, Paul!"

The New Staff

THE discharged men—and two girls—were out of the building within an hour, though some of them protested that they could not be fired because they were Civil Servants; and during that hour, and the hour that followed it, Paul was tremendously busy on a telephone.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the general office became thronged with former pupils of the professor, and the District Attorney gaped at them as he stepped in from the corridor with a newspaper in his hand.

He squeezed past them to John's room, and John immediately closed a book and rose from his desk.

"Hallo, Bert!" he said cheerfully. "You're just the man I want to see!"

"Who are those fellows out there?" asked the District Attorney.

"They don't know it yet, but they're my new staff. Fine youngsters, with no strings attached, no political tie-up—people I can trust. I've cleaned house, Bert, thrown out the rotten bunch that passed for servants of the people, kit and boodle! From now on, things are going to be different."

"John," said the District Attorney regretfully, "there isn't going to be any 'from now on.'"

"What do you mean?"

"I've just come from the Board of Supervisors." The District Attorney held out the newspaper, with its flaming headlines concerning the crime that had been committed. "They blame you for Butler's death. They've clamped down on you. No more money!"

"They want me to quit?"

"Listen, John, a man's a fool to butt his head against a stone wall. You know I want to help you, but my hands are tied."

"All right, Bert," said John grimly. "You have my resignation."

The District Attorney said that he was sorry, and he meant it.

"I know just how you feel," he added.

"No, you don't," John informed him. "You don't know the half of it!"

He went out to the men who had been his students and now were lawyers, and they greeted him with real affection.

"I've dreamed of holding another reunion with my graduates," he said, "but I never thought it was going to be like this. Well, thank you all for coming along. Sit down, please—sit down."

They sat on chairs and desks and tables, and he stood behind one of the desks.

"Gentlemen," he began, "the shortest distance between two points is sometimes a very rocky road. You know what I've been up against since I've taken on this job. Well, I haven't been able to lick it; I've failed."

He held up the newspapers the Dis-

trict Attorney had brought, and he told them about Butler.

"I promised him protection," he said, "but I couldn't keep that promise because my office was infested with stool-pigeons. So I fired them and I sent for you. You were the best students I had—honour graduates. I brought you here to offer you their jobs; but since then, gentlemen, I myself have been fired."

There were murmurs of surprise at that statement.

"Yes," said John. "but I'm not quitting! I'm going to keep right on going as a private citizen. I'm going to fight these racketeers with all the weapons I can find—their own, if necessary, fair or foul, above or below the belt! I'm going to lick them, or else I'm going to wind up on a slab like Butler!"

"But I need help to do that—I need you! I want you to come into this fight. Now there won't be much money in it, there may be times when you won't be getting any. You'll have to be on the job twenty-four hours a day and every day. I'm not hiring a staff; I'm recruiting a regiment. And if you enlist, it's for the duration of the war."

A young fellow named Sloane voiced an objection shared by at least a dozen others.

"Wait a minute, professor!" he exclaimed. "We—some of us—can't—Well, we're working."

"What are you working at?" asked John.

The question astounded all of them.

"Why, you ought to know, professor!" cried one.

"Law," chorused several. "We're practising law."

"What law?" John stabbed the air with his hands. "The law is dead! I taught it to you, but it was all a waste of time! You won't be practising any law until we bring the law back to this city! I, for one, would rather be dead and out of it than go crawling through life taking orders from the lowest and filthiest elements in our social strata! I'm going to fight! How many of you are going to fight with me?"

Twenty volunteered without a moment's hesitation; the rest hesitated only for a few moments. John had acquired a new and loyal staff of twenty-five enthusiasts.

"That's fine!" he said. "Now let's get organised. Paul, have you that list of the loan sharks with you?"

"Right here," Paul handed over a folded sheet of paper, and John opened it out.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "we're going to need money to carry on this investigation." He smiled at a corpulent young man whose hands immediately went to his trousers-pockets. "Don't worry, Tubby, this isn't a touch—I'm going to raise the money by borrowing it from the loan sharks!"

That statement caused a good deal of chatter, but he silenced it with a gesture.

"I'm going to make the loan sharks finance their own destruction," he went on. "They did a business of twenty million dollars last year, so they must have plenty of money. I want you men to go out and get all you can out of them. Rig up your own references."

"But how are we going to pay them back?" inquired a young attorney named Carter.

"Don't worry about that, Joe. When it's time for them to collect, they can come and see me."

He waved the list of loan sharks, prepared by Paul.

"Now, gentlemen, the shortest distance between two points is to have

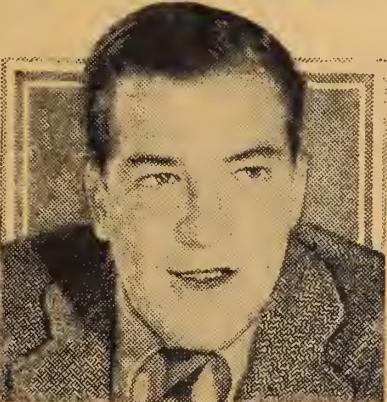
you all help me pack up my files and records and get them out of this mildewed dump. (Come on!)"

The budding lawyers began to gather up files and books and papers. Three of them would have taken a desk to pieces, but John stopped them from doing that.

"Wait a minute, boys," he enjoined, "that desk belongs to the city. I think we shall have to get new typewriters, too."

A removal van was ordered, and arrived. Over the telephone, John broke the news to Jerry that he was—in effect—transferring his office to his home; and by seven o'clock in the evening the sitting-room of the house looked less like a sitting-room than an office, and there were even newly acquired desks in the hall. Out of confusion order was established, and Jerry managed to provide some sort of a meal for the workers.

NEXT WEEK'S BUMPER PROGRAMME!



DON TERRY

IN

"HIDDEN TREASURE"

A ruthless tyrant held sway on Treasure Island, a man who was prepared to go to any lengths to accomplish his life's ambition. It was against this malign scoundrel that a young man and girl pitted their courage and resourcefulness. Read how they fared in this thrill-packed serial of high adventure and stark drama

"THE RANGERS STEP IN"

For his own crooked purpose, Tom Martin revives a feud between the Warrens and the Allens, and the Marshall of Vernon calls in the Texas Rangers. One of the Rangers is Bob Allen, but Bob resigns to try to settle the feud himself, and is framed with the murder of a Warren. A gun-roaring thriller of the West, starring Bob Allen

"CRACKERJACK"

England is thrilled by the exploits of a modern Robin Hood, a "man with a hundred faces," who robs the rich and gives to the poor. At a Society party, Crackerjack steals some valuable pearls, and next day learns that there has been a hold-up at the party and a man killed. As the police consider him the leader of this killer gang, he realises that someone is using his name to cover their own exploits. Starring Tom Walls with Lilli Palmer

"KING OF ALCATRAZ"

Two quarrelsome young radio operators are assigned to duty on the same freighter, where they meet a delightful nurse, eleven male passengers, an invalid old lady and a blonde attendant. The old lady is in reality a notorious public enemy who is escaping from Alcatraz Island, and when he is discovered the thrills come fast and furious. Starring Gail Patrick and Lloyd Nolan

Four days afterwards, at ten o'clock in the morning, the District Attorney arrived at the house with a tall, grey-haired, and sharp featured police-inspector.

Paul was sitting at a desk in the hall, receiving from members of the new staff sums of money they had "borrowed" from loan sharks. The sums ranged from one hundred to two hundred dollars, but they totalled nearly five thousand dollars, and Paul said elatedly:

"I don't know what we'd do without those dear little loan sharks!"

The District Attorney and his companion were ushered into the sitting-room, and John sprang up from his new desk there.

"Hallo, Bert!" he said warmly. "Thank you for coming."

"I went to work the minute you 'phoned me," boomed the District Attorney. "You know, I told you that you could count on me for anything except money."

John gazed appraisingly at the inspector.

"Is he my man?" he asked.

"Yes." The District Attorney introduced them to one another.

"Tell me something about Inspector Gleason," said John.

"He's one of the men who didn't toe the line with certain people, so he was transferred to the marshes with the goats."

"Good enough," approved John. "A man after my own heart."

Jerry had sped to the front door because the bell had rung. She found Mrs. Butler on the porch, and she asked her into the hall.

"I just came over to tell you," said the unhappy woman, "that I'm moving out of the district."

"Moving?" echoed Jerry. "But the business?"

"There isn't any business. Those men haven't given me a minute's peace since my husband was killed."

Jerry took Mrs. Butler into the sitting-room. John was saying to the inspector:

"I want rookies—youngsters who are just starting in. I want you to pick them, check up on them, organise them, and hold them ready for me until I need them."

"John, please!" said Jerry loudly; and then John became aware of Mrs. Butler.

"Oh, good morning," he said.

"She was followed here by three men in a car," said Jerry excitedly. "They're waiting outside now. I just saw them."

"What?" John ran to a window and looked out through a muslin curtain. Beyond the front garden stood a closed car, and three men were discernible inside it.

John called Paul into the room.

"Jerry," he said, "ring up Tom, and ask him to send a reporter and a photographer down here right away."

"What for?" she asked in astonishment.

"Do as I tell you! Inspector, would you mind stepping out and asking those three men to come in here? Paul, you go with the inspector."

Jerry used the telephone in the hall while the Inspector and Paul went out to the car. John watched at a window.

"Tell Tom it's a scoop," he directed. Jerry did so.

"No, I don't know what it is," she said, "but it's a scoop."

"Make it two photographers," directed John. "Wait a minute!" He sped to Jerry's side, and he said into the telephone: "Come yourself, Tom, and be as quick as you can!"

The man at the wheel of the car had set the self-starter buzzing at sight of February 11th, 1929.

the Inspector, but Paul yanked the door open, and the Inspector said sternly:

"What's your hurry?"

The engine was stopped again, and Paul cooed:

"Come on in, gentlemen. You're just in time for a cup of tea."

Inspector Gleason produced a gun.

"Get going!" he commanded.

A Little Experiment

TWENTY minutes afterwards, the three crooks were standing in a row in the sitting-room, holding their hats and looking distinctly sheepish. Their guns had been taken from them by Paul and laid upon the desk; the inspector was covering them with his own weapon.

Tom Ross had arrived with two press photographers and a reporter. Mrs. Butler had gone, but Jerry was looking on in bewilderment.

"Now I want a picture of those three men," said John.

"Why, that's a waste of time," scoffed Tom. "You can get their pictures out of the Rogues Gallery."

"Yes, but I want a nice group picture."

The photographers used their cameras upon the three hoodlums, and John thanked them.

"Now, we'll call that one 'Before,'" he said. "Later on we'll take another picture, and we'll call that one 'After.'"

He took off his jacket, draped it over the back of a chair, and rolled up his sleeves.

"Now, gentlemen, there's been a lot of bosh printed in the newspapers and pulp magazines which has tended to create a false impression concerning the psychology of the hoodlum. Such skunks have been represented as men of desperate courage—exceedingly tough hombres. Well, I've always held an opposite point of view. Observe that they always come armed with guns and other assorted weapons. Take note of the fact that it took three of these alleged gorillas to terrify and intimidate one small unarmed woman. I am sure that—unarmed and alone—their courage is on a par with their intelligence—nil!"

The three captives glared at him murderously, but he viewed them with contempt.

"Now, with the permission of the District Attorney," he said, "I'd like to prove this with a little experiment."

"It's all right with me," responded Bert Berry.

"Thank you." John turned to the photographers. "I'd like to have this experiment photographed in detail."

The photographers nodded, and he advanced upon one of the three and seized him by the front of his jacket.

"Now it's my intention to heat your head off," he stated grimly. "Perhaps it will be the other way round. Anyway, we're going to find out!"

"You can't!" cried Jerry in a panic, and members of the staff who had crowded into the room uttered protests.

"Nobody's going to interfere," insisted John. "Now, if some of you will be good enough to move this furniture back I think we'll have a little more room."

"Stand back!" the Inspector shouted; but he spoke too late. The tallest of the three crooks, an ugly fellow in a tweed suit, struck out at John, caught him on the side of the jaw, and sent him staggering backwards on to a chesterfield.

There was a general move to grab the opportunist, but John would not have it that way.

"Just a moment, boys," he said, "it February 11th, 1929.

was my fault—my fault. I shouldn't have turned my back on him. All right, come on!"

The fellow rushed at him; but he was ready, this time, and with a sudden trick of ju-jitsu he sent his antagonist clean over the chesterfield.

Up rose the hoodlum, but almost immediately he was sent sprawling against a desk.

Recovering his balance in spite of a rain of blows, he struck out in a fury, and John was knocked into a corner by a terrific right to the point of the jaw.

"Stop it!" screamed Jerry. "Stop it!"

Paul caught hold of her, and then John adopted a fighting attitude again, landed a feeble punch that missed, and received another thump—this time between the eyes.

He floundered against several of his former students, but he was by no means beaten. With a sudden divo he was at the crook again, sent him thudding against a french window, then swung him round and administered an uppercut that lifted him half over another desk.

"Give it to him, Professor!" cried Paul; and the Professor did give it to him. He was on him like a wild man, and they both went over the desk to the floor.

"Finish him, John!" shrilled Jerry. "Finish him!"

The third crook, a man in a striped suit, reached out a hand to the desk on which the guns were lying, but Inspector Gleason was swift to put an end to that manoeuvre. The smallest crook tried to escape into the hall, but was jerked back again.

John and his antagonist were fighting on the floor, and the antagonist had managed to roll uppermost. Tom Ross, who had been describing the battle to a re-write man in his office by means of a telephone on a table, was afraid that his brother-in-law would be beaten. But suddenly John was on top again—and Tom boomed into the telephone:

"Right on the button of the hoodlum—and he's out like a light!"

John rose to his feet and brushed one hand against the other.

"Q.E.D.," he said rather breathlessly. "Which was to be proved."

"Professor, can I take this one?" asked the District Attorney.

"Oh, no," said John, pouncing on the little crook, "this is my lecture!"

The little crook was knocked out in next to no time; the one in the striped suit did not even attempt to defend himself. Three battered ruffians were set at liberty, and Tom Ross raced back to his office with his reporter and photographers to get out a special edition of the "Daily Press."

The special edition was on the streets within an hour, its front page nearly all headlines and pictures; and not very long afterwards Moss Kitchell set out for Frankio Ballon's flat with a copy because he had ascertained that Eugene Ferguson was there.

Ferguson studied the pictures and read the story of the "experiment," then handed the paper to Frankie. He seemed to be quite amused.

"You've got to hand it to the Professor," he said. "I've a good mind to make him a proposition—get him into the organisation."

"Be a whole lot better to get your son out of Lindsay's organisation," raged Kitchell. "or else wise him up and get some good out of it."

Ferguson's smile vanished.

"I'd rather throw the whole thing overboard than do that!" he rapped.

"Sure," snorted Kitchell, "your chin isn't out like mine! I'm the one Lind-

say's gunning for, and he's using your son as a sharpshooter. Why should I be the patsy? He's sweated Barrett, and he's got Mrs. Butler to talk! Now, if I were running things—"

"You're not!"

"He's lined up an organisation, and he's found a way to borrow money—and you know where."

"By the way, Gene," said Frankie, who was pouring drinks for the three of them, "the Acme books haven't come back yet, have they?"

Ferguson gnawed his lip.

"I want to see Eddie Girard," he said to Kitchell.

In the Night

BETWEEN midnight and one o'clock the next morning, Eddie Girard stole across the garden of John's house to the french windows of the sitting-room, and it took him a very little while to get the french windows unfastened.

The moon was obscured by clouds, but there was sufficient light in the sitting-room for him to see his way about, and he was making for the archway to the hall, a six-gun in his hand, when the Irish terrier ran into the room and barked at him.

"S-s-sh!" hissed Girard; but the dog was not particularly interested in him. It was playing with an india-rubber mouse which squeaked quite realistically whenever it was bitten. Girard shrank back to the french windows, and the dog sat up on its hind legs with the mouse in its mouth.

In their bed-room on the floor above, John and Jerry were sitting up in their respective beds, an electric reading-lamp on a little table between them, and John was smoking a pipe and Jerry was taking down notes on a scribbling-pad.

"Memorandum to Paul Ferguson," dictated John. "Advertise in newspapers asking all people who borrowed from loan sharks to communicate with me here." Memorandum to Crane: "Check the list of the Kitchell costing system."

Jerry made a face at him.

"Memorandum to John Lindsay," she mocked, "reminding him that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. You know, I've been trying to decide what racket I'll take up to attract a little attention."

John looked at her, and then he put his pipe on the table and got out of his own bed to sit on the side of hers and take hold of the hand that had pointed a pencil at him.

"I have been neglecting you, haven't I?" he said.

"Being neglected's all right," she returned plaintively, "but you haven't even been seeing me!"

"Oh, nonsense!" He stooped to kiss her. "I haven't taken my eyes off you since the day I flunked you in that law course."

"Yes, I'll never forgive you for that." She heaved a sigh. "Oh, dear, if only I hadn't sent you out that day to see 'Snow White'!" She sighed again. "John, I went and bought you a present to-day—it's in the top drawer of that bureau."

"Way over there?" He glanced across the room and grimaced. "Why didn't you put it in the drawer of this table?"

"Go and see what it is," she commanded. "Go on!"

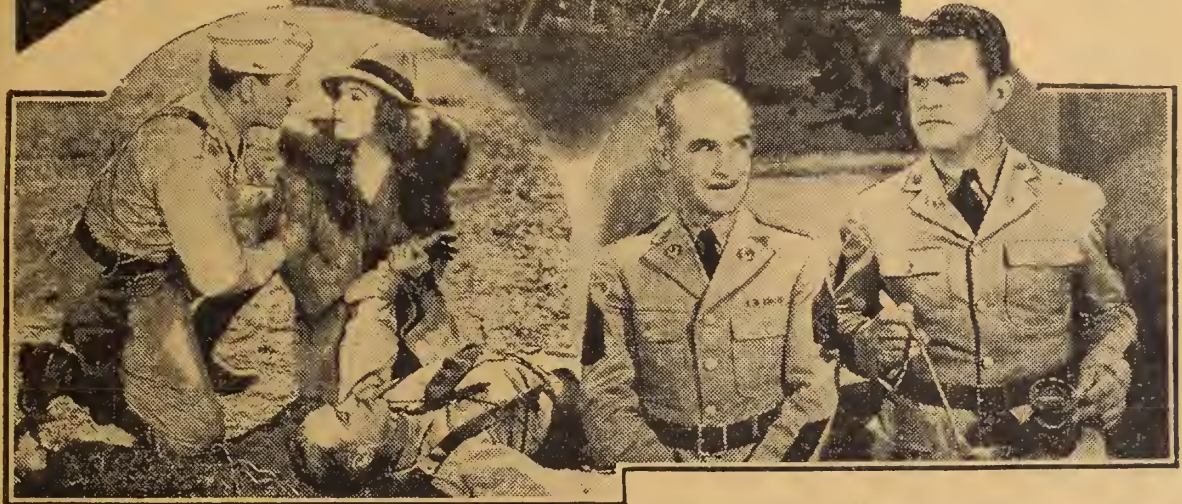
He put on a dressing-gown, went over to the bureau, and returned to the bed with a cardboard box.

"Feels heavy," he commented; and then he broke the string that was round the box and removed the lid—to gape

(Continued on page 23)

The tank or the horse? How the lives of those at the cavalry post were changed by the mighty sweep of Progress. A drama of loyalty and adventure with the modern army of to-day, starring Preston Foster, Madge Evans and James Gleason

"The LAST of the CAVALRY"



Unpleasant News for the Colonel

FORT LAWSON was situated on the rocky boundaries of the Mojave Desert. Over the fort floated the flag of the 31st Regiment of United States Cavalry.

Before the gates lay a great open space of desert, which made a grand parade ground, whilst behind and away to the west lay great mountain ranges.

There was a large wooden grand stand, which could be used for regimental races, and for viewing the numerous reviews, sports meetings and parades.

It was on a fine spring day that General Matthews came to Fort Lawson to inspect the cavalry, who were under the able command of Colonel Armstrong. The colonel was a tall, rather gaunt man, who held himself very stiffly—a kindly man, but every inch a soldier.

Special manoeuvres had been arranged for the visit of the general. The grand stand was full of the wives of the officers, their daughters and their sons, many friends and relations. Out in front were the general, the colonel, and their staff officers. At a given signal a line of troopers, who had been sitting their horses like statues, were on the move. A great number of difficult and intricate drill movements were carried out, and afterwards the regiment demonstrated what they could do in action. Toy villages, supposed to house rebels, were charged in spite of the hidden snipers. The general saw the horses jump all kinds of obstructions, and a small hill was charged, watched through binoculars.

"Magnificent, Colonel Armstrong."

"Thank you, sir."

"That's as fine a body of men and mounts as I've ever seen."

"Coming from you, General Matthews, that is praise indeed, sir," cried the gratified colonel.

The general inspected the regiment at the end, and was amazed at the spick-and-span condition of horses and men after the testing manoeuvres through which they had gone. The second-in-command, Major Kennett, then took over the regiment, marched them back into the fort and dismissed the parade. The general took light refreshments with the ladies of the garrison, and in the cool of the evening departed.

In the morning the colonel went to his orderly-room, and the Adjutant-Captain Joe Schuyler placed some letters before him. The colonel read through the first, which had come from headquarters, and then sat back in his chair. The adjutant watched him closely.

"I think all my officers should know about this at once," the colonel said at last. "Curtailed all morning parades so that there can be a full assembly here at noon."

"Very well, sir."

All the officers, captains and subalterns, wondered what the old man wanted to see them about so urgently. None of them had anything on their conscience, there had been no disorder or drunkenness among the men, and it could not be anything to do with the inspection, because the general had told them about the splendid spectacle that he had witnessed. One look at their colonel's face as they came into the orderly-room told them that the matter was serious.

"Gentlemen"—the colonel picked up

the document that was the cause of this meeting—"I have here an order signed by Brigadier-General Conover. I will read it to you: 'Please be advised of headquarters' decision to conduct a series of mechanisation trials. Captain Conger, in charge of the motorised unit, has been ordered to your post to conduct the experiments.'" The colonel frowned as one or two of the officers began to whisper excitedly at this news. "No comments, gentlemen, please."

The colonel then dismissed the junior officers with orders to say nothing to their men—a notice would appear in regimental orders that evening. When alone with his senior officers the colonel said that those remaining could speak freely.

Most of them were of the opinion that the mechanisation trials were doomed to failure. Only horses could get through the difficult passes and over the foothills, whilst they saw endless trouble for tanks on the sandy desert.

"I've been informed that this new tank has been specially designed for this particular territory," explained the colonel. "It is small, compact, and peculiarly adapted for desert manoeuvres. Unfortunately, gentlemen, the horse is still struggling along with the same old chassis."

"I shall always maintain, sir," argued Major Kennett, "that only the horse can hold country like ours." He turned to a tall officer. "What do you think, Captain Schuyler?"

A somewhat cynical smile appeared on that officer's face. "Well, I'm looking forward to the experiments,

(Continued on page 16)

February 11th, 1939.

**NEXT WEEK'S
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"THE LAST OF THE CAVALRY"

(Continued from page 13)

“sir,” was his answer. “There’s something very funny about a tank sunk in the sand.”

“I beg your pardon, sir.” Captain Bob Marvin, the regiment’s most cheerful officer, stepped forward. “But will the Captain Conger, mentioned in your dispatch, sir, be Captain Dike Conger?”

“I believe it is,” nodded the colonel.

“I’m glad of that, sir. We were young subs together at West Point—a great fellow.”

“And a great engineer,” added Major Kennett. “With a string of successful trials to prove it. I know him, too.”

“Speaking for myself, sir, I’d rather have a team of mules than a whole battalion of tanks.” Schuyler spoke with contempt.

“Gentlemen, we will keep an open mind,” decided the colonel with his usual generosity, “and lend Captain Conger every possible assistance. Naturally, we shall treat Captain Conger as a soldier and a gentleman at all times. Captain Schuyler, you will meet him and see that he gets settled in his quarters.”

“Certainly, sir.”

“Gentlemen, let us try to make him and his tank very welcome.” The colonel rose as a signal that the discussion was at an end.

Dike Conger and Three Star

ON a platform at the goods station reposed a bulky object covered with a large tarpaulin. The railroad was just a small place, but most of the station staff and its usual loungers were staring with their eyes popping out of their heads. Standing on the platform were two men, an officer and a sergeant. The officer was tall, broad of shoulder, and a small moustache added a touch to the laughing mouth.

There was a merry twinkle in the brown eyes. The sergeant was shorter and a real tough card. His moustache was a bristly affair, and the mouth had that same laughing touch, though there was a twist at the corners that made the sergeant’s expression cynical. Captain Dike Conger was a clever and capable engineer, and Sergeant “Three Star” Hennessy was almost as capable.

“All right, Three Star.”

The sergeant, assisted by the station-master and one of his staff, then removed the tarpaulin, whereupon the onlookers looked at each other, and one of them muttered rudely:

“What a funny-looking contraption!”

Dike removed wooden blocks from in front of the caterpillar wheels and raised his hand as a signal, whereupon Three Star clambered up the tank and vanished through a steel turret in the roof.

The machine jerked forward and then crawled down some stout timber planks into the yard. Three Star bobbed out again.

“From a quick look round, I don’t think this territory is gonna be quite the cinch the others were,” commented his chief, staring at the sand dunes and the distant hills.

“Is that so, sir.”

“And I don’t want every trooper on the post sore at us before we even get started. So please show a little diplomacy on this post.”

February 11th, 1939.

“Don’t I always, sir?” Three Star seemed quite huffed.

“No, you don’t,” grunted the officer. “At Fort Meyer you had everybody from the colonel on down foaming at the mouth.”

“Oh, no, sir, that was the horses.”

“Quiet!” snapped Dike Conger, as three cavalry officers trotted their horses into the goods yard.

The officers dismounted and walked towards the tank.

“Dike!”

Captain Conger’s face lit up with a glad smile.

“Well, if it isn’t old Bobby Marvin, the Pride of West Point.” He held out a large hand. “How are you, son?”

“Swell—you’re looking great.”

Major Kennett and Captain Schuyler were staring at the tank. Dike watched them with an amused grin.

“Pardon my not rushing up to shake you by the hand,” Major Kennett turned round. “But this—er—tank made me forget my manners. How are you?”

“Fine, Hal.” Dike shook the proffered hand. “How’s Leila and the kids?”

“All flourishing.” Kennett looked again at the tank. “Say, the old man’s glad you brought this thing along—make a handy receptacle for old razor-blades.”

All three men laughed heartily, until Bob Marvin noticed the unsmiling countenance of Captain Schuyler.

“Captain Conger.” He touched his old friend on the shoulder. “I should like you to meet Captain Schuyler.”

“Colonel Armstrong’s compliments, sir, and welcome to the post,” the captain said stiffly.

“Thank you. Please convey my thanks to Colonel Armstrong.” Dike’s eyes twinkled suddenly. “Would you boys like a lift back—horses and all?”

“A lift?” queried Bob and laughed.

“We’ll probably have to tow you in.”

“How far is it to the post?” Dike asked, after the laughter had subsided.

“For you, first left turn on the highway, then seven miles,” answered Major Kennett.

“Now if you were with the cavalry, it would only be a two-and-a-half-mile jaunt,” Bob pointed. “As the crow flies.”

Sergeant Hennessy had been listening from his turret, and there was a glint in his eyes. So these officers thought his lovely tank was a receptacle for safety-razor blades. But for the warning look of his chief he might have been tempted to have spoken out of turn—Three Star often got into trouble because of that quick tongue.

After getting a map showing the exact location of the fort, the tank officer bade the other officers good-morning. He warned them that, provided he did not lose his way, he had every intention of arriving at the fort before the three horsemen.

“So long, Dike,” Bob Marvin called as he walked towards the horses.

“Yell if you get stuck.”

“All right, go get ‘em,” Dike muttered to his sergeant.

The three mounted officers went down the road at a sharp canter, veered on to the sand, and were off at a gallop towards some low sand hills. The tank lumbered after them. Dike could have gone faster, but the tank was heavy, and he had not forgotten one time Three Star charged down a highway leaving great marks and cracks in the concrete. They left the road and walked over the sand, and it was surprising what a grip it seemed to get. There was no slipping back.

The three officers paused, and Joe Schuyler indicated a number of boulders. The tank would have to go round them. They got a shock because the tank charged the rocks and then slowly climbed up them, with the snub nose pointing in the air, then it crashed down on the other side.

“That must have buckled all the machinery!” cried Major Kennett.

But he was wrong, because the tank proceeded to amble forward none the worse. Without any further argument the officers put spurs to their horses, and did not pull up till the three of them had neatly jumped a stout fence. They thought Conger would have to get out and open the gate, which had been erected to keep cattle from straying. Dike Conger just went straight at that gate, and it was lifted off its hinges and flung to one side. The tank then charged a dried-up stream, vanished down one bank and bobbed up the next, and then at a considerable speed was heading for a valley.

“I guess we’ll have to patch that fence up,” muttered Major Kennett. “Confound the fellow!”

The tank reached the flat desert parade ground with the officers nowhere in sight, and proceeded to race over the sand towards the fort. A wagon and its team of horses near the fort bolted, and a troop of cavalry returning from watering had their animals up in the air, prancing round like mad things.

The sentries at the gates had heard that the tank was expected, and stood at the “present.” The tank chugged between the gates and swung towards the stables, causing one or two horses picketed outside the regiment’s headquarters to show signs of great restlessness. Dike ordered Three Star to stop so that he could go and report to the colonel. Three Star to take the tank on to the stables and await orders.

That was the sort of job Three Star Hennessy enjoyed. He steered a somewhat erratic course, after his master had vanished—Three Star loved to do a bit of swanking. Eventually he pulled up the tank, and from various barracks and stables appeared a great number of troopers to view this extraordinary-looking pill box. Three Star bobbed out of his turret like a jack-in-the-box.

“Ladies and gents, here she is!” he cried in shrill nasal accents. “The eighth, ninth, and tenth wonder of the world. A grim, gargantuan Goliath of Gravel, Grit and Gullies!” He beamed at the scowling faces. “All you got to do is push a little button and things begin to happen.”

Three Star disappeared inside the tank, which proceeded to do a circus act outside the stables. The tank went backwards and it went forwards, it spun round, it stood up on end, its one gun menaced the troopers, and it made an awful noise over the stones of the yard.

“Hey, what’s the idea?” a trooper demanded hotly when the tank had stopped and Three Star had bobbed back into view. “Don’t you know better’n to make that kind of racket around horses?”

“Get this thing out of here, will you?” someone shouted, and there was a chorus of agreement.

“Relax, boys—relax!” cried Three Star. “Here’s your new mount. No saddle, no bridle, no spurs, no hay, no nothing.”

A big fellow elbowed his way through the troopers.

“What’s going on around here?”

“Well, if it ain’t Horse Face Harry from the Marines!” sneered Three Star.

"What wet rock did you crawl out from?" retorted the dark, sullen-faced Harry as he recognised an old and bitter enemy.

"Now, is that any way for a mule's chambermaid to talk?"

"Chambermaid?"

"Yeah, we're moving in."

"Not in my stables, you ain't!" shouted Sergeant Ross. "It's the last run around that smelly steam-roller's giving me."

"Seems to me I heard you say that on other occasions."

"When this territory gets through with that portable garbage can of yours, you can slice it up and sell it for paper-weights."

"Aw, you're bitter, Harry—you're bitter," Three Star derided. "The horse is all right with a buggy behind it, but these modern times—"

"Well, this place is different," interrupted the trooper. "It was like this a thousand years ago, and it won't change. And don't forget, Mister Hennessy, this is the desert, and the desert means sand—sand that you can't get a grip on and you stiek and you slide." A raucous, scoffing laugh. "Why, the horses'll be towing that thing out of here with its tail tucked between its legs before it even gets started!"

"You don't know what you're talking about, Horse-face," blazed Three Star. "You ain't got a hope once we get started. Horses is—" Out of the corner of his eye he had seen his captain, and he stood very much to attention. "All present and correct, sir!" he shouted.

Captain Dike Conger noted the looks on the men's faces as they stiffened to attention, and he wondered if Three Star had been up to his old bear-baiting tricks again.

Dike Meets a Girl

AFTER reporting to the colonel the new officer went in search of his servant. He told Three Star that though he was one of the best mechanics in the world, he would go back to his unit if he started any trouble.

"You're a good chap, Three Star," he stated. "But you just love a spot of trouble. Well, I don't want any spots."

Dike was delighted to find that he had to share a bungalow with Bob Marvin. It amused Dike very much when Bob rang up the few young ladies living at Fort Lawson and in the surrounding district, and every one of them was out, unable to come out, or indisposed. Bob had been a lad for the girls in college days.

Joe Schuyler called the morning after his arrival to say that Mrs. Kennett was making up some tables for bridge, and she wanted Dike to come along and play. Dike assured Captain Schuyler that he was flattered by the invitation, but he was too busy with experiments with the tank, but he would endeavour in the very near future to come across to the Kennett bungalow to see Leila and the children.

"I shy clear of army mothers and their daughters," Dike explained. "The mothers are a bunch of schemers with the supreme idea of marrying you off to one of their children. The girls are in most cases dull, very haughty and extremely plain. No, sirree, you find I avoid army girls like one would the plague."

When Schuyler had gone Bob Marvin informed his friend that he had not been very wise to talk in that manner. Schuyler was crazy about the colonel's daughter.

"I know the type. She makes every-one jump around because her old man happens to be the C.O."

"Not Julie Armstrong." Bob shook his head. "She's really dress parade with the colours flying and the band playing Dixie."

"I know the type," scoffed Dike. "She'll change Dixie into the Wedding March so fast it'll make you dizzy."

Some time later it was Mrs. Leila Kennett on the phone. Captain Joe Schuyler had reported his failure, and she had not been altogether surprised.

"But won't you say 'Yes' to me?"

"I wish I could, Leila, honest I do." "There's some very charming ladies simply dying to meet you," tempted Mrs. Kennett. "We've got a blonde, a brunette, a red-head, and there's me. Red-head's the colonel's daughter."

"Leila, on the level, I'd like nothing better," lied Dike. "But I've got a stack of reports to get out a mile high."

At a tea-party that afternoon Mrs. Kennett informed her friends that she had failed.

"It's about time the vagabond settled down."

"What's he like?" asked the colonel's daughter.

"Dike Conger is the most unmanageable cog in Uncle Sam's motorised units. He hasn't a nickel but his pay, and I don't suppose he saves a cent. When my husband was on a special gunnery course Dike was there at the same time. One of those reckless, swashbuckling types that appeal to our romantic hearts. Avoids social functions, especially army ones, because he thinks that he may lose his bachelorhood."

"How long is he staying?" asked Julie.

"Nobody ever knows," said Leila. "He parades his little tank during the day, prowls the hills during the night, then he's gone, leaving behind him a trail of gasoline and broken hearts."

Leila Kennett considered herself the most important lady at the fort. The colonel was a widower, and her husband



The tank seemed to claw at the boulders for a moment before getting a grip, and then up it went.

was second in command. Of course, the colonel's daughter was a very important person, but the younger woman was often away visiting friends in New York and abroad.

Julie was even then contemplating a visit to New York, because she was bored with life at the post. She loved her father dearly, but he was so involved with his officers and his soldiers, whilst the other officers' wives and daughters did not interest Julie in the least. Leila was a sweet soul, but so much older. Also, Leila was in her bad books, because she was scheming to get her engaged to Captain Joe Schuyler. These awful bridge evenings gave her the shudders. She wanted to go and dance and have a gay time, but as she was part-hostess with Mrs. Kennett, she had to do her duty. The party was one man short, and so Julie was asked to ring up Bob Marvin, who was the world's worst at cards.

Now it chanced that Captain Marvin had had to go out, and he had instructed Sergeant Hennessy that if any of the ladies whom he had rung and found out should ring up and find him out, he was to make a note of their names. As Three Star considered himself indispensable to Captain Conger he had a room in the bungalow, and it was the sergeant who took Julie's call.

"You're Miss Nancy, if I ain't mistaken," the sergeant said, after consulting a list of ladies likely to ring the captain.

"No, I'm not Nancy," cried the colonel's daughter.

"Then you're Millicent."

The bored Julie began to waken up. This was rather amusing. She informed the speaker that she had no idea who he was, but she was not Millicent. Whereupon Three Star tried all the other names.

"I'm not Ellen—try again."

"There's only one left—you're Lucy May Praxton," spoke the tactful Three Star. "Captain Marvin's on duty, but Captain Conger's here. Maybe you'd like to talk to him."

"Sounds rather nice over the 'phone, sir," Three Star confided to his master. "I thought you might like to have a chat with her. Captain Marvin might be pleased."

"And he might not," chuckled Dike, and picked up the 'phone. "Hallo, Lucy May. You've rung up Bob in answer to his call during the day. I'm afraid he's had to go out on unexpected night duty." He laughed cheerfully.

"Here was I, looking forward to a long, lonely evening and suddenly I'm talking to you. Now I don't feel a bit like the fireside, the old pipe and my bed-room slippers. And like rain from heaven you come along. Lucy May—Lucy May—that's the prettiest name. Has magnolias in it and darkies singing in the moonlight. Talk to me, Lucy May."

"What can Ah say—Ah don't even know you," came a southern drawl.

"Well, you must have heard of me."

"Ah, sure have, sugar."

And when he asked her to meet him, Julie, in the same southern drawl, said she would have to get Mistah Bob's permission. Whereupon Dike assured her that he would get that permission from Captain Marvin, and he would meet her in half an hour near the old Mexican church. Rather to her surprise, Julie found herself answering that she would be there.

Dike got hold of Marvin on the phone. Dike wanted to know if he minded him meeting Lucy May, and might he have the car. Marvin said it was okay by him, though he was not

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quite sure which one Lucy May could be. Dike told him not to worry, and rang off.

Captain Conger got out the car and dashed off to the little native church. Dike had put on his smartest mufti suit, with a very natty old school tie and a panama hat. He got out of the car and wondered whether he was being an idiot—still Bob's taste in the old days had been pretty good. At any rate, she'd be far more amusing than these stiff army dames. This girl was probably a girl with Spanish or Mexican blood in her veins. A touch on his arm startled him. He jumped and found himself staring at a most attractive girl. Her hair was a deep auburn, not the fiery kind, but a rich colour. Her features were good, the skin pale but very clear, and very long-fringed eyelashes did not hide the dark eyes. In a flash Dike decided that Lucy May was Spanish and a beauty. She was almost hugging a tree.

"You Captain Conger?"

"Yes."

"If you're Captain Conger, then Ah'm Lucy May."

"Well, what are you doing behind that tree?"

"Oh, Captain Conger, Ah had the most awful time getting away from my maw and pa. Ah sorta kinda sneaked out."

Now Dike Conger considered himself a master of the art of flattery. He had been known to boast that he could make any girl he wished fall for him. Just a look and a smile, and she was hooked. After a certain amount of argument she consented to come for a ride.

"I bet you're the prettiest girl around the post," Dike told her, some considerable time later.

"Prettier than the colonel's daughter?"

"Paugh!" Dike gave a scoffing laugh. "A skinny trollop. Round-shouldered, dull featured, and thinks she looks like an empress."

"You know her?"

"Never seen her, but I bet my guess is a good one."

"All the men folk seem crazy about her."

"Politics—that's all—just politics," cried Dike. "Her old man is the C.O., but why talk about her? Me and the night are young—and you're so lovely."

Julie laughed and suggested that they turn the car round, the desert air was a little trying to her throat, and that they partake of food and wine at Cantina Pete's. Pete was a fat, talkative and excitable Mexican who said he would put them at his best table and charge ten cents cover charge so that he could keep out the "rough raff." Dike asked Pete to instruct the band to play one of his favourite jazz tunes, "La Paloma."

Julie and Dike, over coffee and cream, talked and gazed at each other. The girl could understand now why her sex were so attracted to this man—not that he appealed to her. The man wondered what such an attractive girl could be doing in this outlandish part of the world—she was a raving beauty—he would find himself raving if he weren't careful. The girl encouraged the man to talk about himself.

"Do you know the first thing I do when I get to a new post?"

"Tell me about it."

"I take a piece of string a mile long. On one end I tie a piece of chalk. I tie the other end on a flag pole. I draw a circle two miles wide. I never have anything to do with any woman inside that boundary."

Now it chanced that Three Star

decided he would like to see the sights of the town, and he came to Cantina Pete's. He found a comfortable bar and banged on it.

"What'll you have?" cried the bartender.

"Three Star's my name, and that's what I'll drink."

"Walker's my name," answered the bartender. "But I never touch it."

"Wise-cracker, huh?" snarled Three Star, quick to rouse.

"Yeah, and we just run out of Three Star."

"All right, then make it beer."

Three Star leaned against the bar and sipped his beer. The band began to play, and idly he watched the couples. He grinned as he saw Dike and whistled his appreciation of his partner.

"That's my skipper out there," he informed the bartender. "That's some doll with him, ain't it?"

"Sure is—it's the colonel's daughter."

"The colonel's daughter! Great rattlesnakes!"

The dance finished and Dike took his partner back to their quiet corner. Julie said it was time she went home, and Dike thought a good method of stopping her was to kiss her. The colonel's daughter jumped to her feet, and Dike was about to grab her again when Three Star appeared.

When Three Star grabbed his chief by the arm the girl darted through the tables.

"Boss! Boss! Do you know who that is?"

"You thick-headed baboon!" raved his master. "Don't you know better than to interrupt when I'm with a lady? Beat it!"

And then Dike found to his chagrin that Lucy May had beaten it, or in other words, vanished.

The next day Dike Conger went down to the polo ground to watch a game. It was a shock when Colonel Armstrong presented his daughter Julie to the tank officer.

The Test

THAT night there was a dance in the large drill hall by special invitation of Colonel Armstrong. Major Kennett informed Dike that the colonel was a great stickler for etiquette, and though there was nothing billed, the dance was really a sort of welcome to Captain Conger. So Dike went, and for once that calm officer was grievously troubled. One moment he was in a mad rage at the way he had been tricked, and the next he felt all forgiving.

He was received by the colonel.

"Sorry to talk business, Captain Conger," the colonel said after a hearty handshake. "But would Munday be too early to take part in test manoeuvres?"

"No, sir."

"My men and I are very curious to see your tank in action."

By great bad luck the band would be playing "La Paloma" when Dike entered the ball-room. He saw the laughing, teasing expression on Julie Armstrong's face, and thought she had asked the band for the number. Now he was most indignant. He was so angry that he went out into a garden to cool down. He decided to go back to his quarters, and he would have done if Julie Armstrong had not sought him out.

"Still angry, captain?"

"You've had your laugh—why not drop it?"

"You weren't quite so anxious to get away from me last night."

"Last night you were Lucy May



"Captain Conger, I give you the Thirty-first Cavalry of Gettysburg, the Indian Wars, Cuba, the Philippines and France!" said Colonel Armstrong.

Praxton," was his terse answer. "Tonight you're the colonel's daughter."

"Oh yes, I remember." She laughed up at him. "You did say something about a chalked circle, Captain Conger."

"And it still goes."

But Julie was such a nice, pretty girl, and she had a most persuasive way with men. She did not apologise, but she made Dike feel somehow that it was all his fault, and then like a lamb she led him back into the ballroom. They promised to be true friends to each other.

In fact, Dike came so much under her spell that towards the end of the evening he asked her if she would like a ride in the tank. And they had a good ride around in the desert, with Julie doing the steering—fortunately the desert was very wide. And when Dike did get back to his quarters he stood at a window gazing in a queer fashion at the moon. Three Star saw and shook his head gloomily.

The manoeuvres were to consist of an obstacle test. On the Monday morning all officers were on parade, including Dike Conger, and the colonel stated the nature of the contest or ordeal. He pointed towards the hills. A marked course had been planned, and all manner of barricades, ditches, barb-wire entanglements, gun emplacements and trenches had been constructed. The cavalry and tank would start at a given signal. There would be observers stationed at various points, to make notes on how the obstructions were overcome, and the finish would be the starting point. It was a circular course and most of it through the mountains, and it would be the objective of the tank to finish the course first to

prove the superiority of mechanised warfare.

"Get set." Dike clambered into the tank and addressed his sergeant, who was at the controls.

"We oughta brought sandwiches along for this picnic."

"There won't be any picnic on this course what I've seen of it," Dike laughed grimly.

Captain Bob Marvin fired the starting gun and a thousand cavalymen raced away in almost one straight line. There was an ironical cheer as the tank was left far behind.

But Dike Conger was not worried. He was not going to get the tank overheated right at the start. The mountain tests would be trying enough, and this gallop of the cavalymen was in his mind an unwise move. Junior officers were in charge, the colonel, Major Kennett, Captain Schnyler, and Captain Jack Bradley, assistant adjutant, watched in the capacity of judges. They were able to ride along rough roads that ran through the hills and watch this amazing struggle for supremacy.

The first obstruction after leaving the desert sand was a barrier of rocks. These great boulders must at some time have come rolling down the mountains in an avalanche. Fearlessly the cavalymen rode at these boulders and jumped without thinking of what might be lurking on the other side. Several cavalymen were unseated.

Knowing the vigorous nature of this test, which meant so much to the cavalry, the colonel had ambulance men at various points. They removed several stunned men from either one or the other side of these boulders. From the grand stand the spectators watched the tank lumber forward, and many thought it would fail at the first obstacle.

Dike was now at the controls, and Three Star snuffed as he noted his master was charging the largest boulder of all. There was a special contraption for surmounting such obstacles, and at a shout from the captain the sergeant jerked back a lever and the nose of the tank went up in the air. It seemed to claw at the boulders for a moment before getting a grip, and then up it went.

"Here she goes!" shouted Dike, as the tank reached the top of the great boulder.

"And where we land nobody knows!" muttered Three Star, and jerked back the lever.

The tank crashed down, hit a small rock, seemed to bounce, rolled sideways, crashed against some more great stones, but always went on relentlessly. The two men inside would have been slung against the sides but for the straps buckling them to their seats.

The people in the grand stand were informed by means of loud speakers how the contest was going, and there was also a television set to show some stages through the hills. All witnessed the tank survive the first obstacle, and many expressed an opinion that every bolt must have been jarred out of place.

"Here they come!" the loud speaker informed them. "They are approaching the barbed wire entanglements."

A series of land mines went up and several of the seasoned and trained horses got scared and threw their riders, but hundreds swept on and down into the craters formed by the explosions. Then came a cold mass of barbed wire. The order came to dismount, get out pliers and start cutting. Sergeant Henry Ross yelled hoarse encouragement, and several times glanced back, and when he did

sight the tank became almost like a madman.

"Hurry up, men!" he yelled. "Do you want that beer can to make monkeys out of us?"

The troopers had just finished cutting the last of the wire and were mounting when the tank charged at the wire. Dike did not choose the path cut by the cavalrymen, but went straight at the worst of the wire. Those watching from the hills saw staples tossed to one side, the wire burst apart and the tank forge forward. Once the nose of the tank was one mass of accumulated wire and Major Kennett thought it would bring the tank to a stop. The tank went on and gradually the wire was broken or flung aside. The tank was now past a great many cavalrymen, but several hundreds still held a good lead.

The colonel certainly had done everything thoroughly. Mountain batteries now opened fire with a small calibre shell that contained high-explosive. The noise was deafening and visibility difficult because of the black smoke from the explosions of shells and land mines. Naturally, these shells were not aimed at the actual course, but to right and left and the foreground. On several occasions they came unpleasantly close. Many cavalrymen came to grief, but the spectators were astounded at the amazing recklessness of these men, who were fighting to stem the relentless tide of progress that meant mechanisation.

Several times Dike winced as he saw the mad way in which some of the cavalrymen were charging the obstructions—the ambulance workers were being kept busy.

A steep hill proved a nasty obstacle to the tank because it was a loose surface of a composition similar to limestone. An apparently hard surface cracked and slid away causing the tank to topple over on its side. Spectators watching the television version gasped as the tank rolled over and over like a great black slug, hit a large boulder half way down, slithered round it, hounded on some more rocks, righted itself and proceeded on its way.

"That was tough going, sir," gasped Three Star.

"And we haven't got half way yet," chuckled Dike.

The next big difficulty was a hedge-like obstruction with beyond a wide, muddy stream. The banks were soft and easily crumbled—and the stream was weedy and full of rushes. The horses carried the obstacle and flopped into the water, through which they waded to the bank. Many horses landed badly and tossed their riders into the water. Sergeant Harry Ross was shouting and cursing at those men who had conquered the water—they must keep going—when the tank crashed straight through the fence, hurled a wall of water to right and left as it flopped into the stream and then proceeded to go lower and lower in the stream. Sergeant Ross hoped it would vanish from sight, and the blighters inside he drowned. But like a submarine the tank slushed through the mud, the rushes and the mud and clambered up the bank. Sergeant Ross rushed after his men.

Naturally, they could not have people killed by bullets and explosions, so that there was no direct fire, but Captain Conger had stated to the colonel that his tank was bullet proof and that on one given sector this could be tested. They could shell him and even try to blow him up. And without any vindictiveness or malice the colonel had a good try. Machine-guns beat a tattoo on the tank's side, one or two shells got glaucing blows and did no harm—the tank dodged about so that it was not

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an easy target—and one land mine exploded almost underneath the tank. One great burst of red, then black clouds blotting out everything, and after a few seconds the tank wallowed out of the mire unscathed.

"This must be one of them undeclared wars," Three Star cried, as he mopped his brow. "This is warm work."

"We're on our way home, soldier!"

"Yeah, and running a very pretty last," Three Star looked through an observation opening. "There are a good hundred of them pesky troopers out ahead and being urged on by old Horse-face Harry."

"Don't forget the horses are tired, and we ain't showed 'em our speed, yet," retorted his chief.

"They're on their way home," the announcer boomed in jubilant tones. "The cavalry in the lead."

The spectators turned their glasses towards the edge of the desert. They could see a compact body of riders, and then on the slight slope behind a squat shape. The tank was close behind. The cavalry certainly started the race across the desert with a slight lead, but not for long. Dike Conger had speeded up his craft.

Sportingly the cavalrymen opened their ranks as they heard the roar behind them, and then the tank had whipped through that opening into the lead. It was careering over the sand as if it were an asphalt track, and leaving the tired horses standing.

The tank finished a winner by a quarter of a mile. Colonel Armstrong had ridden out of the hills to be in time for the finish. Major Kennett and the other officers had often looked at their superior officer with questioning expression, but the C.O. kept a poker face.

When the tank stopped, one of the first people to ride out was the colonel. Captain Dike Conger crumbled out, and stood rigidly to attention.

"Congratulations, Conger, a good show."

"Thank you, sir."

Gloom and Glory

IN the weeks that followed, Dike Conger was at times full of good cheer and others irritable and depressed. Three Star, who was a privileged person, tackled his officer on the subject.

"What are you nervous about, sir?"

"Nothing."

"Well, for a guy that ain't nervous about nothing, you certainly are nervous. Washington'll get around to your report all right."

"It's never taken this long—four weeks," Dike scowled. "This hanging around's getting me."

"Well, from what I've seen you didn't look as if you minded much," dryly commented the sergeant. "A nice bit of a canter in the morning with a nice-looking gal, and a hunk a rumba at night."

"That'll do, sergeant."

"I never meant no harm, sir. I was glad you was enjoying yourself. Kinda makes the time pass quick."

"That's the trouble—it doesn't."

"Say, you ain't worried about this report, are you? Why, we're a cinch."

"That's what bothers me," Dike said with a gloomy smile. "For the first time in my life I haven't been too sure I wanted to win. There happens to be a pretty decent fellow on this post who has given thirty years of his life to the work he loves. Horses—cavalry."

"Yeah—so what?"

"So I come along. Compared to him I'm a rookie. I take everything he's done and throw it right in the ash can."

"Are you sure it's him you're think-

ing about and not the daughter?" questioned Three Star.

"How many times do I have to tell you that—that we're but friends? Pals—playmates. The same as you and I."

Three Star raised an eyebrow, but made no comment. The 'phone rang in the next room, and when he returned after answering the call there was a slight curl at the corners of his mouth.

"It's the stables, sir," he reported. "Your horse is all saddled, and Miss Armstrong is waiting to take you for a canter through the woodlands."

With the test manoeuvres concluded there were very few duties for Captain Conger and his sergeant, except to see that the tank was spotlessly clean and in perfect running order. Therefore, Dike was able to go out riding any time.

On this day he had a race with Julie and, as on previous occasions, he lost by several lengths.

In between the hills was a valley of waving trees and green verdure. A grand place for a ride and a picnic, and the colonel's daughter and her latest conquest sat down on the bank of a little stream. It was Julie's idea that they catch some trout and grill them. She had even brought a three-piece split cane rod, a reel, a line and some fly traces. But she was not very experienced at throwing the fly, and it was Dike who showed her how it should be done.

"What's the matter, Dike?" Julie noticed his moodiness.

"I'll miss this."

"Why? Aren't there any fish where you're going?"

"Who knows where I'll go?" Dike shook his head. "When the report comes back from Washington they'll pack me off to some place. Honolulu, Manila—I don't know. Remember what I said about a chalk circle?" The girl nodded. "Well, this is one time where I was wrong."

And when Julie and Dike rode slowly back to Fort Lawson they had become engaged to be married. Dike was elated, but as he neared the fort this elation waned—because he had to face the colonel.

"Not frightened, are you, Captain Conger?" teased Julie.

"No—no—but I'd just as soon drive the tank up the side of an iceberg."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the girl. "Well, don't weaken."

Hand in hand they went up the stairs, but when they came to the colonel's special lounge they were sedately apart. They entered and found that the colonel was not alone, for several of his officers were with him. Julie gave Dike an encouraging smile, and after a friendly wave of her hand to her father and the officers Julie betook herself up some stairs to the sleeping rooms above, but on the first landing she paused. She was eager to see if Dike would get rid of the other officers and broach the subject of their engagement.

"Captain, I have some news that will interest you." The colonel held up a document.

"The report, sir?" Dike's heart missed a beat. "There was something tense and strained in this atmosphere."

"Naturally, sir, I am anxious—"

"You may set your fears at rest, captain," interrupted the colonel.

"General headquarters has ordered the immediate mechanisation of this post."

"Thank you, sir," Dike grinned his pleasure, and added, glancing at the other officers, "and with your permission I should like to express my gratitude to you and your men for your co-operation."

"On behalf of my men and myself, I

thank you." The colonel gave a little bow, and glanced at the document he held. "Now, there's one thing more. Headquarters has decided, and with justice perhaps, that to carry out this specialised work requires someone more familiar with the problems than I am." He looked up. "I am in receipt of an order placing you in charge of the work."

"Do you mean I am to command this post?" Dike asked in hoarse surprise.

"Yes."

"But that's impossible, sir."

"I notice in orders you will soon be a major."

"I couldn't do this to—" Dike began and stopped in confusion. "But I'm an engineer, sir, and—"

"You're a soldier."

"Yes, sir," agreed Dike, stiffening to attention before the eagle glance of this old martinet.

"The notice has been posted and the regiment will be turned over to you officially to-morrow morning." The colonel looked at his officers. "Gentlemen, your regiment has been selected for a duty which will call for all the training and devotion for which it has always been known." He walked round his desk. "Captain Conger, I give you the Thirty-first Cavalry of Gettysburg, the Indian Wars, Cuba, the Philippines and France." He held out his hand. "I congratulate you, sir!"

"Thank you, sir."

"Gentlemen—good-night." The colonel walked towards the stairs, and his shoulders seemed to bow.

Julie, his daughter, was not there, for she had fled to the sanctuary of her room.

"Congratulations, Dike." Captain Bob Marvin was the first and the warmest greeting. "I think it's wonderful."

"Congratulations, old man." Major Kennett was a little pompous. He tried to look as if he were pleased—he hated this change. "Good luck and all that."

"Might I add my congratulations—in a major." Captain Schuyler's face expressed nothing but disgust. "Congratulations for the finest double-cross I've ever seen put over."

Captain Schuyler wisely retired, the other two officers looked uncomfortable and they vanished. Dike Conger, still in a daze, stood by the desk. He turned and saw Julie coming down the stairs.

"Julie! Something has happened!"

"I know—I heard!" Her face was pale.

"Isn't going to change things for us, is it?"

"How can you stand there and think of yourself?" Her eyes suddenly blazed their contempt.

"When you've just taken a man's life away."

"Oh, Julie, please don't feel like that—"

Dike's voice trailed away because the colonel's daughter had fled from him.

Late that night

there came an urgent knocking on the front door. Julie, still dressed in the same clothes, lay motionless on her bed. She stirred and sat up, her hands going to her unruly hair, and then the knocking became more insistent and urgent. She went downstairs and opened the front door to find Three Star standing on the doorstep.

"I'm awful sorry to come busting in and waking you, Miss Armstrong, but I need your help."

"What's wrong, sergeant?"

"It's Captain Conger, miss. He's down at Cantina Pete's—been there all night drinking his head off. For the first time in ten years I can't do nothing with him."

"I'm sorry." Julie stiffened and drew away.

"And you know why he's doing it, too," the sergeant went on viciously. "It's because everybody's against him—the colonel and every man on this post."

"That's too bad."

"And you're the only one he'd listen to, Miss Armstrong. You know the way he feels about you. We gotta get him straightened out by ten o'clock—he's taking over the post."

"I am aware of that."

"Won't you please help me straighten him out?" begged Three Star. "Miss Armstrong, if ever a guy needed a friend he does now."

"Captain Conger doesn't need anyone," haughtily and coldly came her answer. "He's thoroughly capable of taking care of himself. I'm sorry I can do nothing for you. Good-night sergeant!"

Julie went out on to a balcony. Her brain was a turmoil. A gentle touch on her shoulder made her turn, and she gasped to see her father. Then his arm drew her close.

"Julie," the colonel spoke softly and so kindly. "how long have you and Dike been in love with each other?"

And for the first time since her mother

had died many years ago Julie burst into tears.

Three Star did not give up. He went back to Cantina Pete's. Dike Conger was in a private room, and sitting with eyes half closed in a chair with one hand clutching a glass.

"Come on, skipper—come on, snap out of it!"

"Go away—I wanna sleep."

Three Star's chin stuck out aggressively. He put his arm round the captain and got the dazed man to his feet. Dike tried to struggle free but had no strength. Three Star got his master home and got him to bed, and he locked the door so there was no chance of going back to Cantina Pete's.

The Tank Runs Amok

IN the morning Three Star was again in action. His master was sleeping like a log, but the sergeant got the half-drunken man out of bed in spite of protests and into the bath-room. Then Three Star turned on the cold shower, and that brought back some life.

"I'm freezing to death!" cried Dike, after he had been kept there some minutes.

"You're gonna feel much better after a while," answered Three Star.

Then he led the frozen Dike back into the bed-room, flung him on the bed, and proceeded to rub him with hard towels.

"That's enough," protested Dike.

"I'm burning up."

And thus did the faithful Three Star restore Dike Conger almost to his senses. Dike had a terrible head, and mumbled that everything was whirling round, and had a glass put into his hands. It was a horrible-looking mixture—a kill-or-else pick-me-up.

"Do I have to?"

"It'll do you a world of good."

And Dike had just swallowed the last drop when there came the sound of a bugle.

"I'm okay now, sergeant. Thanks a lot." Dike Conger spoke clearly. "I'll



They carried Colonel Armstrong gently from the tank and laid him on the ground.

February 11th, 1933.

get dressed if you'll see to the tank. You needn't worry any more."

Three Star hurried over to the special stall in the stables where the tank was kept. He was surprised to find Sergeant Ross coming out.

"Aw, a Peeping Tom, huh?"

"I just figured as long as we gotta handle these things, I might as well look it over and see what makes it tick."

"Well, I never thought I'd ever win you over."

"Neither did I," grinned Sergeant Ross, and walked off roaring with laughter.

Three Star looked after the burly figure and shrugged his shoulders as if human nature was a puzzler. It was with a great sense of relief that he noted the presence of his chief—looking none the worse for his folly.

Colonel Armstrong had ordered a full parade of his regiment, and he tried to remain calm and unmoved as he watched them for the last time.

"It isn't easy for the men to give up their mounts," he said to Major Kennett. "It's the first time I've ever seen a trooper's face longer than his horse's."

"A certain amount of resentment is natural, sir, but they'll come round."

"I hope so for Conger's sake—this being torn between two loyalties isn't any good." The colonel smiled as Dike approached him. He acknowledged the salute. "Ah, good-morning, captain."

"Good-morning, sir."

"We'll hold the official ceremonies in front of headquarters," stated the colonel. "Have I your permission to make a gesture which might lead to a better understanding between the men of the post and yourself?"

"Certainly, sir."

"I should like to exchange mounts with you."

"Delighted, sir. I will inform Sergeant Hennessy."

Though the men were rigid beside their horses they noted with mixed feelings the gesture of their colonel, and they understood what he was trying to tell them by this action. They saw Captain Conger and Sergeant Hennessy assist the colonel into the tank. Sergeant Hennessy followed, whilst a groom brought forward the colonel's horse for Captain Conger.

The next part of the ceremony was the assembly near the stables and a march towards headquarters for the installation ceremony. The tank would be in the lead.

Sergeant Harry Ross watched the action of his colonel with deep concern, and so far forgot his position to call out: "Don't, sir—don't—"

"Attention!" bellowed Captain Schuyler. "Get back into line!"

The tank proceeded for a short distance in orderly fashion, and then it shot forward with a roar. It hit a post and demolished it, swung round and went straight through a small wall, ploughed through a garden. It was completely out of control.

The wives and families of the officers and many friends had come to witness the installation, and they gasped with horror. The tank charged a shed, and some men on duty there had just time to get to safety as it smashed the wooden structure to matchwood. Completely out of control, the tank smashed through one of the walls of the fort. On this side of Fort Lawson there was a steep cliff that ran down to a river, which, like the Grand Canyon, had eaten its way through the land to a considerable depth. Over and over the tank rolled to crash into some boulders just short of the water.

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Julie had run to her car and drove furiously out of the fort along the road that wound down to the river.

Captain Schuyler shouted an order to an officer to take charge of his squadron and galloped his horse through the breach in the walls, and slid his mount down the cliff.

The turret cover had not been shut down, and near the now silent tank he found the body of Sergeant Three Star Hennessy. The man was obviously dying—blood was running from a terrible gash in his forehead. His eyes stared up eagerly at the captain, and he croaked out two words:

"Harry—Ross—"

In spite of the fact that he was not an expert rider, Dike was about the next person to arrive, and then most of the regiment showed up. The officers had rushed to see what had happened and the men had followed. Of course, safety-belts had not been worn, but they found that Colonel Armstrong had one under his body. Three Star, thinking only of the colonel's safety, had tried to strap the superior officer to his seat but had failed. The bodies had been flung about inside the tank—the colonel had nearly every bone in his body broken.

They laid the body on the ground, and everyone stood back as Julie appeared and took the limp hand in her own warm grasp. Captain Conger knelt by her side and tried to comfort her.

"Don't touch me!" she cried hoarsely.

"Don't touch me!"

Three days later Colonel Armstrong and Three Star Hennessy were buried with full military honours. And after the ceremony authority came from the department of the Secretary of War at Washington that Captain Dike Conger was under arrest pending his trial by court-martial. He would remain in his quarters.

Schuyler Calls a Witness

THE charge against Captain Conger was that of causing the death of the colonel and Three Star through gross negligence in the care and inspection of the tank. Major Kennett was appointed judge advocate of the court-martial, whilst Bob Marvin was detailed to the defence of the prisoner. The chairman of the proceedings was General Matthews.

After a week under arrest the court-martial was convened at Regimental Headquarters. All officers were present. The general, the judge advocate, Captain Bradley and two officers from Washington composed the bench. The first witness called was Major Thorndike, staff tank expert.

"A cursory inspection would have shown that the clutch controls were in a very dangerous condition," was his report.

"Then you absolutely attribute the cause of death to negligent maintenance?"

"I regret to say, sir, I must draw that conclusion."

Captain Marvin made an objection to this statement, which in his opinion carried sufficient weight to affect the entire case. The Court must not forget that the career of a fine soldier was at stake. The objection was sustained.

Sergeant Harry Ross was called to the stand, and took the oath to speak the truth and nothing but the truth.

"You are in charge of the stables where the tank is kept?"

"Yes, sir."

The judge advocate walked up to the stand, showed him a document.

"Is that the maintenance record

covering the comings, goings and inspections of the tank?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did Captain Conger sign an inspection okay on the morning of the accident?"

"He did, sir."

"Your witness, Captain Marvin." The judge advocate signified that he was finished for the moment.

"Did you see Captain Conger or Sergeant Hennessy inspect the tank that morning?"

"I wouldn't know about that, sir. About an hour before the accident Captain Conger and Sergeant Hennessy came up to the tank. The captain was looking kinda white round the gills—"

"We're not interested in your opinion of Captain Conger's appearance," harshly interrupted Captain Marvin. "Continue with your evidence."

"Sorry, sir." Ross grinned unpleasantly. "I handed the captain the maintenance records just like I always done, and he signed 'em."

"Did you notice whether he went through an inspection?"

"I never noticed nothing about that tank, and I didn't care—" shouted the sergeant.

The witness was dismissed and Captain Conger called by the judge advocate.

"Captain Conger, is that your signature on the maintenance record?"

"It is."

"Do you wish to offer anything to contradict the testimony given?"

"No, sir."

"I must warn you—it is fairly conclusive," stated General Matthews.

"I am aware of that, sir," Dike answered frankly. "I would like, however, to clear the name of my deceased sergeant."

"Permission granted."

"Sergeant Hennessy's last act was to attempt to save Colonel Armstrong at the risk of his own life. It was proven by the fact that he made no effort to jump from the tank. He was always scrupulously careful with the equipment. Any fault that may have existed was solely mine."

"The record welcomes this tribute to an old soldier," answered the general. "The court directs that Sergeant Hennessy's bravery be recorded on his final papers to be sent to his family."

Soon afterwards the court closed for consideration of the verdict. Dike Conger was sent back under escort to his quarters.

Meanwhile, Julie was packing to leave. She was going right away from everything in an attempt to forget. She had promised Leila Kennett that she would forget all about Dike Conger, and when she had got over her tragic loss she would be nicer to Captain Joe Schuyler than she had been in the past. Leila was helping her with the packing when Joe Schuyler came across to the house to say he had secured her tickets, and Leila discreetly left them alone.

But before Joe Schuyler could get in a word in his own cause Julie was gripping his arm with both hands and asking what was going to happen to Dike Conger. The tragic expression on the girl's face told Captain Schuyler more than words could have done. He told her as gently as possible that the verdict was now under consideration, and that it looked very grim for Captain Conger. Her distress affected him deeply, and after telling her that perhaps there was still a chance to save the captain left hurriedly.

When Leila fluttered back hoping to hear that Julie had at last

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"I AM THE LAW"

(Continued from page 12)

at a formidable automatic of blue steel. "What's this?"

"Well," said Jerry, "the next time you might not get a chance to disarm them."

He took out the gun with a gesture of repugnance.

"You know, this is the nearest I've ever been to one of these things," he commented. "How does it work?"

She showed him how to release the safety-catch.

"It's fully loaded," she said, "so all you have to do now is to take aim and pull the trigger."

Eddie Girard had crept up the stairs, in spite of the fact that the Irish terrier was at his heels. He needed no better guide than the thin line of light under the bed-room door, and abruptly he flung the door wide.

John saw him, framed in the opening, and he saw the gun in his hand.

"Look out!" he yelled, and in the same instant he pulled the trigger of the automatic.

Two shots rang out almost simultaneously, a bullet buried itself in the wall above John's head—and then Girard reached an open window and jumped clean out of it over the sill to a flower-border down below.

John rushed to the window with the automatic in his hand and peered round one of the curtains, and Jerry deserted her bed to crouch behind him. Girard had scrambled to his feet and was disappearing round a corner of the house.

"Got away!" gritted John. "Jerry, get Gleason on the 'phone—I'll need a couple of his rookies."

The Irish terrier leapt up at him as Jerry made for a telephone on the table between the beds.

"Habeas," said John sternly, "you're fired!"

In less than an hour, John and two brand-new police officers were in the living-room of Girard's flat, and Girard was scowling at them. He was wearing an extravagantly patterned dressing-gown over sky-blue pyjamas.

"You chums oughta know better than to bust in a guy's place without a warrant!" he stormed.

"Well," said John, "you'll have to excuse the boys. They were only recently sworn in, and they don't know the ropes yet."

"I guess you don't, either!" rasped Girard. "What's the pinch for?"

"Parking your car near a hydrant."

"Mister, my car's in the garage. Come on, what's the charge against me?"

"Mr. Lindsay," said one of the policemen. "I think this guy's got a gun on him."

"Well, take a look," directed John.

The highly decorated dressing-gown was ripped open, a shoulder-holster was disclosed beneath it, and from the holster a six-gun was extracted.

"Oh, carrying a gun without a licence," said John.

Girard retorted that he had a licence, and he went to a little desk and opened a drawer. John saw that his right-hand was bandaged.

"What's the matter with your hand?" he demanded. "I suppose you shot it while cleaning this gun?"

"Yeah, that's it," drawled Girard.

"What's the name of the doctor who treated your hand?"

"There wasn't any doctor. I fixed it myself."

"Oh," said John, "practising medicine without a licence, eh? Take him along, boys!"

Girard was taken off to gaol, and it was not until the following afternoon that Tom Ross knew anything of the arrest. John called upon him, then, and mentioned it.

Tom was full of professional indignation.

"You promised me an exclusive on everything, and now you say I can't print this!" he exploded. "When do we open up?"

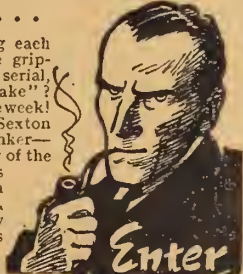
"When we close in," John replied. "My new staff is doing marvellous work, and we're accumulating plenty of evidence, but we're out for more. Now get away from that wailing wall—I've got work for you to do."

"Work? You've got most of my reporters working for you already!"

"Well, then, hire some more." John began to unroll a big plan he had brought with him. "Now Paul Ferguson has been checking up on Moss Kitchell. Kitchell's office is a mere front; he gets together with his boys at his apartment. They hold a meeting several days a week."

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"What's that?" asked Tom, as the plan was spread out over his desk and held down at the corners with a paper-knife, an inkpot, a paste-pot, and an ash-tray.

"Floor plan of two apartments," John replied. "Kitchell's and an unoccupied one that adjoins it. Now, look, the wall of this cupboard is the wall of Kitchell's living-room. I was just wondering if it were possible to plant a motion camera in that cupboard."

Tom's prominent blue eyes sparkled. "I get it," he said. "I'll assign one of my best burglars to plant the camera for you. Not only a camera, but a microphone, too! We'll not only see 'em, but we'll hear 'em!"

The best "burglar" was summoned—an expert photographer, named Austin, who had had experience of movie camera work—and John was introduced to him. The flat next-door to Kitchell's, on the top floor of a big apartment-house in Sheridan Avenue, was rented by one of Tom's nominees with all speed, and Tom and Austin paid a visit to it.

Before the day was out, the "burglar" had installed a microphone behind a statuette on a shelf in Kit-

chell's elegantly furnished living room, an inconspicuous hole had been made in the party wall, and a movie camera was in the cupboard.

"How does it look, Austin?" inquired Tom, when everything was complete.

"Swell," Austin declared. "I can pan all over the room and see everything. That skylight's just right for day-time, and the concealed lighting will be quite strong enough at night."

"That's fine," Tom rubbed his hands together. "Now I want someone here twenty-four hours a day."

"Well, but how about food?"

"Don't worry, I'll see that you get plenty of food. And all the film you get is to be turned over to Mr. Lindsay in person."

John Makes a Will

MONTHS passed, during which the rackets continued, and on the surface it appeared that nothing was being done to put an end to them. The people of Burlington held mass meetings at which the District Attorney and the Special Prosecutor were reviled, demonstrators paraded the streets; and finally a petition signed by thousands was delivered to the Governor of the State.

The Governor called John and Bert Berry before him at State House, and he did not mince matters.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the situation is becoming dangerous. If the people aren't protected by the law they'll take the law into their own hands. I must ask for your resignation."

Berry refused to resign his post as District Attorney, and John declared that he needed Berry's help more than ever at that moment.

"Mr. Lindsay," barked the Governor, "you've tried to do this job, but it's been too big for you. You've failed!"

"We haven't failed," asserted John. "We're all ready for the final push. We've tracked the racketeers down, every one of them. We know who they are and how they operate. We're ready to clean them out—if you'll only give us a little more time."

"How much time?" questioned the harassed Governor.

"Twenty-four hours," was the unexpected reply.

"All right, Lindsay, go to it."

Down in the hall of the building, the District Attorney spoke for the first time after leaving the Governor's room.

"John, that was a good bluff," he said glumly.

"But it wasn't a bluff," John informed him. "I do know who they are and just how they operate. I'm going to arrest every one of them! I want them all brought directly to my house—I don't want any of them booked, or taken to a police station."

Berry stared at him.

"But you can't pull people in without bringing charges against them and having some proof!" he expostulated.

"Are you going to help me round them up?"

"John, I've strung along with you all the way, but this is suicide! If you cause wholesale arrests and then can't back them up—well, we're not only washed up, but we're in line for criminal prosecution."

"I don't care," said John stubbornly. "I'm going to take that risk. It'll be a pleasure to rot in gaol, if I can drag a few of the swine in with me!"

The District Attorney yielded; and precisely at noon a concerted drive began which continued throughout the day. All over the city gangsters and gunmen were arrested, informed that they were to be Mr. Lindsay's guests, February 11th, 1939.

not his prisoners, and were taken to John's house.

There they were handed over to John's staff, but policemen helped to guard them, and as the day wore on the kitchen became full of loan sharks, the sitting-room crowded with members of the other rackets. Tom Ross was early on the scene with reporters and photographers, and Tom rejoiced at the prospect of a sensational scoop.

Towards evening, Paul was dealing with some fresh captives when Jerry told him that he was wanted on the telephone, and he spoke into the instrument on the desk at which she had been helping to check off the names of the latest batch of crooks.

"Paul Ferguson?" said a voice in his ear. "This is Moss Kitchell. I know there's an order to pull me in, but if I'm pinched you'll be the one that will suffer most. If you want to know why, come round to my apartment and I'll tell you."

"I'll be there in ten minutes," said Paul.

Several squad cars were parked in the roadway beyond the garden of the house, and in one of them he was driven to Sheridan Avenue. A lift conveyed him to the top floor, and he sped to the flat; but there was no response to his ringing of the door-bell, and as the front door was not shut he ventured into the flat, after a while, crossed the hallway to a curtained arch, and looked into the living-room.

Three shallow stairs led down into the living-room, and at the foot of them Moss Kitchell lay dead upon his back, his arms flung wide, and it looked as though a six-gun on the carpet had fallen from his right hand.

Paul was stooping beside the body when a telephone-bell began to ring. He looked at the instrument, which was on a low table, hesitated for nearly half a minute, then took out a handkerchief and with it held the receiver to his ear.

"Yes?" he said in a voice utterly unlike his normal voice.

"Hallo, Moss," responded the voice of his own father. "You don't have to worry about Lindsay. As I told you, no matter what he has on you, he'll never have a chance to use it. I'm taking care of that to-night, and after Lindsay's out of the way I'll see to it that Paul leaves town."

Horror was stark in Paul's brown eyes as he dropped the telephone back on its plunger. He stood there, trying to realise what it all meant, till the telephone-bell began to ring again. Then, slowly, he put the handkerchief back in his pocket and went up the stairs and out from the flat.

In less than a quarter of an hour he was back at the house and in John's study, wild-eyed and almost hysterical.

"It was fixed to look like suicide," he blurted, "but it wasn't! Kitchell was killed because somebody knew I was coming to see him! He was killed because he was going to tell me something! That's why Cronin was killed! That's why my father didn't want me to work for you! That's why you wouldn't let me look at those Acme books—you wanted to protect me! You said this was a war. All right, everybody gets hurt in a war."

John grabbed him just as he was making for the door that opened into the crowded sitting-room.

"Wait a minute!" he urged. "Where are you going?"

"Tom Ross is in there," Paul replied hoarsely. "I'm going to tell the world how my father's mixed up in this thing—how he's posed as a civic-minded citizen, when all the time he's been double-crossing me and the rest of the February 11th, 1939.

people! My own father the head of this slimy outfit! I'll give Ross a story! I'll—"

"Wait!" John held on to him. "I'm still in charge of this job. If you're working for me, you're going to take orders from me. You've got to trust me, Paul. You're not going to say a word about this to your father, or anybody else."

"You're wrong, John!" raged Paul. "I've got to get this out in the open!"

"Yes, yes, but not now," John insisted. "We're not ready for it yet. If those arrests we've caused to-day can be made to stick, yes. Otherwise it's we who'll be behind bars! Now go out there and work those hoodlums over—break them down!"

He was about to open the door when Austin dashed in upon them from the hall, a circular tin box in his hand and excitement in his eyes.

"Mr. Lindsay," he cried, "we've got it! It's just what we've been praying for! Why, to-day's film will blow the lid right off this town! And the record, too!"

"Well, let's run it," said John. "You get busy, Paul."

Paul went out into the sitting-room, where members of the staff were trying to bully the crooks into confession.

"What a story we're getting to-night, Paul," Tom Ross said exultingly to him.

"Yes," said Paul with fierce bitterness, "what a story!"

A man concerned in the plate-glass racket had just been marched into the hall from the porch and was shouting that he wanted a lawyer. Paul swept out to him.

"I'll get you a lawyer!" he roared. "The place is full of lawyers! Take him in there, Cranc, will you? I'm going to make those loan sharks talk!"

Jerry and a maid were dispensing sandwiches and cups of coffee, but Paul would neither eat nor drink. Jerry carried a tray to the study and set it down on the desk in front of John.

"Here's some coffee," she said; and then, as he looked up at her with a haggard face: "Why, what's the matter, John?"

"Sit down, Jerry, and take some dictation."

Wonderingly she took the book and the pencil he offered her, and she sat down at the desk.

"Go ahead," he said. "This is the last Will and Testament of Eugene Ferguson. I, Eugene Ferguson, being of sound mind and memory, and not acting under duress, menace, fraud, or undue influence of any person whatsoever, do make, publish, and declare—"

The dictation had only just been finished when Paul entered the room.

"That's all, Jerry," said John. "Get it out as quickly as possible."

She went out with the book and ascended to a bed-room which had been converted into an office.

"John," lamented Paul, "it's hopeless—we can't break them down. We've got to get those witnesses to identify them."

"Where are the witnesses?" asked John.

"They're in the patio—every man who refused to testify before the grand jury."

"Everyone except Butler," corrected John grimly.

The Pictures on the Screen

THE house was built in the Spanish style, round a central paved courtyard, and in the courtyard were the twenty-nine men who had refused to give evidence against their oppressors. John went out to them, and

he told them that he was glad to see them again.

"The last time I talked to you," he said, "you all had lockjaw. You refused to identify the racketeers who were robbing you and ruining your businesses. I'm giving you another chance now to prove that you're men who will stand up for your rights."

It seemed, at first, that he was going to be no more successful on this occasion than on the previous one, though he lashed them with his tongue and told them of the twenty-five young lawyers who had given up their careers just to help them.

A spectacled man named Higgins cried out that he was not ashamed to confess that he was afraid.

"I'm a peaceful man," he declared. "Violence terrifies me. I'd rather pay than be beaten up."

"There's nothing to be afraid of," John assured them. "We have the head man, and Moss Kitchell—his assistant—was killed to-night. We can't let any of them slip through our fingers. They're all in there. I know they're guilty, but I need your help to prove it. All I want you to do is to identify them. Now will you help me?"

He won them over in the end, and he led them to an open french window of the sitting-room. Inspector Gleason and his officers marshalled the crooks in rows the whole length of the room while their victims waited, and then John said:

"Gleason, as these men are identified have them put in the dining-room." He turned to the waiting witnesses. "Gentlemen, I've turned my home into a rat-trap for your convenience. Now do any of these rodents look familiar to you?"

The twenty-nine moved slowly into the room and along the rows of crooks, scrutinising their faces, and almost immediately several of the crooks were identified. Higgins, the peaceful man whom violence terrified, pounced on an ugly fellow in a tweed suit.

"This one is in the poultry racket!" he cried. "He held me and hit me like this!"

He smashed a fist into the fellow's jaw, and would have struck him again and again, but John clung to him while flashlamps blazed and expired.

"Now take it easy, Mr. Higgins!" he enjoined.

After that it was not very long before all the hoodlums had been transferred to the dining-room and were in handcuffs.

At half-past eleven, Frankie Ballou alighted from a squad car outside the house, a vision of beauty in an evening gown and a white fur cloak. A young policeman took her arm and led her along the brick path to the porch, and two of Tom Ross' photographers took pictures of her and her escort.

John was waiting for her on the porch, and Tom was standing beside him.

"Good-evening, Miss Ballou," said the editor mockingly. "Statement for the Press?"

"Not to-night," she replied quite serenely. "How are you, Professor? What's going on here, a revolution?"

"Something like that," John replied. "The way they're bringing them in now, we'll have to get a football park for the overflow."

He escorted her to his study. "I must apologise for asking you to come here at such a late hour," he said.

"Sit down, Frankie."

"You said you wanted me to meet somebody," she reminded him, as she took the indicated chair.

"Yes," John pressed the button of an electric bell, and Ferguson was

brought in from the sitting-room by two young fellows who left him there. He was in evening clothes. "Miss Ballou, I want you to meet Mr. Eugene Ferguson."

Ferguson bowed as to a stranger; Frankie caught at her breath.

"Sit down, Gene," said John. "Oh, by the way, when I introduced you to Miss Ballou I neglected to tell you who she is. Among other things, she's the lady who killed Moss Kitchell."

Ferguson raised his brows. "It isn't polite to contradict," said the girl in a voice that was completely under control, "but according to the extras they're yelling on the streets, Moss Kitchell committed suicide."

"Yes, yes, of course," purred John, "but we know better, don't we?" "What did you want to see me about, John?" asked Ferguson stiffly.

"Oh, yes, we'd better get down to business," John wheeled a portable projector behind the desk, then crossed the room and unrolled a miniature screen upon the opposite wall. "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. I have some very interesting film which I'd like to show you. There, I think everything is in order."

He switched off the lights in the room and set the projector in action, and on to the screen came a picture of Moss Kitchell's living-room.

Frankie started violently as she saw herself in the room, looking at Kitchell, who was striding about it, and heard her own voice:

"Stop pacing, Moss. You make me nervous."

A bell rang, and Kitchell went out from the room, presently to return with Eugene Ferguson, who said:

"You know I don't like to come here. What's all the excitement, Moss?"

"You've heard about this round-up, haven't you?" asked Kitchell.

"What of it?" snapped Ferguson.

"They're not going to get me in it! I'm serving notice right now that I'm not holding the bag for anybody!"

"You won't have to," Ferguson retorted. "I don't care what Lindsay has got on Girard, he'll never be able to use it."

"You said that before," snorted Kitchell, "and he's still around. Even if you got Lindsay out of the way, what about your son? He probably knows as much as Lindsay does! Why didn't you get him out of there when I told you to? Are you going to knock him off, too? What kind of a rat is he?"

Ferguson gave one swift look at Frankie, and then he walked straight up the stairs and out from the picture.

"You shouldn't have said anything about Paul," Frankie said to Kitchell. "It's dynamite!"

"Well, maybe it's time to use a little dynamite," snarled Kitchell, and he went to the little table and began to dial a number on the telephone there.

"What are you going to do?" she cried.

"Call up Paul Ferguson. Hallo, I want to speak to Mr. Paul Ferguson, please."

"Cronin had the same idea," warned Frankie. "You know what happened to him."

Kitchell did not appear to hear her. "Paul Ferguson?" he said into the telephone. "This is Moss Kitchell. I know there's an order to pull me in, but if I'm pinched you'll be the one that will suffer most. If you want to know why, come round to my apartment and I'll tell you."

While he was talking, Frankie had taken a gun from her handbag, and he was in the act of replacing the telephone when she fired at his back, and he staggered and fell.

The real Frankie suppressed a scream in the dark; her pictured self dropped the gun on the floor, close to the dead man's right hand, then flitted up the stairs.

The screen became a blank, the room was flooded with light, and the projector was stopped. Frankie was ghastly beneath her make-up; Ferguson's hands were clenched.

"Frankie," said John gravely, "you're going to end up on the hot seat unless I get what I want."

"What do you want?" she asked tremblingly.

"I want you to write me a story—just the same as if you were still working for the Press. The story of your

life, beginning six years ago, when you left the paper and became involved in these rackets. Now if I like your story, there's a bonus in it for you."

"What's the bonus?" "Your life! Of course, you'll have to stand trial for the killing of Moss Kitchell, but I'll see to it that the District Attorney bears down easily. I'll guarantee to save you from the chair if you'll give me a signed story that will help bring convictions."

"H-how about him?" She looked miserably at Ferguson. "I won't write a line if it'll send him to the chair."

"I promise you it won't."

"You'll give him a break, too?"

"Yes, but not on your account. I'm thinking of somebody else."

"I know," she nodded; and then he opened the door of the now comparatively deserted sitting-room. "There's a typewriter in here and plenty of copy paper."

She looked questioningly at Ferguson.

"It's all right, kid," he nodded. "Go ahead."

Slowly she went out past John, and he closed the door and went and rolled up the miniature screen.

"The story she's writing in there is for to-morrow's paper?" questioned Ferguson.

"Well, that depends," John sat down on the arm of the chair Frankie had occupied. "You know, Gene, some of the best stories never get printed. I want to talk to you about Paul. He's a fine boy, Gene. He's on the threshold of great things. My leave of absence will be over soon, and I want to go back to my classes—I miss them. I'll be glad to have somebody like Paul take my place, so I'm going to arrange with Berry to let Paul handle all the prosecutions. He can be the next District Attorney. From then on he has only one handicap."

"Me?" murmured Ferguson.

"Yes—and your money. You know, you've got an awful lot of it, Gene—too much for Paul to inherit. Have you ever made a will?"

"No," Ferguson shook his head. "I've never got around to it."

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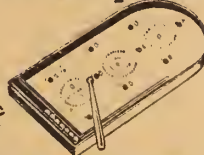
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February 11th, 1939.

"Well, I've made one out for you." John reached over to the desk and picked up the document Jerry had typed. "Read it!"

Ferguson blinked, but he took the document and began to read it.

"You'll see," said John, "that you've left only a fraction of your estate to Paul."

"What's this?" exclaimed Ferguson. "A trust fund for a family of the name of Butler?"

"Yes, I don't know whether you remember him or not, but he was one of my witnesses. He was killed before he could testify, but I suppose he, more than anybody else, was responsible for the success of this investigation. He left a wife and a couple of kids. I've been sending them money, but I think a trust fund would be more proper, don't you? The rest of the estate will go to a fund to carry on the work of this investigation. I can think of no better use to which your money could be put."

"This will," said Ferguson, "is dated a month ago."

"Yes, I dictated it to-night, but I dated it back. It'll look better that way."

"I see I've appointed you executor." "Would you rather have somebody else?"

Ferguson looked up, and their eyes met.

"No, I think not," he said. "I'll arrange about witnesses later." John held out a fountain-pen. "I think you'd better sign it now."

"You talk as though I were going to die pretty soon."

"We all die pretty soon." The pen was still extended.

"Yes, we do." Ferguson took the pen, and with a perfectly steady hand he signed the will at the desk. The pen was returned to its owner and he rose.

"Well, there are some things I'd like to attend to before the fun begins," he said. "I'll be around when you want me—the way you'd want me."

"I'll trust you to do the right thing," John assured him.

He put on his hat and a scarf, and he moved towards the door; but at the door he turned.

"It's getting pretty late," he said, "and I sent my chauffeur back. I wonder if you'd let me borrow your car?"

"Why, yes, certainly," responded John. "Here are the keys."

Ferguson took the proffered keys. "I hope Frankie's story will prove helpful," he said, and with a sudden impulse offered his hand. "Good-night."

"Good-night," said John, and he gripped the hand.

"The End of It"

FERGUSON went out through the crowded hall into the garden and round the side of the house to an open garage where John's modest saloon was standing. He had lit a cigarette, and was getting in behind the wheel, when a newly arrived prisoner in the hall caught hold of Paul's arm.

"I've got to see Lindsay!" he blurted. "It's on the level, I tell you. They've got the finger on Lindsay, and all the cops in the world can't stop it!"

Paul rushed the fellow into the study. "John," he shouted, "this man says there's a plot to kill you before the night's over!"

"What?" John was incredulous. But the prisoner cried:

"It's true, Mr. Lindsay! I don't want no part of it. They rigged up your car with a bomb. It's set to go off the minute you touch the starter!"

February 11th, 1932.

"A bomb in my car?" gasped John.

At that moment the sound of a violent explosion reached their ears. Ferguson had stretched out a hand to the self-starter of the car, and he and the car were blown to pieces.

"That's it!" screamed the prisoner. "That's your car! Somebody's been killed! They'll blame me for this, but I didn't do it! Please, Mr. Lindsay, I tipped you off—gimme a break!"

Inspector Gleason burst into the room, and John bundled the fellow over to him.

"Take charge of this man," he said hoarsely. "I'll talk to him later."

Frankie dashed in from the sitting-room as Gleason swept his captive out into the hall.

"What was that?" she shrieked. "Somebody placed a bomb in Professor Lindsay's car," Paul replied.

John walked slowly over to him.

"Paul," he said, "it was your father. He just borrowed the keys to my car."

"You sent him out there to be killed!" accused Frankie, beside herself with grief. "You killed Eugene Ferguson!"

Paul was standing as though stunned. John looked from him to the half-crazed girl, and he said:

"I didn't know anything about the car. Not a thing! But he did, and he had courage enough to choose that way. He had to die some way—we both knew that. I left it to him. What could I do? Hound him to the chair? Put him in gaol for the rest of his life, and let Paul—"

He broke off and put a hand upon Paul's bowed shoulders.

"He did have courage, Paul," he said gently. "He just took the wrong direction. You'll keep on going, and you'll go a long way."

Paul squared his shoulders. "Thank you, Professor," he said bravely. "I've got work to do."

And he went out past Jerry, who had entered unnoticed.

Frankie drifted back to her task with tears streaming down her cheeks, and Jerry shivered.

"Oh, John, it's all so horrible!" she exclaimed.

John took her into his arms.

"It's all right, honey," he soothed. "This is the end of it."

On the first day of the new term at Burlington University, John walked arm-in-arm with Jerry across the campus to the College of Law, smoking a pipe and at peace with the world.

"The old school!" he said, with a wave of the hand, as they reached the foot of the wide stone steps. "You know, it's great to be back, Jerry."

"Yes," said she wryly, "after a nice, long, restful vacation. Yes, there's nothing like it!"

"Now don't you worry." He wagged a finger at her. "We'll have that second honeymoon yet. You just keep packed and ready. We're going!"

"Yes?" she doubted. "When?"

"Well, my next Sabbatical Year—"

"That's six years off—oh, John!"

"What's the matter?" he asked blankly. "Oh!"

He had put the pipe in his pocket, and the lining of the pocket was on fire.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Edward G. Robinson, with Barbara O'Neil, John Beal, Wendy Barrie, and Otto Kruger.)

Tell all your friends about the grand FREE gifts that are being given away next week—and order your copy early, otherwise you will be disappointed.

"THE LAST OF THE CAVALRY"

(Continued from page 22)

said "Yes" to Joe Schuyler she found an empty room. The colonel's daughter had left her packing to say good-bye to Dike, whom she knew she loved in spite of everything.

Captain Schuyler appeared in the court-room just as General Matthews was about to announce the verdict. The prisoner held himself very erect. He had said good-bye to Julie, but he felt he could face an unkind world and its criticisms knowing that she still loved him.

Then, to everybody's surprise, Captain Schuyler strode forward and asked permission of the court to produce some new evidence that had a great bearing on the case. The general said it was most irregular, but gave him permission to proceed. Captain Schuyler asked that Sergeant Harry Ross be recalled to the witness stand.

There was now a tense air in the hushed room as the sergeant, looking worried and perplexed, took the stand.

"Sergeant Ross, how long have you served the cavalry?"

"Fourteen years, sir."

Captain Schuyler then proceeded by questions to obtain the information that Sergeant Ross had been with four cavalry units to which the tank, under the charge of Captain Conger and Sergeant Hennessy, had been posted.

He asked for these transfers because he had a personal dislike of the motorized unit and a grudge against Sergeant Hennessy. Ross admitted that Three Star was always ribbing him, and that once they had had a fight. On parade Sergeant Ross had attempted to speak to Colonel Armstrong, and the reason was because he feared for the colonel's life if he entered the tank.

Captain Schuyler faced the general.

"I accuse Sergeant Ross of tampering with the tank controls," he stated clearly. "And being primarily responsible for the deaths of Colonel Armstrong and Sergeant Hennessy."

Captain Schuyler went on to inform the court that when Three Star had died in his arms he had mentioned two words—the name of Harry Ross. He had been to the quarters of Sergeant Ross and found a steel saw. There were markings on it that were exactly like those made on the connecting rod.

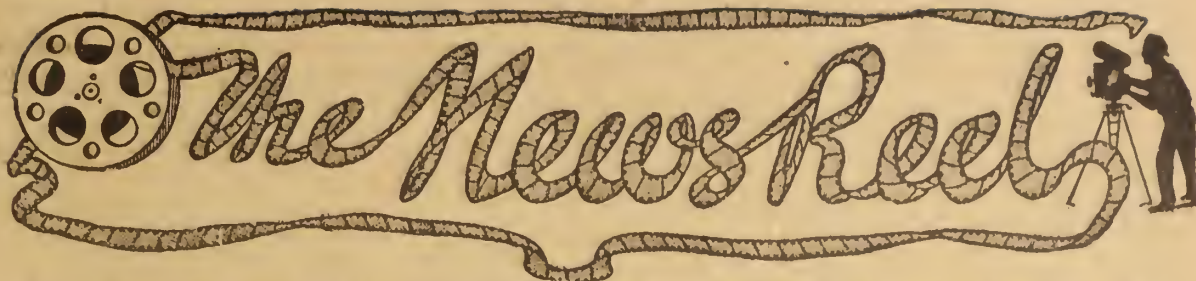
Sergeant Ross broke down and confessed. He had not meant to kill anyone, but just to damage the tank so that it would be discredited and the cavalry saved from extinction.

General Matthews ordered the sergeant to be taken to the guard house, and brought in a verdict there and then of "Not guilty of negligence" against Captain Dike Conger.

The general did consider taking action against Captain Schuyler for not coming forward before, but he agreed after a consultation with Major Kennett that the best thing would be a transfer of Captain Schuyler to another unit.

And when Captain Conger went into an ante-room he found Julie Armstrong waiting for him. She held out her arms to him.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Madge Evans as Julie Armstrong, Preston Foster as Dike Conger and James Gleason as Three Star Hennessy.)



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 194, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Chester Morris Teaching Vic McLaglen to be a Magician

McLaglen and Morris, Magicians Extraordinary.

That will be the calling card of film stars Victor McLaglen and Chester Morris, if plans being formulated now materialise as expected.

Morris is a magician of considerable fame, having just recently returned from a two-month theatrical tour of America, performing amazing feats of legerdemain. His interest in the "magic" art is such that even on the set of his current picture, "Pacific Liner," he thrills the cast with remarkable exhibitions of his skill.

McLaglen became so enthused when he discovered he could perform certain bits of magic that he asked Morris if the latter would act as his instructor. Morris agreed, and progress has been so rapid, according to Chester, that McLaglen is now qualified to mystify any audience.

Right Man, Wrong Film

- John Carradine is one busy villain. He often works in as many as three pictures simultaneously and keeps his dates with movie companies in a small notebook so that he can keep his hectic schedule straight. In three years he has never got an appointment twisted up.

A few days ago, though, he reported promptly at 9 o'clock on Stage 6 at 20th Century-Fox, as per instructions from the casting office.

Director Allan Dwan spotted him from a distance and shouted that the company was ready to shoot. Carradine hurried on the set, and gasped when he met Miles Mander dressed as Cardinal Richelieu and Gloria Stuart as Queen Anne.

"Where in the world did you get that costume?" asked Dwan.

Carradine looked nonplussed. "I guess I made a slight mistake," he said. "I thought I was to kill Jesse James to-day."

"No," said Dwan, "you're to kiss the Cardinal's hand and choke Gloria Stuart. This is the 'Three Musketeers' set, not 'Jesse James.'"

Carradine did a quick change of clothing and expressions, and proceeded to choke the beautiful Miss Stuart. He killed Jesse James on the following day.

Names May Hurt

If you were named Jonathan Appletwitch how would you like it if you went to a cinema and saw a despicable character named Jonathan Appletwitch leering at you from the screen?

You would not like it at all. And neither would the company that made the picture. Because at any time you, as Mr. Appletwitch, might work up such a resentment that you would sue the studio, and would stand a good chance of getting substantial damages.

That's the reason, nowadays, why so many pictures are preceded by the announcement:

"The events and characters depicted in this photoplay are entirely fictional, and any similarity with actual persons, either living or dead, is not intentional, but purely coincidental."

The studios hope, with this, that anyone who might be inclined to resentment over a similarity of names to their own, will realise it is all in good fun, and that certainly nothing personal was intended.

For the most, nobody is inclined to resent a duplication of names when the picture which employs it is just out-and-out fiction. It's the movies with historical basis or background, or woven around contemporary facts that cause producers to get the jitters.

In the former category is Samuel Goldwyn's latest film, "The Cowboy and the Lady." About the only fact involved in this presentation is that there are cowboys, and there are ladies. But instead of having his research department spend weeks thumbing telephone directories so as to develop a spurious name, he simply called Gary Cooper, the Cowboy, "Stretch," and Merle Oberon, the Lady, "Mary Smith." Mr. Goldwyn is of the theory that there are so many real Mary Smiths that any one of them would have some difficulty proving that she was the Mary Smith referred to.

Ever since a company was successfully sued for an enormous sum because a character still alive was represented on the screen, the studios have been very shy of anything smacking of history for their films.

Even though a person is not labelled in a screen play he can still make things difficult for the film company. The person may charge invasion of privacy or embarrassment, and if he can prove either of these it makes no difference that the producer did it unwittingly.

Having exercised all the precautions that are now part of the regular studio routine, Goldwyn does not anticipate any trouble with "The Cowboy and the Lady"—unless all the Mary Smith's of the world unite.

"He's Just Bing"

The old adage that a "prophet is not without honour save in his own country" is either true in Hollywood or else it applies in one particular case.

That particular case is Bing Crosby, who is in the news just now for two reasons. Firstly, "Sing You Sinners," the film in which he co-stars with Fred MacMurray, was generally released, and secondly, his latest Paramount picture, "Paris Honeymoon," had its West End premiere at the same time.

In Hollywood an aura of glamour surrounds such stars as Claudette Colbert, Carole Lombard, Gary Cooper, etc., because they are stars.

But Bing Crosby serenely goes his placid way. Few people in Hollywood realise that Crosby, at the box-office, ranks high among the top ten stars of Hollywood. About the only people who fully appreciate it are studio executives and producers who cast covetous eyes at the receipts of the latest Crosby picture and indulge in a mad scramble for his services.

Crosby's contract with Paramount provides that he has the right to make one picture a year for any other studio or independent producer he may choose. So great is his value as a box-office lure that every studio competes for that extra picture.

But to newspapermen, sportsmen, fellow actors and other Hollywoodites, a mention of Bing as a star is almost an afterthought.

"He's just Bing," is the general attitude.

Bing himself insists that any story is more important to the public than the actors portraying that story on the screen. Because of this, it was several years before Paramount could get him to include in his contract a provision whereby the studio could give him star billing—that is, to announce his name above the title of a picture.

When Crosby finally consented to such a clause, he inserted the proviso that such billing could only be given with his express permission. Now the studio finds it is as hard to get the permission as it was to get the clause into the contract!

So in Hollywood Crosby is accepted as an easy-going, friendly, sports-loving chap with a penchant for wearing old clothes and letting his beard grow if he feels like it. He would much rather watch one of his racehorses work out than attend a business conference involving a million pounds.

This "can't be bothered" attitude of Crosby has won him the reputation in Hollywood of being lazy. The reputation is not deserved. There are few actors—not excepting stars—who work harder than Crosby.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"I AM THE LAW"

- John Lindsay Edward G. Robinson
- Jerry Lindsay... Barbara O'Neill
- Paul Ferguson..... John Beal
- Frankie Ballou..... Wendy Barrie
- Eugene Ferguson..... Otto Kruger
- Tom Ross..... Arthur Loft
- Eddie Girard..... Marc Lawrence
- District Attorney Berry Douglas Wood
- Mass Kitchell..... Robert Middlemass
- Inspector Gleason..... Ivan Miller
- George Leander..... Charles Halton
- J. W. Butler..... Louis Jean Heydt
- Mrs. Butler..... Pay Helm

"THE LAST OF THE CAVALRY"

- Captain Dike Conger.. Preston Foster
- Julie Armstrong..... Madge Evans
- Sergeant "Three Star" Hennessy..... James Gleason
- Colonel Armstrong... H. B. Warner
- Leila Kennett..... Ruth Donnelly
- Captain Joe Schuyler.. Neil Hamilton
- Cantina Pete..... Billy Gilbert
- Major Kennett..... Ralph Morgan
- Captain Bob Marvin..... Ralph Byrd
- Sergeant Harry Ross Guinn Williams

One day a week is spent in making gramophone records. He has his radio programme, which means editing material, rehearsing, and a lot of other work. He has his film work. And to crown everything, he is the head of several business enterprises, ranging from hotels and flats to gold mines and managing actors, singers and prize fighters.

Despite his high rank as a motion picture player, Crosby is honestly convinced he is "just another guy" on the screen. When the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences asked Crosby to present one of its major trophies at its annual banquet—the recipient was to be a close friend of the crooner—Crosby said:

"I can't do that. I appreciate the request, but it ought to go to someone who has some real standing on the screen."

And he named several stars, and all of whom rated far below him as a box-office draw.

So in Hollywood, Crosby is "just Bing." But in all parts of the world the fans flock to the theatres to see the latest picture of this "groaner," as he is affectionately called by some of his intimate friends.

Amateur Rugby League Launched in Hollywood

Sponsored by Victor McLaglen and supported by most of the English actors in Hollywood, a twelve-team amateur Rugby league composed of graduates of California colleges and universities will make its debut this month. Games will be played each Sunday at the McLaglen Stadium in Los Angeles.

The idea of the league, according to McLaglen, is to give football players an opportunity to continue playing as amateurs after they leave college.

Among the film stars who have promised their support to the league are Ronald Colman, Herbert Marshall, Errol Flynn, David Niven, and Lionel Barrymore, now teamed with McLaglen in "Song of the West," at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. McLaglen played Rugby as a youngster attending school in London.

Meek, But Not Mild

Although Meek by name, Donald Meek, the well-known Hollywood Character actor, is certainly not meek by nature.

Seven men in the Walter Wanger "Stagecoach" cast are nursing sore right hands because each thought Meek's muscles matched the type of roles he plays.

The bone bruising began when Thomas Mitchell challenged Meek to a hand-squeezing duel. After a few seconds, Mitchell's face reddened and suddenly his knees buckled. Bertou Churchill next tried Meek's grip and the result was similarly painful. Others, being half sceptical and half curious tried to "out-grip" the smallest member of the cast and walked away chagrined and flexing their bruised fingers.

When it was over, Meek explained that early in his career he had been an

acrobat and had learned the trick of applying pressure at the points where another's muscles couldn't counteract it. Not even husky John Wayne or George Bancroft or 270 pound Andy Devine could free themselves from timid-looking Mr. Meek's iron grip.

Now the five-foot-six-inch actor, who invariably plays roles that match his name and appearance, is known to his studio associates as "Killer Meek."

"Son of Frankenstein"

Streamlined horror, 1939-model, stalks before the cameras at Universal Studios. It is "Son of Frankenstein," presenting three of the world's master horror personalities—Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. The thrilliest, chilliest, most terrorising cinema conception ever to spring from the brain of a scenarist is a sequel to the two former Universal shockers, which since their first presentation have been revived again and again with ever increasing success. "Frankenstein," made in 1931, and "The Bride of Frankenstein," which came to the screen in 1935.

The whole "Frankenstein" business

first started in 1816. Lord Byron, Polidori, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and his wife, Mary Shelley, agreed that each should try to write a ghost-story. They were spending the summer as neighbours in Switzerland and certain volumes of that class of literature, translated from the French and German, had fallen into their hands. Byron began a tale, a fragment of which was afterwards printed at the end of his "Mazeppa," and Shelley began one founded on his early life. Polidori's also, was never completed. Mrs. Shelley's endeavour alone saw the light, and in a shape that bids fair to live as one of the weirdest conceptions in our language.

"Frankenstein" proved fertile material for the screen. James Whale directed the film version with a cast which included Colin Clive, as the original Dr. Frankenstein, Mac Clark as his wife, Boris Karloff in his famous make-up as the Monster and John Boles in an important supporting rôle. James Whale also directed the successor, "The Bride of Frankenstein" with Colin Clive again as Henry Frankenstein and Boris Karloff once more spreading death, destruction and terror through the picture.

Valerie Hobson had the rôle of Frankenstein's wife, and Elsa Lanchester played one of her most famous rôles in the film as the bride of the monster.

The new "Son of Frankenstein" cast boasts, in addition to Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi such well-known screen personalities as Lionel Atwill, Josephine Hutchinson, Donnie Dunagan, Edgar Norton and Emma Dunne in its principal rôles. The locale is Hungary, and the time the present. Every art of the modern cinema has been used to create weird and wonderful horror effects never before seen on any screen. For instance, the sets are an integral part of the dramatic element of the story. Created by Jack Otterson, they are designed for their psychological effect upon the observer. Following no recognised architectural scheme, they present an array of planes and masses, disproportionate and eerie, contributing to the ominous air which hangs over the locale, the ancient castle of the Frankenstein. Lighting and photography will take advantage of every angle of these sets. Long and ghostly shadows will stalk across walls and floors and menace from high positions on the walls. Lightning will flash, thunder roar, and flesh-tingling screams will echo through cavernous halls and down tortuous underground passages.

The busiest man on the set is Jack Pierce, head make-up man of Universal studios. He it is whose imagination and artistry produced the original monster. He gets to the studio at 5 a.m., and for the ensuing four hours is busy applying the make-up to Boris Karloff—and he needs another hour in the evening to take the make-up off the monster-man. But it is Boris Karloff who bears the brunt, for the completed make-up and costume weighs him down with sixty-four unyielding pounds.

OVERSEAS PALS WIN PRIZES!

August "FOOTER-STAMPS" Result

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**SERGEANT
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BOYS'S CINEMA

EVERY
TUESDAY

2⁰

AUG. 5th 1939
NO 1025



Wallace
BEERY as

SERGEANT MADDEN

A stirring drama of a policeman-father and his crook son

SERGEANT MADDEN

Patrolman

IN whatever town or city your home may be, there is an unsung hero on your street to whom you owe your security, sometimes your very life. Yet seldom do you know his name. Seldom do you know him other than as "the cop on the beat."

This is the story of such a hero—a policeman who was destined to choose between love for his son and devotion to duty—a policeman who lived by the watchword of the New York Force, "Faithful Unto Death."

Shaun Madden was his name—Patrolman Shaun Madden, two hundred pounds of burly Irish-American, six feet and a half inch from the crown of his bullet head to the heels of his outsize boots—a man not blessed with a handsome countenance, but with a face that radiated geniality and kindness, and possessed of a heart that was proportionately as big as his hulking frame.

It was on a certain summer's day in the tenth year of his service as a member of the Force that Patrolman Madden attended a simple but impressive ceremony at the flower-bedecked grave of a friend and comrade who had answered to the name of Albert Boylan.

Present with Shaun Madden at that ceremony were his wife Mary, his twelve-year-old boy, Dennis, and the ten-year-old son of the late Patrolman Boylan. Also assembled there, and drawn up in ranks, were a considerable number of police officers, representative of the city's far-flung precincts, and close to the grave itself was the Commissioner of the Force, chief of the Department responsible for the maintenance of law and order in New York.

"We are here to-day," the Commissioner was saying solemnly, "to pay our final tribute to Albert Boylan, who died from gunshot wounds received in a riot at Battery Park. He died on duty—in the service of human safety. To this same service each man who wears a police shield is dedicated—by day, by night, through all emergencies and all weathers."

He ran his gaze over the faces of the stalwart officers who constituted the bulk of his listeners.

"God grant that none of you may ever be required to face death as Albert Boylan did," he added in a fervent tone. "But should you be—God grant you Albert Boylan's courage."

With that he moved towards the spot where the Maddens and the late Patrolman Boylan's little son were standing, and, leaning down, he addressed himself to the latter—a forlorn and diminutive little figure who had lost his mother some months before and who, orphaned now by the slaying of his father, was the picture of grief and misery.

"Albert Boylan, junior," the Commissioner murmured, producing a gleaming medal, "you are the late Patrolman Boylan's only living kin, and, in recognition of your father's courage in the face of death, I hereby award him, posthumously, the highest honour that can be bestowed by the city he served."

August 5th, 1939.



Wallace Beery as
Sergeant Madden

The medal was pinned on the boy's coat, and the youngster, eyeing it tearfully, yet with pride, when Shaun Madden lifted him fondly in his arms and held him close to his barrel chest. Then the Commissioner bent a glance on the big Irish-American cop.

"Patrolman Madden," he said, "if you'll bring the lad to my office after the ceremony, I'll arrange for payment of his father's pension money and see that he's entered into a suitable institution."

Shaun Madden shuffled his large feet awkwardly.

"If ye don't mind, sir," he proposed in a deep-toned, husky voice wherein the brogue of the "Ould Country" was still detectable, "if ye don't mind, sir, Mary an' me—that is, me, wife an' me—we'd like to keep the little fellow."

"To adopt him, sir—if we may," interposed Mary Madden, a pretty little woman with an expression of infinite sweetness on her pink-and-white features.

The Commissioner looked at the two of them approvingly, appreciatively.

"Bless you both," he said.

Thus it was that little Al Boylan took up his abode with the Maddens in their humble Brooklyn home, and he had been "one of the family" for about six months when one rainy evening his adopted father came in off his beat with a bundle hidden under his waterproof cape.

Shaun Madden's son Dennis and young Al were not in the house when the beefy patrolman put in an appearance. They were out playing together somewhere or other, having become inseparable, bosom companions. As for Mrs. Madden, she was in the living-room laying the table for supper, and looked round in mild reproach as Shaun's soaking-wet police cap dropped on the table, having been pitched thither by the incoming officer of the Law.

"Shaun Madden," she protested,

"how many times must I tell you not to throw your hat on the table? With a couple of boys to look after, I've got enough to do without going around picking up things that you—"

She stopped, noting the bulge of the object that was hidden under his cape, and a suspicious frown gathered on her forehead.

"Shaun, what's that you've got there?" she demanded, knowing how soft-hearted he was. "If it's one of those stray animals you're always finding on your beat and bringing in here, filthy with fleas—I'll—"

Shaun did not let her finish. Throwing open his cape, he revealed that self-same object which the waterproof garment had concealed, and Mary Madden at once perceived that it was no stray animal, but an infant child that was smuggling comfortably in the crook of her husband's left arm.

Mary Madden gave vent to an exclamation and hurried across to him, her expression becoming tender as she peeped at that small bundle of humanity.

"Oh, Shaun!" she said pityingly. "Someone left it deserted at your post."

The patrolman nodded. His ugly but likeable face was illuminated by a look of benign compassion.

"Yes, Mary," he answered. "Some poor soul that had come to the end of her tether. She left a note in the basket where the little darlin' was lyin'. 'I cannot buy food. I yield my child to the kindness of man and the mercy of God.' That was what the note said, Mary. And I—I was thinkin', Mary—couldn't we just keep the little creature? I took it to the station house, intendin' to turn it over to the matron there, but I got to thinkin' that 'twas always four boys an' two girls that we wanted—and this hein' a girl, Mary—well, that makes half the family, you know."

"Shaun, are you crazy?" his wife expostulated. "What are we doing here—running an orphans' home?"

Shaun Madden assumed a mournful and regretful air.

"Well," he reflected sadly, "I can—I can take it back so it'll go to the Foundling Home, of course—where it won't have the love of any parents or anything like that. Mind ye, I'm not sayin' anything agin the Foundling Home. 'Tis a fine institution. But at Christmas time, for instance, the little ones there don't have much of a celebration. Nobody brings them any toys or anything, ye know, and—"

He knew how to play upon the heart-strings of his wife and arouse in her the same sentimental emotions to which he himself was so prone.

"Oh, now don't say I'd be condemnin' the child to a Christmas like that," Mary Madden interrupted in a pained voice.

"Well, I wouldn't say 'condemnin', Mary," he rejoined, a beam spreading across his features. "But the child would be happy with us—"

Again he was cut short—not by his wife this time, but by an urgent knock-

ing on the front door of the house—and as he opened that door a young woman stumbled across the threshold, a poorly-dressed but respectable-looking young woman whose pallid face wore an expression of mingled desperation and distress.

"Let me see my baby!" she cried wildly. "Let me see my baby!"

She reached for the infant that Shaun was holding, but the burly Irishman recoiled.

"Your baby?" he reiterated. "What do ye mean?"

"Ye watched you pick her up," the woman jerked out, and now he noticed that her accent was as reminiscent of the Emerald Isle as his own. "Then I followed you."

"Ye did?" he countered. "And why—after you desertin' it? How do I know it's your baby, anyway? Listen to me, woman. There was a note pinned to her little woollen jacket here. Now you tell me just what was written on that note, and then I'll be after believin' she's yours."

The woman swiftly quoted the contents of the missive to which he had referred.

"I cannot buy food. I yield my child to the kindness of man and the mercy of God." That's what I wrote.

"They are the identical words," Shaun muttered. "She is yours, sure enough. But have ye no heart, woman—deserting a little baby like this?"

"I looked for a job," the woman responded hopelessly. "But no luck. And her father's dead."

Mary Madden came forward.

"Have you no folks?" she asked the mother of the child.

"Yes—an uncle in Ireland," was the reply. "I tried to beg the ninety dollars to get myself on a boat with my little Eileen and go back to the Old Country. My uncle is poor, but he has a roof for us if nothing else. And maybe I could find work in Ireland when I get stronger. I—I—"

Her voice failed her, and suddenly she swayed forward—would have fallen to the floor if Shaun had not caught her with his right arm.

"Mary," he ejaculated to his wife in a tone of concern, "Mary, help me to get her to bed in the spare room. The woman's ill. Like enough she's been without food for days. And us keepin' her standin' here talkin'. Here, take the child, Mary, and I'll carry the little one's mother through."

A few seconds later the woman had been laid on the bed in the spare room and her baby placed beside her. Then, leaving his wife to make the exhausted stranger comfortable, Shaun Madden returned to the living-room to set some food on a tray.

It was not only food that he set on that tray, however. When Mary Madden presently rejoined him she found ninety dollars in U.S. currency notes stuffed in a sugar bowl which Shaun had placed on the tray—notes he had impulsively taken from a little store of savings he and his wife kept in the house.

"Shaun!" Mary Madden breathed.

"Aw, Mary," he said apologetically, "it's the price of a ticket to Ireland for the lady and the little one. I know it's most of our savin's. But we can spare it, can't we?"

His wife was silent for a moment. Then she slipped an arm about his broad shoulders.

"Why not?" she answered with a smile. "You've a safe, sure job, and 'tis promotion you'll be getting sooner or later. And if we were saving this money for a rainy day—well, it's just pouring down rain for little Eileen and Mrs. Daly—for that's the fine-sounding

Irish name of the poor soul, Shaun. Mrs. Daly is the name of her, she says."

Without another word she picked up the tray and retraced her steps to the spare room with it, and it was shortly after she had passed into that room and closed the door behind her that young Dennis Madden and the diminutive Al Boylan came into the house.

They were not alone. They were accompanied by another youngster who was sporting a black eye—and by a formidable-looking woman of wrathful aspect.

The woman was a Mrs. McGillivray, a neighbour of the Maddens; the lad with the black eye was her son Diou; and Mrs. McGillivray confronted Shaun indignantly.

"Mr. Madden," she announced, "I wonder you can hold your head up with this boy Dennis of yours almost killin' others, and Albert Boylan here helpin' him in the work."

Shaun drew down his brows and eyed Dennis and Al severely, observing as he did so that both of them were equipped with toy pistols.

"What's this ye've been up to?" he demanded.

It was Dennis who responded. Tall for his years, black of hair, with blue-grey eyes that held a wilful expression and a chin that had an obstinate and belligerent thrust to it, Dennis Madden was a constant source of worry to his father because of his unruliness, which sometimes bordered on ferocity.

"We was playin' cops an' robbers," the policeman's son proclaimed hotly. "An' do you know what that rat Dion did? He tried to kill little Al—one o' my cops! When Al fought back, Dion got his rod away an' tried to hammer him on the head with it, so I moved in and gave Dion the works!"

"Two to one," Mrs. McGillivray put in scornfully. "Two to one, Mr. Madden. And Dennis there two years older than Dion and half as big again—yes, and the bully of ev'ry boy in the block!"

Shaun was prompt to come to a decision and mete out justice. Despite protests on their part, Dennis and Al were compelled to bend over and touch their toes; and without being permitted to return the "compliment," each received a lusty kick in the seat of the pants from the foot of the scion of the clan McGillivray, after which that youngster and his mother departed in a more or less satisfied manner.

Mary Madden reappearing in the living-room a little while later, Shaun told her of the complaint that had been lodged against Dennis and Al. Then, the four of them sitting down to supper and Dennis behaving in a truculent fashion, Shaun ordered him to leave the table half-way through the meal.

"'Tis off to bed ye can go," he declared, "without eatin' the fine custard your mother has made for ye. And see that ye don't make too much noise gettin' up in the mornin', for we've guests in the house this night, and I don't want them scared out of their wits by your carryings-on. Albert, you can stay and have your custard."

But Al had risen immediately after Dennis had slid sullenly off his chair.

"I'm not hungry any more, Pop," he said meekly, yet with a kind of quiet resolution, and, as Dennis went off to his bed-room, so little Al retired to his.

Shaun and Mary Madden exchanged a glance.

"Albert just worships our Dennis," Mary observed in a meditative tone. "He wanted that custard badly, but he denied himself out of some queer sense of loyalty. Have you noticed, too, how he imitates Dennis in everything he does?"

"Yes," Shaun grunted, "and I don't know that Dennis is a very good example, either."

A frown wrinkled Mrs. Madden's forehead.

"Dennis isn't really a bad boy, of course," she said in a voice that challenged argument on that score. "But he's so impetuous and quick-tempered that there are times when I feel uneasy about him. He does things without thinking—whether he hurts himself or others."

"He does that," Shaun assented. "But don't you be worryin', Mary. He's got a great training ahead of him. He'll learn his discipline in a Police Academy. They've taken many an ill-tempered young loafer and made a man out of him."

He heaved himself out of his chair all at once, and made his way to his son's bed-room, and, finding the boy already in his pyjamas, but not yet between the sheets, he sat down on the edge of the bed and lifted Dennis on to his knee.

"So 'tis cops and robbers ye've been playin' to-day, is it?" the patrolman said, with no trace of his former austerity. "Well, me boy, playin' at cops is a fine game. 'Tis something you'll be proud to be playin' all your life."

"But since ye're startin' in kind of young," he added, "why, I think that probably I'd better give ye some of the rules of the game."

Dennis partially stifled a yawn—not a yawn of mere drowsiness, but a yawn that implied disinterest. He knew what his father was going to say. He had heard it all before.

"Now there's all kinds of cops," Patrolman Madden proceeded. "There's wild cops—and there's tame cops—and there's cops that are all stomach and no brains. But mostly all of 'em are good cops."

Perched on his father's knee, Dennis began to swing one leg.

"Sure, mostly all of 'em are good cops," Shaun Madden repeated. "And here's the first rule of the game that every cop has to master if he wants to be a good one. He must learn to hold his temper—always."

Dennis continued to swing his leg, in a style that indicated he found the topic of conversation wearisome.

The New Cop

THE years had passed, and, grown to handsome, self-assured manhood, Dennis Madden was still listening to advice on how to become a good policeman—and was still swinging his leg in a bored fashion as he listened.

The scene was a lecture room in the New York Police Academy, and six-foot-three-inch Dennis Madden was one of a class of students who were being addressed by an officer known as Lieutenant Niles.

"One of the most important things a probationary patrolman must learn in this academy," Niles was saying, "is how to enforce the law. A policeman's mission is to find the suspected criminal and arrest him. Nine out of every ten men in prison are there because another thief talked to a police officer. Making friends on your beat is very important. A successful policeman is wary, shrewd—above all, friendly—"

He paused. The session was almost at an end, and Niles had been employing the last few minutes of it to deliver a homily which was likely to profit the students if they bore it in mind after they had ultimately graduated.

Most of the young men in the class were hanging on his every word. Niles had noticed, however, that Dennis Madden was paying little or no attention. The latter was reclining in his chair with an expression of ironic

tedium on his good-looking face, an expression which the lieutenant had seen there on many occasions since Dennis had entered the police college, and which never failed to nettles the officer.

"The class is dismissed," Niles suddenly snapped out with an abruptness that took the students by surprise. "But you, Madden, will stay here and copy five pages of rules and regulations."

Dennis Madden stared at him.

"Why, sir?"

"Because you haven't been listening to a word I've said," was the curt reply.

Young Madden's temper, so noticeable in him when he had been a boy, revealed itself in a flicker that appeared momentarily in his eyes. When he spoke his voice carried a hint of that temper, and a touch of impudence as well.

"Why should I listen?" he retorted. "I've heard it all before."

"Fifteen pages" Niles announced tersely.

"Lieutenant Niles," Dennis Madden said, suppressing his ire, "my father and adopted brother are waiting for me downstairs. We've got to meet someone coming in on a boat. Can I copy the fifteen pages to-morrow?"

"You can not!"

The other students were filing out. Gritting his teeth Dennis turned to one of them.

"Pete," he requested savagely, "will you tell my father and Al to go ahead to the boat? Tell them I've been detained—for being bored by Lieutenant Niles."

Niles clenched his hands at that.

"Insolence, is it?" he ground out. "I'll report that to the inspector, Madden!"

Dennis glowered defiance. He was in an ugly mood now. He had wanted particularly to meet that incoming boat with his father and Al, for it was a liner which was bringing from Ireland that same Eileen Daly whom Shaun Madden had found on his beat that rainy night years before—Eileen Daly, now a winsomely beautiful young woman, as had been evident from a snapshot she had recently sent to Shaun.

Her mother had never forgotten the kindness of Shaun and Mary Madden. Following her return to Ireland, Mrs. Daly, and Eileen as well when she had learned to write, had kept up a regular correspondence with the Maddens. And Shaun had treasured the affectionate letters that had been received from them—especially two of those letters—one a letter penned some years before by Mrs. Daly and congratulating him on his promotion to the rank of sergeant—the other a letter of condolence, written by Eileen when she had learned of Mary Madden's death, which had occurred shortly after her own mother had passed away.

Eileen's uncle had survived her mother by a year or two. Then, just recently, Shaun Madden had learned from Eileen that her uncle had died as well, and he had promptly sent the girl her fare to New York, insisting that she should come out there to keep house for himself and "the boys."

It was a proposition that the boys had thoroughly approved—Dennis with particular enthusiasm, for he had an eye for a pretty face, and if her picture did not lie Eileen Daly was what he was pleased to call a "winner." And possessing a streak of vanity in his character he had been anxious to figure prominently in her eyes and to monopolize her attention when she disembarked.

Now, thanks to Lieutenant Niles, or August 5th, 1939.

rather to his own intractable nature, he was denied the chance of being present at the quayside when her boat docked. Instead, he was fated to receive a severe reprimand from the inspector to whom Niles had referred, and to copy out those accursed fifteen pages of rules and regulations.

Dennis Madden's meeting with Eileen Daly was therefore delayed, and happy to the point of dissolving into tears as a girl will when overwhelmed with feelings of joy and gratitude, she had been installed under Shaun's roof for more than an hour by the time Dennis came home from the academy.

Her picture had not lied, unless the failure of a snapshot to do a person justice might be termed a lie. Eileen Daly was beautiful. From the crown of her blonde head to the toes of her trim little feet she was bewitching femininity, and in the days that succeeded her arrival in New York the two Maddens and Albert Boylan speedily learned that she was as lovable in manner as she was lovely to look at.

It was small wonder that Sergeant Shaun Madden bragged to the boys down at the station-house of the "colleen" who had come to grace his menage. It was small wonder that Al Boylan, who had developed into a fine, clean-looking young fellow and who was eagerly looking forward to entering the Police Academy, acquired a habit of gazing at Eileen with mute adoration whenever he thought her eyes weren't on him.

And it was small wonder that Dennis, devoid of the shyness that distinguished Al, paid court to Eileen with a fervour and a persistence that he had never deigned to display for any other girl who had ever interested him.

Meanwhile, despite his unpopularity with lecturers and instructors, despite his inattentiveness in class and his frank air of being bored by the curriculum, Dennis Madden was making reasonable enough progress as a student at the Police Academy. In point of fact, they could teach him little there that he had not already learned long since from his father, parrot-fashion.

Marksmanship was the one feature that was new to him in the course, and he proved to have a natural aptitude for shooting. Indeed, on the night he and a batch of other students graduated at Madison Square Garden in the presence of applauding friends and relatives he received a trophy pistol in a case bearing the following inscription:

Awarded by the Police Department
New York City to Dennis Madden
for Marksmanship.

It was a memorable night. But less memorable were the days that ensued when Dennis Madden was assigned to a precinct wherein his father had once tramped a beat. Those days were spent by Dennis in ignoring the first lesson he should have learned—the lesson of keeping his temper and maintaining a friendly attitude towards the people with whom he came in contact while on patrol.

One part of his beat took him into one of the poorer localities of the city. Here he pestered the residents, losing no opportunity of "booking" them for trivial breaches of New York's by-laws. His object was to gain quick promotion, as he thought, by securing as many charges to his credit as he could; and one afternoon there occurred an incident which led him to contemplate the prospect of effecting a really worth-while coup.

He had just ascertained that a child

playing on the side-walk with a mongrel pup possessed no licence for the animal, and as a result of this discovery had called up his station to request that a dog-catcher's truck should be sent down to pick up that animal and several others which he believed to be unlicensed. And he was turning from the police telephone post from which he had made the call when he heard someone close at hand volunteer a derisive comment.

"Lovely work if you can get it. A dog detective, huh?"

Dennis Madden swung round angrily, and saw that the speaker was an insolent-looking youth of seventeen whom he knew as Punchy—an unwashed product of the slums who seemed to have a "down" on cops and who was suspected of being a petty sneak-thief.

Punchy was with another youth of his own ilk, a kid who answered to the name of Milt. It was to the latter that Punchy had addressed his jeering remark concerning Dennis, and the pair of them were now grinning offensively.

It was not the first time the new cop had been annoyed by Punchy, and he saw red. In an instant he had clutched him.

"I've had enough from you!" he barked. "You and your wisecracks! How'd you like to have one shoved right back down your throat—like this!"

Lifting one hand, he planted it on Punchy's mouth and sent him reeling with a thrust of his arm. Back went Punchy to a distance of several yards, but recovering himself and revealing a temper as hot as the stalwart patrolman's, he rushed at Dennis like a terrier.

Full-grown man as he was, and towering head and shoulders above the slum-bred youth, Dennis easily checked the onset.

"Oh, cop fighter, are you?" he bit out, gripping Punchy by the front of his tattered shirt. "All right, you asked for it."

With that he swung him round and gave him another push—one considerably more violent than the first, and one that laid Punchy flat on his back in a pool of mire in the roadway.

Snarling like the vicious little gutter-snipe that he was, Punchy attempted to scramble up with the idea of launching a fresh attack, but a man suddenly appeared beside him and set his foot on the youth's chest—a lean, flashily-dressed man with a sallow face, a slit of a mouth and a pair of eyes that resembled those of a ferret.

"Beat it, stupid," that individual said in a thin voice that was as incisive as a rapier. "Beat it."

Punchy took one look at him, then rose to his feet in a slinking fashion and made himself scarce, being accompanied by his crony Milt. As for the flashily-dressed man who had so summarily ordered Punchy to depart, he strolled over to where Dennis Madden was standing.

"The dumb kid," he observed, nodding in the direction Punchy had taken. "He don't know he's alive. But say, Madden, he's my girl-friend's brother, so go a little easy on him, will you?"

"I went easy on him," Dennis answered grimly. "I was just petting him. Wait until he cracks loose next time."

The other man's ferret eyes narrowed a trifle.

"D'you know who I am?" he queried significantly.

Dennis Madden knew who he was all right—knew him as a racketeer who rented a luxury apartment in a district

adjoining the slum area amid whose squalor the two of them now stood—knew him as a man who would have been behind prison bars long ago but for the services of a smart lawyer.

"Yeah," the young cop drawled. "You're Piggy Ceders."

"Correct. And listen, your father and I were pretty good friends when he was on this beat."

"My old man's choosy about his friends," Dennis retorted.

An ugly flush momentarily suffused Piggy Ceders' sallow face, but when he spoke again his voice was controlled.

"Take it easy, copper," he said. "You're new on this beat, and I might be able to help you—"

"The only help I'll need from you is one wrong move," Dennis interrupted harshly. "An excuse to run you in."

Ceders directed a queer glance at him, then went on his way, but that evening when Dennis came off duty and returned home he found the racketeer talking to his father on the front porch of the trim little house.

"Get out of here!" Dennis rasped at Piggy, as he ascended the steps of the porch.

"Now take it easy, boy," Shaun Madden counselled his son. "Piggy's all right."

"He's all rat, you mean!" Dennis parried in wrathful accents. "And if he comes squealing to you again he's going to get his teeth picked with a night-stick."

Piggy eyed the young fellow wickedly for a moment, and then bidding Shaun a civil "good-night," he took himself off, whereupon Dennis addressed his father again.

"Sitting on your own front porch and gabbin' with one of the grimmest guys out of jail!" he declared, his voice carrying a stinging rebuke and a note of high scorn. "Nice going, sergeant."

"See here, Dennis, I know what Piggy is. But there's some good points about him. Long ago I once happened to do him a favour, an' he's never forgot it. The man's not as bad as he's painted—"

"He's bright yellow!" his son cut in, and with that slammed into the house.

He found Al in the living-room and inquired whether Eileen was at home, and Al had just informed him that the girl had gone out to post a letter to a friend in Ireland when Shaun lumbered in from the porch.

"Look, Dennis," the sergeant began, taking up the subject of Ceders' call. "Piggy was only tryin' to be helpful. Ye're gettin' a bad name on the beat, and he figures ye're liable to make trouble for yerself the way ye're carryin' on."

"Yeah? Well, it's trouble I'm looking for. How is a cop going to get any place making love to the city of New York?"

"Well, he can get some place by doing his duty and passing his post-graduate examinations," Shaun pointed out.

"And taking thirty years to make the grade," Dennis said contemptuously.

"Listen, I want a captain's pay before I'm too old to enjoy it. Yeah, and if I could break the back of one top mucker like Ceders I'd be a hero—right away."

A reflective, anticipant expression gathered on his handsome features as he uttered those words. Regarding him sombrely, Shaun noticed that expression.

"Oh, 'tis a hero ye want to be," he commented. "Fresh from the academy, ye're already seein' medals pinned on the chest of ye."

"Well, I want people to know I'm Dennis Madden—not just another blue suit walking by."

Into Shaun's eyes there came an ominous glint.

"Starting trouble!" he said. "Insulting your superiors, so I've heard. And now I learn of ye fightin' with young boys. 'Tis a blue suit ridin' by in a hearse—that's what ye'll be."

"Starting trouble—yeah, and finishing it!" Dennis flung at him. "You know your trouble, don't you? You're working for the Police Department. Well, the Police Department's going to work for me, see? It's going to do twenty-four hour duty—getting me some place."

The sergeant's big hands clenched spasmodically.

"Dennis!" he said in a sharp tone.

"Don't be settin' yourself up above the department. The Police Department is the finest thing in this city. 'New York's Finest' is what they call the boys on the Force, and that's what they are. And 'tis yerself that should be on your knees thankin' your stars that ye're one of them."

"'New York's Finest'!" his son scoffed. "Finest what? Finest mob of chumps that ever fell for a flash line of sob stuff. Huh, duty—loyalty—faithful unto death! For what?"

Shaun Madden answered that mocking outburst—not with weight of argument, but with weight of hand. Enraged by the utterance of such sentiments by one who was his own kith and kin, he lunged forward and lashed Dennis across the cheek.

Al Boylan quickly intervened. He had listened to the discussion with

feelings of growing uneasiness. Now he jumped between father and son, a look of intense consternation on his fresh, young face.

"Pop!" he cried. "Pop, don't! Take it easy now—take it easy!"

Shaun seemed to master his emotions. The expression of fierce resentment that had distorted his countenance was dispelled—was succeeded by one of remorse.

"I'm—sorry, Dennis!" he muttered huskily.

Dennis Madden's features were white, except where the red imprint of the sergeant's palm lay upon his cheek. His teeth were tightly clenched and his eyes were hard.

"Sorry?" he echoed in a bitter voice. "Yeah, so am I!"

Next moment he was striding from the house, and, his mood as black as the encroaching night, he directed his steps towards a car that was standing in front of the Madden home. It was his father's car, but Dennis did not scruple to commandeering it without permission; and he was about to drive off, with some notion of heading for Central Park and brooding over the quarrel in the dusky tranquillity of that enclosure, when suddenly he saw Eileen Daly approaching.

He hailed her, and it was in a tone bordering on the imperative that he told her to climb in. Then he started up the car, and, during a somewhat random tour around through the city streets, he gave her a glum account of the altercation that had occurred between himself and his father.

He did not finish up in Central Park



It was not the first time the new cop had been annoyed by Punchy, and he saw red. In an instant he had clutched him

after all, but on a ferry-boat that was making the crossing between New York and New Jersey; and, leaning against the rail of that ferry-boat with Eileen after having left the car on the waterfront, he made a blunt proposal of marriage that took the girl's breath away.

Under normal circumstances she would have accepted that proposal unhesitatingly, for in the weeks she had known him she had fallen under the spell of his head-strong, wilful yet nonetheless magnetic personality. But he had declared his intention of cutting completely adrift from his father, and for that reason she would not give him a direct answer.

"Now, what's the point in stalling around?" he finally demanded of her in an impatient voice. "Listen, Eileen, if you won't say 'Yes,' I don't know but what I'll jump overboard into the river."

She smiled at the absurdity of the threat, and then, becoming earnest, laid a hand on his sleeve.

"Look Dennis," she said, "you're leaving your father's house and you're asking me to go with you. And it's a strange marriage, Dennis, that starts with desertion."

He was silent for a spell. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"Okay, sweetheart," he assented grudgingly, "I'll make it up with dad. I'll even agree to boarding at the Madden household—if you want it that way."

She threw her arms around him as he spoke those words, and the light in her eyes put the bright-twinkling radiance of the stars overhead to shame. "Oh, Dennis," she cried in ecstasy, "if you hadn't said that it would be I who'd be jumping in the river."

The Break

THE months had passed, and life in the Madden household had been humdrum enough except for an anticipative excitement which had latterly become noticeable in that menage—the reason for which excitement was featured in a paragraph that appeared in the "Police Magazine" one day.

"The Dennis Madden, married last August, will be increasing the population next summer," that paragraph proclaimed.

It was during the afternoon of the day on which this announcement was published that young Dennis Madden was involved in an incident that was destined to change the whole course of his life. He was on duty at the time, and was patrolling that section of his beat on which he had first come into contact with Piggy Ceders; and he was walking along the edge of the kerb with measured gait when a sudden commotion fell upon his ears.

He turned sharply, and saw a familiar figure sprinting along the street in his direction. It was the figure of Punchy, the sneak-thief brother of Piggy Ceders' girl friend, and Punchy was clutching a fur that he had obviously stolen from a nearby establishment that traded in cheap skins. For the owner of the shop was pursuing the youth and hellowing out that he had been robbed.

Dennis started towards Punchy, and they were fifty yards apart when the latter caught sight of him and ducked down an alley-way. Into that alley Dennis charged a few seconds later, to glimpse the fugitive diving into the side doorway of an empty warehouse, and on entering the untenanted repository himself the policeman espied the youth scrambling amongst a clutter of abandoned crates and bales

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that bestrewed the ground floor of the premises.

He was heading for a staircase that led up to a doorway which communicated with the flat roof of an adjacent single-storeyed workshop. Dennis bounded after him, and was only ten paces behind his quarry when the thief gained the flight of steps.

Punchy raced up those stairs as hard as he could go, but realised from the swift-pounding footfalls in his rear that he was no match for Dennis in agility, and, his glance lighting on an iron bar that lay on the top step of the flight, he snatched it up and turned at bay.

"Drop that!" Dennis barked.

Punchy snarled defiance, and, desperate to elude capture, struck at the young Irish-American as the police officer lunged upward and attempted to close with him.

The iron bar caught Dennis a violent blow on the left side of his neck, bruising him cruelly and drawing blood. He lost his balance and fell to the bottom of the staircase, but was quickly on his feet, and, his eyes ablaze with rage, he whipped out his Service revolver as he beheld Punchy framed in the upper doorway that communicated with the neighbouring workshop's roof.

"Stop, you dirty little crook!" the policeman roared.

Punchy did not obey the command. He made the mistake of pausing, however, to hurl a challenge over his shoulder.

"You'll never get me, copper!" he shrilled.

Next instant he was making as if to dash forth on to the adjoining roof, but he had yet to vanish beyond the doorway when the blast of Dennis Madden's gun awoke the echoes below him and behind him. And all at once Punchy was reeling in a stricken fashion, a slug lodged in his ill-nourished body—a slug that had smacked home between his shoulder-blades.

He tottered backwards, sobbing, swung around with his vicious little face horribly distorted, then plunged down the stairs to finish up in an inert heap at the bottom of the flight.

Punchy was dead, and, in all truth, was little loss to the community. He had been brought up in an environment that had made of him an enemy of the Law. He had learned to steal, and there was scant likelihood that he would ever have amounted to anything worth while. But a bullet in the back was harsh penalty for resisting arrest in connection with a theft that was trifling enough, after all. For the fur which he had "lifted," and which was still clenched in his lifeless fingers, would have fetched a couple of dollars at an outside estimate.

At the station-house to which he was attached, and where he afterwards gave a full report of the occurrence, Dennis Madden received no congratulations from comrades or superiors. On the contrary, his colleagues looked at him askance, reflecting that the slaying of a seventeen-year-old sneak-thief was not the kind of affair that would resound to the credit of "New York's Finest," reflecting also that young Madden seemed callously phlegmatic for a man who had a killing on his conscience—and a killing which savoured of the unjustifiable at that.

In point of fact, the conscience of Dennis Madden was not troubling him in the slightest. To his way of thinking, Punchy had got what was coming to him, and, apparently oblivious of the unfavourable impression he had made, Dennis left the station in a self-satisfied frame of mind after he had written out

a detailed report, received treatment for his neck injury, and changed into civilian attire.

On his arrival home he found Al and Eileen in the living-room, and as they noticed that he was wearing a patch of medicated plaster on his neck they expressed concern. But he waved aside their exclamations of anxiety with a carefree gesture.

"It's nothing," he stated. "Huh, you ought to see the other fellow! Listen while I tell you what happened—"

He was not destined to launch into his story just then, however, for at that moment the front door opened and Shaun Madden entered.

He was in uniform, and, removing his cap without a word, he flung it on to the living-room table. Then, as if recalling the protests his wife had been wont to utter over that foible of his, he retrieved the cap and hung it on a peg.

Still he spoke no word. There was a sombre look on his big face, and it was in an involuntary manner that he took a pipe from his pocket and thrust it between his teeth, making no attempt to fill it or light it, merely biting on the stem in a way he had when he was in a troubled mood.

Dennis addressed him now.

"You seem as if you've something on your mind, dad," he remarked. "But whatever it is that's bothering you, snap out of it. You're just in time to hear how I scored one to-day for the Maddens."

Shaun bent his gaze on his son. There was a trace of grimness in the timbre of his voice when he answered the younger man, but Dennis failed to detect it.

"Did you, now?" the sergeant breathed.

"Yep. That kid Punchy—the one Piggy Ceders has been patron saint for. I caught him with some hot fur. He tried to brain me, and I had to plug him."

Eileen gave vent to an exclamation. "Plug him?" she echoed. "Is he badly hurt?"

Shaun glanced at her, and in three words made it plain to his son that pews of the occurrence had reached him.

"The boy's dead," he announced, then turned to Dennis again as both Eileen and Al recoiled with a shocked air.

"So you scored one to-day for the Maddens, did you?" the sergeant said bitterly. "'Tis a black minus score you've marked up for the Maddens."

"Minus score?" Dennis reiterated with sudden heat. "Minus score, my eye! Ceders himself will be doing something about this, and that's all I want. Give me the chance to clamp down on Mister Piggy Ceders and I'll grab every front page in the borough. That's the way to promotion!"

Shaun Madden took a step towards him.

"So it was promotion ye were thinkin' about when ye let go at that lad?"

"It was not," Dennis retorted. "He had it coming to him, anyway."

The sergeant's teeth clenched harder on the stem of his pipe.

"What you've got comin' is a transfer," he said. "A transfer to some other beat where ye'll have naught to do but make eyes at nursemaids. For I went to the Commissioner as soon as I heard what had happened to Punchy—"

His son broke in on him. The young fellow's countenance had grown livid.

"You went to the Commissioner?" he cried out furiously. "You went to the Commissioner and got me transferred because you're afraid of Piggy



Shaun made as if to lash out at his son, but Eileen caught hold of him, while at the same time Al seized Dennis

Ceders? You did that to me? You fool! Don't you realise Ceders was my one chance to show what I could do?"

"Ye showed what you could do today," his father grated. "Ay, and ye're lucky 'tis only a transfer ye're gettin'. Ye showed that ye're a cop with a taste for killin' in his mouth. And killing's a raw taste that poisons. It doesn't promote."

Dennis glared at him.

"And what have your old-fashioned, old woman ideas ever gotten you?" he stormed. "You're a sergeant after twenty-odd years. A dumb harness-cop with nothing ahead but his pension. Why, you old fool—"

Shaun made as if to lash out at his son, as he had done once before, but Eileen caught hold of him restrainingly, while at the same time Al seized Dennis.

"Take it easy, Denny!" Al begged. "That's no way to talk to pop. And, pop, don't let yourself get rattled! Pipe down, the both of you, and let's all sit down to dinner, and—"

Dennis interrupted him.

"Take it easy, eh?" he snapped. "And sit around at dinner while this flatfoot serves second helpings of sob-stuff."

"Why, Dennis, that's shameful of you!" Eileen cried vehemently.

"What's shameful about it? What's wrong with wanting to get ahead? Eileen, get your things packed. We're going out!"

Al gripped the young police officer's arm.

"Dennis, you can't walk out on pop."

"Why not?" the other bit out. "He went to the Commissioner and put in a

word against me, didn't he? As from to-night, I pay my own rent!"

Eileen stumbled towards him, tried to expostulate, but he would not listen.

"I'm leaving," he told her bluntly. "Whatever you choose to do, I'm leaving."

With that he strode from the living-room, and as the door slammed behind him Eileen turned to Shaun. The latter had calmed down to some extent, and was standing in a forlorn attitude—looked at the girl sadly as she laid a trembling hand on his sleeve.

"Oh, pop, what shall I do?" she wept.

Shaun clasped her slim fingers and spoke with an effort.

"You go with him, of course," he said in a husky tone. "You can always come back—alone—or together—when-ever you like."

Framed

ON the evening after Punchy's funeral, a conference was held in the luxury apartment of Piggy Ceders, the racketeer.

It was a conference attended by four men and a girl. The four men were Piggy himself, a tough-looking associate known as Stenuny who acted as Piggy's bodyguard, a shyster lawyer in the racketeer's employ, and a gangster who answered to the nickname of "Philadelphia," and who hailed from that town. The girl was Piggy's betrothed, Charlotte, the sister of the ill-fated Punchy—a flaxen-haired, high-rouged "moll" who had scarcely given her brother a thought when he had been alive, but who was now draped in mourning and who was positively hysterical with grief.

Piggy did most of the talking at that

conference, and the one who did most of the listening was the man who went by the pseudonym of Philadelphia.

"Now, look," Piggy said to that worthy. "I got you out of a couple of hot jams a year or two back, didn't I?"

"Not me," Philadelphia rejoined, inferring that he had a short memory.

Ceders eyed him wickedly. "Yeah, you," he declared. "What's more your number's still up any time I care to call it. I could get you a life stretch, and you know it."

Philadelphia frowned and shuffled his feet.

"Say, what is this?" he demanded, whereupon Piggy leaned close to him.

"How'd you like to spend two to four years in Sing Sing?" he suggested slyly, "and get twenty-five grand when you come out?"

The gangster from the city on the Delaware River betrayed interest.

"Two to four for twenty-five?" he mused. "Hnh, I'd say that was good pay for doin' time. What I gotta do to earn that twenty-five thousand?"

"You gotta slap a fresh cop on the wrist," Piggy replied, and then proceeded to outline a scheme he had in mind.

It was a scheme that concerned Dennis Madden, and late that night, while moodily patrolling the new beat to which he had been transferred, Dennis Madden was struck down by a blackjack that was handled so deftly it scattered his wits without leaving any mark of violence.

Stenuny was the man who wielded that blackjack, and the only witness of the blow was Philadelphia, who promptly produced a whisky bottle, uncorked it, poured half its contents down the unconscious police officer's throat,

then stuffed a wad of currency into the young cop's hip pocket.

This done, he parted company with Stemmy, who lost no time in making himself scarce. As for Philadelphia, he sauntered to a side-street not far away, turned into that side-street to halt beside a jewellery store situated thirty yards from the corner, and, an expert in such matters, had soon obtained burglarious entry to the establishment in question.

In doing so, however, he deliberately set off an alarm bell, which, as he well knew, would bring a squad of "New York's Finest" from the nearest station house. Moreover, he deliberately spent an unconscionable time in opening a safe that should have yielded its contents readily enough to a man of his talents, and a car-load of policemen was at the very door of the jewellery store before he essayed a belated attempt at escape.

He was caught, of course, and, naturally enough, the officers who arrested him made it their business to find out why Patrolman Madden had not arrived on the scene—with that alarm bell resounding far and wide all over the precinct. Nor was it long before they located Dennis, with the smell of strong liquor on his breath—and with five hundred dollars in notes tucked inside his hip-pocket, as was afterwards ascertained when he and Philadelphia were brought to the station house.

There at the station house, in the privacy of a room to which he was taken, Philadelphia was rigorously "grilled" by a group of detectives, and after feigning reticence for a while he affected to break down under the har- rage of questions that were directed at him.

"All right," he panted, "I'll talk. Madden, the cop on the beat—he was in with me. I got him drunk an' I gave him that five hundred bucks to stay away from that jewellery store. Now leave me alone. I know what's comin' to me. Two to four years in Sing Sing. The beak can't give me more for a first offence in this State."

It was thus that Piggy Ceders avenged the shooting of Punchy, thereby displaying his adoration for that wretched youth's sister; and it was in vain that Dennis Madden, on his recovery, argued that he had been framed. In all New York there were but three people who believed in his plea of innocence—his wife Eileen, young Al Boylan and Shaun.

As far as Shaun was concerned, the high words Dennis had spoken on the night of Punchy's death were forgotten and forgiven, and, with no thought in his mind other than a determination to stand by his son and vindicate him, the veteran police-officer tried to seek out Piggy Ceders—realising that if Dennis had been framed, Ceders was, beyond a doubt, the culprit.

But Piggy was not in town—was apparently vacationing "somewhere in the South." And Piggy was still far removed from New York on the day that Shaun Madden's son entrained for Ossining in the custody of a plain-clothes man—Ossining, site of Sing Sing; whither Dennis was being conveyed to serve a term of imprisonment on a charge of bribery.

Savage and embittered were the reflections of Dennis Madden as he sat in a coach of the Ossining train, with his right wrist manacled to the left wrist of his escort. Up to the last, until the close of his trial, when the jury had brought in a verdict of guilty, he had fondly hoped that he might be acquitted of the indictment that had been made against him. Now he was

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faced with the prospect of spending long months in the company of jail-birds who would gloat over his plight, and who could be counted upon to take every opportunity of making his lot even harder to bear than it would normally have been.

He was an ex-cop—and an ex-cop who had shot a seventeen-year-old kid. And as such he had an unenviable future awaiting him amid the dregs of humanity lodged within Sing Sing's bleak walls.

He was provided with a sample of what was in store for him when the train was only a few miles north of New York. Another prisoner—an old "lag" who was sitting close to Dennis and who was handcuffed, like Dennis, to a plain-clothes officer—suddenly produced a cigarette and leaned towards the former patrolman.

"Gimme a light from that butt, will yuh?" he requested, indicating a stub at which Dennis had been moodily pulling.

Automatically, vacantly, the younger man handed him the cigarette-end, and the old lag lit his own cigarette with it. Then he leered at Dennis.

"I understand you've been dishin' it out as a cop," he said. "Killin' kids, so I'm told. Huh, I guess the 'cons' up at the Big House will want to see whether you can take it like you dished it out. Here, thanks for the light."

With that he stuck the glowing end of the borrowed cigarette-butt hard against the ex-patrolman's neck, and with a shout of mingled pain and rage Dennis hurled himself on the fellow. Next second a violent scuffle was in progress—a scuffle that was terminated with difficulty by the respective plain-clothes officers to whom the prisoners were linked.

The two combatants having been separated, but both of them still glaring at each other murderously, the detective who was in charge of Dennis spoke in a curt voice.

"Come on, Madden," he said laconically. "We'll ride on the platform. It's cooler there."

He escorted Dennis to the rear of the coach, and, standing with him on the railed platform at the back of it, he volunteered a few words of advice.

"Look, Madden," he announced above the clamour of the train's wheels, "there's four thousand convicts up in Sing Sing, and you won't have a friend among 'em. But it's not going to do you any good trying to fight them any time they get your dander up. I'm thinking they'll go easier on you if you hold your horses."

Dennis was staring over the rail at a belt of woodland that stretched westward from an embankment along which the train was thundering. A queer glint had come into his eyes, and that glint was still in his eyes when he turned them on the detective. But the shadows of night had fallen and the plain-clothes man did not see the captive's expression.

"Yeah, I guess you're right," Dennis murmured. "I never got any place fighting. I'll settle down in Sing Sing, though. I'll be okay up there. Here, give me another cigarette, will you?"

The detective nodded and reached into a pocket of his coat. It was then that Dennis Madden brought his left fist across in an unexpected punch that landed with the force of a sledge-hammer and jolted the plain-clothes man into oblivion.

The detective went down, and, falling atop of his insensible form, the prisoner searched him eagerly for the key to the handcuffs. He secured that key, also took possession of a gun the plain-clothes man was carrying and hurriedly

unlocked the "hraelet" that fastened him to the unconscious officer. Then, scrambling on to the rail of the platform, Dennis Madden jumped from the speeding train, rolled down the embankment in a smother of dust, picked himself up at the foot of the declivity, and, bruised and shaken, plunged into the blackness of the woods hard by.

Fugitive

BACK home from his vacation in the South, Piggy Ceders was reclining on a chesterfield in the lounge of his Manhattan apartment and was studying a newspaper which was one of several that his satellite Stemmy had handed him on his return.

Those newspapers covered a period of several days, and their front page headlines summarised the known adventures of Dennis Madden from the time of his escape to the last glimpse that had been obtained of him.

The oldest of the publications in question retailed the manner in which he had secured his liberty. Another referred to the disappearance of Mrs. Eileen Madden, who had apparently set out one evening on a shopping expedition in her father-in-law's car and who had failed to return home, the automobile afterwards having been found abandoned.

A third newspaper carried a report that Dennis Madden and a woman answering to the description of his wife had been sighted and pursued by officers in a police car, but had made their getaway. And yet another related how they had eluded a second mobile patrol, who had exchanged shots with young Madden and who believed the ex-policeman had been wounded.

It was this last newspaper which Piggy Ceders was now scrutinising, and he had just finished reading its front-page story concerning Dennis Madden and his wife when he heard a combination of tuneful sounds reminiscent of a snatch of melody played on a musical box.

Actually those sounds indicated the presence of a caller. A touch on a bell-button attached to the front door was responsible for the quaint summons, and, answering that summons, Piggy found himself confronted by no less a personage than Shaun Madden.

The latter was in plain clothes, but Piggy did not conclude from this circumstance that the ponderous Irish-American was off duty. He had learned since his return that Shaun had been promoted to the rank of detective.

"Hallo, Madden," the racketeer greeted complacently. "I hear you've been tryin' to contact me for the last few weeks. As a matter of fact, I've been down in Florida—playin' golf. Was it anything important you wanted to see me about?"

Shaun closed the front door of the apartment behind him. There was a hard glint in his eyes.

"My boy's in a jam," he said, "because you framed him."

Piggy affected a look of bewilderment.

"I framed your boy?" he echoed. "What are you talkin' about?"

"You framed him because he shot your girl's thieving brother," Shaun told him deliberately. "I know you framed him—and so does he. You framed him because you're daffy about that blonde."

Piggy's face tightened.

"Listen, Madden," he snapped, "you keep my girl out of this. I don't go around framin' cops, and, if I did, she wouldn't know anything about it. In any case, I don't want you grillin' her. She's been sick while I've been away, see? She's been laid up—"

"Oh, she's been laid up, has she?" Shaun cut in. "Well, accordin' to this report she's been seein' a lot of that lawyer of yours—while you've been down in Florida."

He produced a folded sheet of paper and handed it to Piggy, but without so much as scanning it the racketeer tore it in half and flung the two pieces contemptuously on to a nearby chair.

"My girl don't consult no lawyer," he said. "She don't consult nobody but me. And that's what I think of cop reports."

Shaun stepped close to him, his great hands clenched.

"You tell me how my boy was framed!" he ground out. "Come on, I'm givin' ye a chance to talk, and if ye don't talk I'll kill ye for what ye've done to my son!"

Piggy had recoiled.

"Yeah?" he countered, not without a trace of alarm in his voice. "That would fix your boy up fine, wouldn't it?"

Shaun Madden hesitated, then drew in a long breath.

"You're right," he muttered. "Ye're no good to me dead."

There was a silence, and in that silence Piggy Ceders recovered his composure. He seated himself in a more or less nonchalant fashion on the arm of the chair on to which he had tossed the fragments of the detective's report, and it was as he did so that his glance chanced to light on something which was written on one of those torn scraps of paper.

A frown gathered on his brow, and he leaned nearer to that portion of the document. A moment later he had snatched up both pieces of the report, and, placing them together, he read with mounting fury the statements inscribed on them.

Watching him, Shaun suddenly saw him jerk himself to his feet. Next instant the racketeer was striding to the door of an adjacent room. It was a room in which Stenny was sitting alone at a table, playing solitaire, and, bursting in upon his associate, Piggy Ceders scattered the cards that were set on that table and thrust the torn report in front of his minion's face.

"You drove my girl Charlotte and that rat mouthpiece to the Club Bagdad four nights last week!" he snarled.

Stenny's eyes dilated in an expression that was meant to convey innocence.

"Me," he faltered. "Why, no—"

"Look at this, curse you!" Piggy raged. "It's a detective's report! You drove 'em in my car! You ran 'em to the Club Bagdad four nights last week, and took 'em back each time to that mouthpiece's flat. Yeah, and on the first night you sent off a wire that she gave you—this wire!"

He snatched a telegram from his pocket and quoted its contents savagely.

"Doctor says I mustn't join you in Florida on account of I'm sick with the flu. Love to my wonderful honey man.—CHARLOTTE."

He glared at Stenny.

"Why didn't you tell me she was consultin' that mouthpiece in my time?" he shouted. "In my car? Why didn't you tell me he was makin' a play for her? And why did you send this telegram? Why?"

Stenny fidgeted uncomfortably. His blunt face, utterly devoid of intelligence, portrayed a look of genuine pain.

"I hired out as your bodyguard to keep you from getting hurt, didn't I?" he appealed. "Well, when a guy's dame two-times him it's liable to hurt his feelin's somethin' awful."

Piggy ripped out an oath, and, crushing the telegram and the fragments of the report into a ball, crammed them viciously into Stenny's thick-lipped mouth. Then he swung round and stamped back into the lounge, where Shaun Madden was still standing.

"Dirty, double-crossing dame!" Piggy grated. "Huh, that sap skirt fallin' for that lawyer's two-dollar words!"

Shaun approached him.

"Get your hat, Piggy," he said quietly.

"What for?" the racketeer demanded, glowering at him.

"Ye're goin' to the station house for pullin' a gun on me."

Piggy's upper lip curled in a sneer.

"That won't do no good," he retorted. "You can swear me dead on any charge you care to fake, and I still won't know nothin' about your boy."

"Ye didn't pull that gun on me."

Shaun observed, eyeing a significant bulge near Ceders' left armpit. "But it would be my word agin yours, and they'd take mine. I can pin three years on ye, Piggy, an' that's plenty of nights for that girl of yours and that mouthpiece. While you're lyin' on a cold shelf in a cell, they'll be out heatin' up some dance joint, and everybody in town will be talkin' about Piggy Ceders' girl goin' around with a cheap lawyer."

The racketeer bunched his fists.

"She won't be goin' round with him. I'll see her dead first—"

"Oh, no, ye won't," Shaun interposed. "Ye won't see her at all, for we're practically on our way down to the station house."

"No, Piggy," he went on with purposeful persistence, "ye won't see her at all—for three years. She'll be too hussy with him to be ever comin' down to the jail to look ye up, I'm thinkin'. And that's the kind of female that ye sent my boy up for, eh?"

Piggy's features tightened. When he spoke again he did not actually admit that the accusation expressed in Shaun's last sentence was true, but neither did he make any denial.

"Dirty two-timing blonde!" he said thickly. "Bawlin' about her dead brother. He was a lovely boy. He was her lovely brother. And me—I was her lovely honey man."

"Piggy," Shaun mused in a reflective tone, "I've a mind to make ye a bargain. Ye don't know anything about how my boy got into that jam, but if ye can think of any way to get him out—well, I'll lay off ye."

Piggy Ceders did not answer him at once, but it became obvious from the pensive look on his thin countenance that he was debating the proposition the Irish-American had volunteered. Then suddenly he launched a direct glance at Shaun.

"Madden," he announced, "I'll take you up on that. Gimme three days to clear up my affairs, and I'll fix it so your boy is cleared an' that blonde and my mouthpiece take the rap for framin' him."

When Shaun Madden left the racketeer's apartment a little while afterwards his step was almost light. His manner certainly suggested a calmness that was in contrast to the agitation he had displayed ever since his son's indictment, though when he arrived home he received a shock that temporarily jarred him out of his comparative tranquillity.

For there in the living-room of his trim Brooklyn house was Eileen—a wretched, distracted shadow of her former self, weeping pitifully in the arms of Al Boylan.

She had put in an appearance at the

dwelling only a moment before, and had not yet begun to tell her story to the astounded yet fervently sympathetic Al. Nor was she able to give any account of herself for several minutes following Shaun's arrival. But at last, fragmentarily and in broken accents, she managed to relate her experiences of the last few days.

It seemed she had found Dennis skulking in Shaun's car on the night she had set out on that shopping excursion. He had been desperate to see her, and she had been with him constantly from that night onward, sharing his existence as a fugitive, begging him again and again to give himself up, though he had been fiercely adamant in his refusals to do so.

"Oh, it's been horrible!" she moaned. "Horrible! And Dennis—he's so different. He's not Dennis Madden any more. He's a stranger. His hands, they've—they've turned cold, cold as that gun he's carryin'. The touch of him that once thrilled me so much makes me tremble now."

"Dennis isn't any different," Al murmured soothingly. "Just think what he's been through—on the run like a fox with a pack of dogs at his heels."

"I know," the girl sobbed. "I know. And he's hurt, too—where a bullet tore a gash in his shoulder. That's why I slipped out to-night to go to a drug store for lint and bandages. Then suddenly I got frightened because I thought the man behind the counter in the drug store was looking at me strangely, as if he connected me with the Eileen Madden whose description has been circulated all over the city. That's why I came here instead of going back to Dennis. I was scared to go back."

It was then that Shaun laid a gentle, reassuring hand on her arm.

"Darlin'," he said, "ye don't have to worry any more. Ceders has promised to clear Dennis in three days, so ye don't have to worry any more. The Police Department don't know it yet, but in three days' time my boy's good name will be vindicated. Meanwhile, I've got to see him. Where is he hidin', Eileen?"

Just thirty seconds later Shaun Madden was setting out for an address with which Eileen had provided him. It was the address of a one-room flat in a dismal apartment-house situated in the Bowery; and arriving there in due course, Shaun had paused on the sidewalk to direct a cursory glance over the building's sombre frontage when he was seen by a couple of plain-clothes' men.

They were talking to a white-coated chemist in the doorway of a drug-store across the way. That drug-store was the one at which Eileen had called, and the girl had not been mistaken when she had suspected that the man behind the counter had identified her. He had recognised her sure enough and had communicated with the nearest police-station—was being interrogated by those two plain-clothes' officers, who had been detailed to investigate his story, when the pair of them observed Shaun Madden.

The detectives knew Shaun, and as he entered the apartment-house opposite they jumped to the conclusion that his son was somewhere in that building and that Shaun was aware of the fugitive's hiding place but had no intention of revealing it to the police.

"Old man Madden!" one of them rapped out. "Come on, we're 'phonin' for a squad of the boys!"

Ignorant of the stir he had created Shaun was at that moment ascending a dingy stairway, and he continued to mount until he gained the top floor of the apartment-house, on which floor he located a door which bore the number "519."

According to Eileen, that was the number of the flat in which Dennis was hiding, and the veteran police-officer raised his hand and tapped on the door.

"Dennis," he called out in a low voice.

There was no immediate response, but he heard the scrape of a chair within.

"Dennis," he called again. "Open the door. It's your dad, and I'm all alone. And listen, Dennis, I've got news for ye—good news."

On the other side of the door stood Dennis Madden. In his fist was a revolver which he had seized at the first alarm. His face was drawn and wore an expression that was at once hunted and malign.

"You wouldn't double-cross your own son, would you?" he demanded suspiciously.

"No, Dennis," Shaun answered in an urgent tone. "Dennis, 'tis the truth I'm tellin' ye when I say I'm here with good news. I saw Ceders, and he's goin' to clear ye. You'll be free in a few days."

"Yeah? I'm free now."

"No, you're not, Dennis. You're up to your neck in trouble. Aw, ye've got to believe me, Dennis. I'll come in with me hands up, but ye've got to believe me."

Still Dennis Madden made no move to unfasten the door and admit his father. Warped in mind, he seemed to doubt Shaun's word—to meditate upon the possibility that Shaun, having discovered his hide-away, had come here with the idea of snaring him into surrender. And Shaun had yet to allay the younger man's suspicions when all at once there arose a sound that convinced Dennis his father had tried to play him false.

That sound was the piercing wail of a police car's siren down in the street that fronted the apartment-house, and as he heard it Dennis Madden cried out in venomous denunciation.

"You filthy, crooked, lying cop!" he shouted, his voice climbing to a high note. "You'd two-time your own son, would you? But it won't work! I learned all your tricks in that rat college for cops, and I'll teach 'New York's Finest' some more! Yeah, and I'll use a gun the way they taught me to shoot, too!"

Shaun yelled at him through the door-panels, imploringly but in vain. The swift patter of feet reached his ears from beyond those panels—the scrape of a window-sash that was violently up-raised. Then he began to hurl himself at the locked door, and breaking it open at the fourth attempt, reeled into the flat that had been his son's refuge.

There on his left was a gaping window which gave on to a fire-escape. Shaun Madden stumbled across to the aperture, and looking downwards saw Dennis crouching, gun in hand, away below him—on the roof of an adjacent two-storey building to which he had jumped from the emergency staircase. And Shaun Madden saw someone else—an armed police-officer who had run into an alley to cover the rear of the apartment-house.

The officer's face was uplifted, but he had not espied Dennis. Dennis had spotted him, however, and rabid-murderous with fury and desperation, he was preparing to draw a bead on the patrolman.

"Dennis!" Shaun roared. "Drop that gun!"

His son threw a glance aloft, and even at the distance Shaun gained an impression of his mouth twisting into a snarl. Then the younger man fixed his

attention anew on the police-officer in the alley and deliberately sighted his six-shooter on him.

Involuntarily Shaun whipped out his own revolver. Involuntarily he pointed the weapon at Dennis. But though he had plucked the gun forth with a promptitude that might have saved a comrade's life, he flinched as his forefinger touched the trigger—flinched in that fateful instant from the thought of drilling the hounded and ruthless creature down there who was of his own flesh and blood.

Shaun Madden's was not the gun that spoke. It was the .45 in his son's fist that belched flame and lead, and in the alley below a blue-uniformed figure pitched forward lifelessly.

A sob broke from Shaun's lips and a mist seemed to swim before his eyes. Through that mist he saw Dennis scramble from his vantage point and slide rapidly down a drainpipe to fetch up in the alley—saw him bestride the prone form of the officer he had slain and run like a stag, to vanish presently beyond a turn in the passage.



"You wouldn't double-cross your own son, would you?"

Cornered

THAT evening Shaun Madden handed over his badge and revolver to the Commissioner of Police, together with a letter of resignation which he refused to retract in spite of his chief's request that he should reconsider his decision.

"I put a gun in the hands of a killer, sir," he told the Commissioner, "when I proposed my son for enlistment in the Force. And to-day I took the life of an officer just as surely as he did. For when Dennis Madden was on that roof I could have shot him—and saved that officer from death."

He bit his lip.

"Only my finger froze on the trigger, sir," he added miserably. "For the boy was my son, Commissioner."

The Police Chief laid a kindly hand on his shoulder.

"There are two million fathers in this city," he said. "They pay our salaries. But they wouldn't want you earning yours—that way."

And so, of his own volition, Shaun Madden left the service to which he had belonged for so many years, and in the days that followed it was as a private citizen that he read of the misdeeds perpetrated by the young man who bore his name.

For Dennis Madden was still at large, and Dennis Madden had given free rein to the unruly instincts that had always been existent in his character. No longer was he merely a luckless youngster trying to "beat an unjust rap." He had been "framed" in the beginning, a fact that had yet to be established in the eyes of the law, but the brutal slaying of a police-officer was inexcusable. And equally inexcusable was the life of crime on which he embarked following the shooting of that patrolman.

Banks were raided, cashiers wounded—these latter testifying in every instance that the thief had answered to the description of Dennis Madden. Piggy Ceders was shot dead by the wanted ex-policeman whom he had prepared to clear—if clearing Dennis of that bribery charge could have done the fugitive any good now. A week after the killing of the racketeer two mobile patrolmen who tried to hold up a stolen car were "winged" by its occupant, whom they recognised as young Madden. Yet another officer was drilled by him the succeeding day and later succumbed to the injury.

And still Dennis Madden remained at liberty.

On the night of that second patrolman's death Shaun Madden and Al Boylan attended the Lexington Hospital, whither Eileen had been taken a few hours previously. They were present there when a nurse announced to them that a baby boy had been born to Mrs. Dennis Madden, and it was within twenty minutes of receiving this news that Shaun put in an appearance at police headquarters and made his way to the broadcasting room, where an officer by the name of Casey was on duty.

"Casey," the burly ex-sergeant said slowly, "my son is the father of a seven pound boy."

"Yeah?" Casey murmured. "Well, that's some good he's done, Shaun."

Shaun Madden nodded, then went on speaking.

"I was thinkin', Casey," he stated. "I was thinkin' that if he knew about that boy, there's a wild, crazy streak in him that would dare him to see the child. He was lookin' forward to the little one's arrival. 'Twas one decent sentiment that son o' mine always had—a fondness for very small children, Casey."

And, Casey, every car they've found that Dennis Madden has stolen since he's been on the run has been wired for radio. He's got that much cunning."

"What's on your mind, Shaun?" Casey asked him with a puzzled air. Shaun bent towards him.

"Casey," he rejoined in a steadfast tone, "I want ye to broadcast a call every hour. I want ye to broadcast a call for ex-Sergeant Shaun Madden to come to the Lexington Hospital, Room 322, where his grandchild has just been born."

A look of mingled comprehension and awe spread across the face of Casey. "Shaun! Are you mad? It would be less than human to take him that way." "He's killed three men already, Casey. And if he's allowed to run loose there's no tellin' how many more he'll kill."

"But he's your son—"

"Sure he's my son," Shaun Madden interrupted. "And two of the men he's killed were officers. Officers are all that stand between decent people and killers, Casey. Listen, 'tis a war my son has declared, and all men who want war should be wiped from the face of the earth. Broadcast that call, Casey. Ye owe it to them that may be Dennis Madden's next victims."

Casey seemed to waver for a few seconds, then inclined his head in assent, and, leaving him, Shaun departed from police headquarters and returned to the Lexington Hospital—not to make his way to Room 322, but to post himself in a yard adjacent to the institution.

There in the shadows he waited, keeping an eye on a broad thoroughfare that the hospital faced, and he had been there for something over an hour when he saw a grey car turn into the yard, a car from which the unmistakable figure of his son alighted.

Shaun's ruse had succeeded, Dennis had picked up the call that Casey had agreed to broadcast, and, as Shaun had imagined, Dennis had taken the risk of visiting the hospital.

Shaun did not accost him there and then. He resolved to grant him the opportunity of fulfilling the desire that had prompted him to come here, and, lurking out of sight, watched his son duck into the hospital by a side door reserved for the use of the staff.

It was Shaun's intention to confront him on his reappearance—to grapple with him if necessary and to force him to surrender to the Law. But he was never destined to effect his purpose, for a quarter of an hour after his son had disappeared into the hospital a sudden commotion arose within the building and down in the yard the ex-sergeant heard voices shrilling the name of Dennis Madden.

He was to learn afterwards how a nurse had recognised the fugitive from Justice, and how his son had doubled back and forth confusedly through the hospital corridors—obviously losing all sense of direction so that by the time he ultimately found his way back to the yard the police had been telephoned and the siren of an approaching squad car was audible above the traffic hum in the street hard by.

It was with the note of that siren swelling in his ears that Dennis Madden charged out of the hospital's side door to see his father standing between him and the stolen automobile in the yard, and as he clapped eyes on the ex-sergeant his hand went to his coat-pocket and whipped out the revolver that had killed three men.

"Get out of my way!" he panted. "Get out of my way, or I'll give it to you!"

Unarmed, Shaun moved towards him.

"You drop that gun," he said evenly, "'cause I'm takin' you, anyway."

"Stop!" Dennis Madden shouted. "Stop, or I'll blow you apart!"

Still Shaun came on, and, low as he had sunk, vicious as he had become, Dennis Madden could not bring himself to discharge that revolver at his father. He backed from the older man, then spun round all at once even as the approaching police car swept into the yard, and, before the ex-sergeant could close with him, he had bounded to an iron ladder that was clamped to the flanking wall of the hospital.

It was a ladder that communicated with a fire-escape which led from the first floor of the institution to the roof, and Dennis Madden doubtless had some forlorn hope of effecting a get-away across that roof. But he had scarcely reached the lowermost platform of the fire-escape when a spot-light from the police car limned him clearly.

That car was at a standstill now, and three or four armed officers had piled

out of it—were starting forward when Shaun called out to them.

"Wait!" he appealed. "Keep back! I'll take him!"

The officers remained by the squad car, and determinedly Shaun began to climb the ladder that his son had ascended. He was bent on doing all in his power to prevent further bloodshed. He was bent on reasoning with Dennis and persuading him to submit. He was bent on convincing him that it was the only course to take.

But another course had suggested itself to Dennis Madden. He knew that he could never make a get-away now. He knew that he was cornered—cornered like an animal that had been brought to bay, though as he looked down on his father from the first-floor platform of that fire-escape his face was serene enough.

The evilness had faded from his countenance. The old expression of wilfulness was not even apparent on it. Rather, there was something of regret visible on it as he contemplated the man who was clambering up the ladder.

For a brief interval Dennis Madden continued to regard his father. Then abruptly he turned his head towards the spot-light focused upon his own half-crouching form, and, drawing himself to his full height, he lifted his revolver.

"Hey, coppers!" he sang out, and put a shot above the heads of the police officers who were standing by the car.

It was a shot they interpreted as a signal that he meant to give battle, and they answered it promptly, as their quarry had anticipated they would, answered it with a volley that riddled him—so that as the echoes of the fusillade rolled about the yard below Dennis Madden slumped to the iron platform on which he was located and breathed his last.

Months had passed, and once more Madison Square Garden had become the scene of a graduation ceremony attended by a batch of Police Academy students and their applauding friends and relatives.

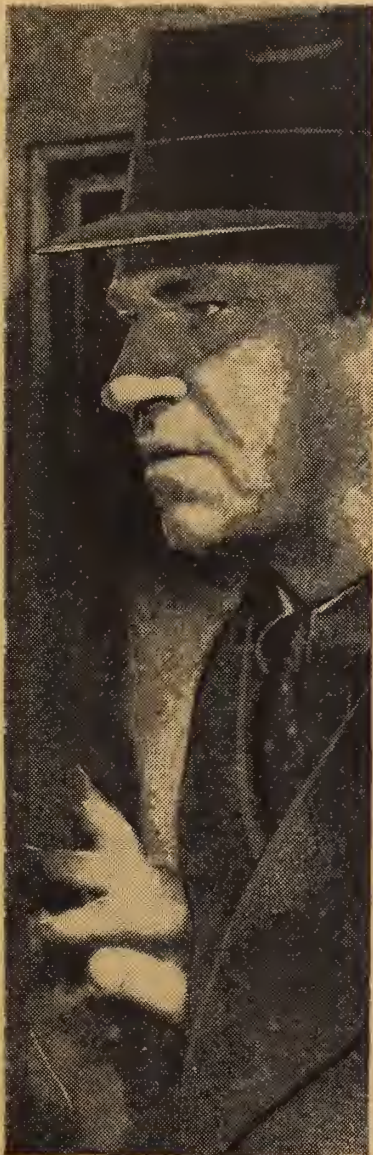
Al Boylan was one of the students who were awarded patrolmen's badges that night, and among the onlookers were three people who were near and dear to him. They were Mrs. Eileen Madden, her tiny infant son, and Shaun Madden—Sergeant Shaun Madden once more, for he had been pressed by the Commissioner to accept reinstatement in the Force. And, holding his grandchild on his knee as the graduation ceremony was being enacted, Sergeant Shaun Madden nudged Eileen with a large elbow and indicated the baby with a jerk of his big thumb.

"Sure," he declared prophetically. "Sure, and when this little fellow grows up, Eileen, he'll make the finest policeman that ever pounded a beat."

By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Ltd., the film "Sergeant Madden" stars

- | | | |
|-----------------|----|--------------------------|
| Wallace Beery | as | Sergeant Shaun Madden |
| Tom Brown | as | Al Boylan, jun. |
| Alan Curtis | as | Dennis Madden |
| Laraine Day | as | Eileen Daly |
| Fay Holden | as | Mary Madden |
| Marc Lawrence | as | "Piggy" Ceders |
| Marion Martin | as | Charlotte |
| David Gorcey | as | "Punchy" |
| Donald Haines | as | Milt |
| Ben Welden | as | Stemmy |
| H. MacMahon | as | Philadelphia |
| Neil Fitzgerald | as | Casey |
| Dickie Jones | as | Dennis Madden (as a boy) |

Drew Roddy as Al Boylan, jun. (as a boy)
August 5th, 1939.



"No, Dennis, 'tis the truth I'm tellin' ye when I say I'm here with good news"

Hopalong Cassidy runs slap into trouble when he hits Mary Joyce's ranch, because the bad men of the ranges have decided to rustle Mary's cattle. Hopalong sets out to make them change their minds—with a six-gun in each hand!



William
Boyd
as
Hopalong
Cassidy

Pretty Shootin'!

HOPALONG CASSIDY and Lucky Jenkins reined their horses for a moment when they reached the ridge overlooking Cactus Springs.

The township was about a mile up the valley. Immediately below them was a huge herd of cattle, grazing peacefully.

It was hot. Lucky pushed back his sombrero and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"Well, I reckon we ought to have a medal," he said. "We've ridden across two states just because old Windy Halliday has got himself elected town marshal."

Hopalong laughed.

"I've been wantin' to see that old cuss ever since he left the Bar 20," he said. "And since we've got so far, we may as well keep movin'. I'm kinda hungry."

They rode on.

They reached the main street of Cactus Springs at high noon, just when things were busiest. Hopalong looked at the township with interest, and found himself liking it.

"I reckon Windy's got himself the kind of job he always wanted," he said. "A quiet cattle town, decent folks—"

"Did you say quiet?" Lucky broke in. "Look what's happening over there."

A buckboard was standing in front of the general store, and in it was a kid and his dog. The dog suddenly jumped down and ran, barking, at a man who had just come out of the saloon on the other side of the street.

"Get out of here, you tyke!" the man roared, and lunged at the dog with his heavy riding boot.

The boot caught the dog in the ribs, and the dog let out a howl. The kid

promptly got off the buckboard and ran across the street.

"Quit kicking my dog, you!" he shouted, and went for the man with his fists.

The man swung his hand in anger, and gave the kid a hard slap that sent him staggering backwards.

Hopalong's voice cut clear through the din.

"Don't do that!" He dismounted and walked slowly across to the man, Lucky close behind him. "Where I come from, men don't go around slapping little boys."

The man looked Hopalong up and down, and didn't see much to get scared about. To him, Hopalong just looked like another cowpuncher—young, lean, and hard-bitten. Lucky didn't look any great shakes, either.

The man grinned.

"I didn't mean any harm, mister," he said, pretending to be scared. Then his tone suddenly changed. "But, of course, if you're asking for it—"

And he went for his six-gun.

Nobody saw Hopalong's hand move. One moment it was empty, and the next it was bucking as his shooter roared. A bullet tore across the man's knuckles, sending his gun yards away.

Hopalong didn't even look at him again. He holstered his shooter and turned to the kid.

"Get back on your wagon, son," he said. "And take the pooch with you."

"Yes, sir!" said the kid admiringly, and hastened to obey.

The man stooped to pick up his fallen weapon. If he had any ideas of starting anything, he changed his mind when he saw Lucky's level eyes on him.

"You ain't seen the last of me yet, mister," he growled at Hopalong.

Hopalong did not even bother to turn round.

"Any time you say," he replied. "I won't be hard to find."

The man slouched away, Lucky staring hard after him. Hopalong went across the street with the kid and helped him back on to the buckboard. Just then a woman came out of the store. She was young and pretty, but her face was white with anger.

She stood three feet from Hopalong, her hands on her hips, and glared at him.

"It's a pretty state of affairs when decent citizens can't ride into town without being shot at by you would-be bad men," she snapped.

Hopalong was so startled he was speechless for a moment or two. He blinked at her in amazement.

"Meanin' me?" he managed to say at last.

"Yes, you. I heard the shooting. Are you hurt, Joey?"

The kid was grinning, but he didn't

intend to say much. He was enjoying himself.

"No, I'm all right," he answered.

The woman went to the buckboard and raised her hands hopelessly. A jar of molasses had been overturned—probably by Joey when he had jumped down after his dog.

"Look at it!" she said fiercely. "Look at the state my buckboard's in. You're not going to get away with this." She snatched a rifle from the buckboard and put the muzzle against Hopalong's chest. "Put up your hands!"

Chuckling, Hopalong obeyed.

"Want 'em any higher?" he asked politely.

"Don't try to be funny. You're going to pay for my molasses and for the cleaning of the buckboard, or there'll be one less good-for-nothing bandit in this town."

Joey decided that it was time he spoke up.

"But, ma,—," he began.

Hopalong cut him short quickly.

"Better not get your ma too irritated, son," he said. "She's a mighty dangerous woman when she's aroused." He looked at her admiringly. "Mighty dangerous when she ain't aroused, too, I reckon. I'll pay for the damage, ma'am. How much is it?"

"The molasses cost sixty cents—if you've got that much."

Hopalong jerked his head in the direction of one of his pockets.

"You'll find it right there," he said.

She reached out to take it, then realised that the rifle was in her way. She fumbled, and Hopalong decided to be obliging.

"Can I hold the artillery for you?" he asked.

He said it so innocently that she let him take it from her. Then she went to work on his pocket again.

A guffaw from Joey made her realise what she had done, and she snatched the rifle back.

"Oh, keep your money!" she said. "It's probably stolen, anyway."

Crossly she threw the rifle on to the buckboard and climbed up herself. "You just wait until I tell Marshal Halliday about this. He'll have you run out of town." She picked up the reins. "Get up!" she said to the horse.

The horse tried to move off, but didn't get far. He had been tied to a hitch-post by a short halter.

"Sometimes, ma'am, you have to untie 'em," said Hopalong gently, and did the job for her.

Joey was holding his sides with mirth. The woman glared at him, two red spots burning on her cheeks. Then she jerked on the reins, and the buckboard rolled away down the street.

Hopalong watched her go. Then he heard laughter from across the way, and turned to see what it was about.

Lucky had just come out of the town marshal's office with old Windy Halliday. Windy was about sixty, and had a white beard and no teeth. But that didn't stop him enjoying life.

"I don't like the looks of things, Lucky," he said in a voice loud enough for Hopalong to hear.

"What are you talking about?" Lucky asked.

"Well, it's this ways," Windy said. "Every woman that starts out by fighting with Hoppy usually ends up by trying to hook him. Did you notice the way he smiled at her?"

"Gosh!" Lucky exclaimed. "Wouldn't it be terrible if, after all these years, Hoppy got married?"

"Awful?" Windy said. "Why, it'd be a calam—calam—well, terrible."

"Quiet!" said Lucky loudly. "Here he comes."

Hopalong strode up, grinning and holding out his hand to Windy. Windy grabbed it and worked it up and down as though it was a pump-handle.

"The same old Hoppy!" Windy chuckled. "In town for two minutes and lookin' for trouble. Why, say, I thought for a minute I'd have to come right across and resene you."

Hopalong laughed.

"The same old Windy!" he said. "Always ready to back me up. Say, I got into a jam over the little lady, didn't I? Who is she?"

"Her name's Mary Joyce," Windy replied. "and she's a widow. She's got a ranch away to the west of the town—a pretty good sort of spread it is."

"And that hombre you had the gunplay with is called Bailey—Stiff-Hat Bailey," broke in Lucky. "He's a stranger around town, and Windy thinks maybe he's plannin' to do some rustlin' if he gets the chance."

"Huh!" Windy's voice was full of scorn. He spat on his marshal's badge and polished it briskly with the sleeve of his shirt. "He ain't goin' to get no chance of doin' anything while I'm around here."

Hopalong took in a notch of his belt.

"Say, Windy, have you got any ham and eggs in this part of the country?" he asked.

"Ham and eggs, huh?" Windy rolled his eyes expressively. "The best in the West, although I say it myself. Right this way, gentlemen."

He turned and led the way into his office. The others followed eagerly.

Smoky is Warned

HOPALONG and Lucky rode out with Windy Halliday the following morning to make the daily round of inspection. As they approached Mary Joyce's ranch, the foreman came out to meet them.

"Say, marshal, I'm kinda worried," he said. "I saw Stiff-Hat Bailey ridin' hard to the Blue Hills this mornin'. He has a pretty bad reputation, and I reckon he's up to something."

Hopalong saw Joey come out of the ranch-house with his dog, and rode to meet him, leaving the others to talk. He dismounted and picked the dog up.

"Good-morning, Joey," he said. "What do you call this pooch?"

"Hoppy," Joe replied.

Hopalong started and looked puzzled. "Now, where would you be getting a name like that from?" he asked.

"It's short for Hopalong Cassidy," Joey explained. "You've heard of him, haven't you?"

Hopalong hid a grin and pretended to think hard.

"Well, come to think of it, I seem to

have heard of him some place," he said.

"I wanted to give my dog a name he'd be proud of," Joey went on. "Next to my dad, Hopalong Cassidy is the greatest guy in the world. Marshal Halliday is a great friend of his, and he says he's the best gun-fighter ever, and he's fair and square and always helping folks when somebody's pickin' on them. That's what I'm goin' to be like when I grow up."

Hopalong couldn't think of anything to say to that. He was silent for a moment, then said:

"Is your mother at home?"

"She sure is," Joey replied.

"Fine! I guess I ought to call on her. You run along and talk to the marshal. I'll see you later."

Joey nodded and ran off. Hopalong went to the ranch-house door and knocked. Getting no reply, he pushed it open and went inside.

Mary had a man with her, and, judging from the looks of them both, they had been having a few words. The man was small and mean-faced. He looked like a crook—and a pretty dirty crook at that.

"Oh, hallo!" Mary said. She looked almost glad to see Hopalong, in spite of what had occurred the day before. "This is my—my brother, Dan Beunett."

Hopalong nodded shortly. He wondered who the man really was. He didn't look much like Mary's brother, and he had noticed Mary's hesitation.

"Howdy, Bennett!" Hopalong said. "My name's Cassidy."

"My brother just returned from Mexico a few days ago," Mary said nervously.

Hopalong smelt trouble. He was like that. He always knew in advance when things were going to blow up.

"Is that so?" he said casually.

"That's my old stamping ground. Was you down there long?"

The brother tried to be equally casual.

"For the past five years," he said.

"As long as that?" Hopalong eyed him steadily. "Negacio de ganda?"

The brother looked puzzled, but did his best to pass things off easily.

"You'll have to come again on that, mister," he said.

"It was Spanish," Hopalong explained. "I just asked you what business you were in."

"Oh, I did a little mining down around Santa Rosalia."

Hopalong nodded.

"It's a great mining country," he said. "A great ranching country, too. A friend of mine owns the Gonzales Rancho down there. Did you ever hear of it?"

"Sure." The brother smiled. "I know Gonzales well. As a matter of fact, I talked to him just the day before I left."

Hopalong had been waiting for something like that.

"That's funny," he said slowly.

"Gonzales has been dead for more than a year. His daughter's running the place now."

The brother scowled, realising that Hopalong had deliberately led him into a trap.

"Listen, mister," he said. "I don't like your attitude. What right have you to cross-examine me?"

"Well, I wasn't aimin' to," Hopalong replied, "but since you're getting so het up over nothing, I'll make you a bet you've never been in Mexico."

"Are you calling me a liar?"

Mary broke in hurriedly. She was badly scared about something, and Hopalong could see that she didn't want any trouble.

"I'm sure he isn't lying, Mr. Cassidy," she said.

"And I'm sure he is," said Hopalong quietly. "He's crossed himself up twice, and I'm just beginning to wonder what he's doing wearing a dead man's clothes."

"What are you talking about?" the man demanded fiercely.

Hopalong pointed to his shirt.

"Those are bullet holes," he explained. "Whoever had that shirt on last was dead when he hit the ground." He saw the man reaching for his gun, and his own bored into the man's stomach in the twinkling of an eye. "Just a minute! I'll take care of that little trinket." He yanked the gun out of the man's hand and looked at it. "This is a police special. State property, eh?"

The man shrugged.

"All right, Cassidy," he said. "You're holding the aces. What next?"

"I don't quite know," Hopalong looked at him steadily. "I don't like you, and I don't believe you're Mrs. Joyce's brother. I think you've got some hold over her. What's more, there are some rustlers around, and I'm thinkin' you might be mixed up with them. I guess I'll turn you over to the marshal for safe keepin'!"

Mary got between them quickly, suddenly alarmed.

"But you can't do that!" she cried. "He'll be recognised. He'll be sent back to prison!"

The man gripped her arm.

"Shut up!" he snapped.

Cassidy frowned. The trouble was evidently worse than he thought, and he intended to get to the bottom of it.

"Say, I don't like to be inquisitive," he said, "but I don't like workin' in the dark, either. Maybe you'd better go ahead and talk, Mary." He used her first name unconsciously. "What's the answer to all this?"

Mary looked at him doubtfully, then appeared to make up her mind. In spite of a warning scowl from the man, she led Hopalong outside.

"I lied to you," she said quickly.

"He isn't my brother. He's my husband. And he's just escaped from jail after being there for five years." She looked unhappy. "Joey was too young to remember his father much, and as it was a life sentence, I told him his father was dead."

"You told me his name was Dan Bennett," Hopalong said. "What's his real name? Joyce?"

She shook her head.

"He's always been known as Smoky Joslin," she said. "When he went away, I changed my name to Joyce and moved to Cactus Springs." She turned to Hopalong anxiously. "He's threatened to tell Joey who he is if I don't give him money. And I can't let Joey know the truth. It would destroy everything I've built up all these years. Joey would lose his faith in everything and everybody."

Hopalong stood there thinking for a few minutes. Then he turned to the man.

"All right, Joslin," he said. "I've got the story. You're an escaped jail-bird, and I ought to hand you to the marshal, but I'm going to trade you your liberty on condition that you keep away from Joey."

Joslin's face went ugly.

"And who's going to keep me away from him?" he wanted to know.

Hopalong did his best to be patient.

"Listen, Joslin," he said, "just now I told you that my name is Cassidy. I didn't tell you that I'm known generally as Hopalong Cassidy. Does that mean anything to you?"

"Hopalong Cassidy!" exclaimed Mary in a low voice.

Joslin started. Evidently he had heard of Hopalong, because his manner changed pretty quickly.

"Okay," he said. "I'll do what you say."

"That's fine," said Hopalong dryly.

"I'll give him some money," said Mary quickly. "Enough to make a fresh start somewhere."

Hopalong nodded and turned again to Joslin.

"Remember, Joslin," he said, "this is a bargain between the two of us, and men who make bargains with me don't go back on them. So long as you stay away from here and Joey never gets to hear anything of you, everything is going to be all right. But you start something, and I'll finish it."

Joslin's face was expressionless. He watched Mary go to her safe and produce a small roll of bills. In silence he took them and shambled to the door. As he went he heard Mary say:

"I'll never forget what you've done for me, Mr. Cassidy."

Joslin stopped and turned. There was a twisted smile on his face.

"And I'll never forget what you've done for me, either," he said cryptically, and the next moment he had gone.

Hopalong went to the window and watched him mount his horse. Calmly Joslin turned and rode towards the Blue Hills.

Hopalong said nothing to Mary about that. But he knew in that moment that he had made a bad mistake. Bailey was in those hills, and Hopalong knew that sooner or later Bailey was going to make trouble.

Rustlers!

MARY was up at dawn the following morning—long before her cowhands rode in from Cactus Springs. She had a busy day in front of her, because a part of her herd was to be driven down to the railroad and sent away to be sold.

She began getting some breakfast. Then she looked out of the window and saw a man walking stealthily towards the ranch-house from the corral.

Quickly she got a gun and went outside.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" she demanded.

The man stopped and eyed the gun uneasily.

"The name's Trayner, lady," he said. "I ain't meanin' no harm. I just wanted to see if I could borrow some tools to fix my stirrups."

He started to walk towards her. Quickly she levelled the gun.

"Stay where you are!" she warned.

"If you come— Oh!"

Somebody had stolen up behind her and had jerked the gun from her hand. Trayner said:

"Nice work, Smoky! You still know how to think fast."

Mary turned round and faced Smoky Joslin, the man who was her husband.

"You beast!" she said. "You're even rottener than I thought you were."

"I ain't interested in what you think of me," Joslin snapped. "And as you ain't got Mr. Hopalong Cassidy around to help you, I'm doin' all the talkin'. Come on!"

He took her by the arm and tried to drag her away. She struggled and got free. So he picked her up and carried her to a shed nearby, pushed her inside, and locked her in.

"Stick around, Trayner," he said.

"Keep her where she is, and if anyone comes around, see that she doesn't have a chance to talk. I'll go back to Bailey and tell him we're all set."

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"Okay," Trayner replied, and Joslin hurried away.

Meanwhile, down at Cactus Springs, Mary's foreman had called in at the marshal's office.

"Listen, Windy," he said, "I've seen some fresh tracks of horses up on the ridge above the Joyce Ranch, and I don't like the look of things. That Bailey outfit is plannin' something."

Windy scratched his beard. He had only just got up, and the idea of going out looking for tracks didn't appeal to him.

Just then Lucky came in, accompanied by a cowhand named Red who also worked on Mary's ranch. Windy turned to them eagerly.

"There's some work for you two boys," he said. "Slin here tells me he's seen tracks on the ridge above the Joyce Ranch, and reckons it might be Bailey's gang. How about going to take a look?"

Lucky nodded eagerly.

"You can count me in," he said. "When Hopalong shows up, tell him where I've gone, will you?"

And he and Red hurried away.

They found the tracks where the foreman had said, and decided to follow them. They led for some way along the top of the ridge towards the Blue Hills.

It was rocky up there, and huge boulders and hard ground made the trail difficult to follow.

Suddenly a rifle cracked from somewhere, and Lucky, riding ahead, swayed in his saddle and slid to the ground. Barely a second later a second shot rang out, but this time it was not Red who fell. It was a man who had been lying behind a boulder, taking aim with a rifle.

Hopalong rode up and dismounted. He dropped on one knee by Lucky's side.

"I got to the marshal's office a bare minute after you left," he said quickly, "and came on after you." He pulled back Lucky's shirt. "He's got a bad one here."

"Shall I go back and get help, Mr. Cassidy?" Red asked.

"No. We'd better get him down ourselves. I'll fix him so that he doesn't bleed."

He dug some bandages and lint from one of his saddle-bags, and bound Lucky's wound tightly. When he had finished, Lucky opened his eyes.

"Hallo, Hopper!" he said. "I ain't dead yet."

"You will be if you don't keep quiet," Hopalong said. "We're going to get you down to the camp and send you to the ranch-house in the chuck wagon."

Lucky tried to sit up. The effort was too much for him, and he sank back.

"Now, listen, Hopper," he said, "I'll be all right in a little while. And from the way things are shaping, you're going to need every gun up here that you can raise."

"Windy is seeing to that," said Hopalong. "He's raising a posse right now—just in case of trouble. And you're still going back to the ranch."

Lucky protested, but it didn't make any difference. Hopalong lifted him on to his horse, and they rode to the camp. From there Lucky went down the valley propped up against bags of beans and flour.

The chuck wagon reached the ranch twenty minutes later, and it was met by Trayner. The driver of the wagon took no notice of him, but called out:

"Mrs. Joyce!"

"Mrs. Joyce ain't home," Trayner said. "She went into town."

"Okay," said the driver. "But who are you, anyway?"

"I started work for her this morning."

She left me here to take care of the place."

The driver stared hard at Trayner, then said softly to Lucky behind him: "It sounds kinda fishy to me, Lucky. I don't like the fellow's looks."

Lucky looked out from under the wagon covers.

"Watch your step!" he warned. "That's one of the men who was with Bailey when Hoppy tangled with Bailey the day he hit town. There's something wrong here."

"I'll soon find out," the driver said, and spoke to Trayner again. "Stand right where you are, mister." He pulled a gun. "We want to find out a few things."

Trayner whipped out his own weapon and thumbed back the hammer. Before the driver could do anything about it, a lead slug hit him in the shoulder and toppled him off his seat. Lucky dragged out his own gun and squeezed the trigger, and Trayner threw up his hands and collapsed, his gun flying wide.

Mary heard the shooting, and looked through the cracks in the boarding of the shack. She saw what had happened, and looked round for something to break her way out.

She found a spade under a pile of sacking, and shattered the window with it. A minute later she was over at the wagon. She saw Lucky.

"Lucky, are you all right?" she asked.

"Sure I'm all right," Lucky replied. "But what's it all about?"

"I'll tell you as soon as I get Joey. We've got to get out of here."

She ran into the ranch-house, and presently appeared again carrying Joey in her arms. She bundled him into the chuck wagon, and jumped on to the driving-box.

"Hold tight!" she cried, and got the horses moving.

She took the trail for the cowhands' camp, Lucky having told her that she would find Hopalong there. But before she had gone very far, Lucky let out a shout.

"Here's Bailey's men!" he cried.

She looked round and saw half a dozen horsemen not far behind her. She used the whip, and made her horses give every ounce of speed they had, but she knew it was hopeless. A wagon couldn't go as fast as free riders.

They surrounded the wagon in the end and brought it to a standstill. Joslin was with Bailey, and took charge.

"All right—get down!" he said to Mary.

Mary obeyed. Joslin went to the back of the wagon and looked in.

"You, too," he said to Lucky. "And drop that gun." He watched Lucky obey, then turned to Bailey. "Take the boys and get that herd on the move. I'll stay here and take care of the family until you're clear."

"Right," said Bailey. "Come on, boys—let's go!"

The others rode off. Joslin dismounted and strutted up to Mary.

"Make yourself at home, Mrs. Joyce," he said, sneering. "Sit down!"

Joey looked out of the back of the wagon. He was frightened, but was doing his best not to show it.

"What are you going to do, Uncle Dan?" he asked.

"Uncle Dan's going to tell you some fairy tales," Joslin replied. "And they ain't the kind your mamma told you, either."

Mary ran to him pleadingly.

"No, no, please!" she begged. Joslin pushed her away roughly.

"Why not?" he said. "It wasn't nice of you to tell lies to little boys."

Joslin held his gun low on his hip. "This story I'm goin' to tell you is about a man you know quite well—a man who got around a good bit and—"

Mary, desperate, threw herself at him. The suddenness of her attack took him by surprise, and he went over backwards, his gun flying wide. Lucky jumped in and grappled with him, trying to prevent him from getting up.

"Get on that wagon and make a break for it!" he shouted to Mary. "I can hold him for a while. Hurry!"

Mary nodded and lifted Joey into the wagon. Then she climbed up herself and went to pick up the reins.

Joslin fought with Lucky, and Lucky was so weak from his wound there wasn't much he could do. Joslin rolled over and managed to regain possession of his gun. He levelled it at Mary.

Lucky made one last desperate effort. His fingers closed on Joslin's wrist just as the other pulled the trigger, and the shot went wide.

But the roar startled the horses, and before Mary could get hold of the reins, the animals bolted.

Joslin wrenched himself free, but by then the wagon was out of range. He laughed.

"Well, if those runaways don't smash her to pieces," he said, "the boys will get her."

Lucky fell backwards, exhausted.

"I've never had much respect for snakes and skunks," he said, "but after knowing you they'll seem like real folks."

Joslin laughed again.

"Talk all you want to," he said. "You ain't got much more of it to do."

And he stood up, thumbed back the trigger, and took aim at Lucky's heart.

Hopalong Gets Busy

HOPALONG rounded up all the boys he could from the camp, and set out with them along the trail leading to the Joyce Ranch. Not knowing what had happened, his plan was to make sure Mary and Joey were all right, send them into Cactus Springs, and then lay in wait for Bailey and his gang.

Windy, his marshal's badge freshly polished, joined him with a few more men after a quarter of a mile, and they rode on. Windy was breathing fire.

"I reckon that there Bailey is ridin' for a fall," he said. "I've just had word that he's wanted in the next county for horse stealin', so maybe we can get to him and pinch him before he does any harm. He—"

He stopped speaking suddenly, and stared ahead. "For the love of Mike," he exclaimed, "what's going on there?"

Hopalong looked ahead, too. He saw Joslin standing over Lucky, gun in hand. It looked as though Lucky's last hour had come.

Hopalong whipped out his shooter and snapped back the hammer. Windy took a quick breath.

"You'll never get him at this distance," he muttered.

Hopalong's shooter roared and kicked, and for a moment nothing seemed to happen. Then Joslin started to crumple.

"Got him, by gosh!" roared Windy. "Pretty shootin', Hoppy, pretty shootin'."

They rode on, and found Lucky trying to get to his feet. Windy got down from his horse.

"Take it easy, son!" he said.

"What's happened?"

"Mrs. Joyce is in the chuck wagon," Lucky said. "The horses have bolted. And she's heading right for where Bailey and his men are rounding up the herd."

Hopalong had been examining Joslin.

"He's dead," he said briefly. "Windy, you'd better leave a man with Lucky, then get after Bailey. I'll go on ahead."

And before anyone could say anything more, he had taken a flying leap into his saddle, and was galloping hard down the trail.

He saw the wagon after a couple of minutes. The horses had gone mad, yet some instinct made them keep to the

trail instead of going over broken ground.

The trail made a wide sweep a short distance on, and Hopalong cut across the grassland to head the wagon off.

He rejoined the trail again just behind it, and urged his animal on. Slowly, foot by foot, he drew level with the horses.

Timing his movements to a second, he stood up on his saddle, and jumped. He landed squarely on the back of the near-side horse, and leaned forward to gather in the reins. The next moment he was throwing his whole weight backward, the leathers securely locked in his fingers.

The horses stopped quickly enough then. The bits dragged at their tender mouths, bringing them up short.

Then Hopalong turned to see how Mary was getting on. The first thing he heard was Joey's voice.

"Gee!" Joey said. "That was some ride."

Hopalong laughed.

"That's just the kind of thing I would expect you to say, young feller," he said.

"How are you, Mary? All right?"

"Yes, I'm all right," Mary said quickly. "But you must go back. My—my brother is holding Lucky some distance away. If you don't get to him quickly—"

"It's all right. Everything's been taken care of." Hopalong pulled one of his six-guns out and gave it to her. "Take this and go back the way you came. You'll find Lucky and one of the marshal's men somewhere. I have to go ahead. There's still work for me to do. Think you can manage those horses now?"

She nodded.

"They'll be all right," she said. "They only bolted because I didn't get to the reins in time."

Hopalong swung himself into his saddle.

Just as Joslin was pulling the trigger Lucky snatched at his wrist



"About that brother of yours," he said quietly. "He's—well, he's dead. I reckon he won't trouble you no more now."

Then he turned and galloped towards that part of the valley where Windy and the boys would be dealing with Bailey.

He did not take long to find them. Bailey and his men had driven part of the herd into a short ravine, and Windy had led his men in after them. In doing so, he had walked clean into a trap.

When Hopalong came to where he could see them, he found that every one of Windy's men had their hands above their heads. Bailey was strutting about in front of Windy, talking a lot.

Hopalong slipped from the saddle. He knew it was no good riding in on Bailey—he had far too many men with him. The only thing was to try getting them some other way.

He hurried forward, taking advantage of all the cover he could. At last he gained the herd itself, and started to creep through it, bent almost double.

He was coming up behind Bailey and his men, and as he got nearer, he heard Bailey ask:

"Well, where's the great Hopalong Cassidy?"

It was one of the cowpunchers who answered.

"He rode off a short while back. We don't know where he is."

Bailey laughed sourly.

"So that's the kind of a guy he is!" he said. "Yellow when it comes to an even chance. Well, I'll have the pleasure of meeting up with him again some time, sooner or later."

"It's sooner," said Hopalong quietly from behind him. "Get your hands up!"

A couple of the men started to turn. Hopalong's voice cut through the silence like a knife.

"Get them up, I say—before I let Bailey have it."

Bailey's bombast left him quickly. He started to whine.

"Don't shoot, Cassidy," he cried. "Give me a chance."

One man tried to bring his six-gun to bear. Hopalong twisted his shooter quickly, and the man changed his mind.

"Up!" Hopalong roared. "Up, I tell you!" They obeyed then. They had heard about the accuracy of Hopalong's gunplay. "That's better. All right, Windy—get their guns!"

Windy and the others obeyed gleefully. When they were disarmed, Hopalong relaxed.

"If you haven't anything further to say to me, Bailey," he said, "I'll just get the marshal and his men to tie you all and take you into town."

Mary's foreman, who had been part of the posse, blew out his breath explosively.

"Gosh, Mr. Cassidy," he said, "you took a long chance, tackling this bunch the way you did. Supposin' they'd shown fight?"

Hopalong laughed.

"Folks who go around kicking dogs and slapping little boys don't usually put up much of a fight when it comes to a showdown," he said. "Bailey can talk big, but that's about all there is to it." He stood back and saw that Windy's men had the upper hand now. "Well, boys, I'll be seeing you later. I'd better get back to the Joyce Ranch."

Windy nodded sagely as he dropped a noose over Bailey's arms.

"I thought there was something like that in the wind," he said.

But he was wrong. Hoppy returned to where Mary was waiting with the wagon, and then took Lucky back to the ranch. On the way there, Mary said:

"I don't know how to thank you, Hoppy, for all you've done for me."

"I guess you don't need to," Hopalong said. "Just forget it."

"I'll never do that." She was silent for a minute, then she went on: "Would you do something for me? Would you stay on at the ranch until I've got all my cattle shipped?"

Hopalong avoided her eyes.

"I reckon I'd like to stay until Lucky is well enough to travel," he answered.

"No longer?" She sounded disappointed.

"Well, I guess not." He scratched his head, trying to think of some way of not hurting her feelings. He knew that she wanted him to stay at the ranch for ever. "I don't take kindly to settlin' down. So when Lucky can ride again, I guess I'll just be hoppin' along."

And she knew that he would never change his mind.

By permission of Paramount Film Service, Ltd., "Renegade Trail" stars

William Boyd	as	Hopalong Cassidy
Russell Hayden	as	Lucky Jenkins
George Hayes	as	Windy Halliday
Charlotte Wynters	as	Mary Joyce
Russell Hopton	as	Smoky Joslin
Roy Barcroft	as	Stiff-Hat Bailey
John Morton	as	Trayner
Sonny Bupp	as	Joey Joyce
Eddie Dean	as	Red

In Praise of the P.C.

In placing the detective on a celluloid pedestal the cinema has been criticised in the past for ignoring that "forgotten man," the policeman on the beat. This injustice, however, has now been corrected. Assigned recently to see that the old-fashioned "cop" gets his share of the glory on the screen was Val O'Toole, an Irishman from Brooklyn and a veteran of the New York Police Department.

Hired as technical adviser on Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Sergeant Madden" to do right by the police, O'Toole handed the story, squinted at it with one good eye—the other having been knocked out by a burglar—and snorted. O'Toole does not pretend to know anything about actors. But he does know cops. Frankly and bluntly he stated that no actor he ever saw even looked like a cop, much less gave the slightest impression of being one.

Several items favoured his argument. The first was O'Toole himself. Dramatically he pointed to the scars of wounds he had received in the line of duty. More than that, he related scores of blood-curdling yarns about cops and robbers, all in the records of the New York Police Department, which baffled the writers. For once their fiction couldn't outdo the facts.

Following numerous conferences with J. Walter Ruben, who produced "Sergeant Madden," and with Director Joseph von Sternberg, O'Toole was given authority to glorify the policeman in his own way. For settings and characterisation of Sergeant Madden, as portrayed by Wallace Beery, he drew largely from his own experience. Beery's Sergeant Madden is O'Toole's idea of the model cop, one of New York's finest. Beery being himself the August 6th, 1939.

son of a Kansas City cop and Scotch-Irish, was decidedly pleasing to O'Toole's good eye. He commented that Beery was a born "bobby," adding it was a shame for such fine police material to be wasted as an actor—a sentiment with which I cannot agree.

In a Jam

Here is an amusing little story that happened during the filming of "Sergeant Madden." Wallace Beery, regarded as one star who could never dodge recognition by his fans, found it was possible to be caught in the centre of a Hollywood crowd and not be recognised.

In response to a business call over the phone, he left the set without bothering to change his police uniform. Driving to Hollywood he ran smack into a noon traffic jam. One motorist signalled to Wallace; he yelled:

"Why don't you assert your authority and straighten out this tangle?"

"Why don't you call a policeman?" retorted Wallace.

When a policeman did come up, the motorist pointed to Wallace's car with a look of disgust, but the officer exclaimed:

"Wally Beery, I haven't seen you since I worked as an extra in 'China Seas,' four years ago!"

Ultimately the traffic situation cleared up, and Wallace thanked the cop for recognising him and "getting him out of a jam."

Buster Has Not Lost His Skill

When Buster Keaton let loose with a custard pie in the direction of Alice Faye, in an important scene in 20th Century-Fox's "Hollywood Cavalcade," a technician's history of Hollywood's

silent days, there was an audible sigh of relief from Director Irving Cummings.

Although the script called for Keaton to pitch the pie at Miss Faye, it was suggested that an expert sharpshooter be employed, to eliminate the risk of missing.

"Nonsense," was Cummings' reply. "When it comes to experience at tossing custards, you can't beat a veteran like Buster. I don't care how long ago he tossed one, he's still good enough for me."

So Keaton got the job. Without so much as a warm-up, he wound up, took careful aim and let loose from fifteen feet away. There was no doubt of his excellent marksmanship, for Alice's lovely features were no longer visible. They had been replaced by the entire pie!

Paulette Goddard Will Play Opposite Chaplin Again

Paulette Goddard will be Charlie Chaplin's leading lady in the comedian's first all-talking production, now tentatively titled, "The Great Dictator." It is officially announced by Alfred Reeves, general manager of the Chaplin organisation.

Mr. Reeves reveals that the first sets for the picture are now under construction at the Chaplin Studio. A crew of carpenters and artisans have been engaged, and the lot is humming with the first real activity in three years.

The initial set to go up is one of the largest ever erected in the studio grounds, and will take a week or ten days to complete, using day-and-night shifts of workers.

In line with Chaplin's traditional policy, no information on the story is as yet available.

A grand story of the roped square



NIGHT CLUB HOSTESS

Starring
BUCK JONES

All Washed Up!

IT was a big night at the Arena Stadium, and the place was packed from ringside to roof.

Outside there was still a crowd struggling to get in. They had come to see something, attracted by the huge posters which glared from a hundred hoardings throughout the city. The posters read:

**"MAIN EVENT—10 ROUNDS.
SLAG BAILEY v.
BUZZ KENTON."**

It was to be the fight of the year. Inside the dressing-room at the back of the building, Slag Bailey himself was getting ready. He was a thick-set man, with a good-humoured face and a wide grin—the kind of man who liked to take life easily.

He had arrived at the Arena Stadium late, and his manager, perky little Pins Strevier, was stamping up and down. Pins had got the jitters.

"What the heck's the matter with you, Slag?" he said plaintively. "You ain't like what you used to be. You ain't been keeping up your training, and you're nearly always late."

Slag just grinned and went on getting ready.

"This is the fight of your life," Pins went on. "If you win, we're in the money. If you lose—bloody!"

"I shall win," said Slag, and thereafter paid no more attention to him until he had finished getting ready. Then someone came to the door and bawled:

"This is it, Slag!" Slag put on his dressing-gown and went along the corridor that led to the ring. Pins Strevier trotting along beside him. Just before they got inside the arena itself, Slag asked:

"Is Pat out in front?"

"Sure—she's there," Pins replied. "She's taken the night off specially to come and see you. I reckon you ought to have made some effort, seeing that—"

"Shut up!" said Slag genially, and Pins knew it was no good saying anything more.

While the crowd was cheering itself hoarse and the announcements were being made, Slag managed to locate Pat. She was sitting three rows back, and she was looking worried.

Her full name was Pat Rogers, and she worked at a night spot in the heart of the city. She was fair and had the kind of face that made a fellow's heart turn over. Slag got a lot of amusement out of the fact that she pretended to be hard-boiled. She wasn't really. She was a darned nice girl.

And Slag liked her a whole lot! He grinned cheerfully at her just before the bell rang, and then looked across at his opponent, Buzz Kenton. Buzz was slim and wiry, and looked as though he had trained to the last ounce.

Slag grinned again as he quickly made his plans. Buzz would depend upon speed—upon trying for a swift knock-out. That was all right. Slag liked them that way. He was a slow, plodding fighter, and his tactics were to tire his opponent out and then crush him with sheer weight. It was easy!

The bell rang. Slag came out of his corner, still grinning. He didn't hurry. He left all the hurrying to Buzz.

And Buzz met him two-thirds of the way across the ring, his gloves moving fast. Slag stopped him with a sledgehammer left to the body, then gave ground. Buzz went after him.

Slag fought stolidly, but as the round progressed he found that something was happening to him. He was being just a bit too slow and stolid. Buzz was getting hard, strength-taking blows past his guard.

That was all right up to a point. Slag reckoned to take something of a hammering early in a fight. But this was more severe than he was used to.

And Buzz could slam them in, too! Slag reckoned there was something in what Pins had said about neglecting training. Taking things easy made a fellow just a bit too slow.

But Slag wasn't worrying. He could warm up after a while, he told himself. Down by the timekeeper's desk a

radio announcer was giving a running commentary.

"Slag hasn't really got going yet, folks! He's letting Buzz Kenton do all the fighting, and every now and then pulls Buzz up with a hard smack. But Buzz is doing well, all the same. He's fighting hard, and isn't getting rattled."

He paused a second, then went on: "Phew! I wish you had been here to see that one, folks! Slag tried to put a hard one over Buzz's heart. Buzz smothered it, and sent a left to Slag's face and a right to his body. Beautiful timing, Buzz—beautiful timing!"

"Come on, Slag!" Pins roared. "Don't waste time over him. Knock him out!"

Slag tried. He gave ground suddenly, then stopped, trying to trick Buzz into walking clean into him. He swung up a hard one, but it never connected. Instead, Buzz's glove landed clean between Slag's eyes, and Slag lost balance and went down.

Clang! It was the end of the round. When Slag got to his corner, Pins said urgently:

"Loren, Slag—stay away from him, will you? Keep him running after you."

"Shut up!" said Slag genially. "I ain't going to shut up." Pins sounded unhappy. "We've got to win, Slag. We've got to. All our dough's up with the bookies. You can see how it is."

The bell went again, and once more Buzz met Slag two-thirds of the way across the ring. The thud of his blows could be heard even above the din of the yelling.

Slag didn't heed the advice that Pins had given him. He knew he had weight, and he knew that once he hit Buzz really hard, Buzz would fold up. So he kept in close this time.

It was what Buzz wanted. Buzz had superior speed. He countered and parried, fast footwork keeping him out of serious trouble.

Slag kept right on after him, grinning all the time.

Suddenly Slag thought he saw his chance. Buzz opened his guard for a fraction of a second.

The situation called for speed as well as weight, and speed was something that Slag hadn't got just then. But he tried. He saw the point of Buzz's chin just asking to be slammed into a pulp, and he went after it.

Yet again his blow never connected. Yet again he found himself momentarily off-balance.

And Buzz leapt in. He gave Slag a clout on the side of the head that made Slag's senses reel. Before Slag could recover, Buzz drove a couple of hard ones to the body.

They left Slag wide open for what was coming to him. And it came a split second later. Buzz whizzed in a hay-maker that started from the region of his knees and lifted Slag clean off his feet.

"Gosh!" muttered Pins. "Get me a drink, somebody!"

Nobody took any notice of him. They were listening to the referee counting.

"One—two—three—"
Slag heard the referee's voice only vaguely. Every nerve in his body was urging him to get up and knock Buzz clean into the middle of the yelling crowd.

"—Four—five—six—seven—eight—"

Slag's brain was clear enough to know that only two more seconds were left. He had to get up. But somehow he couldn't. He didn't seem to have any strength left.

"—Nine—out!"
The yell increased to a roar. But Slag wasn't interested any more. He just let go and went off to sleep.

When he came to he found himself lying in the dressing-room. The tang of powerful smelling-salts was in his nose.

He shook his head and looked up. Pins was bending over him anxiously, and by his side was Pat herself. Standing a short distance away was Cash Enright, the boxing promoter who had backed Slag against Buzz.

Slag grinned at them all.
"Gosh, he socked me, didn't he?" he said. "But I should worry. The next time I meet him I'm going to turn him into soup."

Cash Enright came forward. He was a slick-looking man with wavy hair and a hard face.

"There isn't going to be any next time," he said harshly. "I've lost plenty of dough on you to-night, Slag."

"I've lost plenty of dough on myself," Slag replied ruefully. "But why worry. Give me a return match with him for a month's time, and we'll get it all back."

Enright frowned. There was a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, but he had forgotten to light it.

"Slag," he said, "you've had your chance, and you've thrown it away. You've neglected training, and I hear you've been hanging around a night-spot these fast few weeks. That isn't any good to me. I can't afford to back fighters who play that kind of game. You're finished."

Slag sat up. He had just realised that things were serious.

"But, Mr. Enright—" he began.

Enright cut in with:
"I'm sorry, Slag, but you're all washed up!"

The next minute the door had slammed behind him, and that was that.

The Kid

AN hour later Slag and Pat sat at a table in the night club where Pat worked. Pat was looking tired and disappointed.

"What's your alibi, Slag?" she asked.

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Slag hunched his shoulders.

"I reckon I ain't got no alibi, Pat," he answered. "Buzz Kenton was just too much for me, that's all. And it was my fault. The worst of it is, Pins says we're broke."

"Broke?" Pat spoke scornfully. "Of course you're broke. Have you ever checked up on the amount of money Pins ought to have for you?"

"Well, no." Slag looked at her in a puzzled way. "But Pins is all right."

"So you say." Pat sounded impatient. "Listen to me, Slag. You've earned big money in your time, and you've never been a big spender. You ought to have loads of dough. Yet Pins says you're broke. You make me tired!"

Slag began to look troubled. All his life had been devoted to fighting, and he had never bothered about money.

"I reckon you must be wrong, Pat," he said. "Pins wouldn't—"

He broke off as a man approached the table. He had a flat nose, and was one of Slag's old sparring partners.

"Hallo, Joe!" Slag said.

Joe kept his voice low and spoke fast.

"I'm come about Pins, Slag," he said. "I think he's gone daffy." "What's the matter with him?" Slag asked.

"Well, a few minutes ago I tried to get some dough off him, and he says 'Sure—come on!' So he walks me round to the back door of the Arena."

Pat made a weary gesture.

"What do you think he was going to do—knock over the safe?" she asked, meaning to be sarcastic.

"That's right, lady," Joe replied. "He wanted to cut me in on it, but I beat it. I don't want any of that stuff."

Slag jumped to his feet. He saw what Pat had been getting at then. Pins, when in a tight corner, turned crooked. And if he would knock over a safe he would rob Slag himself.

All the same, Slag and Pins had been pals a long time, and Slag wasn't the kind of guy to go back on a man.

"Come on, Pat," he said. "We've got to get him out of that place."

The Arena was only a block away, and they went there as fast as they could run. They found the back door open, the lock having been forced.

As they rushed in, a shot echoed somewhere in the building. They knew where it came from—Cash Enright's office.

As they turned a corner they saw Pins staggering towards them. He slumped against a wall, trying to keep on his feet.

"Gosh!" muttered Slag, and grabbed hold of him.

He and Pat got him into Slag's old dressing-room and sat him in a chair. Slag told Pat to sit on the arm and hold him up.

Running footsteps could be heard outside. Slag started to talk hard.

"I see what you mean, Pins," he said loudly. "I drop suddenly on my left knee, and then come up again with all I've got. Okay. The next time I'm matched, I'll try that and see—"

The door suddenly opened, and the night watchman and a cop looked in. Slag turned.

"Hiya, Jimmy!" he said to the night watchman. "Pins is giving me what's coming to me for losing to-night."

"Someone tried to crack Mr. Enright's safe," the watchman said.

"Did you hear the shooting?"

"No." Slag frowned, pretending to think. "But I did hear someone going towards the hall. He was running, too."

"When?" the cop asked.

"I dunno. About a minute ago, maybe." He grinned. "I thought it was you, Jimmy, so didn't pay any attention."

The cop nodded to the watchman, and the two hurried away. Slag turned to Pat.

"We've got to get him out of here," he said. "Give me a hand."

She shook her head. She was standing up, looking down at Pins.

"I reckon there's nothing more to be done," she said. "He's—dead."

Slag blinked, speechless for the moment. Then he pulled himself together.

"We've still got to get him out of here," he said. "We'll take him along to his rooms. If the cops find him shot, there's going to be trouble for both of us. Get a taxi—I'll make some stall about pretending he's drunk."

Pat hurried away, and Slag dragged Pins' body to the back door, holding him upright as though Pins couldn't walk. He piled him into a taxi only just in time. As they got clear the sound of police sirens could be heard from farther up the street.

Safely in Pins' room, Pat looked at Slag angrily.

"Well, you've got me in a nice jam!" she said. "Why I have anything to do with you, I don't know. What do we do with him now?"

"I'll find somebody to take care of things," Slag answered. "He'll never be found. Meanwhile, we'd better empty his pockets of papers."

They got to work. Slag pulled out a long envelope and withdrew the document from inside. Pat, looking over his shoulder, gave an exclamation of surprise.

"So that's why you were both broke!" he said. "The deeds of a house! He's been buying property!"

"Some place in a joint called Hilldale," said Slag. "So that's why he used to scam out of town every Saturday without leaving any address. He kept this place secret—all ready to walk out on me the minute I was through with the fight game."

There were other papers. One was a telegram. It said:

"EEEEEE GGGG stop Arrive Hilldale to-morrow. Will meet you at the house."

It was signed "Ted."

"What do all them E's and G's mean?" Slag asked.

"You can search me about the E's," Pat answered, "but I know what the G's stand for. Four grand—four thousand dollars. And somebody named Ted is going to pay that to Pins—maybe a debt or something. What's more, you're going to be there to take it off him. It's your dough."

Slag shook his head. "I ain't going to no Hilldale," he said.

"You booh!" Pat raved. "If you hadn't got me to look after you, where would you be? And you're the guy who pesters me to marry you! You are going to Hilldale."

"I ain't."

"You are!"

And early the next morning they caught a train to Hilldale!

The house that Pins had bought was a grand little place, set in its own garden, and bright with fresh paint. Slag and Pat let themselves in with the keys they had taken from Pins' pockets, and looked about.

"Cute little joint, ain't it?" said Slag. "Glad you like it!" Pat answered dryly. "Don't forget it was your money that bought it."

They went out into the kitchen, and found a larder stocked with food. Then they went into a living-room, and saw a photograph standing on a small table.

"Look!" Slag said. "That's Pins. I wonder who the girl is he was took with."

"I don't know," Pat replied. "Did you ever see him with her?"

"Nope."
"Then she's the one that counted with him." Pat turned abruptly at the sound of the street door opening. She and Slag hurried out into the hall.

"It'll be that Ted person," Pat said briskly.

Standing before them, looking at them doubtfully, was a small boy. He was about twelve—no more. He was carrying a suitcase, and wore a school cap.

"Hallo, son!" Slag said. "What do you want?"

The boy looked at him in a scared way.

"Please, isn't this where Mr. Streaver lives?" he asked.

"Eh? Streaver?" Slag blinked at him. "Sure, sure!" He looked at the boy curiously. "Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm Ted," the boy answered.

Pat held her hand to her head and closed her eyes. Then she remembered something, and opened her handbag. She took from it the telegram that they had found in Pins' pockets.

"Did you send this?" she asked.

Ted looked at the telegram, and nodded. He was not so scared now. He rather liked these two grown-ups he had met so unexpectedly.

"Yes, ma'am. I sent it," he said. "I sent it to Dad yesterday."

"Dad!" Ideas began to filter slowly into Slag's brain. "Say, are you Pins' boy?"

"Pins, sir?" Ted shook his head. "No, I'm—that is, James Streaver is my father."

"Well," said Slag, "what do you know about that?"

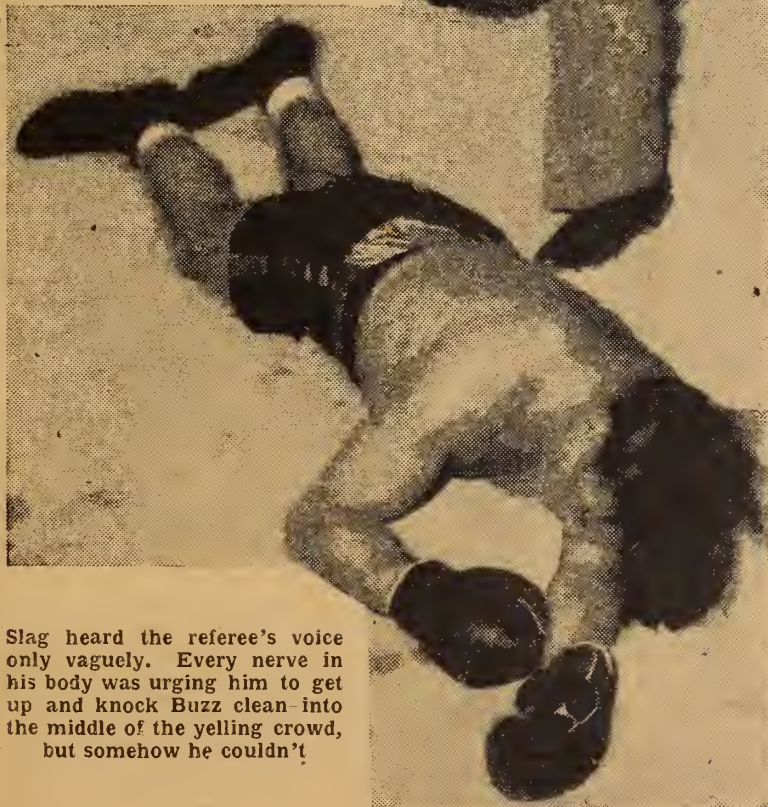
Pat waved him aside. She was still thinking about that telegram.

"What do all these E's and G's mean?" she asked.

"Excellent and Good, ma'am. They're the marks I got at school. The G's are for arithmetic, and the E's are for history." Ted smiled modestly. "I'm rather good at history."

Slag was past speech. Pat looked at Ted, and went on trying to be hard-boiled.

"I—er—well, I reckon I'd better try



Slag heard the referee's voice only vaguely. Every nerve in his body was urging him to get up and knock Buzz clean into the middle of the yelling crowd, but somehow he couldn't

to fix us all something to eat," she said, and moved towards the kitchen. "Slag, you'd better have a talk with Ted while I'm gone."

Leaving Slag with the dirty work to do, she vanished. Slag muttered things about her that wouldn't have done her any good to hear, and cleared his throat noisily.

The next quarter of an hour was the worst he had ever spent in his life. Telling that kid what had happened to Pins was no easy job, especially when the kid told him that his mother had died a couple of years previously.

Slag and Pat had an orphan on their hands!

Thrown Out!

HAVING Ted to look after did strange things to Slag and Pat. They thought of the pleasant little house in Hilldale, and they thought of the noisy life of the big city—and found that they liked Hilldale best.

There was nobody to claim Pins' house, so they got married and stayed on. Pat said that the place had been bought with Slag's money, so why shouldn't they have it? Slag said that the house belonged to Ted really, but Ted wouldn't mind them living in it.

As for Ted himself—well, he thought Slag and Pat were fun. Once he had got over the shock of his father's death, he was quite ready to leave himself entirely in Slag's hands.

So Slag got busy and found himself a job. He didn't have much difficulty over that. He was well-known, and everybody liked him. The foreman at the oilfield close to Hilldale had been one of Slag's fans when Slag had been a top-line boxer, and promptly signed him on.

The money was not big, but Slag added to it by giving exhibition bouts

at the local boxing booth. He made enough in those fights to pay Ted's school bills.

And so the years passed. Ted grew up, and Slag went on fighting. He got enough out of it to send Ted to college, and by the time Ted was twenty he was showing promise of doing great things.

He was in the college football team, and his professors gave him good reports. Slag and Pat felt that they had done a good job of work on him.

At last came Ted's graduation—the time for him to leave college and go out into the world.

Pat gave the house a good clean up on the day he was due home. He had told her in a letter that he was bringing a friend along, and Pat wanted to make things really nice for them.

Pat was upstairs when Ted arrived. Slag was out in the garden. He heard Ted bellow:

"Hey, folks! Where are you? We've arrived!"

"Coming, Ted." Slag bellowed back, and ran into the house. Then he stopped dead.

"Hallo, Dad!" Ted said. "I want you to meet—"

"Cash Enright!" said Slag grimly.

Cash Enright smiled and held out his hand. He was greyer about the temples, but he still had that hard, shifty look of old.

"Hallo, Slag!" he said.

Slag ignored the outstretched hand. Ted looked from one to the other curiously.

"Do you know, Mr. Enright, Dad?" he asked.

"Yeah, I know him." Slag's voice was low and expressionless. He turned to Cash. "What are you doing here?"

Cash laughed easily.

"Say, if this isn't a coincidence!" he said. "Young man, this is going to be easy. We won't have any difficulty selling your father our proposition."

Ted nodded eagerly.

"Mr. Enright is going to help me make a lot of money in the next two or three years," he said quickly. "He's going to put me into the fight game. He's been watching me play football, and thinks he can train me for the ring."

"Sure," Cash broke in. "It'll be a cinch to build him up for a slot at the title."

"And with all that money," Ted added, "think of the things I could do for you and Mom."

At that moment Pat walked in. She stared at Cash coldly. She had never liked him in the old days, and liked him still less now.

"I heard what you said," she told him. "So you want to get your hands on another poor kid and hammer the heart and sense out of him, like you did to all the others—just to make a few more rotten dollars."

Cash grinned at her ingratiatingly.

"Well, if it isn't Pat!" he said. "I often wondered what had happened to you two. If you listen to what I've got to say—"

Pat went up to him angrily.

"Listen, Cash. If you try to talk Ted into going into the fight racket, I'll brain you."

Cash turned to Slag, his expression nasty.

"Slag, can't you shut her up?" he said.

Slag didn't like his tone, and he wasn't going to have Pat spoken about like that by anyone. He took Cash by the shoulders and swung him towards the door.

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"Outside, you!" he snapped. "And stay out."

Ted tried to intervene.

"Listen, Dad," he said. "I brought Mr. Enright down here—"

"Mom's right," Slag cut in quickly.

"He'll make a dim-witted, pulp-faced, burned-out old man before you've had a chance to know what it's all about. The fight game is lousy. I got put out on my ear when I was licked by Buzz Kenton, and Buzz became the blue-eyed boy. Do you know what's happened to Buzz since then? He got flung out, too, and the last I heard of him he was tramping the State trying to beg food to eat. And there have been others—Batling Jamieson, Terror Fortuna, and that Bronx kid, young Nelson."

"But, Dad—"

"He'll make you a pal of all the crooks and chisellers from coast to coast," Slag went on. "And he'll join them in laughing at you when you're through. He'll make you rich for a minute and poor for the rest of your life—that's what he'll do for you." He shook Cash violently. "Now get out of here, or for once in your easy life you're going to get what's coming to you."

He ran Cash to the door. Ted took a step forward to interfere. Pat caught hold of his arm.

"You stay here," she said.

Slag got Cash outside on the veranda, and gave a mighty heave. Cash tumbled down the steps, and before he could pick himself up Slag had slammed the door hard behind him.

Ted freed himself from Pat, and confronted Slag angrily.

"Listen, Dad," he said. "I'm not going to throw away a chance like this. Suppose I do what you and Mom want—go to law school. It'll be years before I can make any real money, and you know it. But if I grab this, I can clean up in a couple of years."

Slag looked at him wearily.

"Clean up in a couple of years!" he said scornfully. "You're trying to tell me what's going to happen! I know what Cash Enright does to people."

Pat nodded vigorously. However hard-boiled she might have been in the past, she loved Ted as though he had been her own son.

"Yeah, and I could tell you a few things about him, too," she cut in.

Slag waved her to silence.

"You stay out of this, Pat," he said. "Ted and me are going to settle things."

He turned back to Ted. "I'm going to tell you about a guy I ran into about a week ago. He was a college fellow, too—he was another who started to clean up in a couple of years."

"But look at all the big fighters, Dad," Ted interrupted. "They're not down and out. They had to start at the bottom, the same as I want to."

"I know," Slag said. "And for every top notcher, there are a thousand walking on their heels. Anyway, I was going to tell you about this guy. Cash Enright caught him when he was young. He found him in a college football team—just the same as you—and the lad had also done a bit of school boxing."

"Billy Roone!" Pat exclaimed.

"Yeah, Bill Roone," Slag answered. "Well, Billy trained to fight standard and had a couple of bouts matched against palookas. And he licked them—just like he was meant to do. Then Cash was told he would have to lose the next fight—just because the betting went that way. It was a build up for big money. The kid would take a dive, and then, when the odds would be against him for a future fight, he would get a

knock-out on the next bout and put Cash Enright into the big dough."

"And Billy refused," Pat said.

"That's right. Billy refused. He said he was going to fight the clean way. So what happened? Cash put him out on his ear."

Ted made a gesture of impatience.

"What of it?" he said. "He could still go ahead with some other career." Slag shook his head.

"That's where you're wrong, Ted, he couldn't. He'd forgotten everything he knew. He was punch-drunk—he had to be giving it and taking it, or he wasn't happy. So what happened. He goes on the booze, and ended up last week in the Hilldale jail."

"And he sent for Dad to bail him out," Pat said, taking up the threads of the story. "Dad brought him home here, and what did he have to do? He ate our food, borrowed some money, stole a lot more, and cleared out, leaving Dad to lose the cash he had put up as bail." Her voice was bitter. "That's the kind of heel he had become—because of Cash Enright. It's a good job that bail money wasn't heavy, or it would have broke us."

Ted was not convinced. He had set his heart on the fight game, and wasn't going to listen to reason.

"If I got big money," he said, "look what I could do for you both."

"We don't want things done for us," Pat said. "Not that way, anyhow."

"We've always looked after ourselves," Slag added.

Ted nodded patiently.

"That's true," he admitted. "And you've looked after me, too. I don't forget that. But I'm not a kid any more. You can't make my decisions for me."

Slag put his hand on Ted's shoulder.

"This is one we've got to make for you, son," he said kindly.

Ted drew away angrily.

"So that's it!" he said. "You think I'm not capable of managing my own life, eh?"

"It looks that way," Slag answered.

"Right!" Ted's face was red and his hands were trembling. "Then I'm not going to argue with you any more. I'll just tell you instead. I'm going through with that deal with Enright."

Slag faced him, a gleam in his eye.

"You're not," he said flatly.

"I'm twenty-one," Ted persisted, "and I can do what I darned well please."

Slag did not move.

"You think so?" he asked.

"I'm sure so. And what's more, I'm going to start right now."

Slag planted his feet wide apart. The grin, the easy-going demeanour, that had been his main characteristic in the old days, had gone completely now.

"All right," he said. "You say you're going to do what you like, and you ain't going to argue any more. That's fine. I'm not going to argue either. I'm going to tell you. You're going to law school the way we planned—you're going to amount to something. And if it takes longer to make big dough that way, well, you're going to take longer, that's all."

"You're wasting your time, talking like this," Ted snapped.

"I am, huh?" Slag squared his shoulders. "Okay. Maybe when I was in the fight game I wasn't anything but a third-rater, but I've still got enough left in me to knock any fool notions out of your head."

"That's what you think," Ted said rudely.

"Yeah, that's what I think. Take care of yourself, can you?"

"You bet I can."
 "Well, start doing it."

And deliberately, knowing what was bound to happen, Slag reached out and brought the flat of his hand hard across Ted's face.

The Last Fight

TED started back, his face scarlet except for the white marks left by Slag's fingers. He stared at Slag unbelievably, not knowing what to do.

"Come on," said Slag. "I'm going to knock some sense into you. Put up your hands."

Ted put them up—a little uncertainly. Slag gave him a light blow on the side of the jaw.

"Come on, prize-fighter!" Slag taunted. "See how you like it!"

That last blow sent Ted into a fury. He lashed out, aiming a left at Slag's face. Slag stepped back easily, and while Ted was off balance and trying to recover, sent a wicked right in between Ted's eyes.

"What's the matter, Champ?" Slag wanted to know. "Another one like that, and you'll be cold."

Ted rushed in, still in a rage. Yet again Slag stepped away and rammed home a hard one. Ted tottered back, clutching wildly at nothing, and went down with a crash.

Slag grinned and helped him to his feet. Then he stood back, waiting.

Ted did nothing for a moment or two. He was shaking the dizziness out of his head. Then he came on again.

But this time he did not rush. He had learnt his lesson. It was no good losing one's temper with a fighter like Slag. Slag had tactics and science—he was slow but clever.

So Ted became slow and clever, too. He went down into proper fighting position and edged himself forward.

Slag saw him coming, and his grin widened. He waited until Ted was near enough, then got his left into action again.

But Ted wasn't there when it ought to have connected. He let the blow go past him, and put his right hard on to Slag's nose. Slag staggered backwards, blinking, wondering what had happened.

He realised that Ted had been doing some fighting before. Ted's blow had

been shrewd and well-timed. Slag decided to go all out on him. The boy had to be taught his lesson, and this was the time to do it.

He went in with all the ringeraft he knew and gave Ted a couple of hard body blows. Ted took them comfortably, and countered with another smasher to Slag's face.

"How do you like it, prize-fighter?" Ted said tauntingly.

Pat stood on a chair, waving her arms about excitedly.

"Give it to him, Slag!" she cried. "Show him some sense! Knock him out!"

Slag grinned again, and decided that he would take Pat's advice. The only way to cope with an obstinate kid like this was to get really rough.

He feinted with his right to draw Ted's guard, and then started a hay-maker on its way. The blow started from the region of Slag's knees, and came upwards with crashing force as he gathered his weight behind it.

But Ted had realised what was coming, and against Slag's science he had speed. He smothered the hay-maker by going backwards and beating it down, and then stepped forward with one of his own.

Again it was beautifully timed. It landed full on the point of Slag's chin, and Slag, completely unprepared for it, gave a grunt of mingled surprise and pain and went over backwards. He hit the floor with a thud that rocked the house.

The moment he was down, Ted realised what he had done. He rushed forward and dropped on one knee.

"Dad!" he cried. "I'm sorry! If you hadn't started—" He broke off, then repeated. "I'm sorry, dad!"

Pat jumped off her chair and knelt down on the other side of Slag. She put her arm under Slag's head.

"Sorry!" she shouted at Ted. "You ought to be! Picking Cash Enright instead of him, after the way he's sweated his life out to give you a chance like other boys—and you not even his son! Going without things so that you could have everything your own father would have wanted you to have!"

Ted hung his head, ashamed.
 "Do you know what he's been do-

ing?" Pat went on fiercely. "He's been going out of nights, down to the local boxing booth, letting those rats down there make a chopping-block of him so as to pay for you at college—trying to give you a chance to be something better than he was. And if you ever turn out to be one-tenth as good —"

She stopped. Slag was moving. He opened his eyes, looked up at them both, and grinned again.

"Dad, I didn't mean it," Ted said miserably.

"I know you didn't, son," Slag said. "I asked for it—and I got it."

Ted tried to keep the tears from coming into his eyes.

"Dad, you're right about Cash," he said. "I'll go to law school if you still want it."

Slag sat up, fingering his jaw.
 "It would be better that way, Ted," he said. "Honest, it would. I reckon you deserve to be different from me and the rest of the mugs."

Ted nodded, reached out, and took hold of Slag's right hand.

"I will be," he said. "You see."

Pat glared at him, conscious that her eyes were misty. She tried to cover it up by going hard-boiled again.

"Say, what are you hanging around for?" she said to Ted. "Go upstairs and get the witch-hazel and the cotton-wool. And hurry!"

Ted scrambled to his feet and hurried away. Slag watched him go, then put his hand on Pat's shoulder. He grinned at her. She smiled back, and a tear ran down her nose.

"Okay, now?" Slag asked.

"Okay, Slag," Pat answered. "You're a great guy. And you won your last fight by losing it."

And unable to hold back the tears any more, she buried her face in his coat.

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Buck Jones	as	Slag Bailey
Helen Twelvetees	as	Pat Rogers
Donald O'Connor	as	Ted Streaever
		(at 12)
John Hartley	as	Ted Streaever
Robert Armstrong	as	Pins Streaever
Larry Crabbe	as	Buzz Kenton
Sidney Blackmer	as	Cash Enright

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Read This First

Wild Bill Hickok, United States marshal in Abilene, Kansas, declares war on the Phantom Raiders, a powerful organisation of outlaws dominated by a ruthless schemer known as "Lynx" Morrell.

Morrell and his associates are bent on a dual purpose—firstly, to prevent the movements of cattle from Texas to Kansas, where beef is fetching high prices—secondly, to hold up construction on a railroad which is being extended from the north and which constitutes a threat to their ambitions.

The crooks' ultimate aim is to obtain possession of the lands owned by the Texas cattle-barons, who, under the leadership of a rancher named Cameron, have banded themselves together with the object of driving their combined herds north to Abilene via the Chisholm trail.

The Texans set out on their long and perilous journey through the wilderness, the expedition comprising supply wagons, cowmen and their womenfolk, and thousands of head of steers.

Meanwhile, away up in Abilene, Bill Hickok obtains information which causes him to ride south and contact the Cameron column, and he is instrumental in saving the Texans from massacre during an Indian uprising engineered by the Phantom Raiders.

Afterwards, Bill returns to Kansas, but in due course heads southward again, unaware that Cameron has met August 5th, 1939.

his death and that the Texans are contemplating retreat.

On the trail he is attacked and captured by renegade Indians in the pay of Morrell, and carried to the Red-skin encampment, is condemned to die at the stake.

Now Read On

Reprieve

ADVENTUROUS as his career had been, familiar as he was with the perils of the frontier, Wild Bill Hickok had never been involved in a plight so desperate as that in which he stood now.

Deprived of his death-dealing guns, a prisoner of the infamous Vulture and his band of renegade Indians, a helpless figure lashed to the stake, the marshal believed that his doom was imminent as the leader of his foes flourished that blazing brand and prepared to thrust it into the brushwood that was piled about him.

Yet before the Vulture could plunge that brand into the heap of dry faggots Bill Hickok saw a chance of saving himself from the ghastly fate with which he was threatened.

Physical prowess could not have aided him. Muscular as he was, he could never have burst the bonds that secured him to the stake, and even if that had been possible he would have been instantly massacred by the Redskins who surrounded him. But presence of mind and quickness of wit came to his rescue as he suddenly beheld a shadow commencing to intervene between the vivid, brazen orb that was the sun and the world to which he was in danger of bidding farewell for ever.

It was then that he remembered the expected eclipse for which he had been interestedly keeping a look-out when he had been ambushed and captured, and as he realised that it was about to take place he immediately perceived that he might profit by the phenomenon.

"Wait, Vulture," he jerked. "I say you do great wrong by burning me at the stake. I say my death will displease the Great Spirit and bring misfortune to you and your brothers. I say that if you set fire to this brushwood the Great Spirit will move his hand across the face of the sun and

bring on the night as a sign of his wrath."

The Vulture had stayed his hand to listen to what the captive had to say, but having heard him out, he was clearly unimpressed by the white man's prophetic declaration. For his lean, rascally countenance merely registered a look of mockery.

"Big Thunder would make fool of me," he jeered.

"I speak the truth," Bill Hickok retorted. "You will see."

A derisive laugh was the Vulture's only response, and flourishing the torch again, he lowered it deliberately and forced it into the brushwood that had been piled around the marshal, the twigs and foliage speedily becoming ignited.

Meanwhile, however, the shadow of the moon was continuing to pass slowly across the face of the noonday sun, and with the brush crackling sinistral before him and flames mounting luridly from the heaped vegetation Bill threw a glance skyward.

"Look!" he rapped out. "Look, Vulture! Now do you see?"

The Vulture raised his head as did the other Indians who had formed a ring about the stake, and at once they desisted that the sun was huff obscured. And as they gazed aloft with awe succeeding the fiendish expressions that had hitherto stamped their features, the shadow of the moon gradually obliterated the sun in its entirety so that they and their intended victim were enveloped in a darkness as thick as the gloom of night.

It was a darkness complete but for the flicker of flames arising from the brushwood in the close vicinity of the stake, and not for long did those flames continue to play. For on a sudden a Redskin standing close to the Vulture leapt forward, tore away the burning brand and such of the faggots as had caught fire and flinging them to the dust, stamped them underfoot and extinguished them.

In another moment that same Redskin had cast himself on his knees in an attitude of fearful reverence, and the Vulture excepted, the other Indians made haste to fall into the like posture, crouching there with abject faces uplifted to the sombre heavens.

Bound to the stake, Wild Bill Hickok drew in a long breath. He had gambled on the superstitious credulity of the savages, and it looked as if the gamble had proved successful. Nor did he have occasion to doubt the success of that gamble when the ecliptic phenomenon at length came to an end. For as the shadow of the moon passed clear of the sun's orbit and allowed the light of day to shine forth again the Redskins who had dropped to their knees rose up and turned apprehensive glances on the marshal.

"Big Thunder spoke true words," faltered the Indian who had quenched the blazing faggots and the torch that the Vulture had thrust into them. "I, Moon Dog, say that Big Thunder must not perish by any hand of ours."

There was a tremulous murmur of assent from those other Redskins who had knelt reverently during the period of the eclipse. But the Vulture did not add his voice to that murmur. Alone among the renegades he was still in murderous mood, and plucking a knife from a belt around his waist, was lunging towards the marshal when the Indian known as Moon Dog sprang to intercept him.

Seizing the Vulture by the wrist, Moon Dog dragged him back from the captive.

"No," he cried vehemently. "No, Vulture! Big Thunder gave sign. No can kill!"

"Maybe you no can kill!" the Vulture snarled. "But I am not afraid."

"Moon Dog say no kill!" the other insisted. "You bring great trouble on us! Moon Dog say no kill!"

The Vulture was the leader of that band of renegades, yet it was plain that Moon Dog was a personage of influence amongst them. Moreover, it was obvious that Moon Dog had the support of the rest of the Indians present, and, divining that these might even turn on him if he persisted in his desire to slay Bill Hickok, the Vulture sullenly discarded his knife.

"What of our bargain with the white man who bribed us to kill Big Thunder?" he muttered, when he had let the dagger fall to the ground. "What of the rest of the gold he was to pay us? We were to buy much fire-water with it—and good guns."

"We take Big Thunder alive to that white man at Wolfville," Moon Dog retorted. "We get gold just the same. But we no kill. We leave that to white man. Then Great Spirit make no bad medicine for us."

The arrangement met with general approval, and within a few minutes Bill Hickok had been untied from the stake and marched to the edge of the encampment, on the fringe of which his own bronco Pinto and the mustangs of the Indians were picketed. There, covered by his captors, the marshal was compelled to climb astride his pony with his arms pinioned by a lariat which had been slung over him and which the Vulture was holding. Then, the leader of the renegades mounting a sorrel horse and Moon Dog and two powerfully built braves scrambling on to the backs of three other steeds, a start was made for the town of Wolfville, which lay half a day's journey to the north-east and which possessed an unsavoury reputation, as Bill well knew.

The remainder of the Indians watched prisoner and escort until they had passed out of sight of the encampment, and for the marshal and the four Redskins who were in charge of him there ensued a brisk journey through the hills which environed that encampment.

Bill was forced to keep ahead of his captors. Riding abreast of one another,

these followed at a distance of a dozen yards, the Vulture linked to Bill by the rope which encircled the officer of the law and which the Redskin had twined round his own right wrist.

In this formation the quartet presently debouched on to an expanse of prairie bounded on the north-east by a stretch of terrain cluttered with massive rocks, and, the Vulture calling out terse directions to him from time to time, Bill at length found himself in close proximity to that boulder-strewn tract.

He had been speculating on the identity of the white man whom the Indians intended to seek out in Wolfville, but he had no desire to make that individual's acquaintance yet awhile—and certainly not as a prisoner. And he had scarcely reached the rocks to which he had been directed when he unexpectedly jabbed his heels into Pinto's flanks.

The bronco was prompt to respond. It shot forward from trot to gallop with an impetus that might have been likened to the velocity of a stone discharged from a catapult. Simultaneously Bill braced himself to counteract the tug of the rope that connected him to the Vulture, and, taken completely unawares, that dusky ruffian was whipped clear over his mustang's neck as the lasso was wrenched taut.

The renegade crashed to earth, and was dragged forward as Pinto careered into the midst of the huge boulders that littered the ground ahead. Twenty paces the Vulture was hauled, then his skull came into sickening collision with a snag of rock, and cracked as if it had been an egg-shell, his brains splattering the dust.

By then Pinto and Bill Hickok had disappeared among the boulders—before Moon Dog and the other two Redskins could fire so much as a single shot—and a split-second after the leader of the renegades had met his death against that snag of rock the marshal contrived to tear the lariat's noose from around his arms and extricate himself from the imprisoning loop.

He spurred onward. Behind him there arose a fierce outcry and a sudden, swift tattoo of hoofs—sounds that told him the Vulture's cronies were surging forward to give chase—and, though he had no doubts concerning Pinto's ability to outstrip the Indians' mounts, he had no intention of matching the paint stallion's speed against that of his enemies' mustangs. He wanted his guns, and they were in the possession of one of the two braves who were with Moon Dog.

He had gone no more than a hundred yards through the rocks when he jumped from the saddle, and, shouting to Pinto to keep going, he scrambled to the craggy side of a high boulder—had barely gained the peak of it when Moon Dog and his comrades swept into his view.

They were riding side by side, following the dust-clouds raised by the flying feet of Pinto, who had vanished among the rocks farther on, and no sooner were the three Indians below him than Wild Bill hurled himself upon them.

He lauded atop of them, enveloping the trio in his powerful arms. Next instant white man and Redskins were thumping to the ground with an impact for which the marshal was prepared, but for which his foes were not.

Bill was the first to rise. Moon Dog was the next to reach his feet, but almost immediately renewed his acquaintance with the dirt, for he encountered an Anglo-Saxon upper-cut that laid him as flat as a tepee rug and

buffeted the wits clean out of his feather-decked head.

The other two renegades struggled up, only to feel the weight of Bill's blunCHED knuckles as well. They had no chance to use musket, six-gun, or knife—were slammed senseless ere they could make any dangerous move—and just thirty seconds later Bill Hickok had retrieved his prized forty-fives and was uttering a shrill whistle that was calculated to bring Pinto back to him.

Smile enough the bronco soon returned to him, and, swinging himself into the saddle again, he abandoned the unconscious renegades and made tracks for the west.

Half an hour afterwards he picked up the Chisholm trail and turned southward along it in the expectation of meeting up with the Cameron column; and it was about four o'clock of that same afternoon that he finally came upon the Texans at the point near which the rancher who had headed the expedition had died so tragically.

The fight which had broken out between Scudder, Keno, Jim Blakely and Kit Lawson had been stopped, the other men in the outfit having intervened. Yet it was plain to Bill when he arrived on the scene and dismounted that all was not well, and espying Ruth Cameron among the assemblage gathered there, he singled her out and addressed her inquiringly.

"Howdy, Miss Cameron?" he greeted. "Are you folks camping here for a spell?"

Scudder was near by, somewhat bruised of countenance but belligerent of manner, and he stepped close to Bill before Ruth could reply.

"No, we're not campin' here, Mr. Hickok," he said thickly. "We're headin' back to Texas where we belong."

Bill surveyed him coolly.

"I sort of heard rumours that a fellow by the name of Scudder was trying to spread discontent through the outfit," he observed. "It appears a hunter who spent a night in camp with this expedition showed up in Abilene a week or so back with word to that effect. That's why I'm here."

He turned to Ruth again.

"Is your father around, Miss Cameron?" he asked.

The girl's eyes filled with tears, and approaching Bill, Jim Blakeley related the news of Cameron's death, whereupon the marshal was silent for a spell. Then, after expressing his condolence to Ruth, he once more addressed himself to Scudder.

"Listen," he said, "you may be from the Lone Star State, but you answer to the name and description of a hombre who used to hang out in Abilene and who wasn't too highly thought of by the folks around there. Anyhow, I'm giving it as my opinion that whatever you may be aiming to do, the rest of these people won't be of the same mind as yourself after I've had a talk with them."

"No?" Scudder sneered. "Talk's cheap, Hickok."

Bill took his hand across the ruffian's face in a sharp, stinging blow, and at that Keno made as if to pounce on the marshal from the rear, only to be held in check as Kit Lawson pulled a six-shooter and covered him. As for Scudder, he had recoiled with hand up-lifted to his cheek, but in another moment he ripped out an oath and reached for a revolver he was wearing on his hip.

Bill could easily have beaten him to the draw and plugged him. He refrained from doing so, however, and instead gripped the rogue by the front of his shirt with one hand and let loose a smashing punch with the other.

Scudder went down and stayed down for several seconds. Then he rose, and though he scowled darkly at Bill, he seemed to think better of trying to settle the issue by gunplay, for he kept his fingers away from his holster.

"Now cut your hundred measly head of steers out of the herd and get going!" the officer of the law commanded tersely. "Go on, beat it!"

Scudder slouched off, and Keno did not have to be told to accompany him. And under Kit Lawson's supervision the pair of them had mounted up and had departed with the hundred head of cattle to which Bill had referred, when the marshal commenced to harangue the personnel of the Cameron column.

"Folks," he began, "there's just one question I want to ask you. Are you real Texans?"

There was a murmur of assent, which Bill quickly interrupted.

"Maybe you think you are," he declared, breaking in on their concerted response. "But you're not the kind of Texans who fought with Davy Crockett at the Alamo. Listen, while the wagoners and outriders and punchers among you stand here bickering like a lot of old women, men up in the north—real men—are risking their lives to complete the railroad that's going to help your state if you'll take advantage of it. And that railroad will be completed in a short time—to be ready for you when you reach trail's end."

His audience looked sheepish, and he saw that his homily had created an effect and was bidding fair to shame them out of all inclination to abandon their enterprise.

"Now what is it to be?" he demanded of them. "Back to Texas in dis-

grace or on to Abilene with honour?"

A dubious pause ensued. Then someone raised the cry of "Abilene," and it was a cry that was taken up on every side until the whole concourse was shouting it in determined accents.

"That's the spirit of the Lone Star State!" Bill announced, when the hubbub had died down, and immediately afterwards he was receiving the thanks of Ruth, Jim Blakely and Kit Lawson for the manner in which he had restored the confidence of the people of the column.

"Aw, that's all right, friends," he drawled in response to their appreciative words. "But say, where's my little pal Buddy? I don't see him about anywhere."

It was Ruth who answered him.

"He's gone, Bill," she told him, a worried expression dawning on her pretty features. "One minute he was close by me, and in the next I caught sight of him riding off on that little pony dad gave him. I couldn't follow him at the time because things were looking so bad here. But I suppose he thought we were going back to Via Vista, and dreaded the idea of being caught and whipped raw by that heartless storekeeper he and the half-breed boy Jerry used to work for."

"You mean the fellow he called Stone," Bill rejoined through clenched teeth. "Tell me, Miss Ruth, which way did Buddy head when he left here?"

"East was the direction he took," was the reply. "East towards the hills."

"East, eh?" Bill mused. "I'll bet he went to look for Jerry. Yes, I'll gamble on that, for Grey Eagle's tribe isn't very far away. Look, Miss Ruth,

you folks get the column moving, and I'll ride into the hills and see if I can find Buddy. If I'm lucky, I may have him safely back with the outfit before you make your next camp."

Stone

ABOUT the time that Bill Hickok set out to make a search for little Buddy, that diminutive youngster might have been located near the rim of a hundred-foot cliff some miles to the east of the Chisholm trail.

The half-breed lad Jerry was with him, for as Bill had surmised, Buddy had left the Cameron column with the object of seeking that boy who had been his friend and his companion in misfortune in Via Vista.

Fortunately for Buddy, he had fallen in with a band of friendly Indians belonging to Grey Eagle's tribe, and these had conveyed him to the Comanche head-chief's village where he had been reunited with Jerry and where he had informed the latter that he wanted to live with him and the Redskins—as a happy alternative to returning to Via Vista.

Jerry had been all in favour of the idea, and after Buddy had been provided with a meal in the Indian village the older boy had invited him to accompany him on a ride through the hills, it being Jerry's custom to enjoy a canter during the afternoons, when the heat of the sun was on the wane.

At present the two of them were a long way from Grey Eagle's village, and having dismounted to rest their ponies, they were discussing the customs of the race among whom Buddy had elected to spend his life.

It was a discussion during which Jerry retailed many of the traditions and habits that were current among the people of the Comanche nation. Then the subject of hunting eventually

"The rat who answers to the name of Stone was responsible for this, and according to little Buddy, Stone was on his way to Wolfville. I'm going there, too, and I'm packing a bullet that will carry the message: 'Remember young Jerry!'" said Bill



cropping up and Buddy expressing a desire to become adept in archery, his half-breed chum laid hold of a bow and a quiver full of arrows which he had brought with him from the Indian village.

He was soon instructing Buddy in the art of using a bow and arrow, and it was while he was demonstrating that art that he suddenly heard movements in some thickets hard by.

A moment later a man emerged from those thickets on horseback. He was a white man, and lowering the bow and a feathered shaft he was grasping, Jerry was on the point of volunteering an amiable greeting when he recognised the newcomer.

"Stone!" he blurted.

Buddy was quick to identify the horseman as well, and with a scared exclamation he made a rush for his pony. Nor did Jerry lose any time in following his little friend's example, but before either of them could reach their mounts Stone had spurred forward and interposed himself between them and their mustangs.

The two boys retreated then, and climbing out of the saddle Stone surveyed them ominously. There was an evil look on his cadaverous face and a baleful glint in his narrow eyes.

"I heard your voices as I was passin' by," he said slowly, "and I thought they sounded familiar. That's why I turned aside an' pushed through the brushwood, and I'm sure glad I did. Yeah, I'm sure glad I did."

He drew in a long breath, then went on speaking in a harsher tone.

"I knew I'd catch up with you two some day," he rasped. "So you didn't like workin' for me and my partner Mr. Jenkins hack in Via Vista, hey? First one and then the other of you

ran away thinkin' you could escape me, hey? Ran away an' left Mr. Jenkins and me short-handed at the store—and me havin' gono to the trouble of takin' out papers that made me your lawful guardian, too."

He took a step towards the youngsters.

"Well," he continued, "I've found the pair of you again, and you're comin' with me. Right now I'm headed for Wolfville, an' that's where you're goin'. And from there I'm packin' you back to Via Vista. But before I do pack you back there I'm gonna tan the hide off the both of you—and when I'm through with you neither one of you will ever have the notion to give me the slip a second time."

Young Buddy was trembling, but Jerry had stiffened. Not without justification had the Indians named the half-breed boy little Bravo Heart, and as Stone moved forward again the elder of the two lads brought up the bow and arrow he was clutching and levelled the feathered bolt at the advancing storkeeper.

"Keep back, Mr. Stone!" he panted. "Legal papers don't mean nothin' to us, and you're not takin' us anywhere."

"Put that toy away!" Stone snapped, still advancing.

"This is no toy," Jerry warned. "You get out of here or I'll shoot—and shoot straight!"

He retreated a pace as he made the threat, and at the same time drew back the levelled arrow so that the bowstring was stretched taut. But that retrograde pace proved his undoing, for he tripped over a small rock that was embedded in the ground, and as he reeled he lost his grip on the arrow and missed his aim as well.

The shaft whistled harmlessly above Stone's head, and in an instant the rogue pounced on Jerry and struck him a savage blow in the face. It was a blow that knocked the boy staggering, and the rim of the cliff was only two or three yards behind him—fatally close, for suddenly the lad was toppling over it, and uttering a scream that was punctuated by a shrill cry of horror on the part of Buddy, he plunged from sight and hurtled downward through a hundred feet of space.

Stone had not intended to send him to his doom, and with Jerry's shriek ringing in his ears he stood motionless for a few seconds with an expression of awe on his lean face. Not for long was he impressed by the tragic result of the blow he had struck, however, and with a shrug of his shoulders he turned all at once towards Buddy as if to take charge of the latter.

Yet he was not destined to lay hands on Buddy, for in the very moment that he turned in the little fellow's direction he perceived a lone rider cantering across an expanse of plain away to the east of the cliff over which Jerry had fallen—a rider who was too far off to recognise, but who was mounted on a paint horse which caused Stone to hazard a guess at his identity.

"Hickok!" the storkeeper jerked involuntarily, and immediately losing interest in Buddy, he made tracks for his bronc, scrambled astride the animal and spurred from the scene.

The rider whom he had espied was indeed Bill Hickok, and some time afterwards Buddy was by the marshal's side and was giving him a tearful account of all that had occurred the youngster having found a winding path that had enabled him to descend the cliff safely.



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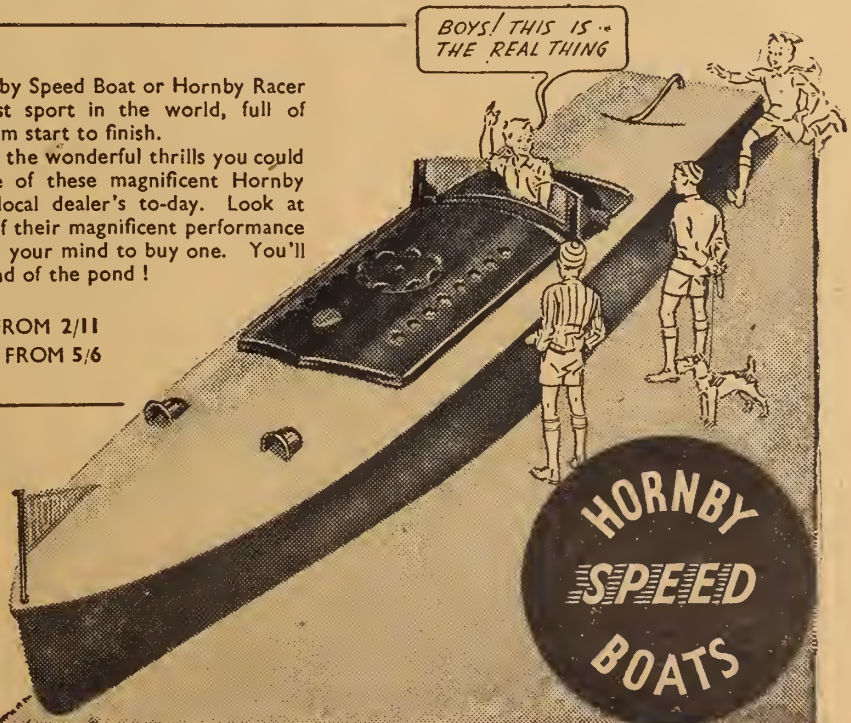
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The two of them located Jerry among some boulders in the shadow of that cliff. He was dead, and it was with an expression of mingled sorrow and determination on his handsome countenance that Bill gathered him in his arms and laid him across Pinto's saddle-bow. Then, remounting and lifting the weeping Buddy up behind him, he headed in the direction of the Chisholm trail.

An hour or two later Bill Hickok rejoined the Cameron column, coming upon the wagon-train in a valley where the Texans had encamped, and there in the presence of a sympathetic crowd which speedily congregated around him the officer of the law climbed down from his stallion with Buddy and lowered the lifeless body of Jerry to the ground.

Kneeling by the prone form of the half-breed boy with Ruth Cameron and Jim Blakely and Kit Lawson close beside him, Bill spoke in a voice that was pent-up with emotion.

"The rat who answers to the name of Stone was responsible for this," he said, "and according to little Buddy, Stone was on his way to Wolfville. I'm going there, too, and I'm packing a bullet that will carry this message: 'Remember young Jerry!'"

He paused, then went on speaking.

"I'll be hitting the trail as soon as we've buried Jerry," he murmured. "As for Buddy here, he needn't worry about falling foul of Stone again. I'll see to it that Stone never has the chance to bother him any more. Incidentally, I've told the little fellow there's no question of you turning back, Miss Ruth, and he wants to stick with you."

The sun was now dipping beyond the hills in the west, and it was as the shades of night were enfolding the landscape that Wild Bill Hickok once more detached himself from the Cameron outfit, bearing with him the memory of a grave that was Jerry's last resting-place—and the memory of young Buddy sobbing his heart out in one of the prairie schooners of the "train."

Throughout the greater part of that night and all through the forenoon of the following day Bill was in the saddle, and the sun had attained its meridian when the stalwart representative of the law entered the town of Wolfville, which consisted of a single street of crude frame buildings.

The marshal was not wearing his badge. In view of the settlement's ugly reputation, he had no desire to advertise his calling until he had checked up on the place, which he had never before visited. He was planning to remain incognito while he took the measure of the town—though, having heard that Wolfville was supposed to be a haunt of outlaws, he was alive to the possibility of meeting up with some desperado who knew him.

Half-way along the settlement's street, and on the north side of the dusty thoroughfare, there stood a mean-looking saloon. In front of this Bill drew his brone Pinto to a halt, and, throwing the animal's rein loosely over a hitch-rail, he dismounted and strode into the establishment.

There were half a dozen men drinking together at the bar. They were of rascally appearance, but were all strangers to Bill, and they returned casually enough the brief glance which he cast in their direction as he seated himself at a table a few yards from the counter. Then a greasy individual who had been serving those men rounded the bar and approached the marshal.

"Howdy, mister," this individual

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greeted. "What can I do for you?"

"I'd like some grub," Bill answered. "What have you got?"

He was offered the choice of several dishes, and within five minutes of his having made his selection an adequate meal was set before him.

The man who had taken his order and served him pulled up a chair and sat beside him. He turned out to be the proprietor of the saloon, and mentioned that he was called "Cactus" Dawson. He also proved to be of an inquisitive disposition, and after some conversation asked what Bill's name was.

"I've got my reasons for keeping that to myself," was the marshal's response.

Cactus Dawson jumped to the conclusion that Bill was a fugitive from justice, and, noting the two guns the latter was wearing, tentatively suggested that if he had any outstanding ability as a "triggerman" he might find work to his liking in that part of the country.

Wondering what the fellow was driving at, Bill took him up on the suggestion, and hinted that he was more than ordinarily skilful in the handling of a six-shooter, whereupon Cactus Dawson leaned closer to him.

"Did you ever hear of the Phantom Raiders?" he asked slyly.

"Why, yes," Bill answered. "I've heard of them."

Cactus indicated the men at the bar.

"There's some of 'em," he muttered. "And I'm mixed up with the organisation myself. They use my saloon as a sort of clearin'-house for stores and ammunition. A man named Morrell is the big chief, and he might find a job for you if you're as smart with a shootin' iron as you claim to be. Tell me, do you happen to know a hombre called Wild Bill Hickok?"

The marshal had become tense.

"Wild Bill Hickok!" he reiterated. "Sure, I know him—and if there's one man I'd like to rub out it's that star-packing peace officer."

"You would? Then you're among friends. Me an' the boys here have never seen this Hickok, but it appears he's been makin' a heap o' trouble for some o' the other fellers in the organisation. Now listen, Morrell ain't in town just now. He left early this mornin' for Silver River. But his right-hand man—"

He broke off, for at that juncture the swing-doors of the bar-room were thrust apart and a thin-visaged, dark-moustached personage entered the saloon—a personage at sight of whom Cactus Dawson laid a hand on Bill's sleeve.

"Why, here's Morrell's right-hand man now," he announced. "I'll introduce you. Hey, Stone."

Stone! Bill swung round in his chair as Cactus uttered that name, and he saw in Stone that scoundrel who had escaped from his custody a week or two before—that scoundrel whom the marshal had known to be a prominent member of the Raiders' organisation, though he had not been aware of his name at the time.

Stone clapped eyes on the officer of the law simultaneously, and astonishment and consternation were painted on his cadaverous face in the liveliest colours.

"Hickok!" he yelled.

The men at the bar wheeled, quick to take the alarm. Cactus Dawson started up with an oath and clutched at a knife that was tucked inside a belt which incircled his waist. In the same instant, however, Bill rammed the table hard against the saloon-owner's midriff and capsized that table atop of him as the greasy ruffian fell to the floor with a grunt. Then, incensed by odds that

were too heavy even for him, the marshal dived for a door that stood ajar in the rear wall of the bar-room.

He charged through into an apartment that contained a considerable quantity of stores; slammed and bolted the door behind him; then turned to seek a window through which he could make his getaway—only to learn to his dismay that the apartment in question possessed no window. Nevertheless, daylight was shining into the room through a crevice between two of the planks which formed its ceiling, and, desiring that those planks were obviously loose, Bill stumbled towards a big provision barrel that stood in a far corner.

To reach that barrel he had to pull aside several small kegs. One of these contained gunpowder, and in dragging it out of the way Bill overturned it—a circumstance which, unbeknown to him, was to expose him to deadly peril.

The keg rolled across to the door he had bolted, and thumped against it heavily. At the same time a stream of powder spilled through a faulty seam in the cask and trickled under that door, on the other side of which Stone, Cactus Dawson and the men from the bar were now mustering.

The crooks had drawn their six-shooters, and several of them were preparing to pour a volley through the store-room door when Stone restrained them.

"Wait!" he said. "There's no need to waste cartridges. We've got Hickok where we want him. There's no window in that room there, an' no way out except by this door. Yeah, we've got him where we want him—cornered like a rat in a trap!"

"Hickok," he called out, "you're bottled up good an' proper, and it won't do you any good to show fight. Now you come on out with your hands in the air, or we'll bust in and shoot you like a dog."

There was no response, and, seeing nothing for it but to break into the store-room, Stone beckoned to his confederates and moved towards the bolted door, beneath which the powder spilled from the cask had trickled, though none of the crooks had noticed it.

There was a lighted cigarette between Stone's lips, and he threw it down as he and his associates were preparing to hurl themselves at the door with drawn guns. And that cigarette, dropping to the floor, came into contact with the gunpowder that had issued from the keg.

The grains of powder were ignited, and sputtered wickedly; and, since they formed a fuse-train which led from Stone's feet to the keg within the store-room, the spark consuming them swiftly ate its way under the door towards the overturned cask, whose contents were bound to explode with shattering effect.

Meanwhile, in the far corner of the apartment, Bill Hickok had laid hold of the big provision barrel and had manoeuvred it into such a position that it was immediately beneath the loose planks he had observed in the ceiling. Now he was scrambling on to the barrel to set his hands against the boards, and, as he was pushing those planks upward, so the spark created by Stone's cigarette drew rapidly nearer to the fatal keg—rapidly nearer!

(Is Wild Bill Hickok destined to be blown to bits by the explosion that is imminent? Or will he escape from that death-trap before the blast takes place? Will little Jerry be avenged? Don't miss "Burning Waters," the eleventh pulsing episode of this terrific serial, published by kind permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd.)

Swimming is Still Johnny Weissmuller's Favourite Hobby

Johnny Weissmuller may have given his exhibition swimming for his rôle as the Tarzan of the screen, but he has never given up his loyalty to the sport. Accordingly, when not before the camera of a personal appearance tour, he is to be found doing regular duty as a lifeguard on the beach at Santa Monica.

He has an official badge and regular hours of duty, just as the men who earn their living in the service.

He has made several rescues. One was a boy, Johnny brought him in, unconscious. Restoratives were applied. The boy looked up into Johnny's face. "Tarzan!" he gasped, and promptly fainted again.

Johnny's first fame came when, practising swimming one day, he and his brother rescued several people in an excursion steamer disaster.

Johnny was a sickly boy, and took to swimming for his health. He improved, attracted attention in school teams, and was taken in hand by William Bachrach, coach at the Chicago Athletic Club, who is still Johnny's mentor. His Olympic and other records, since acquired, are now sports history. Many have never been broken.

"Chum" Makes the Grade

Chum, film-director Walter Forde's four-year-old wire-haired terrier, has at last become a screen actor himself; he will be seen in the Michael Balcon film "Cheer Boys, Cheer," which his master is directing at the Ealing Studios. His part in the film is the reward for four years of patient waiting at the back of the camera, for Chum has been Walter Forde's inseparable companion on the set.

There have been, you may say, dog actors before Chum, and his entry into histrionics may not—you may therefore claim—merit any undue attention; but Chum has made his entry into films newsworthy by being the first dog to write in his own part in the script. There is a scene in "Cheer Boys, Cheer," on which the unit was working the other day and in which there is a collision between two cars. Five principals of the film are in this scene—Nova Pilbeam, Jimmy O'Dea, Edmund Gwenn and that grand comedy team—Moore

Marriott and Graham Mollatt. The collision causes some commotion among them, and it was this commotion which Chum found irresistible; before Walter Forde could restrain him he rushed harking into the fray and proceeded to bury his teeth enthusiastically into the ample flesh of Graham Mollatt, causing the stout lad to protest in no uncertain terms. Chum's entry, it was found when they screened the "rushes," lent great vigour to the scene, and it was decided to keep him in the film.

D. W. Griffith, Pioneer Film Director, Joins Hal Roach

David Wark Griffith, pioneer Hollywood director and producer, who retired from pictures about eight years ago, is returning to active participation in the industry by joining the Hal-Roach Studios in an advisory capacity. In addition, Mr. Griffith will act as consultant on story material. Should the veteran director find a vehicle that strikes his particular fancy, he may even direct it, he states.

Inasmuch as the Roach productions are distributed through United Artists, Griffith returns to a company that he himself helped to found in 1919 along with Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks.

Griffith's best-known film is "The Birth of a Nation," which is still being shown in many sections of the globe. He is also responsible for such screen classics as "Intolerance," "Hearts of the World," "Broken Blossoms," "Way Down East," and "Orphans of the Storm."

Among the players Griffith helped to develop were Mary Pickford, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Blanche Sweet, Mae Marsh, Richard Barthelmess, Constance Talmadge, Owen Moore and Alice Joyce.

Since his last picture, "The Struggle," made in 1931, Griffith has been residing at his birthplace in Kentucky, where he has been working on his autobiography.

Keeping Up the Props

Charles Ryan is a most harassed property man, for not only has he to live in the past, but must dip into the future to keep up with a progressive property box.

Ryan, in charge of props for the

Hardy Family series, has to preserve every essential article that appeared in the first picture of the series more than two years ago. He also is required to keep the various items which accumulate in each successive picture, and the end is not in sight.

"There," said Ryan, pointing to a huge mounted swordfish, "is a white elephant that came in one of the first pictures. Over yonder"—he indicated a huge wall bookcase—"is the law library. My collection also includes an automobile from 'Love Finds Andy Hardy.'"

The Ryan prop box is augmented in the latest picture of the series, "The Hardys Ride High," by a large iron frying pan, the first of its kind the family has ever owned. It represents the sole loot which Fay Holden gets out of an inheritance of a fortune that goes astray.

"But they'll use that pan in the next picture, so I'll have to keep it," said Ryan. "It's like that with everything they use. Of course, we can and do duplicate some of the articles, but most of the familiar ones stay with us. The public has come to recognise them."


£400,000 Film Prop

The most valuable prop in the history of motion pictures will be used in "Charlie Chan in the City of Darkness," if 20th Century-Fox is successful in its efforts to obtain use of the £400,000 former Imperial throne of China.

Executives of the film corporation learned the throne was in the United States when newspapers carried dispatches from New York stating that it had been mis-addressed, lost and found again after an exhaustive search. It had stood unguarded on a New York dock for three days before it was discovered in a crate addressed to an Oakland professor.

The throne would be valuable to the picture, because "City of Darkness" deals with the theft of precious Chinese objects of art, smuggled from the country as the Japanese moved in. This is the history of the throne.

Because dispatches neglected to give the name of the person in charge of the throne in the United States, 20th Century-Fox offices in New York have been asked to investigate the possibility of acquiring it for the picture.



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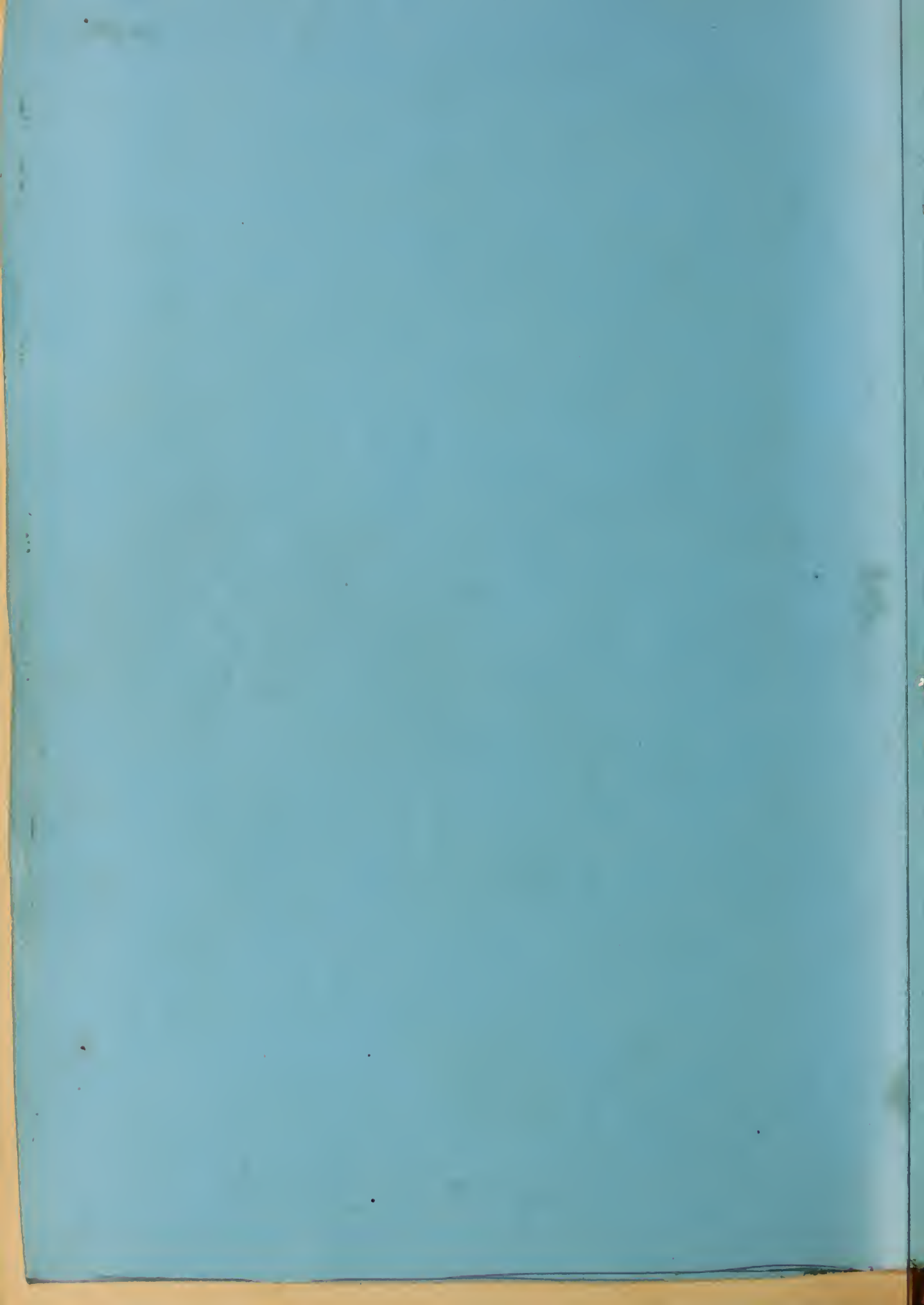
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