

# DETECTIVE

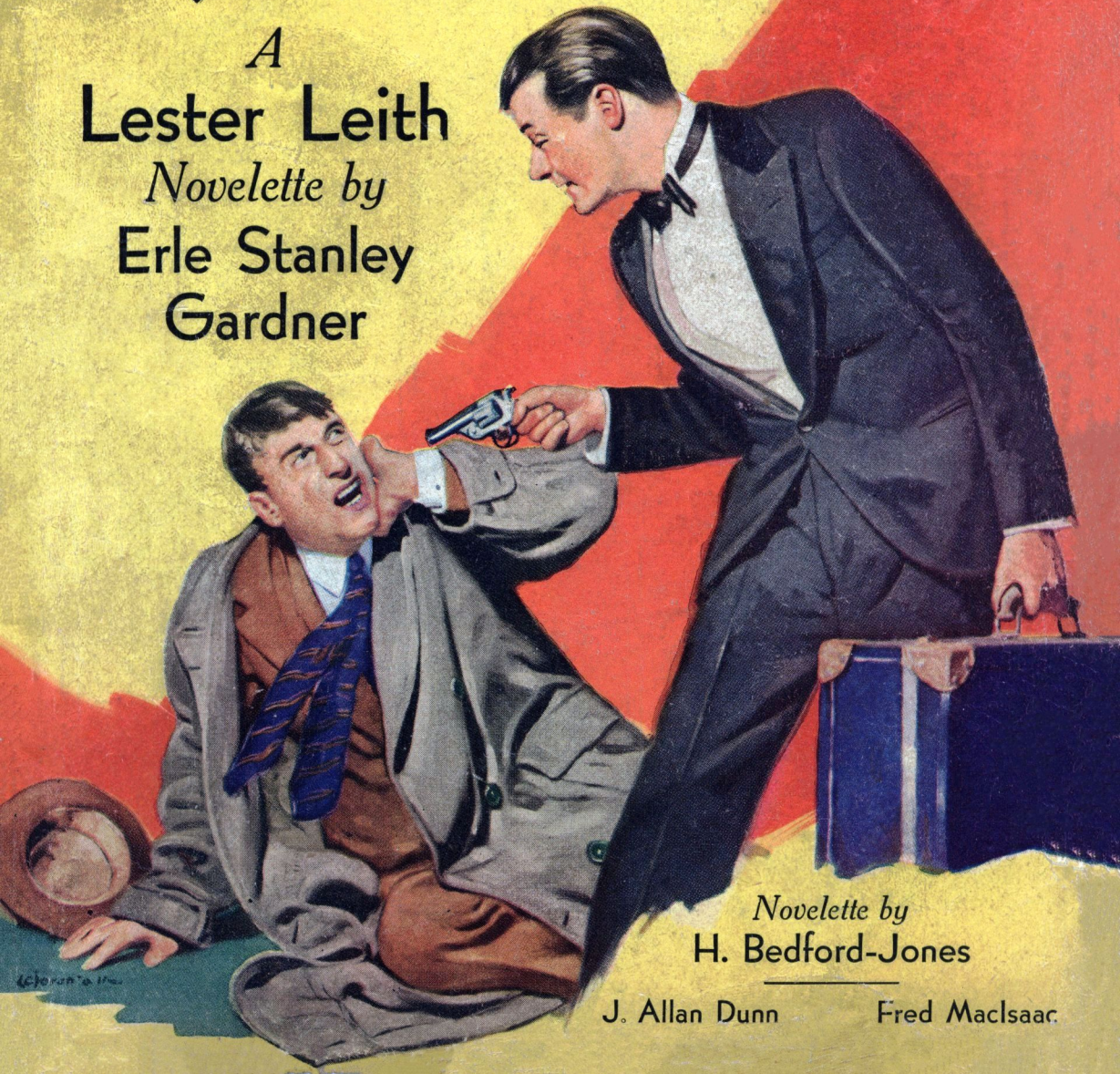
FICTION

# WEEKLY

Formerly Flynn's



A  
Lester Leith  
*Novelette by*  
Erle Stanley  
Gardner

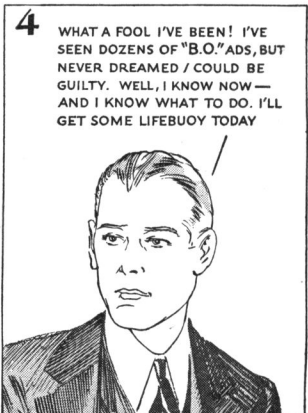
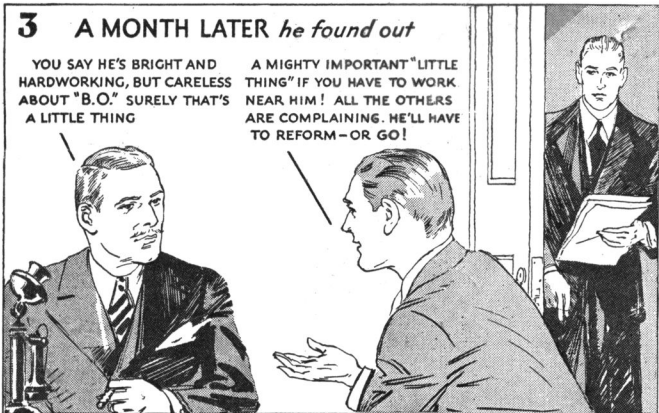
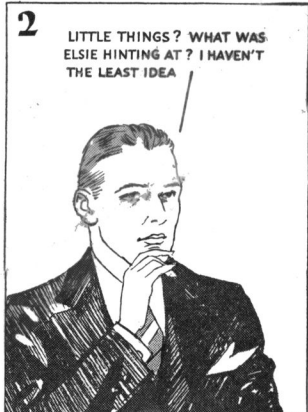


*Novelette by*  
H. Bedford-Jones

J. Allan Dunn

Fred Maclsaac

# THE MAN WHO COULDN'T KEEP A JOB — by Timmins



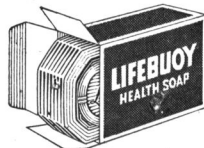
## Don't let "B.O." bar your way (body odor)

TAKE this frank, friendly warning. Make *sure* "B.O." (body odor) can never spoil *your* chances. Bathe regularly with Lifebuoy. Its pleasant, quickly-vanishing, hygienic scent tells you, "Here is no ordinary toilet soap!" Lifebuoy gives *extra* protection. Its creamy, penetrating lather *deodorizes* pores—stops "B.O." Freshens the skin.

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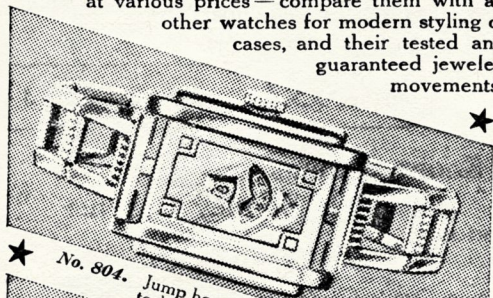
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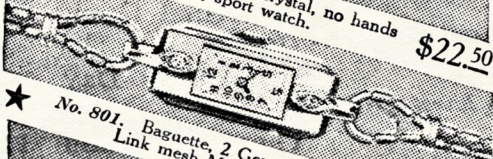


# A Challenge! "I'm voting

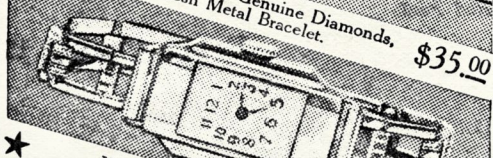
If you are ready to select a new watch we challenge you to find any other of standard make offering greater value than the Elaine-Goering Watches pictured below! Accept this challenge—go to your local jeweler—see the many Elaine-Goering models at various prices—compare them with all other watches for modern styling of cases, and their tested and guaranteed jeweled movements!



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★ No. 802. 15 Jewel Link Metal Bracelet. \$25.00



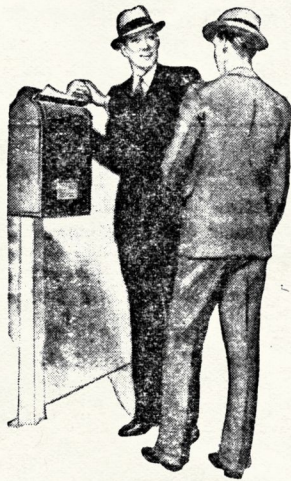
★ No. 803. Wonder Watch, Metal Link Bracelet. \$15.00

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(7-Jewel Movement) (15-Jewel Movement)  
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# DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY



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*"The Magazine With the Detective Shield On the Cover"*

VOLUME LXXI

Saturday, November 5, 1932

NUMBER 5

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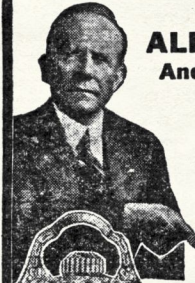
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# DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY



"The Magazine With the Detective Shield On the Cover"

VOLUME LXXI

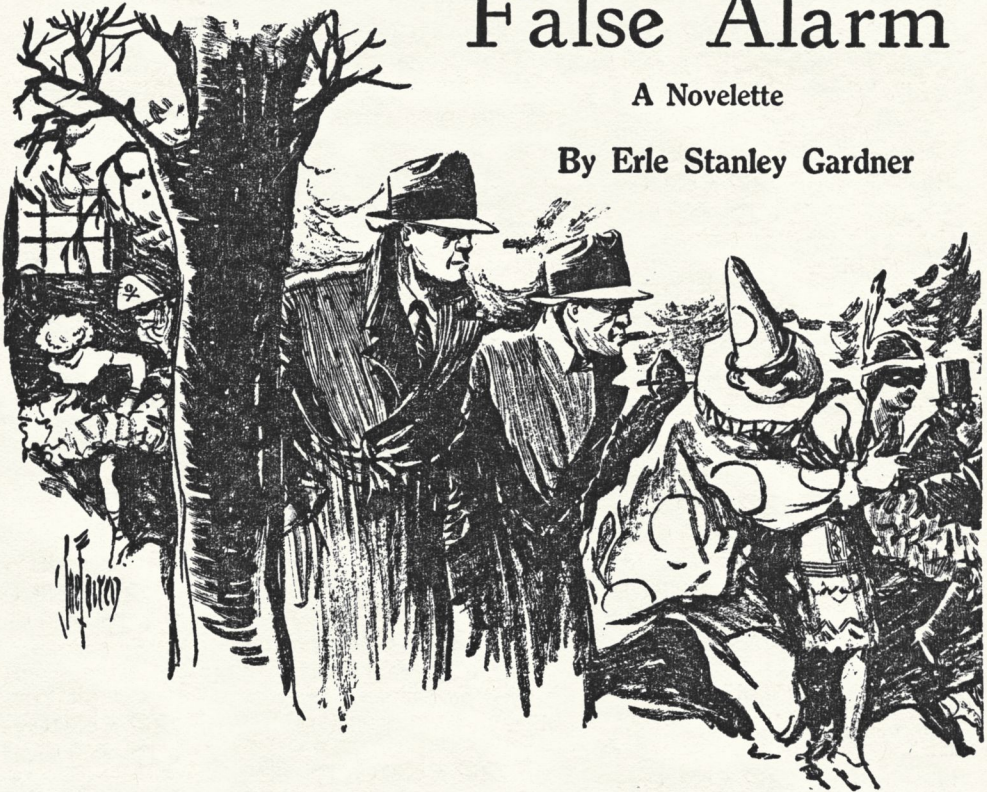
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1932

NUMBER 5

## False Alarm

A Novelette

By Erle Stanley Gardner



*Lester Leith Plays Fireman with a Red-Headed Woman  
Who Has a Mean Disposition and a Good Left Hook*

### CHAPTER I

#### A Fireman-Crook

**L**ESTER LEITH stretched his lithe length in a sunny corner of his bachelor apartment, and sighed. The police spy, who posed as a valet

for Lester Leith, blinked shoebutton eyes and surveyed the man upon whom he spied.

"You're going out tonight, sir?"

Lester Leith reached for a cigarette.

"Perhaps, Scuttle. I can't remember what I have on for tonight. There's



a charity masquerade on for tomorrow night. Mrs. Effie Pendegrast is giving it. Tickets one hundred dollars apiece. The proceeds go to help the unemployed."

"You're going, sir?"

"Yes, Scuttle. I've purchased ten tickets."

"Good heavens, sir! Ten tickets! At a hundred dollars a ticket?"

Lester Leith nodded.

"Helping out the unemployed, you know, Scuttle. Every little bit helps."

"Yes, sir, but do you mean to say you paid out a thousand dollars for tickets?"

The valet spy blinked.

"That's tomorrow night, sir?"

"Yes, Scuttle."

"You've got your costume, sir?"

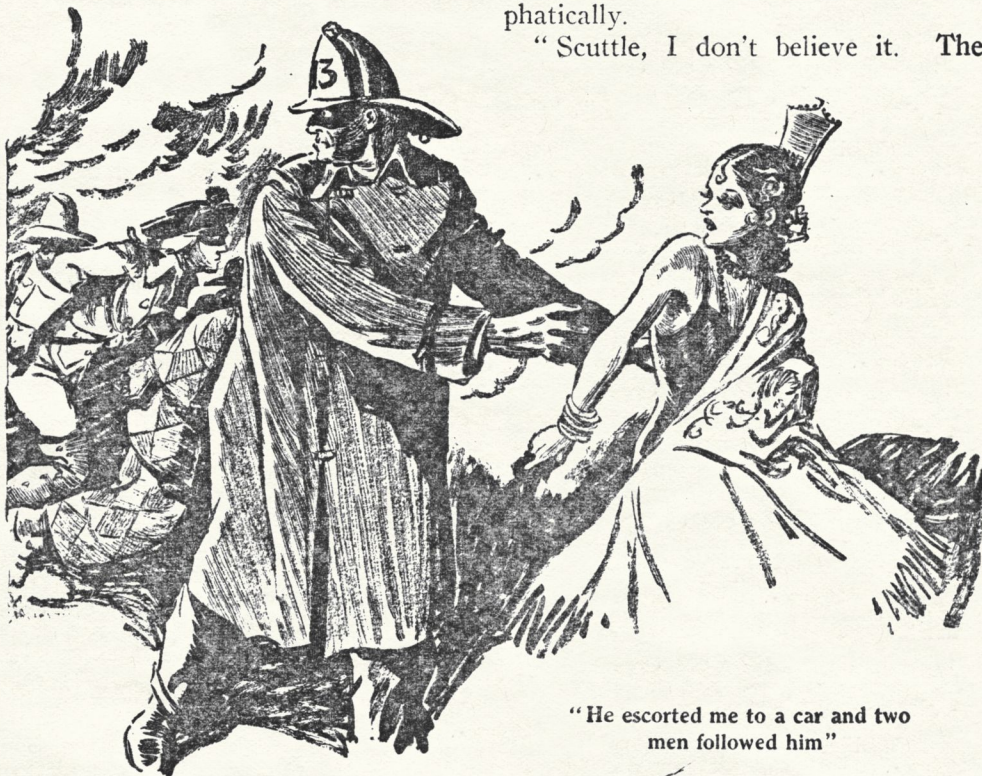
"Not yet, Scuttle. I'll have to get it this afternoon. Can you fancy me getting up at this hour of the morning? It's not yet ten o'clock! Fancy! That's what these confounded exercises do for me. I can't sleep as late as I used to."

The spy nodded.

"Yes, sir," he said, tonelessly. "By the way, sir, there's a most interesting crime reported in the morning paper. A fireman sneaked away from duty long enough to pull a stick-up."

Lester Leith shook his head emphatically.

"Scuttle, I don't believe it. The



"He escorted me to a car and two men followed him"

"I will do so, Scuttle. Mrs. Pendegrast gave me ten tickets to sell. I haven't tried to sell them to my friends. I shall use one, and then turn in the thousand dollars, myself."

members of the fire department are men who are underpaid. They take risks that you and I would never take. The very nature of their calling demands unusual bravery. I doubt very

much whether a crook would ever have the moral fibre to keep on a fire truck and still be a crook."

The spy shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Nevertheless that's what happened, sir. The man who was robbed was George Crampp. No one knows the exact amount of the loot. He was a receiver for the defunct Double Indemnity Building & Loan. You know there was a bit of scandal about him.

"Anyway, the grand jury refused to indict, and Crampp retired to the isolation of his house, living very much alone. He claimed to be penniless. It seems he was hoarding money, however.

"Last night a fire alarm was turned in. A small shed was blazing. Fire truck Number 56 answered the call. There was some confusion. The shed was close to Crampp's residence, and one of the firemen rushed over there, dynamited the safe, looted it of its cash, and escaped.

"Crampp says the loss was 'a few dollars'; but there's a rumor that it ran into thousands. I thought you'd be interested, sir."

**L**ESTER LEITH tapped a cigarette upon the well manicured nail of a delicate thumb, regarded his valet with wide eyes.

"But, Scuttle, why the devil should I be interested?"

"Because you're usually interested in odd bits of crime news, sir."

Leith shook his head in an emphatic negative.

"Scuttle, I've repeatedly told you that that's a thing of the past. Formerly, it is true, I interested myself in crime problems. I contended that the newspaper reporters, gathering all the facts, frequently gave sufficient data to

enable a man to solve the mystery; whereas the police, seeking always to gather only significant clues, frequently went so far afield they lost sight of the main issue."

The spy nodded eager affirmation.

"Yes, sir; and you used to read newspaper clippings about crime, and beat the police to the solution."

Lester Leith's eyes were cold and narrow.

"And then what, Scuttle?" he asked, ominously.

The valet shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Why, of course, that was all there was to it; except that sometimes the police used to entertain unjust suspicions."

"Exactly," agreed Lester Leith. "That overbearing, over-zealous, Sergeant Ackley used to insist that I did not concern myself with mere theoretical solutions of crime, but that I went so far as to solve the crimes, beat the police to the criminal and strip him of his ill-gotten gains. That's why I ceased bothering with interesting crimes. I couldn't stand having Sergeant Ackley storming in here at all hours with his confounded accusations.

"I'll admit I used to get quite a kick out of it. I puzzled over odd crimes just the way a cross-word puzzle fan sweats over some particular puzzle. But I'm finished now, Scuttle. I'm not interested in crime any more."

The spy moved his big form in ponderous approach. His voice became wheedling.

"But *this* crime, sir, has exactly the element of mystery you always appreciated."

Lester Leith struck a match, held it to the tip of the cigarette, breathed deeply, then exhaled, snuffing the match in a single smoky breath.

"No, Scuttle. I refuse to be tempted."

"Sergeant Ackley, sir," said the spy, "need never know."

Lester Leith pondered that statement.

"Well, Scuttle, give me an outline of the facts. Just casually, mind you. Tell me what the newspapers have to say on the subject."

The spy's face lit with triumph.

"Yes, sir. As I told you, sir. Crampp was alone in his house with Steve Purkett, his secretary. There was a fire next door. A fireman came to the back door. Purkett heard him pounding. Purkett ran to the back door, opened it to let in the fireman.

"The fireman jumped into the kitchen, smashed Purkett on the eye, knocking him out, giving him a nasty black eye, then ran up the stairs, jabbed a gun in Crampp's stomach, and ordered him to open the safe.

"Crampp refused. The fireman smashed him a vicious blow, ran into the office where the safe was, and locked the door. About that time the secretary staggered up the stairs, carrying a gun. Crampp told Purkett what had happened, suggested they call the police. But Purkett was suffering from that black eye.

"He raised his weapon to the locked door, ordered the criminal to come out. For answer, the crook set off the charge that exploded the safe. Purkett emptied his gun, shooting through the panels of the door."

## CHAPTER II

### Wanted: A Woman Pug

"CRAMPP called the police," Scuttle continued.

"But some of the firemen had heard the noise of the explosion and

the shots. They came running into the house. That was the worst thing they could have done. In fact, it's that factor which complicates the situation. The fireman who had committed the crime simply looted the safe of its cash, ran out of another door, down the hallway, and mingled with the other firemen when they came in.

"The police are investigating the whole crew. It's a nasty scandal. The fire in the shed was probably set by the fireman who robbed the safe, or by an accomplice. The whole crime was carefully planned.

"The police are holding a man named Colfax. He's got a shady record. He claims he'd tried to begin over and had taken a job on the fire truck to earn an honest living. The police think he was the guilty party."

Lester Leith frowned.

"He wore a mask, Scuttle?"

"Yes. He had a mask."

"And he wore his fireman's helmet?"

"Yes, sir."

"How about finger-prints, Scuttle?"

"There were none. The safe shows finger-prints of Crampp and his secretary, but no others. It's a baffling case."

"Did the police find the gun, Scuttle?"

"No, sir. The man jumped into the room, locked the door, went to work on the safe, blew it open, grabbed the money, and slipped out. Purkett, the secretary, thought he could recognize the man if he saw him again. Even without having seen the face, he claimed he could identify the man. But he can't identify Colfax, not positively."

Lester Leith puffed placid spirals of smoke, thoughtfully speculative.

"The cleverness of the thing lies in

its extreme simplicity," he said at length.

The spy nodded eagerly.

"If you could only concentrate upon it, sir, perhaps you could work out a solution. The evening papers will have more details. The police are shaking down every member of the truck."

Lester Leith shook his head, slowly.

"No, Scuttle, I don't think so. But the yarn has given me one idea, at least."

"What's that, sir?"

"I'll go to the masquerade ball as a fireman-crook with a gun."

The spy sighed.

"Yes, sir. If you wish, sir. But there will probably be others who will capitalize on the situation and adopt similar costumes."

Lester Leith shook his head emphatically.

"No, Scuttle," he said. "They won't have the chance. Take the telephone book. Get every costumer in the city and corner the firemen's costumes. And have all the costumes delivered here."

The valet stared uncertainly.

"Yes, sir," he said, dubiously.

Lester Leith nodded. Twinkling devils of humor appeared in either eye. The corners of his mouth twitched. He took the cigarette from his lips and solemnly began to beat time with it.

"Remember the old tune, Scuttle, the one we were taught as children. It goes something like this:

"Fire, fire! Ring the bell!  
Call the firemen,  
Each one tell,  
Fire, *Fire*, fire, *Fire!*"

The spy stared at the man whom the police suspected of being the shrewdest criminal they had ever contacted, with eyes that betrayed amazement and disappointment.

"But, sir, what's that got to do with it, sir?"

Lester Leith's voice was amiability itself.

"Nothing, Scuttle, not the slightest thing in the world. That's what makes it so funny."

The spy drew himself up with an air of injured dignity.

"Yes, sir," he said.

**L**ESTER LEITH studied the eddying smoke of his cigarette. He blew a smoke ring, watched it drift toward the ceiling, twisting and writhing upon itself. Then he turned to his valet, and said:

"One other thing, Scuttle. Here's a hundred dollar bill. I wish you'd soak it in gasoline, crumple it, and then run an iron over it until it's pretty well pressed."

The valet stared, with a jaw that showed an indication to sag.

"Do what, sir?"

"Do just what I said, Scuttle. And there's one other thing. I shall want a young girl with a rotten disposition who has taken boxing lessons. I guess we'd better insert an ad in the *Sun*, Scuttle."

The valet's eyes bulged.

"You want a *what?*"

"A young woman with a rotten disposition, Scuttle. She should be a regular fire eater. And she should know something about pugilism. Let's see how we'll word that ad. We'll want her to have red hair, of course, Scuttle. Women who have red hair are accustomed to stand up for themselves. And we'd better be frank, Scuttle. Let's word the ad this way . . . get a pencil, Scuttle. Now take this:

"Wanted: A young woman, preferably with red hair, who has a bad temper. She must have trained herself in boxing, other-

wise previous experience is unnecessary. A good job for the right young woman with a hard wallop. Good pay for a helion who can hit. Women with sweet dispositions need not apply."

Lester Leith nodded his head, musingly. "That, Scuttle," he said, "should get them!"

The spy stood staring, eyes protruding from their sockets.

"Do you really want me to put that ad in the paper, sir?"

Lester Leith's eyes became suddenly cold.

"Those w e r e my instructions, Scuttle."

The valet suddenly snapped into obsequious obedience.

"Yes, sir. I'll phone it in at once, sir."

Lester Leith blew smoke rings at the ceiling, nodded his head. The valet spy went to the sound-proof closet where the telephone was kept. But he did not call the newspaper until after he had called Sergeant Ackley on the private wire which was used by the undercover men.

"Listen, Sergeant, I gotta make it snappy because he's in the next room. But I sold him on that Crampp case. He's fallen for it like a ton of brick. He's going to the masquerade at Pendegrast's tomorrow night, the charity masquerade for the unemployed. He's wearing a fireman's costume, and he's going to pull something sure as hell. I can't tell you about it now, but start putting the clamps on him."

Sergeant's Ackley's voice was harsh and rasping.

"That's fine work, Beaver! You've done a good job. Leave the rest to me. You keep him sold on the idea of messing in that Crampp case. I'll have men cover every move he makes."

"Okay," said the spy. "Now here's another hot one. He wants a red-

headed woman with a rotten disposition who has studied boxing and packs a wallop!"

Sergeant Ackley's voice rose an octave.

"He wants a *what?*"

"A red-headed woman pug."

"Beaver, you're crazy."

"Nope," said the spy. "He is!"

And he slid the receiver back on its hook, mopped the perspiration from his forehead, and started telephoning the costume houses.

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### CHAPTER III

#### She Got the Job

THERE were five girls in the little den which opened off the living room of Lester Leith's bachelor apartment, five girls who were beautiful to the eye, very smooth of skin, very red of hair, very broad of shoulder, very determined of jaw.

Their complexions were that strawberry-and-cream of the real red-head. Their eyes were blue. Their mouths were pretty, but it did not need a close observer to notice that the corners of those mouths showed fine lines of grim determination. And there was, underlying the external beauty, a certain internal tension, as though the girls were like volcanoes, ready to burst into eruption, and their red hair was a danger signal of that which seethed within.

The door opened. Lester Leith walked in. He sized up the girls with interest.

"Five," he said.

The girls said nothing.

"Five applications," he went on, "and only one can get the job. There'll be four who are disappointed. I don't want you to lose anything by coming here. Here are four twenty-dollar bills.

Each one of the unsuccessful applicants takes a twenty-dollar bill as partial compensation for her time. The girl who gets the job doesn't need the bonus as she'll draw good wages. Is that fair?"

Five heads nodded.

"To determine which one of you very estimable young ladies I want," said Lester Leith, "I shall resort to a unique test. You will sing, one at a time: Fire, Fire, Ring the bell! Call the firemen, each one tell: Fire, *Fire*, fire, *Fire!*"

"Now we'll begin with you over there in the corner. Please start."

The young woman he had indicated got to her feet. Her eyes were flashing, her lips a thin, straight line. It seemed that every strand of the flaming red hair was stiffly erect, bristling with explosive anger.

"No, you don't," she blazed. "I expected to be insulted, but I'm not going to be made a fool of. I'll take one of those twenty-dollar bills and be on my way right now. I'm damned if I'll work for a fool!"

And she walked to the table, snatched one of the twenty-dollar bills from the pile, strode toward the door, heels pounding the floor.

"Just a moment," said Lester Leith. "What's your name, please? I want to check it off the list."

She whirled on him.

"Bess Marlowe!" she snapped. And she spat forth the words with the explosive force of a cat spitting at a dog.

Lester Leith made a check mark opposite the name on the list that he had.

"Just a moment before you leave," he said. "If you'll pardon me a moment, please."

He stepped to the door, put a swift hand on the knob. The crouching form of the valet-spy, bent over

double, ear to the keyhole, was disclosed as Lester Leith jerked the door open. The spy made fumbling efforts to indicate that his posture had been due to a desire to tie his shoe.

But Lester Leith apparently did not notice either the posture, or the man's discomfiture. He tapped the shoulder of the spy, said: "This way, Scuttle. A word with you."

"Yes, sir," said the spy.

Lester Leith jerked his head toward the little den.

"There are five red-headed women in there, Scuttle. I have chosen one named Bess Marlowe for the job. She seems to have the worst disposition of any of them. She's my choice. Go in there and tell her she's hired. Tell the rest to take twenty dollars apiece from the bills on the table. I'll speak with Miss Marlowe later, about her duties."

The valet nodded.

"Yes, sir," he said.

The spy straightened his tie, stepped into the den and closed the door. Lester Leith promptly moved into the bedroom which opened from the living room on the opposite side from the study.

**F**OR a moment or two there was silence.

Then came a storm of protest, shrill feminine voices raised in anger, each voice pitched on a different key.

For a few moments the bass rumble of the spy's masculine voice sought to stem the tide of feminine anger. Then his male voice was drowned out. The clatter of feminine abuse rose to a higher crescendo. The door opened and Scuttle, the spy, literally dashed from the room.

There was a moment of comparative silence, then a woman's voice snapped:

"Well, I didn't want this job, but I've got it, and there's no use you cats trying to yowl me out of it. Beat it!" And this time there was no outburst. These red-headed women recognized the temper of a red-headed woman. They filed out, sniffing scornfully. Yet each one had some comment to fling over her shoulder at the door.

"He didn't choose you for ability!"

"Well, it wasn't for looks, dearie, either."

"Well, he got the disposition he wanted!"

"Hussy!"

The outer door slammed. Four very angry red-headed women pounded their indignant paths down the outer corridor. The police spy, having rushed to Lester Leith for refuge, heaved a sigh.

"Well, sir," he said, "she seems to answer the qualifications of the ad. But any of them would have done, sir!"

Lester Leith nodded.

"Right, Scuttle. Now I'll leave you to instruct Miss Marlowe in her duties. Virtually all that will be required of her is that she attend one or two social functions a month. For instance, tonight she will attend the Pendegrast Charity Ball with me. She will be in costume, of course. From time to time, I will indicate to her what I wish done. I can't tell her in advance, as it will depend somewhat upon events. You will pay her her salary at the end of each month. I'll give you the money. Her salary, Scuttle, will be five hundred dollars a month."

The spy gasped.

"Five — hundred — dollars — a month, sir?"

"Yes, Scuttle."

"But, good heavens, sir! *I'm* only drawing a hundred and a quarter, sir!"

Lester Leith's nod was affable.

"Quite right, Scuttle. You have a remarkable memory for figures, haven't you? And I'll want you to account to the ticket selling committee tonight. Here is a thousand dollars and the nine tickets. Better destroy the tickets, but you'll find the committee on finances meeting at the Pendegrast house. You can turn in the thousand dollars to that committee, giving them the number of the book with which I'm charged.

"And now get me a bag. I want the biggest bag that money can buy, a bag that will swallow up anything I want to cram into it. Pack my dress suit in that bag, and include all the incidentals."

The spy gulped, stared, cleared his throat.

"Yes, sir," he said mechanically.

Leith frowned speculatively. "Now how about those firemen's suits from the costumers? They've all been delivered?"

"Yes, sir," said the spy. "You've got every suit in the city. I've covered every single costumer in the whole city and picked up every suit. Of course, sir, they run into quite a number, and it's costing you a lot of money, just to . . ."

Lester Leith interrupted, his manner impatient.

"Never mind the cost, Scuttle. Let's have a look at the suits."

The valet bowed, piloted Lester Leith into an adjoining room where suits of firemen's costumes hung in long rows.

Lester Leith surveyed them with a frown.

"Scuttle, I've got to have more suits than that."

"More suits than that, sir! Why, you've got them all!"

"I can't help it, Scuttle. I've got

to have more suits. These aren't enough."

The spy stared at Lester Leith with sagging jaw, made two futile efforts at speech, then gasped: "Not enough! Good heavens!"

Lester Leith indicated the telephone closet with a nod.

"Get busy at once, Scuttle. Call each costumer. Call them all. Tell them I've simply got to have more firemen's costumes. Tell them it's imperative. Get them to rush the costumes out here before five o'clock tonight.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### Another Man's Party

"AND, by the way, Scuttle," Leith went on, "did you wash that hundred dollar bill out in gasoline, then iron it out flat?"

The spy gave a gesture of resignation.

"Yes, sir. Here it is, sir."

He crossed to a table, opened a drawer and disclosed a rather sadly mutilated bill, still reeking with the odor of gasoline, crumpled, crushed, and then pressed flat with the edges all creases, pressed until they were fairly knifelike.

Lester Leith pursed his lips, turned the bill over and over in his hand.

"Scuttle, this looks like a very good job."

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir."

The spy smirked his pleasure, took advantage of the moment to lower his voice.

"Tell me, sir, has this hundred dollars, and the firemen's costumes, and the red-haired girl got something to do with your solution of the Crampp robbery?"

Lester Leith's eyes grew round.

"Why, Scuttle! What on earth

could a gasoline-soaked hundred-dollar bill, a red-headed woman with a rotten disposition, and the cornering of the firemen's costumes have to do with the Crampp burglary?"

The valet seemed embarrassed.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir."

"I'm sure you don't either, Scuttle. But, by the way, Scuttle, I notice that none of the newspaper accounts mention that the man who robbed Crampp's safe wore gloves. The point's rather important. Having a fireman's uniform on, did the man wear gloves?"

The spy blinked his eyes.

"No, sir, I don't think he did, sir. Purkett, the secretary, was struck with an ungloved fist. Crampp mentioned that he could see the back of the man's hand as the gun was thrust out at him. He said the knuckles were very red, sir, as though the fist had struck something solid."

Lester Leith beamed.

"Meaning Purkett's head, I take it, Scuttle?"

The spy smiled.

"Well, yes, sir; that must have been what he meant, sir."

Leith nodded.

"Very well, Scuttle. If you'll get busy about those additional costumes, and instruct Miss Marlowe in her duties."

The door jerked open. Bess Marlowe thrust in her head.

"Listen," she said, "I wasn't crazy to take this job in the first place, and I'm not going to stand around while you two men kill a lot of time. If you've got something for me to do, get me started, and . . ."

Lester Leith fixed the spy with accusing eyes. That individual rushed smirkingly forward.

"Yes, Miss Marlowe, right away.



I'm sorry I kept you waiting. Right this way, please. I have your duties and information about your salary."

He oozed out through the bedroom door, closed it behind him.

Left behind, Lester Leith examined the firemen's costumes which were stretched out upon hangers in a long row. He smiled, and nodded his head approvingly.

For half an hour he reclined in an easy chair, smoking musingly. Then the door opened, and the face of the spy grinned at him.

"I got it, sir, another fireman's suit. Bentley's just had one come in. They're rushing it through the cleaning department. They say it'll be rather strong with the odor of gasoline if they deliver it early. The longer they can hold it the less it will smell. They're open until midnight."

Lester Leith shook his head.

"To thunder with the odor of gasoline, Scuttle. Have them deliver the costume!"

The spy nodded, withdrew from the room. Lester Leith got to his feet, yawned deeply, stretched himself. There was about him something of the appearance of a hunting animal about to venture forth into the forest trails in search of foray.

**T**HE night was cold and foggy.

The bachelor apartment of Lester Leith seemed warm and cheery contrasted with the cold moisture of the outer night. Lester Leith had donned one of the firemen's costumes, and had gone to the masquerade, picking up Bess Marlowe en route.

Sergeant Ackley, knowing that the coast was clear, knowing that Lester Leith was being trailed by two of the cleverest shadows that the Department had, dropped in to secure a more com-

plete report from the undercover man, whose real name was Beaver, although referred to only as Scuttle by Lester Leith.

The nickname had been applied because of some fancied resemblance to a reincarnated pirate. And the spy bitterly loathed that nickname.

"You got him away to the masquerade all right?" asked Sergeant Ackley.

"I'll say! All dolled up in his fireman's suit. But he did a funny thing. He had me get him a big bag, the biggest money could buy. It was a whopper. When I got it he had me put his dress suit in it. Then he had me go out and get him a duplicate bag, just exactly like the first bag. One's as like the other as two peas from the same pod, only one of them's empty. The other's got his dress suit in it.

"Now what in the name of reason does he want those two bags for, and what does he see about that Cramp case that we don't see?"

Sergeant Ackley laughed, a patronizing laugh.

"Don't waste time thinking about that, Beaver. It's just a waste of energy worrying about all the things that chap does. About half of 'em are just designed to throw us off the trail, anyway. But we've got him dead to rights, where we don't need to worry about what he's trying to do, or how he's trying to do it.

"I've got him shadowed by two of the best men in the Department. Whatever he does he'll be walking right into our trap. He can't ditch those shadows. I've instructed them to go so far as to sock him if he tries to make a break.

"You say that Bess Marlowe is class?"

The spy's nostrils dilated with enthusiasm.

"I'll say she's class. She's got a mean streak of temper, but a good man could take that down. She's sure got a figure, and eyes, and a complexion! Man, she's all to the good!"

Sergeant Ackley's eyes narrowed speculatively.

"What have you got to do tonight, Beaver? Something for Leith?"

Beaver nodded.

"Turn in the money on those tickets. That's all. After that I'm free for the evening."

"Hundred dollars a crack for those tickets, eh?"

"Yeah. He's using one of 'em; but he's going to buy 'em all. Told me to burn 'em up and take a thousand dollars out to the ticket committee."

**S**ERGEANT ACKLEY frowned.

"Burn 'em up?"

"Yeah. That's what he said. But they ain't got no way of telling which ticket is which, see? Well, I've got an idea. I figure that maybe you and me can run out there and take a look at the ball. It ain't every day a man on a salary gets a chance to hobnob with the sort of dames who go with guys who buy dance tickets at a hundred bucks per each."

Sergeant Ackley sat bolt upright, whistled.

"It's a costume ball, though," he said slowly.

The spy laughed gloatingly.

"Lookit the costumes we've got here, all paid for by this guy, Leith. He's got all sizes of firemen's clothes. All we've got to do is to pick the size that suits us, dress here, and go on out to the ball."

Sergeant Ackley stared at the tip of his cigar.

"Look 'em over, eh?"

The spy nodded again.

"Dance with some of those babies. The women have got some wild costumes out there. They show plenty. And it'll all be what Lester Leith called a 'spirit of camaraderie.' See the point? They put the price of the tickets at a hundred bucks each to make it exclusive. You can approach any baby out there and she'll figure you're one of the upper crust. You can play around until time to unmask."

Sergeant Ackley's eyes were sparkling with enthusiasm.

"Gee," he said, "I'd sure like to go out and shake a leg at a hundred-dollar shindig, particularly if Leith was paying the way and didn't know it!"

Beaver grinned. "Well," he said, "what's stopping you?"

Sergeant Ackley chuckled.

"Nothing," he said. "Only we don't dress here. He might come back early. We'll do up the costumes, take 'em with us, and change at my apartment. He'd never miss the two costumes if he should come back early."

"Okay," said Beaver. "Maybe we'll pick up a couple of swell wrens out there that have got rocks. You can't tell. Sometimes girls fall in love with guys like us. And there'll be some swell eats if we want to wait."

Sergeant Ackley nodded slowly, ponderously.

"Beaver," he said, "there's times when you get some damned good ideas. An' if anybody says anything to us, we'll tell 'em we did it in the line of duty. We was afraid he might give the shadows the slip . . . But how about those tickets? Doesn't the committee figure you turn in the unsold ones for credit?"

"Sure," said the spy. "But it's charity. You know how Leith is. He robs the crooks, but he distributes the swag back to the poor guys. He's

given thousands to unemployment relief. That's why he said to take the thousand dollars and turn it in. He's taking all the tickets."

Sergeant Ackley blinked his eyes rapidly.

"If," he suggested, "we should call on the committee and turn in three hundred dollars, the price of Leith's ticket, yours and mine, and then surrender the rest of the tickets, there'd be seven hundred dollars that would be gravy."

"The committee would balance its accounts by crediting Leith with the returned tickets. We'd have seven hundred dollars to split between us."

The two men looked at each other.

Beaver strode forward, held out his right hand. Sergeant Ackley took it in his big paw. Silently, the two men shook hands.

## CHAPTER V

### The Firemen's Ball

THE masquerade ball for the unemployed at the palatial home of Mrs. Effie Pendegrast, was a huge success. The rooms were crowded with brilliant costumes. Men and women's voices could be heard in a constant chatter of conversation, raised in laughter. Yet the voices were all well modulated. The people were ladies and gentlemen who could afford to buy tickets to a ball that was to swell the unemployment relief fund, even though those tickets cost the sum of one hundred dollars per ticket.

The decorations were exquisite. The forms of the women, daringly displayed with costumes that were shrewdly designed to enhance feminine charms, were a delight to the appreciative eye. There were young women dressed as Hawaiian dancers, clad in

grass skirts, shoulders wiggling seductively under leis. There were girls dressed as ballet dancers who occasionally stretched a mean limb in a kick, just to give color to their costume.

Sergeant Ackley and Edward Beaver, dressed as firemen, stood a little self-consciously on the outskirts of the crowd.

"We gotta bust right in," said Beaver. "These people ain't waiting for introductions. Our ticket's our introduction."

Sergeant Ackley felt with a questioning hand for the pocket in which reposed the three hundred and fifty dollars, representing his half of the ticket rebate.

"Okay," he said, "lead the way."

But they had no occasion to lead the way. A young woman, masked, of course, with superb figure and clattering castanets, dressed in Spanish costume, paused before them, surveyed them with eyes that sparkled, and began to move her shoulders suggestively.

The castanets clacked, the lithe form twisted seductively. A graceful hand dropped to the skirts, raised them until an expanse of intriguing limb was disclosed. Then she slowly pivoted, one hand holding up the skirt, the other held over her head, clattering the castanets. Slowly she turned, disclosing the lines of her figure, emphasizing the backless upper half of the gown, the black stockinged limb, which protruded to the delighted gaze of the two officers, making little kicking motions, then coming down on the floor with a stamp.

"Fire, fire! Ring the bell!  
Call the firemen,  
Each one tell,  
Fire, fire, fire, fire!"

Her voice ran through the lilting

chorus as her eyes flashed from one to the other.

"Where's the fire?" grinned Sergeant Ackley.

Beaver pushed forward.

"Coming, Little One," he said.

The heavy hand of Sergeant Ackley pushed Beaver aside. The Sergeant extended his arms. The lithe creature wriggled into them with a motion like that of a trout squirming up against the protecting side of a big rock. The dance music struck up, and Sergeant Ackley and his amiable partner whirled away, out on the floor.

Beaver knitted his brows.

There had been something familiar about the voice, some haunting memory stirred by the tune. He had it! His great fist smacked upon a ham-like palm. The girl was Bess Marlowe, the one Lester Leith had employed as secretary, the one he had taken as a partner to the masquerade!

He started forward to warn Sergeant Ackley, then came to abrupt pause as he remembered how Sergeant Ackley had butted in to claim the girl. "Let him go," grumbled the spy under his breath.

THE spy turned back into the sidelines, gravitating toward a cut glass bowl in which tinkled ice, floating in the midst of a cooling punch which was guaranteed to make the feet feel the pulse of the throbbing music.

Beaver accepted a glass of the cool liquid at the hands of the stony-faced attendant who presided over the punch, sipped it, sighed, drained the glass in three great gulps, extended it for another helping.

There was a giggling little package crowded next to him, dressed as a South Sea island belle. Her form, containing surprisingly little in the way

of clothes, was pushed against his as two couples approached the punch bowl simultaneously.

"Pardon," muttered Beaver.

The girl looked up at him. Beaver grinned.

"Ooooh, goody," she said, "my old friend, the fireman. I had a wonderful dance with you, and I certainly enjoyed your line of chatter . . ."

Then her eyes widened behind the mask as she estimated the size of the spy.

"But you're not *my* fireman!" she said.

Edward H. Beaver grinned.

"Maybe not," he observed, feeling a heady surge of intoxicating recklessness from the environment, the fruit punch, the feeling of three hundred and fifty dollars unexpected cash which lined his pocket. "Maybe I ain't your fireman, but don't start any false alarms around me. I might answer 'em!"

He started to say more, but checked himself.

The laughing eyes of the South Sea island belle swept his face.

"Go ahead," she said, "don't stop on my account!"

And she laughed up at him.

Beaver extended his thick arms, pulled her away, out onto the dance floor.

"That's where I shine," he said, "finding fires and running to 'em!"

"Gee," said the young lady, "you're big and strong . . . You seem sorta human. I sneaked in here. I'm going to be frank with you. I'm just a maid for one of the society swells. I handle her hair for her. She couldn't go, and she gave me a ticket in case I wanted to come in, but she made me promise I wouldn't take anybody, so I'm here all alone.

"I shouldn't tell you this, only I hate to sail under false colors. I know you're some big banker or something, and I don't want to offend you. You ain't sore, are you?"

The spy held the slender, swaying figure close to him.

"Not a bit, baby," he said. "You see, I ain't a banker."

"No?" she asked.

"No. I'm a downtown broker."

## CHAPTER VI

### Fire! Fire!

**L**ESTER LEITH in his masquerade costume of fireman, the long shiny black coat, the helmet, keen eyes sparkling through twin holes in a very black mask, surveyed the forms of the Spanish dancer and her partner, also garbed as a fireman.

He knew enough about the temperament of the red-haired girl to know that he must work quickly. Her disposition was hardly equal to an extended dose of Sergeant Ackley's chatter. She had, in fact, demurred at the very idea of approaching the man in the first place, and Lester Leith had been forced to remind her that jobs were scarce, that she was drawing very good money for her services.

Lester Leith watched the big fireman lead the girl away to a secluded corner. Then he slipped quietly back to one of the telephones, called the fire department.

"Please don't make any undue commotion about it," he said. "We don't want to start a stampede. But the house is on fire. This is the butler at Mrs. Effie Pendegrast's residence. It's 7089 Adams. The fire's got quite a start. It's in the upper part of the house. We're having a masquerade here this evening and we don't want

a panic. Please send out plenty of men. The fur wraps here tonight are worth a fortune. Rush it."

He caught a note of deference in the voice of the man who rasped forth a repetition of the address to make certain he had heard it right. The Pendegrast masquerade for the benefit of the unemployed, with tickets at such price that only the wealthy could afford them, had attracted much newspaper attention.

Lester Leith slipped the receiver back on its hook.

Lester Leith moved unobtrusively up the stairs. He planted a small object in a corner, waited five minutes, struck a match, lit a fuse and calmly walked back down the stairs.

Within a matter of minutes the first wisps of black, smelly smoke began to roll down the staircase.

Lester Leith slipped toward the doorway.

A woman shrieked: "Smoke! I smell smoke!"

A man's voice bellowed an order.

"Keep calm, everybody. Keep calm!"

A woman's voice again, shrilling above the sudden roar of confusion: "Our fur coats! Get the fur coats!"

The dance music stopped with a crash. There was a concerted rush of feet. A siren screamed from the street outside the house. Lester Leith took off his mask, slipped it in the top of the fire helmet.

Great clouds of black smoke were rolling down the stairs now, coming in suffocating billows. There were more sirens in the street. The big yard quivered with the sound of running feet.

Lester Leith slipped out into the night, started to run, running heavily, clumsily. All about him the fog-filled

darkness was swarming with running forms. Firemen dashed here and there. A window crashed in. A long line of hose snaked its way across the lawn.

Lester Leith grabbed hold of this hose, started pulling and tugging.

Hoarse shouts rang through the night. Big spotlights suddenly stabbed their smoky paths through the fog. A man with a megaphone bellowed orders. Masked dancers were pouring out of the front door of the house in a steady stream. The spotlights showed them plainly.

There were vivid colors, weird and bizarre costumes, flashing limbs, willow shapes d a r i n g l y displayed. Through the throng of dancers came the pushing figure of a man costumed as a fireman, escorting a woman who was attired as a Spanish dancer. Both figures wore masks. For a moment they were plainly visible in the glare of the spotlight. The man was elbowing a none too gentle pathway for the young woman.

Lester Leith dropped the hose, slipped toward the sidelines, pushed authoritatively through the first ranks of the curious spectators who were collecting in constantly increasing numbers, and sought his big sedan.

**S**AFELY locked in this sedan were the two huge bags which the spy had purchased for him. In one of these bags Lester Leith had his evening clothes. He drove the sedan a couple of blocks, swung into the curb, pulled down the curtains, and changed from his fireman's costume to the evening clothes. He did it as matter-of-factly as though he were accustomed to dress in automobiles seven nights a week.

When he had dressed himself in his

formal attire, he piloted the sedan to Bentley's, the costumer who had delivered him the very last fireman's suit which remained in the city.

A clerk was on duty. He approached Lester Leith with mechanical deference.

Lester Leith was crisply business-like.

"My name's Leith," he said. "I rented a fireman's costume from you. You were rushing it though the cleaners to get it done in time. When I put it on I found this in the pocket."

And Lester Leith extracted from an envelope the crumpled, pressed, gasoline-impregnated hundred-dollar bill.

The clerk looked at it, straightened it out.

"A hundred dollars," he said in a voice that contained a measure of awe.

"A hundred dollars," said Lester Leith.

"Do you suppose it was left in the pocket?" asked the clerk.

Lester Leith shrugged his shoulders.

"I want to find out who last had the suit. I will call upon him. If he convinces me that he left the hundred dollars in the pocket I will give it to him. If the bill has been in there for some time, I suppose I'm entitled to it."

The clerk knitted his brows.

"Well, maybe," he grudgingly admitted. "I'll get you the name and address of the party that had the suit last."

Lester Leith took out a small leather-backed notebook, a fountain pen, stood at the counter in an attitude of courteous waiting. The clerk checked through a file of cards.

"Oscar Neklin," he said. "The address is 3825 Washington."

Lester Leith nodded gravely. The clerk fidgeted.

"Don't you think that money should

be turned in to our lost and found department?" he said.

Lester Leith shook his head in a gesture of positive, final negation.

"Not a bit of it. I found it. You didn't. I'm not sure but what this hundred-dollar bill may have been in that costume for a year or more. You seldom clean out the pockets, I take it, but act on the theory there's nothing in them. Anyhow, I found it, and I'm not going to surrender it unless I find someone who's got a better claim to it than I have."

And he turned and walked from the establishment, into his sedan, and waited patiently for the time it took him to smoke four leisurely cigarettes.

At the end of that time a taxicab drew up to the curb. Lester Leith walked to the cab, paid the meter, opened the door and assisted Bess Marlowe to the pavement.

She glared at him.

"You ditched me on purpose!" she blazed.

The taxicab driver listened with bored interest. Family fights were nothing in his young life. Lester Leith gravely piloted the indignant young woman toward his sedan. She continued to talk.

"You told me that if anything happened and we got separated, I was to go to my apartment, change from my costume and take a cab here. What made you think we were going to be separated, if you didn't plan that we would?"

Lester Leith smiled at her, a smile of easy poise.

"Yes," he said, "I planned it."

"Well, of all the nerve!" she flared. "If you think that's any way to treat a lady . . ."

Lester Leith's tone was courteously suave.

"Would you, perhaps," he asked, "care to resign? The salary of five hundred dollars a month is rather liberal."

She stared at him.

"The salary of *how* much?"

"Of five hundred dollars a month."

Her mouth sagged open in a gasp, then snapped shut as the blue eyes blazed like coals of fire.

"Why, your valet told me the salary was two hundred!"

Lester Leith looked shocked.

"Can you feature that!" he said.

"Of course, I knew that Scuttle had his little peculiarities, but I certainly never thought he would try to hold out three hundred dollars a month on a young woman."

## CHAPTER VII

### The Trail of a Bill

THE indignation of the red-headed woman at being abandoned by Lester Leith was entirely forgotten in her new-found, white hot anger at the grafting valet who had sought to knock down three hundred dollars a month from her salary.

While she sputtered and fumed, Lester Leith piloted her into the sedan, started the motor, and eased the car away from the curb.

"What happened after the fire started?" he asked.

Bess Marlowe told him exactly what had happened, her enunciation crisply scornful.

"You instructed me to vamp anyone who wore a fireman's uniform. I found a man who seemed attractive enough at first, but he speedily became intolerable. I was on the verge of slapping his face, when the fire alarm sounded and orders were given to leave the house.

"I'll say this much for the man. He was good at getting me out. He shoved people right and left. It was rude, of course, but I didn't have people trampling over *my* feet.

"He escorted me to a car, and two men followed him. I saw them before he did. They didn't seem to be mashers. They looked to me more like highwaymen. I called his attention to them.

"And, my goodness! I never saw a man get so mad in my life! He walked off and left me, went directly to those two men and started to bawl them out. I couldn't hear all that was said, but I heard one of the men say: 'It isn't our fault. You told us to follow a masked fireman. We shadowed him in with this Spanish dancer, and then . . . ' And that was all I could hear.

"But he never came back. He seemed to have forgotten all about me, and I'm not the sort of a girl to wait. As soon as he showed that he was neglecting me, I got in a cab and went directly to my apartment. Then I changed from my costume and came here."

Lester Leith smiled musingly, the smile of one who conjured up pleasant memories.

"Very well done," he said. "Very well done, indeed."

She glared at him, and snapped: "I'm glad you think so!"

Then followed an interval of silence, during which Lester Leith piloted the car to 3825 Washington.

That address turned out to be an apartment house.

Lester Leith found the apartment registered under the name of Oscar Neklin, and with his red-headed companion on his arm went up and rang the bell.

A woman's voice came through a very small crack in a door that was barely opened.

"Who is it, and what do you want?"

"You rented a suit from Bentley's," said Lester Leith.

"I did nothing of the sort!" indignantly answered the woman.

"Yes, ma'am," said Lester Leith, you did, or your husband did. Oscar Neklin was the name. And I rented the same costume tonight. I found a hundred-dollar bill in the pocket. It had evidently been there for some time. If you can show that your husband was the one who left it there, I shall return it. Otherwise I intend to keep it."

The door opened a little wider.

"Come in," said the woman.

She was blonde, about twenty-five or six, and she had been in bed. There was a kimono thrown about her, sandals on her feet. The apartment was a modest, two room and kitchen affair. The windows had been opened for the night, giving a cold, clammy touch to the atmosphere.

There were two whiskey glasses on a little table, empty, yet showing they had been used, some ash trays with cigarette ends in them, a crumpled newspaper on the floor, an overstuffed chair drawn up in front of a table with a reading light placed to give a good light.

The young woman crossed to the windows, pulled them down, lowered the shades, went to the little fireplace and lit a gas burner which sent flickering flames up through imitation logs. As she moved, her kimono trailed behind her, giving glimpses of a very shapely form, covered with pajamas of sheerest silk.

She turned, stared at the pair, motioned them to chairs, reached for a cigarette.



"If that bird's two-timing me," she said, "I'll cut his heart out!"

**H**ER voice was bitter. Lester Leith raised his eyebrows.

"Two-timing you?" he asked, using well modulated tones of aristocratic surprise. "I'm sure I don't understand."

"You wouldn't," said the blonde grimly.

"You're Mrs. Neklin, I take it?" said Lester Leith, speaking with the voice of one who feels ill at ease.

"Yes," said the blonde in a mechanical assent that would have caused a shrewd student of human nature to doubt the veracity of the statement.

"Is your husband here?" asked Lester Leith.

"No. He's a traveling salesman. He started out on a trip. He got this costume. He had it delivered here and told me not to answer any questions about it. He was using it for an initiation at a secret lodge meeting. But we've been broke for a month. He couldn't have left any hundred smacks in there, unless he's holding out on me. If he is, I propose to know it. Let's see the century."

Lester Leith extended the bill to her. She looked at it, sniffed it.

"It was in the costume while it was being cleaned," she said.

Leith bowed his head in assent.

"It couldn't have been in there very long. I mean it couldn't have been there when Oscar rented the costume."

"Why not?" asked Bess Marlowe.

The woman turned on her with eyes that were hard as flints.

"Because Oscar would have found it, of course."

"He might have failed to find it," said Bess Marlowe

"Not Oscar!" rasped the blonde. She abruptly thrust the hundred-dollar bill down the front of her pajamas. "I'm going to keep it. It's ours. You admit it ain't yours."

"I found it," said Lester Leith with dignity.

"Well, of all the nerve!" said Bess Marlowe. "A man tries to be honest, and you . . ."

"Shut up," rasped the blonde. "I didn't invite *you* here."

Lester Leith got to his feet with dignity. He walked to the far side of the room, stood with his back to the window.

"I'm afraid I must insist that you get your husband to identify that bill, or at least to prove he had a hundred dollars."

The woman laughed.

"Go on, beat it. It's our century. Oscar'd prove to you that he'd had it whether he was broke or not. He's a smooth one. Now I'll tell you something. Oscar's walked out on me. I probably won't ever see him again. I've got the hundred, and I need it worse than you do. And that's that. Now beat it, and let me get my beauty sleep. Your hundred's gone.

"There's no use looking shocked. I've got as much right to that hundred as you have. You never did anything except find it. Tell you what I'll do, though. I'll buy you a drink. Then we'll part friends."

Bess Marlowe was on her feet, eyes blazing.

"No, thank you! I prefer to drink with people who are honest!"

The blonde flung herself toward Bess Marlowe.

"Say, where do *you* get that noise? Don't start anything with *me*. If you knew what some of us girls have to put up with you wouldn't be so damned up-

stage just because you run around to costume balls! If you don't want to drink, don't. Get out now, before I call a cop!"

Lester Leith sidled along the wall, after the manner of a gentleman who suddenly sees two members of the fair sex about to come to blows in his presence.

"Quite all right, *quite* all right," he said. "We'll just let the whole affair go. Don't bother about it, Miss Marlowe."

But the two women never so much as glanced in his direction. They were eying each other with that look of scornful appraisal which only one woman can give another.

"Well," said Bess Marlowe, "it takes all sorts of people to make a world."

The blonde's reply was an epithet.

Lester Leith, who had sidled along the wall until he could reach the mantel, swiftly grasped a framed picture which showed a young man with a rather vacuous face and eyes soulfully serious. The picture vanished under his coat.

"Just give me permission," said Bess Marlowe to Leith, "and I'll teach her some manners."

Leith spoke hastily: "No, no, no!" he said. "Not here!"

Bess Marlowe swept toward the door, jerked it open.

As Lester Leith stepped into the corridor the blonde snapped: "Don't argue with your betters!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### Leith Leaves It to Crampp

**B**ESS MARLOWE, breathing heavily, her face set with indignation, rode wordlessly down in the elevator, went to the car.

Lester Leith handed Bess into the car, took his own position behind the steering wheel, drove at once to the place where George Crampp maintained his residence. Bess Marlowe's lips were still pressed tightly together as Lester Leith brought the car to a stop before the dark pile of the mansion.

There was a light in a room on the upper floor. Aside from that, the house was in darkness.

"Must I go in?" asked Bess.

"If you please," said Lester Leith.

"Well," snapped Bess Marlowe, "if I'm insulted any more, I'm going to forget that I'm a lady."

Lester Leith chuckled.

Together, they walked through a gate in a wrought iron fence, up a cement walk, climbed four steps to a porch, paused before an ornate door, massive, dark and forbidding. Lester Leith pressed his forefinger upon a bell button, and the note of the bell jangled from the interior of the house.

After a period of several seconds, there were steps on the stairs. A light clicked on in the corridor. Another light flooded the porch with brilliance. A shadowy face surveyed them from the interior of the house, then the door opened a trifle. A young man with an eye that was bruised and livid surveyed them with uncordial appraisal.

"What was it?" he asked.

Lester Leith, looking very substantial and prosperous in his evening clothes, spoke in polite tones.

"An accident," he said, "has placed us in possession of startling information. This information has to do with the real identity of the man who burglarized Mr. Crampp's safe. We would like to see Mr. Crampp himself."

The man with the black eye took another good look at the pair.

"I am Mr. Crampp's secretary. You may tell me. Mr. Crampp has retired."

Lester Leith shook his head.

"This information is for Mr. Crampp himself," he said.

The young man hesitated, frowned, then stood to one side.

"Come in," he invited.

He led them through the lighted corridor, switched on the lights in a library, indicated chairs, and excused himself.

After ten minutes a tall man attired in trousers, slippers, shirt and dressing gown came into the room. He wore huge, tortoise-shell glasses and surveyed the occupants of the room with restless eyes.

"George Crampp?" asked Lester Leith.

The tall man nodded, wet his lips, nodded again, and then, as though the nods had not been enough, said: "Yes."

"MY name is Leith. The young woman is Bess Marlowe, my secretary. Her discretion is highly cultivated."

Crampp bowed, formally, did not take a chair.

"My secretary, Mr. Purkett, tells me you have some information about the robbery of my safe."

Lester Leith nodded.

"I have outside, in a bag, the costume which was used by the man who entered your house. It is a fireman's costume, was rented from Bentley's, and returned this morning."

George Crampp widened his eyes.

"A costume?" he said. "Then the man wasn't really a fireman!"

"That is correct," said Lester Leith.

"You can prove this?" asked Crampp.

"Permit me," said Lester Leith.

"I will get the costume and show you positive proof."

He bowed, walked from the door, went to the car, returned with the big bag that held the fireman's costume he had worn to the masquerade. He placed this large, distinctive bag on the floor of the room, opened it, took out the fireman's costume.

"This," he said, "is it."

Crampp cleared his throat.

"The proof?"

"There was a hundred-dollar bill in the pocket of the costume," said Lester Leith. "At the time I discovered it I thought nothing of the matter. I wanted to return the bill. I went to the costumer's and secured the address of the last renter of the costume. It was Oscar Neklin. He lives in an apartment at number 3825 Washington. I went there. There was a young woman in the apartment. She said she was Mrs. Neklin. Her conduct was suspicious. She took the hundred-dollar bill and refused to surrender it. She said her husband was a traveling salesman. Her manner made me suspicious, so I decided to come to you."

"I am satisfied that the man who robbed your safe was not a fireman. Yet he had a uniform. What more natural than to suppose this uniform was, in reality, a costume? He set a small fire, put in an alarm, and counted upon the noise of the safe explosion to bring the firemen rushing into the house. Then he mingled with them and made his escape."

Crampp stared down his nose. His lips twitched nervously. His hands clenched and unclenched.

"There was only a very little money taken from the safe. In fact I have no money. As my receivership report showed, I was embarrassed financially when I entered upon the receivership,

and, contrary to malicious rumors circulated by political enemies, I am still financially embarrassed."

Lester Leith nodded sympathetically.

"That is why," he said, "I thought I should come directly to you. I thought you might care to go and call on Mrs. Neklin. Perhaps the entire matter could be . . . ah . . . adjusted, without publicity."

The tall man fidgeted, shifted his weight, glanced questioningly at his secretary. That individual was staring at the floor.

"Where is this man, Neklin?" asked Crampp.

"Away on the road somewhere. I think the woman could reach him if she wanted to. She's probably got some photographs of him somewhere around her apartment. You could see if he's anyone you know. It's possible you know him, under a different name, of course. His conduct showed a familiarity with your habits and the lay of the land here in the house."

Crampp took a deep breath.

"I'll talk with her," he said.

Lester Leith nodded.

"I can wait here. My secretary can drive my car. She'll drive you to the place."

Bess Marlowe started to say something, then caught the look in Lester Leith's eye, changed her mind and snapped: "I'll drive him there. I won't go in."

Crampp started for the door. His chin was forward now, and his eyes showed determination.

"Okay," he said. "I'm glad you came to me instead of informing the police."

"Certainly," said Lester Leith. "I felt that under the very peculiar circumstances, you should be placed in possession of the information so that

you could notify the police yourself. I'll leave it to you to do that."

Crampp nodded.

"Wait until I change my clothes," he said.

He strode from the room. The secretary, Steve Purkett, smiled at Lester Leith. "I'm sure that you're very astute, Mr. Leith. You've done some excellent detective work."

"Thank you," said Lester Leith, beaming affably.

The young man withdrew.

## CHAPTER IX

### A Break

TWO or three minutes elapsed. George Crampp came into the room. He was dressed for the street. There was a suspicious bulge in the pocket of his overcoat. His eyes were hard and glittering. His mouth was clamped.

"All ready," he said.

Lester Leith arose.

"You won't mind my waiting?"

"Not at all. But you can come with us if you wish."

Lester Leith shook his head.

"No. I feel that it's a matter you should handle alone. My secretary, Miss Marlowe, will show you the place. Then you can talk with the wife of this salesman. You can threaten her with prosecution if you wish. She's a woman who has an acid tongue. I don't like her."

Crampp nodded, gave Leith a significant glance.

"Yes," he said. "I understand. I'll leave Mr. Purkett to keep you entertained. He'll see that you have proper refreshment. Shall we go, Miss Marlowe?"

Left behind, Steve Purkett turned to Lester Leith.

"Shall I get you a highball?"

Lester Leith bowed his head.

"It would be quite acceptable, I'm sure."

The secretary smirked, moved away upon silent feet.

Lester Leith walked back to the library, but did not go into the room. Instead, he walked past the entrance, down the corridor, through a dining room, and stood in the shadows, a position from which he could see both the back stairs as well as the front stairs.

He waited.

Seconds clacked away, registered by the deep throated ticking of the huge clock in the front hallway. Then there sounded a soft, furtive noise, the shuffling of stealthy feet upon carpeted stairs.

The steps were coming down the back stairs.

Lester Leith moved toward those back stairs. A shadowy figure appeared, moving stealthily. A groping left hand slid along the polished rail of the banister, making a little rasping sound which was distinctly audible in the silence of the house.

Lester Leith moved out into the open, away from the shadows, just as the furtive figure reached the bottom of the stairs. A light switch clicked under Lester Leith's thumb, and the room was flooded with brilliance.

Steve Purkett, the secretary, stood in the glare of that light, a suitcase in his hand.

"Ah!" said Lester Leith.

The figure of the secretary exploded into a violent contortion as his right hand dropped the suitcase, flashed to the base of his left arm. Lester Leith's left snapped out in the perfectly timed blow of a skillful boxer. It caught the man's jaw, smashed him backwards, stag-

gered him across the corridor. A blued steel revolver, jerked from its holster by the snatching fingers of the secretary, was wrested from his half grasp as the man staggered. It made a pinwheel of glittering steel, then thudded to the floor.

Lester Leith grabbed the gun.

"Tut, tut, Purkett," said Lester Leith, entirely unruffled. "Suppose you come in here and talk things over."

And, the suitcase in one hand, the revolver in the other, Lester Leith walked nonchalantly into the library. After a moment, the secretary, regaining his composure, followed.

Lester Leith paused before the open bag which contained the fireman's costume. Then he opened the suitcase which Purkett had carried. There were some clothes on the top of the suitcase. Down underneath were packets of money. These were, for the most part in hundred-dollar bills, although there were some thousands.

Lester Leith pulled out the bills, dumped them into his bag, tossed in the revolver, closed the bag, then closed the suitcase. He crossed the room to the place where he had deposited his overcoat on the back of a chair, picked out the framed picture which he had appropriated at the apartment where the blonde had grabbed the hundred-dollar bill.

It was a photograph of Steve Purkett.

**L**ESTER LEITH grinned at the discomfited secretary.

"You couldn't have got away with it, anyhow, Purkett," he said in a voice that was not at all unkindly. It was the tone of voice a bridge expert would use in reviewing the mistakes of an amateur after the hands had been played.

"In the first place the thing was too cleverly planned to have been the result of any chance. It showed premeditation as well as a fairly clever mind. You merely donned the fireman's costume, walked into the room where Crampp was, socked him a fairly good blow, and ran into the room which held the safe, locking the door.

"You'd previously opened that safe and abstracted the coin, leaving a high explosive on the inside with a length of fuse protruding. You paused only long enough to light that fuse, then divested yourself of your fireman's costume, rushed out of the other door, grabbed a gun and rejoined Crampp.

"In the meantime you'd smashed your fist into your eye, so you could substantiate your story of the fireman who had rushed in through the back door.

"You hadn't taken a full minute from the time you left Crampp staggering from your punch, until you rejoined him. You'd only had to strike a match and light the fuse, slip off the costume which you had donned over your other clothes, whip out a revolver, and run into the room.

"Naturally, Crampp told you that the fireman was in the room with the safe. You started shooting through the door. The explosion of the dynamite you'd left back of the half opened safe door gave further indication of the fact that the fireman was there in the room as you emptied your revolver.

"Then the real fireman, hearing the shots and the explosion of the dynamite, rushed in. You had everything all fixed the way you wanted it. But you slipped up on one thing. You didn't wear gloves, and the fingerprint experts found only your prints and those of Crampp on the safe. *They* couldn't

understand why the prints of the robber didn't show.

"As soon as I read in the paper that no fingerprints save those of you and Crampp were on the safe, I surmised it might be an inside job. So I took steps to see to it that I'd be notified as soon as anyone surrendered a fireman's costume.

"The costume idea was good. It wouldn't have been good enough to have enabled a thief to mingle with actual firemen. But it was good enough to fool Crampp, who had only a glimpse of the fireman before he was struck a blow which dazed him.

"You needed a fireman's costume. You didn't dare, of course, order it under your own name. But you had been living a dual life, posing as Oscar Neklin, a salesman, and having an apartment that you thought no one knew about.

"Therefore you thought it would be a cinch to order the suit sent there, as Oscar Neklin, and have your blonde playmate return it to the costume company.

"When I went to the apartment, and found a man's picture on the mantel, I just appropriated it as evidence. As soon as we rang the bell here and you answered the door, I saw that my chase was ended. You were Oscar Neklin.

"You figured Crampp would go to the apartment on Washington Street, find out the real identity of Neklin, and return here. So you decided to beat him to it and skip out."

Lester Leith smiled, a smile that was friendly, lit a cigarette, took in a deep drag, and blew out the match flame with a smoky breath.

"What," asked Purkett, his eyes still glassy, his hands clenched, "are *you* going to do?"

Lester Leith made a gesture with his hand.

"Nothing," he said, "nothing at all. You'll have to skip out, of course, because Crampp will sweat the truth out of your blonde friend, at least enough to direct his suspicions toward you. Once he begins to doubt you, he'll put two and two together fast enough."

Steve Purkett wet his lips.

"I've got to run," he said. "I've got to flee. I've got to get out. He'll have me arrested. He'll kill me. He's a dirty crook! He got that money by fraud and trickery. His receivership accounts were crooked. That money isn't his. He's got no more right to it than I have!"

Lester Leith blew a smoke ring, watched the swirling borders of the smoke with appreciative eyes.

"Exactly," he agreed. "He hasn't any more right to it than you have—or than *I* have." And he chuckled.

"But," persisted Purkett, "*I've* got to skip out!"

Lester Leith shrugged his shoulders.

"That's a matter for you to decide."

Purkett's eyes blazed with maniacal fury.

"Damn you! You sit there and take the fruits of my careful planning, and then have the crust to blow smoke rings and laugh at me! You . . ."

He started to rush.

Lester Leith moved sideways. His body rippled into swift motion. His left hand blocked the right swing with which Purkett had rushed. He adroitly sidestepped, was standing on the balls of his feet as Purkett whirled.

"If," said Lester Leith, "you want me to beat you up, just come on and get it. Seconds are precious, and you're wasting them. The police will be on your trail."

The man's mouth twisted. His eyes

blinked rapidly. Tears of self pity coursed down his cheeks.

"I risked my all to get that money! You come along here and get all the gravy without risking a damned thing. It ain't right. I've got to be hounded by the police all my life . . . Give me a stake, anyway. At least give me my revolver!"

Lester Leith smiled, a paternal smile.

"Of course," he said, "when you put it on *that* ground, it's your revolver. The money isn't yours, any more than it's really Crampp's."

He took out the blued steel revolver. He took the cartridges from the weapon, handed the unloaded weapon to Purkett.

"Get started now. I've given you a break."

The man seized the gun, grabbed his suitcase from the floor. He looked longingly at the bag, then at the steel-hard eyes of Lester Leith, sighed, turned on his heel.

"Well," he remarked, "you gave me a break, anyway. Watch what I do with it," and he laughed significantly.

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## CHAPTER X

### Nothing to Tell the Police

HE ran through the door of the library, along the corridor, out of the back door. Lester Leith heard a door slam, then the whirring of the starting motor on a car. He waited until the motor had ceased to make noise, the sounds being swallowed in the distance. Then he arose, opened the big bag and took out the piles of bills he had dumped into it.

There was over fifty thousand dollars in the haul.

Lester Leith took the bills, walked out of the back door, crossed the yard to a garbage pail, lifted the lid,

dumped in the bank notes, returned to the living room.

He had only settled comfortably in the library when he heard the sound of a car, running feet on the porch, the sound of a key in the lock, and pounding feet in the corridor.

Lester Leith, an open book in his hand, looked up in mild inquiry.

"Find anything?" he asked.

George Crampp's face was writhing, twisting with fury. His eyes were glittering slits of indignation.

"Where is he?" he yelled.

"Who?" asked Lester Leith.

"That damned traitor! That two-timing, double-crossing crook! I mean Purkett, the man who betrayed my confidence, went under the name of Neklin, robbed my safe, betrayed me . . ."

Lester Leith looked shocked. He made little clucking noises in his throat.

"Tut, tut, what a shame! He has betrayed you! I wonder where he is. He went to get me a highball, and, come to think of it, it's been quite a time. I got interested in this book . . ."

George Crampp gave an inarticulate bellow, rushed for the stairs. They followed him up. He rushed to the room which his secretary had occupied. It needed only a glance at the emptied drawers, the clothing scattered about, to show that the secretary had packed and gone.

Crampp ran down the back stairs, into the garage, stared at the empty building.

"Taken my car, the dirty ——!"

Lester Leith rebuked him.

"Tut, tut," he said, "that is no way to talk in front of a lady. How much did you lose, altogether?"

Crampp stared at him. "Fifty thou—" He clamped his teeth together, took a deep breath. "Something less

than five hundred dollars," he said slowly. "It ain't the money. It's the principle of the thing."

Lester Leith nodded ready sympathy.

"Of course," he agreed. "I know exactly how you feel. Will you notify the police?"

Crampp took another deep breath.

"No," he said. "I shall refuse to prosecute. The amount involved is too small to bother with. But if I ever find that crook I'll tear him limb from limb."

Leith nodded again.

"Then I take it, you want me to refrain from mentioning the matter—to the police I mean."

"Yes," said Crampp slowly, "it's the only thing to do."

Leith nodded again.

"Then Miss Marlowe and I will be going. There's really nothing further we can do. I'm so sorry the matter turned out as it did. It's a great loss—not the money of course, but the loss of a bit of faith in human nature—the principle of the thing."

Crampp said nothing. He stood rigidly in the doorway while they walked down the porch and entered the big sedan. The starter whirred, the motor pulsed, the car moved away from the curb.

**T**HE girl glanced sidelong at Lester Leith.

"You're one too many for me," she said.

Lester Leith made more clucking noises in his throat.

"To think that it would be his own secretary!" he said. "I don't see how it *could* have been if the newspaper accounts are right. Why, the secretary was standing with Crampp, firing through the door, when the safe ex-



ploded. Crampp *must* have been mistaken."

The girl frowned, said nothing.

The car slowed, came to a stop at a boulevard intersection, started to purr into motion again. An automobile came rushing out of a side street, slammed into the running board, hurtled the sedan over to the curb. A masked figure, slender, active, menacing, was sitting at the wheel of the other car.

He whipped a gun over the edge of the door, covered the open-mouthed Lester Leith.

"Where is it?" he yelled.

In spite of the mask, it was possible to recognize the voice as being that of Purkett, the secretary. And even the mask failed to conceal the fact that one eye was badly discolored and swollen.

"Where is what?" asked Lester Leith.

The man jerked open the rear door of the car, saw the duplicate bag which Lester Leith had placed there earlier in the evening.

He grabbed the bag, menacing them with the gun.

He slammed the car door shut, holding the bag in his hand.

"You see what a break the gun gave me!" exulted the masked man. "Now step on it, damn you. Get going!"

Lester Leith, apparently almost beside himself with fear, stepped on the gas. The car shot forward. When they had gone half a dozen blocks, Leith swung down a side street. Then he twisted and turned, going down side streets, swinging around blocks, doubling back on his trail, keeping the car at high speed.

"Gósh," he said, "it must have been a desire for revenge."

The girl nodded.

"But that was only one bag. There were two. What did you do with the other one?"

Lester Leith laughed.

"Great heavens, it's out at Crampp's. I forgot to bring it with me. Never mind. I'll get it in the morning. It's got that costume in it. That's what Purkett wanted. He knew that would be evidence which could be used against him.

"Oh, well, we'll drop by the apartment and get a drink, if you don't mind running up with me. Then we'll call it a day. This business of being an amateur sleuth is too strenuous."

The girl gave a determined exclamation.

"If you think this is strenuous," she said, "wait until you hear what I tell your valet about that matter of my salary."

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## CHAPTER XI

### Scuttle Bumps into a Door

THEY walked into Lester Leith's apartment. Two figures moved forward from the shadows of the corridor, closed in on them as they entered the room.

"Stick 'em up!" growled a deep-throated voice.

Lester Leith whirled.

The girl gave a half scream. Lights clicked on. Lester Leith bowed.

"Miss Marlowe," he said, "may I have the pleasure of presenting Sergeant Arthur Ackley, of the metropolitan police? The gentleman with him is, doubtless, a detective."

Sergeant Ackley growled throatily.

"None of your lip. Get in there and get your hands up!"

Lester Leith sighed.

"These things," he proclaimed, "are but a part of the price an honest citi-

zen has to pay when he takes an academic interest in crime."

Miss Marlowe whirled on Sergeant Ackley.

"I don't know just how *you* fit into this picture," she blazed, "but don't think *you* can . . ."

Sergeant Ackley placed a hand on her shoulder.

"Shut up," he said, "or I'll jail you as an accomplice!"

He kicked the door shut behind him, strode into the middle of the apartment.

"Search him, Bill," he said.

The detective advanced toward Lester Leith. The door of an inner room opened, and Beaver, the undercover spy, pretended to seem very much surprised.

"Why," he said, "whatever in the world . . ."

"Shut up!" rasped Ackley.

The detective searched Lester Leith thoroughly, turned to Sergeant Ackley.

"Clean as a hound's tooth," he said.

Sergeant Ackley's face twisted with conflicting emotions.

"Leith," he said, ominously, "I've got you this time! You gave my men the slip and went out on that Crampp case. You've been out at Crampp's. You've been at the costumer's getting the name and address of the man who turned in that fireman's costume!

"You planted a smoke bomb and turned in a fire alarm. Then you slipped out, leaving me with this woman. Naturally, when I escorted her out, the shadows followed me and let you escape so you could hijack that Crampp money! I can prove every step in your diabolically clever plot! And this woman is an accomplice. I'm going to search her!"

"You're going to *what?*" asked Bess Marlowe, ominously.

"Search you," said Sergeant Ackley. "The money ain't on him. It must be on you."

**H**E moved toward her. His big hand went toward the front of her dress.

The red-headed woman swung her left. The fist impacted the startled cheek of the Sergeant. She crossed her right. Her eyes were blazing.

The detective jumped forward, held the girl's left. Beaver, the spy, grabbed her right. Sergeant Ackley, punch groggy, staggered under the impact of those blows, blows that were powerfully delivered, fully timed.

Lester Leith lit a cigarette.

"Tut, tut, Sergeant. You shouldn't search women! It's an invasion of their privacy. That's particularly true of young women who are red-headed, have hot tempers, and have taken boxing lessons. And, you'll remember, Miss Marlowe answered an ad calling for those qualifications."

Bess Marlowe spoke, her voice vibrant with loathing and disgust.

"You big ham!" she said. "I'll report you for this. I'll have you on the carpet! I happen to know a young woman who is a friend of the mayor's secretary. I'll have you sent back to pounding pavements!"

Sergeant Ackley fought with himself for his self-control.

"You *must* have been in on it," he said, but his tone showed concern.

"In on what?" asked the girl, ominously.

"In on that Crampp job."

She spoke slowly, articulating the words clearly, after the manner in which one would explain a simple matter to a very dull child.

"I think," she said, "that you're drunk, or crazy. I happen to have been

with Mr. Leith ever since he left Bentley's. He went to a man's apartment, talked with a woman who claimed to be the man's wife.

"He showed that woman a hundred-dollar bill he had found in a costume that he rented. She stole the bill from him. Then Mr. Leith got the idea this man might have robbed Crampp, using the fireman's costume. He went to Mr. Crampp with his suspicions.

"Crampp went to the woman, forced from her information which led him to suspect his secretary. He rushed back home, found the secretary had skipped out. He asked Mr. Leith not to report to the police, as he wouldn't care to prosecute the case.

"Therefore Mr. Leith acted perfectly within his rights. He lost the hundred dollars he had found in the suit. What is more, he lost a bag which he had in the sedan. Purkett held us up, and took that bag from us."

Sergeant Ackley's eye suddenly gleamed.

"He did what?"

"Stole a bag from us."

Ackley groaned.

"No wonder then I didn't find the money on Leith. This is once when he was lucky by being unlucky. *You* probably are innocent, young lady, but Lester Leith was alone in that house with the man who robbed Crampp. He had the money in that bag."

"No," said the girl, still speaking slowly, distinctly. "He didn't have access to that bag at all. It was in the car with us."

The police spy cleared his throat.

"There were two bags," he said.

Lester Leith blew a smoke ring.

"The second bag," he said, "remained in Crampp's library where I overlooked it in the excitement of my departure. It contains a fireman's

costume. You can have it, Sergeant, if you wish, seeing you like to attend balls in firemen's costumes. And now, since *you've* had the floor, permit me to say a word about the matter.

"If I planned this thing, as you claim, then I must have done it with the knowledge that you would be at that masquerade, dressed as a fireman. A moment's thought will convince you that I couldn't have had any such advance information.

"Sergeants of police don't usually pay one hundred dollars for tickets to masquerades and I *am* wondering about the costume. I thought *I* had cornered all the firemen's costumes. And then again, about the ticket. Of course, my dear Sergeant, it was a commendable donation to charity, but I had hardly anticipated that you would have . . ."

**S**ERGEANT ACKLEY'S face was the color of boiled beets.

"That'll do," he said. "I guess I made a mistake."

Lester Leith nodded.

"Indeed you did. Your entire premise is predicated upon a robbery of Crampp's secretary by me. Crampp says the secretary didn't steal anything from him, and he won't prosecute. The secretary has skipped out. I have witnesses who were with me all the evening."

"And," said Bess Marlowe, "you lost a hundred-dollar bill that you'd found."

Sergeant Ackley wheeled savagely on her.

"Found hell!" he blazed. "It was *his* hundred dollars. He planted it!"

The girl smiled at him, one of those sweetly scornful smiles.

"How childish, Sergeant! He couldn't have done that. If he hadn't

found that hundred-dollar bill in the suit, he would have never had any clew to the identity of the man who robbed Crampp's safe. It was finding that bill that gave him the idea."

Sergeant Ackley placed a hand to his forehead, looked at Lester Leith, then at the undercover man.

"It's too deep for me," he said. "Come on, Bill. One thing's certain. The trail's so mixed up now it can't be followed."

Lester Leith waved his hand, and smiled.

"I really feel, Sergeant, that you owe me an apology, and I *know* you owe the girl one. As Crampp so aptly remarked, it's the principle of the thing. And then there was your unjust suspicion of the fire department . . . A false alarm, my dear Sergeant. You should be more careful about false alarms . . ."

He was interrupted by the banging of the door of the apartment as Ackley stamped out.

He sighed, took a drag at his cigarette.

"Sergeant Ackley," he said, "will never make a great detective. He lacks composure."

Bess Marlowe turned to Beaver, the spy.

"If Mr. Leith is finished for the evening," she said, "there's a matter I'd like to discuss with Mr. Beaver before I go."

Lester Leith waved his hand. "Go right ahead," he said.

Bess Marlowe opened the door into the corridor.

"Would you mind," she asked, "stepping this way?"

Beaver smirked, followed her into the hallway. It was some three minutes before he again opened the outer door, oozed sheepishly into the room.

Lester Leith was speaking, his eyes on his cigarette. He raised them slowly, as he talked.

"Really, Scuttle, I must thank you for calling my attention to that Crampp case. It had some very interesting angles. Very interesting indeed . . . Why, Scuttle! Whatever happened to your eye?"

The spy raised a rueful hand to the swollen optic.

"I ran into a door," he said. Then, after a moment, he asked. "And damn that Crampp case and everything connected with it!"

Lester Leith arched his eyebrows.

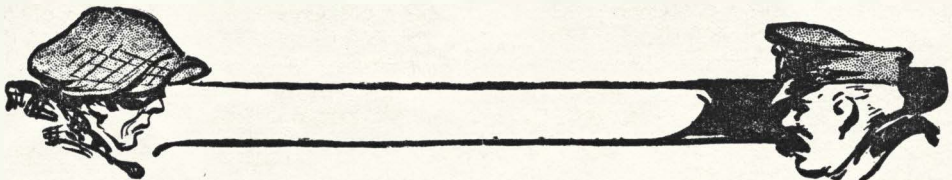
"Why, Scuttle!" he protested. "Such language, such vehemence . . . And, by the way, Scuttle, can you call me at four o'clock in the morning?"

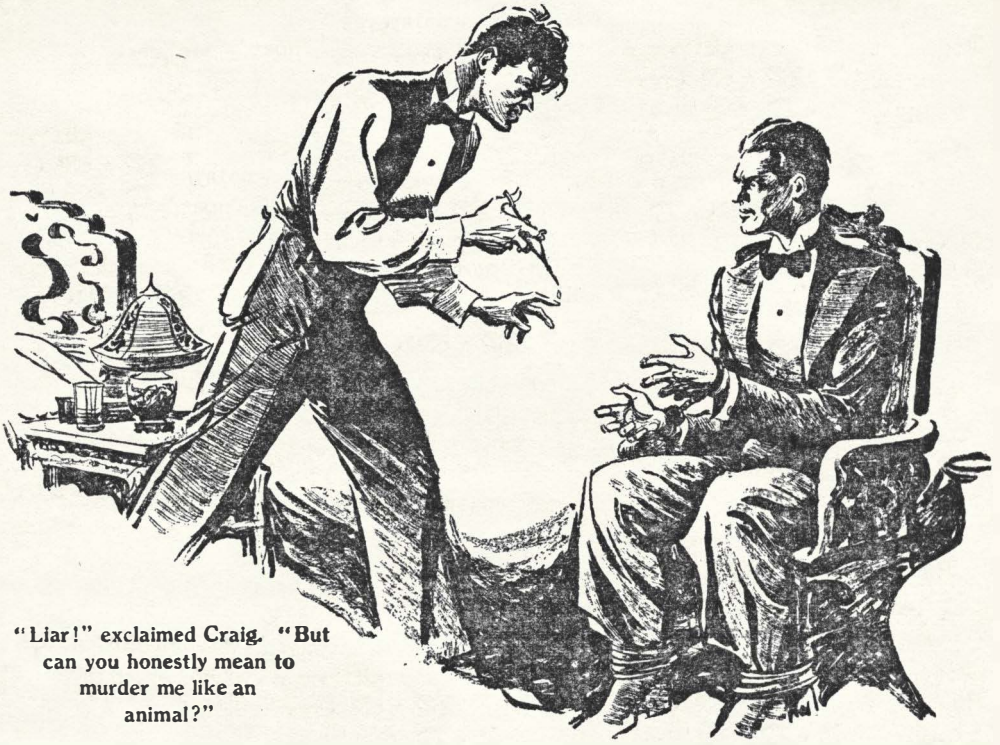
The spy gasped.

"Four o'clock! Why, that's before the milkman comes. You'll be beating him up, sir!"

Lester Leith smiled enigmatically.

"Or, Scuttle," he drawled, "perhaps the garbage man!"





"Liar!" exclaimed Craig. "But can you honestly mean to murder me like an animal?"

# The Guns of the Redskins

A Novelette

By H. Bedford-Jones

*Craig Knew Too Much About This Ruthless Band of Counterfeiters—  
He Was Sentenced to Die and His Body to Be Thrown in the Seine*

## CHAPTER I

### A Brotherly Act

CRAIG fingered the twenty thousand-franc notes, crisp, new, lavender notes of the Bank of France, then laid them on the table and shook his head.

"No," he said curtly.

"Don't be a fool, Jack!" broke out the other man impatiently. "All you have to do is to turn them in. It means that we split five thousand."

Craig regarded his brother for a long moment, stuffed his pipe afresh, and held a match to it. They were very different in appearance, these two, although of the same height and build. Perry Craig was cynical, stooped, his rather pallid features showing a flash of the other's energy, but none of the rugged independence and harsh vigor that stamped John Craig and had made him successful in the fierce business competition of Paris.

"I know you, Perry," said Craig,

when his pipe was alight. "Why do you come to me with a job of this kind—me, of all people? I've got you out of trouble often enough, here in France. I know you run with a rotten crowd. Are these notes stolen, then?"

"No!" snapped Perry, with sulky anger. None of his brother's challenging strength showed in his face. The calm, deep restraint of those gray eyes did not appear in his own grayish-blue gaze.

"No," he went on. "Nothing like that. It wouldn't get you into trouble at all. But I can't explain. I promised."

Craig laughed scornfully.

"As though a promise meant anything to you, Perry. What's back of it?"

"I'm helping out a friend," said Perry sullenly. "Five thousand to split, understand? More than your blamed typewriter agency makes in a week!"

"Wrong, old chap," said Craig calmly. "I signed a whopping contract today with the biggest chain of banks in France." He turned from the table, and his hand fell on the shoulder of his brother. "Perry, quit it! You have the stuff, if you'll give up the easy money notion and go straight. I'll put you in charge—"

"Oh, cut out the nonsense, Jack! Do you mean you won't turn in those notes for me? You know I've no bank account of my own—"

"Exactly that," said Craig with decision. "Who sent you here?"

Fear flashed in the sallow features.

"Who sent me? Why—nobody sent me! I came myself."

Craig nodded to himself. He reached out and picked up the notes.

"Hm! Well, Perry, I'll make a bargain with you. I need a lot of cash to swing that new contract; they

pay on delivery here, you know, and it takes time and money. I'll turn in the notes to the bank on one condition."

"Good!" Perry wiped sweat from his brow. "What is it?"

"That you tell me who sent you to me with them."

"No," snapped Perry. Craig shrugged, laughed, and pocketed the notes.

"All right. I'll deposit them in the morning. Come around to the office at noon, eh?"

Perry stared at him, drew a deep breath, and his eyes widened in delight.

"You mean that? You'll do it, and no preaching?"

Craig broke into a laugh and clapped him on the shoulder.

"Right. Leave it to me. What time is it—five thirty! Just right for a drink. They have some Napoleon brandy down at the corner; no tourist stuff, but the genuine. What do you say? And we'll forget everything except old times."

"Done!" Perry thrust out his hand, his face glowing. "Jack, you've never gone back on me yet! Old faithful, that's what you are. I know I'm a rotten egg, but I'll not bust into your life any more, with my whines and pleas for help. I swear it! Lend me a hand this time, and it's the last."

"Right," said Craig. "Sit down and have a cigarette. I'll wash up, get into a fresh shirt, and be with you in a minute. Had a devilish hard, hot day at the office."

Leaving his brother, he passed into the next room of the apartment, and closed the door. Then, surprisingly enough, he dropped into a chair and his eyes closed.

"Lord forgive me!" he muttered. "It's a damnable trick; first time I

ever did it—but he's slipping fast. He thinks I'm a sanctimonious ass, a preaching fool, just because I've tried to pull him up. Well, go ahead with it! Heroic measures; that or nothing!"

Decision taken, he was on his feet, stripping off his shirt, hurrying into the bathroom for a quick wash.

Craig had been three years in Paris, and had made good so far as importing typewriters went. Perry's arrival had changed things. Perry could make good at spending money, but not at earning it honestly. One thing after another had happened, always a step down, until now Craig had come to fear and accept the worst.

Ten minutes later they swung side by side down the street to the corner, turned in at the café there, and Craig nodded to the waitress as they took a corner seat. He ordered Napoleon brandy. He knew his brother well, only too well.

"This is about the first time you ever bought me a drink," said Perry, with a laugh. "Have you given up your fool notion that I can't hold my liquor, that it makes an ass of me?"

"Bosh! I gave up that notion long ago," said Craig jovially. "I'll buy you a dozen drinks if you want 'em, old chap! Got to celebrate that new contract of mine."

"Fair enough," said Perry with enthusiasm. "I'm darned glad you're getting human, Jack!"

Craig proceeded to give every evidence that he was getting more human each minute.

Half an hour later he piloted the staggering Perry back to his apartment, a bottle of cognac under his arm; he was grimly determined to see the thing through now. Perry was at the garrulous stage, but not yet sorry for himself.

Another drink, and another. Craig's face grew more harsh as he probed deftly. Presently Perry was in the throes of self-pity, and in maudlin accent unbosomed himself.

"Can you imagine it, Jack? Rich feller like him, too! And now he talks about turning over everything to the police. Wouldn't hurt him a mite to make 'em good. And that little Frida Ginsberg—say, you ought to see her! She's the best little dame in Paris—"

Nothing about the notes; Craig began to believe that if there was anything crooked about those banknotes, Perry did not know it. But plenty of other information. Things that shocked him, stupefied him, left his pulses racing with anger.

"Who are these Redskins, Perry?" he demanded.

"Shucks! You know." Perry waved his hand. "Every kiosk, every street-corner news stand; the same old nickel novels we used to read as boys. Mostly the Redskins, *Les Peaux Rouges*. Sure, you know."

Craig knew this, of course. Paris and all of France were at the present moment enthralled in the wildest sort of stories about redskins and cowboys; in fact, were passing through the phase that every American boy of a past generation experienced, but in dead seriousness.

"That's not the point, Perry," he insisted. "Just who are these Redskins of yours? Is Morell one of them?"

"Him? He's the big chief, you bet!" Perry passed into weak laughter. "Like Apaches, you know! But this is a higher-up outfit, old chap. Tough, you bet. Morell runs the gang. Frida's one of them, too. She's going to break away with me and go straight, savvy? Listen! That skirt can do wonders

with a pen! She can write your name better'n you can do it, honest! But forgery's too risky. She's going to quit. Tol' me so, too. Her and me both. Soon's we can raise enough cash, we're off to the Riviera!"

Well, Craig had gained what he wanted. And it left him chilled, before he finished. When he laid the unconscious Perry on the couch, he went through his pockets and found a stubby, deadly-looking automatic.

"So! And after forgery, the next step will be murder, eh?" he said grimly. "All right. Here's where I barge in and start something, you poor drunken fool! You and your Frida Ginsberg—faugh!"

He had not, however, as yet met said Frida. But he meant to keep Perry's date with her for the evening.

## CHAPTER II

### A Sinister Errand

**U**NHURRIED, Craig dressed for dinner, slipped Perry's ugly little automatic into a hip pocket, took the sheaf of bank notes, and then donned his black silk "smoking" hat. He had not worn it three times, but since he was aiming at high society this evening, it was the correct thing to complete his Tuxedo outfit. The black silk Fedora was extremely heavy, being very stiffly lined to hold its shape, a typically Parisian article.

Aware that Perry was good to last out the night where he now reposed, Craig left his apartment and walked down to the corner restaurant, where he enjoyed an excellent twenty-franc dinner. It was characteristic that, having obtained the information he desired, he now shut Morell and the Redskins from his mind until the moment of action.

His meal finished, Craig went to the taxi stand on the corner, entered the first cab, and gave Morell's address. Next moment, the taxi was off on the way to St. Cloud.

From his apartment in the *Rue de Passy*, it was not a long drive down the hill to the river; before reaching the bridge, however, the car turned aside. Opposite rose the heights of St. Cloud, glittering lights shining against the night sky, a faint burst of music coming from the park across the bridge. Here on this side was Morell's house—one of those old and aristocratic mansions built directly on the river-front, with deep gardens ending at the water's edge. Such a house must be inherited; it can seldom or never be bought.

At the tall iron entrance gates, the chauffeur alighted, jingled the hand bell, and turned to Craig.

"What name, *m'sieu*?"

"M. Craig, to see Mlle. Ginsberg."

An old crone appeared from a tiny cottage behind the wall, and evidently recognized the name, for she opened the gates at once. The taxi drove in; this entrance, from the street, circled behind the house and came under a *porte-cochère* at the side. Nothing was allowed to interfere with the river-view from the front.

Craig alighted, paid the driver, told him not to wait, and turned to the entrance door. He pressed the bell firmly. The door was opened by a tall man in butler's striped waistcoat, who stared at him blankly.

"M. Craig. I believe Mlle. Ginsberg expects me? Or my brother?"

"Oh!" The other held open the door. "It is the brother of M. Craig, then! Your pardon, *m'sieu*. I believe mademoiselle has not yet returned. We do not dine before nine, you compre-



hend. M. Morell is in his study, however."

"In that case," said Craig, "have the kindness to announce me."

The other bowed, took his hat, placed it on a rack inside the entrance, and ushered him into a small reception salon. Craig had a glimpse of a larger reception room across the hall; both were ornate and typically French, with silk-paneled walls, glass lustres, gilt chairs and wall cabinets.

"The stately luxury of a fast generation—hm! Doesn't look much like the headquarters of a gang," thought Craig. "If Perry lied, then I'm out of luck."

With each moment his uneasiness, his uncertainty, increased. The butler reappeared and asked him to follow. Craig passed down a long corridor lined with suits of ancient armor, alternated with ancestral portraits.

At this instant, however, occurred something that jerked him into sharp alertness and quite spoiled the effect of this stage-setting. At the end of the hall, a magnificent old staircase of carved oak mounted to the upper floors. As though a door upstairs had opened and closed again, a voice drifted down in a snatch of talk, instantly cut off—but it was an American voice, and the words were unmistakable:

"—you damned dick, I says, I'll shove a rod in your back some—"

The butler swung around, gave Craig a startled look, but Craig nodded calmly toward a suit of Milanese armor, as though he had heard nothing.

"Magnificent thing, that! Contemporary with Cellini, eh?"

"I never heard of him, *m'sieu*," replied the other. "This next door on the right—"

A family butler, in France, who had never heard of Cellini, who apparently knew nothing of his master's possessions? Craig smiled to himself. He wondered what American crook was refuged upstairs. Plenty of them in France, of late years, bringing American efficiency into the older criminal circles. So Perry had not lied, after all!

The door opened. He was ushered into a study, a large room with flat desk in the center, book shelves on all sides, walls and ceiling of old carved oak; a tantalus holding the most exquisite glassware, a radio installed in a glorious buhl cabinet—everything of the most luxurious and costly materials imaginable. The entire top of the desk was covered with tooled leather, the shaded lamp upon it was a statue carved from rose quartz, true gem tourmaline.

At this desk sat a remarkable man, who rose and extended his hand.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Craig," he said in perfect English. "I have heard much of you from your brother, who is my friend. Sit down. These cigars are of the best Belgian—ah, you will pardon me!"

The telephone rang. He sank back into his chair and picked up the instrument from its rack—an instrument of superbly chased gold ringed with bands of onyx. He spoke in rapid German, broke off and paused, then continued in Italian, too swiftly for Craig to catch more than an occasional word.

Instantly, all Craig's notions of how he would meet this man fled away and were gone.

**H**E dropped into the deep, soft chair beside the desk, took a cigar from the open silver and lapis humidor, and lit it carefully. His

every faculty was centered on the man before him.

Morell, who wore full evening clothes, was smooth-faced, small, and fat; Craig judged that, while little over five feet six, he must weigh fully two hundred. His features were pink and white, and almost un wrinkled. Oddly enough, he conveyed an impression of extreme lighthness and agility, as so frequently is the case with a man of weight. His nostrils were thin and keen, his eyes dark, very bright, his chin and mouth heavy, dominant. At a guess, he was not over thirty-five. While obviously in the most perfect self-command, he fairly radiated energy, personality, character.

Replacing the telephone on its rack, Morell turned with a smile.

"I see that you know how to light a good cigar, Mr. Craig. Few men but over-heat it at the start and ruin it. Excellent! Your brother did not come with you?"

"No." Suddenly aware how terrifically dangerous was this man, Craig flung overboard all caution, all plans, everything. He met the gaze of Morell and smiled. "You were not astonished to see me in place of my brother?"

Morell showed white, even teeth in a laugh.

"Of course I was astonished, but I knew instantly who you must be. Perry is not ill?"

"He is drunk," said Craig, and produced the sheaf of banknotes. Somehow this man, whose magnificent house was a den of crooks, held Perry by a bond of blackmail; everything else faded out before this fact.

Craig tossed the notes on the desk. He must attack now, attack without mercy.

"You can give me a few moments?" he asked.

"Half an hour, until my dinner guests arrive. What is this money?"

Craig shrugged.

"A childish effort on Perry's part to play a joke on me. I thought you might know something about it."

Morell picked up the notes, fingered them, threw him a sharp, keen scrutiny.

"But I do not understand, Mr. Craig! I know nothing about this money."

This lie was all that Craig needed. It set a spark to his brain. He had half an hour. And half an hour of reckless audacity might serve to redeem and recast a life nearly wrecked.

"In that case," said Craig carelessly, "there's no more to be said. I must apologize for my intrusion. Let me call a taxi, if I may use your telephone—"

He laid down his cigar, rose, picked up the telephone. Then, like a flash, he brought down the heavy instrument across Morell's head.

Without a sound the man slumped forward and lay half across the desk, face in his arms.

Craig's heart leaped. For well or ill, he had taken the plunge! He replaced the telephone, whirled, and stepped to the door; the key was in the lock, and he turned it.

A thin stream of blood ran from Morell's head on the leather top of the desk.

Craig came behind him, jerked the unconscious man back into his chair, pulled it away from the desk. He caught sight of buttons set in the desk-edge, electric push buttons, and avoided them carefully. Darting at the drawers, he jerked open the top ones—these French desks invariably had a locking mechanism controlled by the top drawers. Next moment he had the

four drawers on either side open, and at his mercy.

Everything now would be won or lost within a few moments.

Craig went through the four drawers on the right side with feverish haste, seeking he knew not what. Nothing caught his eye—except, in the top drawer, a pistol and a revolver with long and sinister silencers attached. Nothing very damning here. His heart sinking, he turned to the left side, looked into the bottom drawer.

It was filled with neatly wrapped packages, four by six inches, and quite thick. He drew one out and ripped away the wrapping. Within were thousand-franc bank notes.

Craig reached out another and another; the same contents. Now two packages came at once, bound about with string, and he tore this open. Thousand-franc notes again, but on top of them a bit of paper bearing a penciled scrawl:

Destroy. Wrong plate used. Exercise more care; use only the perfected plates.

Drawing a deep breath, Craig wiped the sweat from his forehead, picked up his cigar, and dropped into his chair for a moment, staring at the bank notes and the relaxed Morell.

Here was the explanation of everything. The bank notes were forged, perfectly forged. They were being passed in all quarters, undetected. Perry had been sent to him with twenty of them to pass on a bank—audacity! Justified audacity, no doubt, since these notes must be close to perfect in all details.

“Well—by the Lord Harry! That lets me out,” muttered Craig, and came to his feet. Heavy shears, their handle of enameled and chased gold, lay on the desk. With these, he went

to the brocade curtains drawn across the deep window recesses, and returned with strips of brocade.

When he had emptied Morell's pockets, which contained only a wallet and a few letters, he bound the man firmly, hand and foot, stuffed his mouth full and tied his jaws up. Except for inarticulate noises, Morell was safe. With an effort that taxed his strength, Craig then dragged Morell to a window-recess, laid him in it, drew the curtains before him.

He now came back to the desk.

Within the past two minutes, Craig had become a changed man. He had taken a fearful gamble, had staked everything on a desperate throw of the dice; and now he was justified. His harsh features set in grim lines, he pulled the chair up to the desk, dropped the packets of forged notes back into their bottom drawer, and set about a thorough examination of everything in sight.

The letters taken from Morell were unimportant. In the man's wallet was a sheaf of notes, but of five hundred francs—evidently to distinguish them from any forgeries. Laying these aside, he took out the silenced revolver and laid it ready to hand, then went to the other drawers.

He was seeking now whatever might implicate Perry, or hold him in this man's power. As yet, he had given no thought to his own situation.

Presently, with a grunt of satisfaction, he drew out a small letter file and opened it under the desk-light. He had no time to examine the various papers it contained. Turning to the letter C, he was rewarded at once by two checks and a telegram. He saw that the checks were made out to Perry, bore the signature of Morell, and smoothed out the greenish telegraph form. It was a fran-

tic plea from Perry, asking Morell to honor the checks, and had been sent from Le Touquet a month previously.

So this was it! Perry had been gambling at Le Touquet, had deliberately forged these checks, counting on Morell to honor them. Morell had done so—and from that instant, the man had held Perry absolutely in his power.

"Wish I'd hit you twice as hard!" muttered Craig, flinging a glance at the concealed figure of Morell.

He struck a match, held it to the checks and telegram, and watched them consume in the ashtray on the desk before him.

Upon the door came a knock—a sharp, gay "rat-a-tat-tat-tat!"

### CHAPTER III

#### Perry's Flame

**S**ILENCED revolver in hand, Craig moved to the door, unlocked it, flung it open—himself behind it.

"Oh! Marco told me that Perry was here—"

Craig closed the door, locked it, faced the startled, frightened girl. She flung back her evening wrap, her blue eyes wide. Pretty, he thought, with her rather weak face and masses of blondined hair; pretty, clever in a way, but nothing to brag about in the high world. So this was Perry's flame!

"Who—who are you?" she demanded, shrinking a little before his savage gray eyes. Craig smiled, and motioned to the chair by the desk.

"Sit down, please; that's right. You are Frida Ginsberg, then?"

"Of course. Where is M. Morell—"

"Never mind; you are not here to ask questions, but to answer them," said Craig. He laid down the revolver, took a fresh cigar, bit at it. The look in her eyes confirmed his first opinion.

Weak, and selfish. Not worth the damnation of a man like Perry; however, if Perry wanted her, why not? Perry himself was nothing to brag about.

"Tell me something, if you please," said Craig, not unkindly. "Believe me, I wish you no harm. I am here in M. Morell's place, perhaps for a little while, perhaps—forever. He left certain instructions in regard to you. Is it true that you would like to leave here, would like to break off entirely with the Redskins, and go to the Riviera with Perry?"

Conflicting emotions flitted across her face as she watched him, listened to the words that must have stirred her deeply. At his final query, stark fright flashed in her eyes.

"How do you—oh! Surely he did not tell you?"

"Answer, don't ask," said Craig. "You certainly do not love him?"

"No, of course not. But—well, I like him. Is there any harm in that?"

"None," replied Craig. "Wait a minute, now."

A sudden thought had occurred to him. The letter file was still lying on the desk. He opened it to the letter G, and there found two papers covered with German script, which he could not read. However, at a venture he held them up, and saw her shrink a trifle.

"You recognize these, do you?" He smiled, struck a match, held the flame to the papers. Incredulity leaped in her face.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "You mean—"

"For you to have any further connection with the Redskins," said Craig, "would be extremely dangerous. I shall give you certain instructions; you will follow them, eh?"

"Yes, yes," she replied, breathing rapidly. "I understand now—you are from the police—"

"You are not asked to understand." Craig glanced at his watch. "It is too late now for the Golden Arrow, but you can catch the Nice Rapide at seven in the morning. Leave this house without speaking a word to anyone. Here is money," and he threw Morell's wallet across the desk to her. She clutched at it swiftly, confirming his opinion of her. "At seven, Perry will meet you at the station, by the gates of the Rapide. That is all."

"You mean—I must go—with him? With Perry?" she faltered.

"Don't you want to?" snapped Craig, watching her.

"Yes, of course," she admitted in confusion.

"But you are not to stop at Nice," he said quickly. "You understand? Go on, across the frontier; get out of France quickly."

"Oh!" Comprehension, fresh alarm, flashed in her eyes. "I see, I see! Thank you, *m'sieu*—it is very good of you—"

"Get out," said Craig, with a gesture to the door. "And remember, not a word to anyone!"

She rose from her chair, fled to the door, and was gone quickly.

Craig sat motionless for a moment, frowning. What a confounded fool he was! Still, this was the best thing to do. Get Perry out of the country in a hurry. He was still staggered by the fact that Perry had sunk to actual, barefaced forgery. He had no illusions about his brother, now. And if this weak, selfish chit really wanted to get clear of the gang, let her go with Perry, let them both go! Somehow, he would get Perry to that train in the morning. He had no fear that she would give

him away to others in the house. All this girl wanted was to get out and save her own skin in a hurry.

Rising, Craig went to the door and locked it again after her.

He turned to the nearest window, drew aside the heavy drapes, and looked out. The garden lay outside. There was his hat in the hall; well, he must leave it. His work here was done. Now to get home, waken Perry from his drunken sleep, start him going toward the rendezvous in the morning. Perry would need to get his things packed up quickly and slip away quietly—

The window was open, he was about to step out to the garden, when he paused abruptly. The police? Why not, indeed? This was their job now. Counterfeiting, in France, carries a life penalty. Wealth or social position makes no difference; the police would drop on Morell like a ton of bricks. Here was the evidence in his desk. A simple telephone call would do the trick.

Craig started back to the desk. He shut the drawers again, replaced everything. He was reaching for the telephone when a sharp thought checked him. Perry! No telling how deeply Perry was implicated. Better wait until morning, until Perry was on his way out of France, then put in the call. If he did it now, some of the crowd would certainly squeal on Perry and the girl. And the forgery of those checks might not have been the first time.

He looked in on his captive. Morell was, apparently, still unconscious, knew nothing of what had transpired in the room. So much the better. He would not suspect the truth. The last thing to occur to him was that Craig would drag in the police. Undoubtedly this desk held more evidence than

the mere forged bank notes—best to get away while the getting was good.

CRAIG went back to the open window, drew the curtains behind him, and heard a sharp knock at the door as he slipped outside. The lights of a car swung around, picked him up for an instant, and swung on. A car was coming in at the gate.

As the old woman from her cottage was closing the iron gates again, Craig appeared beside her.

"One moment, madame," he said pleasantly. "If M. Morell asks for M. Craig, have the kindness to tell him that I have departed. Good night."

Leaving her staring after him, he departed, striding rapidly away.

In another ten minutes, waiting in the avenue near the bridge, he sighted a taxi returning to the city from St. Cloud, and hailed it. Sinking back on the cushions, he puffed appreciatively at Morell's excellent cigar, and wondered what had become of Frida Ginsberg. For all her weakness, she was a hard little piece, and if Perry were attached to her, the pair of them might pull up and go straight from now on. He shrugged. Perry must take care of his own future from now on.

Reaching his own apartment, he threw off his coat and settled grimly to work. Within ten minutes he had Perry, stripped, lying in the bath, and turned on the cold water.

That was merely the beginning. It was half an hour later when the heavy-eyed Perry, with wild alarm beginning to ring frightened peals in his heart, was swallowing copious draughts of hot black coffee and listening to Craig's instructions.

"Here's five thousand francs," concluded Craig, throwing the money on the table. "It's all I have or can get

right now. Take it, get home and pack, go down to a hotel for the rest of the night. Understand? Clear out. Don't let 'em find you. At seven in the morning, you meet that girl and get the Nice Rapide, or I'll break every bone in your body!"

"Oh, I'll do it—she's going to meet me there?" Perry eyed his brother in wonder. "But there's something you don't know, Jack. About Morell—"

"There's nothing I don't know about Morell," snapped Craig angrily. He pointed to the telegram he had been writing. "This goes to the concierge now; he'll get it off in the morning, since it can't be sent tonight. The police will nab Morell and his whole gang before breakfast. Those thousand franc notes are counterfeit. Morell's desk is stuffed with 'em."

"Counterfeit?" Perry sank back in his chair. "So that explains—"

Craig eyed him grimly.

"You didn't know it, eh? I'll give you that much credit."

"How the devil did you find out?"

"I hit Morell over the head and went through his place," said Craig.

"What?" Perry started from his chair, his eyes wide. "You did—that? My Lord, Jack! Those fellows will kill you, sure! The Redskins, they call themselves. Morell's got a couple of American crooks in his house, and three or four other French birds make up the gang. They follow the races, pull off some big coups—but they're a bad lot! They'll stop at nothing—"

"Oh, shut up all that junk, will you?" snapped Craig. "Now, listen! I found those two checks and the telegram to Morell. I destroyed them. Burned them. You're free of him; can you get that through your head?"

Perry started. "Jack! You did that—for me—"

"Damn your gratitude. I did it for myself. I suppose it's not the first time you've tried forgery? Has Morell anything else on you?"

"Yes," confessed Perry. "Two or three little things—"

"Then clear out across the frontier, and watch your step!" said Craig. "This is the last time I step in to save your hide. I'm getting you a clean escape, giving you a fresh start, and your girl goes with you. Marry her in Italy, if you like. She has money. I gave her what Morell had in his pockets. You're clear. Now — stay clear! D'you understand?"

"Yes. I'll do it, Jack," said the other brokenly. He took out a cigarette, lit it, stared at Craig. "I might have been a man like you if I'd started—"

"Forget the sob stuff," jerked out Craig impatiently. "You clear out. Get out of here, pick up whatever you need at your rooms, and beat it before anyone tries to trace you."

"But what about you?" said Perry earnestly. "I tell you, they'll be after you! You don't know Morell. He's a devil, not a man. When he gets started—"

"He'll get started for hard labor early in the morning, a life sentence," said Craig. "You and your fears give me a pain! Because a couple of tough birds have scared the liver out of you, d'you think everybody in the world is afraid of a few criminals? Rats! You'll hear 'em squeal quick enough when they're pinched. On your way, now. I'll go downstairs with you. This telegram will get to the police early in the morning. They'll probably be after you with the rest of the gang, but you should make the frontier before they pick up your traces. Finish that coffee and get started."

Perry obeyed. His head was clear enough by this time. He could quite realize that his one and only chance was to follow the course Craig mapped out for him. He would follow it to the letter.

They descended together to the street, stepped around the corner to the thronged *Rue de Passy*; a moment later a taxi swerved in to the curb at Craig's signal. Perry wrung his hand.

"Goodby, Jack. I'll never forget this—all you've done—"

"On your way. Goodby, and good luck. Wire me from Italy."

Craig returned to his rooms, giving the telegram on the way to the concierge, who promised to despatch it as soon as the Bureau de Poste opened in the morning. That telegram, signed by a fictitious name, laid bare everything to the police. Even if it were traced back to Craig as the sender, Perry should be in safety long before.

Now that it was all over, Craig smiled grimly to himself as he sank into a chair.

A little later he started for bed. Finding in his pocket the pistol he had taken from Perry, he laid it aside with a chuckle. He picked up the coffee things, took them out into the kitchen, and washed up. When he came back into the living room, he stopped short and stared.

There, lying in the center of the floor, was the black silk "smoking" hat he had left in Morell's house.

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#### CHAPTER IV

##### The Leveled Automatic

**I**NCREDULOUS, Craig advanced to the hat, picked it up, looked inside it. There was his name and address—ah! He looked up, suddenly alert. Too late.

"Yeah," drawled a voice. "Yours all right! Personally delivered, you might say. Keep them mitts in the air."

The same voice he had heard in the hallway of Morell's house. But here was the speaker before him, in the doorway, an automatic leveled at him. A loudly dressed young man, chunky of build, his dark features aggressive and insolent.

"Ah!" exclaimed Craig. "My com-patriot! And may I inquire who left the door open?"

The other grinned. "Sure. Jake did. Hey, Jake! Where are you?"

"Coming right up, Monk," said another voice, and the owner appeared in the bedroom door. He was a stooped, thin man of fifty, peering over thick spectacles; his features were pleasant and even scholarly.

"So, Monk and Jake," observed Craig. "Not a comedy act, I presume?"

"You're right, feller," said the aggressive Monk. "Slide into your coat. You may not know it, but you're going visiting. Frisk him, Jake."

Jake approached Craig, frisked him, and nodded as he stepped away. He handed over Craig's jacket with a gesture of command.

"Now, listen sharp, Craig," said Monk, narrow-eyed. "We're marching down the stairs and out, and my rod will be in your back, get me?"

"More or less," assented Craig amiably. "Like you wanted to stick it in the back of that dick, if you'd had the nerve, eh?"

Monk gaped at him in astonishment.

"For Pete's sake! Who told you about that?"

"I was reading your mind," and Craig laughed a little. "But go ahead. You seem to be quite serious."

"You bet we are." Recovering from his amazement, Monk scowled savagely. "If you let out a yip or make a move, I'll let you have it on the run. If not, you'll come along with us and talk to Morell. Whether we blow out your lungs or take you along, don't matter much to us. So march! Keep close ahead of us, Jake."

His gun prodded Craig in the back. Jake advanced to the door, then turned and gave Craig a look over his spectacles.

"Don't be tempted to hit me like you did Morell," he said. "My head is hard."

"No danger," returned Craig dryly. "Your friend here holds a good argument."

"And I'll use it," growled Monk. "This here is our private expedition, feller, and we aim to give Morell a surprise; either alive or dead. Right smart of you to leave that hat with your name and address in it! It was Marco thought of it."

"Marco? The butler?" queried Craig. "An unpleasant looking rascal."

Monk laughed harshly.

"You'll think so. On your way, Jake!"

The three left the apartment and descended the stairs.

Craig felt a ray of hope at thought of the concierge, but the latter had retired, and merely pressed the opening button at a summons from Jake. Outside, a huge Minerva was waiting at the curb. Jake held open the door, and at the gun-prod, Craig obeyed helplessly and got in. Monk followed closely, alert for any sign of insubordination. When Jake had entered, the car purred away.

"Now, then, gimme your hands!" snarled Monk. "Jake, soak him over



the bean with that slungshot if he acts tricky."

They had turned into the *Rue de Passy*, whose flashing car and shop lights gave them plenty of illumination. The lanky Jake held a slungshot ready, and Craig obeyed the order with alacrity. Over his wrists Monk slipped and clinked a pair of handcuffs.

"There! Now you're safe, anyhow," and with a breath of relief, Monk sat back. "Here, Jake, you keep the key. Done any more mind-reading, feller?"

"It isn't hard to do," said Craig coolly. "I suppose you're running the race-track game, and Jake is the gentleman who provided the plates that are being used."

He felt Jake, beside him, give a start.

"What plates you talking about?" snapped Monk.

Craig half turned and met the sharp glance of Jake. It came to him in a flash that no doubt some of the gang were in the dark about the counterfeiting work, as Perry had been. But he did not go on. Something in the look, in the face, of the lean Jake caused him to relax with a short laugh.

"Photographic plates, of course," he rejoined whimsically.

"Huh! You ain't so bad at that," observed Monk. "How'd you know Jake was interested in photography?"

"Morell told me," said Craig. He had the conviction that these words made an impression on Jake.

The conversation languished. The Minerva paused at the Auteuil gate, the driver ducked into the octroi office, got his return permit to enter the city, and they were going on again down the long slopes toward the river.

Craig had learned a lot from the brief exchange of words. Now he had Jake placed, beyond any question; the man's studious look was accounted for.

Jake was one of those unfortunate persons who have no refuge save in foreign lands, and little enough there—an expert engraver who is unable to resist the money-making itch. Those who exist, if not behind bars, are watched like hawks, their every move known. Yet they are helpless before the fatal fascination of playing with forbidden fruit. Theirs is ever the dream of achieving the impossible; the creation of plates so perfect as not to be told from the genuine government article.

Jake, evidently, had found his opportunity in France.

THE Seine at last, and the iron gates of Morell's house. At a signal from the driver's horn, the old crone appeared and opened the gates. The car went on. No other cars were here now. Beyond doubt, the dinner guests had departed upon learning of Morell's injury.

"Run in and see if the boss wants him, Jake," said Monk. "I'll handle him now."

The lanky Jake alighted and entered the house, then, almost at once, came out again with the butler beside him, talking vociferously.

"Morell's in bed," said Jake, evidently translating for Monk's benefit. "The doctor's with him now, looking him over. Better keep this bird downstairs till we learn whether the skull is fractured or not."

"He ain't got no skull," snorted Monk. "He's cast iron, Morell is. Well, you set and watch him while we go up. Come on, Craig."

The latter obeyed, while Marco bombarded him with excited oaths. Monk seized his arm and propelled him into the house, and then into the same little reception salon where he had first waited. It had but the one entrance.

"Here," and Monk handed his automatic to Jake. "Set here. Plug him if he gets out of that chair. Mind your step, Craig! Back in a minute. Come on, Marco."

He slammed the door, departing with the butler. Craig was alone in the little room with Jake, who stood by the door and kept him covered. The man watched him with a singular intensity, and then spoke suddenly.

"Well? What's the answer? You a gov'ment man—and that brother of yours a stool?"

"No," said Craig coolly.

"Don't lie. You're wise—who told you? Not Morell."

"Sure," returned Craig. "About the two sets of plates, also. Too bad they spoiled so much good paper using the wrong ones."

"My lord!" muttered the other, staring at him in utter stupefaction. Then he stirred. "You come over here to get me, have you?"

"No," said Craig. He eyed the lean man with swift appraisal. In those eyes lay the terror of the eternally hunted. This Jake was no hardened criminal, but something of an artist, indeed.

"Listen here," went on Craig, with a surge of impulse. "You're an artist, Jake; you're not like these other Redskins. Over here, you don't get a term of years, but life at hard labor. Deportation. That's worse than death! And there's no escaping it."

Sweat stood on the man's lean face.

"What you trying to do—preach?" he growled.

"No. Bargain. Unlock these bracelets, nothing more; in return, I'll give you the straight works. The tip-off. Nobody else will know. But work fast!"

Jake stared at him, licked his wide

lips, then moved in sudden decision. From his vest pocket he took the key and came forward, holding the pistol carefully.

"No tricks!" he breathed. "Or I'll plug you sure—"

Craig held out his wrists. The key fitted into the handcuffs, unlocked them. They were not of a spring type and did not fall apart. Testing them, Craig found he could free himself with one motion, and nodded.

"Right, Jake. About eight in the morning, the police jump the whole crowd. You have until then to get clear. Everyone from Morell down to Marco will be nabbed. There won't be a Redskin left in Paris. Suit you?"

"How do you know so much?" growled Jake suspiciously. Craig shrugged.

"That's not your affair. I'm giving it to you straight—"

Steps outside. He slumped in his chair, checked his words. The door was flung open. Into the room came Monk, followed by three other men, and Marco. One of the three wore evening clothes. The others were of rougher type. All three were predatory, sharp-faced, bitter men.

"All right, Jake," said Monk. "You might's well blow. The boss ain't bad hurt after all. We'll take care of this bird."

Without response, Jake turned and his angular frame slipped from sight. The five closed in upon Craig. The man in evening dress spoke sharply.

"Well? What does all this mean, *m'sieu?* Where is your brother?"

Craig relaxed comfortably, wondering how much they knew or guessed.

"My friend, I don't know you; I've been brought here by force—"

"Never mind all that," cut in the other. "Where is your brother?"

"I don't know. He's on an errand for Morell somewhere."

"You smashed Morell and cleared out. Why?"

"That is his business and mine, not yours—"

The other came close, an expression of sudden ferocity blazing in his dark features.

"You fool, do you want to be hung up by the thumbs? We'll make you talk, never fear—"

"Hold on," intervened Monk. "Let the boss handle him. Go ask him, Marco, if he's awake."

The butler left the room. The four men clustered at the door and conferred in low voices. Craig, waited, immobile. He knew well that for the moment his peril was the more savagely acute because of their very uncertainty. To attempt any escape now would be sheer folly, even did the chance offer.

Presently Marco thrust his head in at the door.

"He is coming down to the study," he exclaimed hurriedly. "He says to keep the American here until he sends for him."

The others stared at Craig, as Marco withdrew. A sharp oath burst from Monk.

"Jake's got the key to his bracelets! I forgot that—"

"No matter," and one of the others laughed. "He'll never take them off."

Craig said nothing. No evasion now; Morell would learn the truth, or most of it, as soon as he examined his letter file. The four watched him curiously, cruelly, without emotion. Monk passed around cigarettes, but ignored Craig; they smoked, exchanged a low word or two, their eyes on the American. Then they stirred as the door was flung open and Marco reappeared.

"Bring him, Ivry. He wants you, Monk, too. Anybody seen Frida?"

"She went out early," said Ivry, the man in evening attire. "For the evening. Come along, Craig! Watch him, Monk."

Craig rose and followed in silence. He perceived now that, with luck, Perry should be safe enough. Nobody here knew of his interview with the girl. She had been thoroughly frightened and would undoubtedly stay hidden until the Nice express pulled out in the morning.

So, for the second time that night, Craig entered Morell's study—this time halting before his captor. And he realized why his brother had called Morell a devil.

## CHAPTER V

### Condemned to Die

**M**ORELL sat at the desk, the letter file before him. He was in shirt-sleeves, his coat gone.

About his head was a bandage. With his keen nostrils, bright eyes, heavy mouth, against the fat and pink face, he looked like an unclean parrot. Those smooth, unwrinkled cheeks were now a trifle pallid, and the dark blazing eyes held an infernal glare as he surveyed the captive. Yet, when he spoke, his voice showed perfect self-control.

"Here, Monk." He extended a large envelope, which Monk took. "Go at once to the Bureau de Poste and mail this; it's already stamped."

He leaned back, took a cigar and lit it carefully, gazing over it at Craig with a peculiar exultant expression. Monk departed, and the door slammed.

"Do you know what has just gone to the post?" said Morell. "You thought you were clever, destroying those two checks, eh? Well, there are

others papers which you did not find. By tomorrow morning, every prefecture in France will be looking for that accursed brother of yours! That's my answer for this blow on the head."

Craig said nothing. He had no doubt that Morell told the truth. Perry had admitted that there were other things against him.

"That brother of yours," went on Morell calmly, "has forged more than one signature. So much for him. Now for you." He transferred his gaze to Ivry and spoke in French. "Where is Frida?"

"She went out, *m'sieu*," said Ivry, "before dinner. Before this thing arose."

Morell nodded, and Craig breathed more freely.

"Where is your brother?" demanded Morell. Craig smiled a little.

"The last I saw of him before coming here," he responded calmly, "Perry was exceedingly drunk. That's how he happened to tell me so much."

"So." Morell regarded him steadily. "Well, he is now out of the picture. You left those bank notes lying on my desk; twenty thousand francs. Why?"

Craig perceived in a flash that Morell must have investigated the packages.

"Stolen money, of course," he rejoined. "There's more of it in your desk; I saw it. Why should I pass any of it to the bank? Not much. As I suspected, you've stolen it or gotten it illegally."

A flicker of relief shot into the dark, brilliant eyes and was gone.

"You are a fool," said Morell. "But at the same time, you have clever impulses. Hm! If I offered to make a place for you—"

He paused, his eyes inquiring.

"Among the Redskins?" asked Craig.

"Exactly." Morell waved his cigar. "The Redskins are famous, but their identity is not known. You would join them?"

"Cat and mouse?" said Craig dryly. Morell smiled.

"No, I retract; you're no fool! You're not a weakling like that brother of yours. You'd make a splendid lieutenant for me, but I could not trust you, and you know it perfectly. Well, men are cheap! Why did you take the Ginsberg papers from this file?"

Craig was startled, but gave no trace of it.

"To please Perry, of course," he responded coolly. "He is apparently infatuated with some person of that name. I made a good job of it while I was about it."

"A fair job, at least," admitted Morell. "Hm! *Adicu*, my friend."

Craig's brows lifted. "Meaning—"

"That you go presently to sleep, to dream, to die! You know your Hamlet, perhaps? Superb reading. Ivry!"

"Yes, *m'sieu*," responded the dark man.

"Take him to the Jade Room. The hypodermic outfit is in the closet. When it is done, give him half an hour for the drug to take effect; then carry him out to the river. No weights. Let the body float. Jules and Sernine are here?"

"Waiting outside, *m'sieu*."

"Let them attend to it, then. Me, I am going to bed. *Adicu*, M. Craig!"

He waved his cigar in dismissal. Ivry turned; a pistol in his hand prodded Craig, who obeyed the gesture and turned to the door.

Craig, to tell the truth, was staggered by what he had just heard.

For a moment he was incapable of

coherent thought or speech. He could not believe that Morell had spoken in cold earnest. He realized that Morell had halted Ivry, saw him give the dark man the same silenced revolver Craig had left on the desk; then Morell rose, strode past them, and left the room.

**M**URDER! No joke about it, then. The orders had been deliberate, calm, without compromise. Craig wondered dully how many of Morell's enemies had been thus disposed of. Then he found himself in the hall, saw the grinning face of Monk, saw the other two men, whom Ivry now addressed sharply.

"Jules! You and Sernine turn on the lights in the Jade Room and get a cord. To the stairs, imbecile American! Move!"

The two grinned and preceded them. Craig followed, with Ivry urging him on. Up that magnificent oak staircase to the floor above, then down a corridor carpeted with an inch-thick Sirah runner. A door was flung open by Sernine, who then followed Jules inside. A moment later Craig was propelled into the room by Ivry.

A large bed-chamber, it was entirely finished in jade green, from curtains and bed-hangings to the very rug on the floor. There were two windows, to judge from the curtains. In keeping with what Craig had seen below, the furnishings were of the most costly. The head and foot-boards of the bed were inlaid with slabs of jade, and carved pieces of jade stood about.

Between the windows stood a large Chinese temple chair of red lacquer, embellished with bits of jade. By this chair the other two men were standing, each holding a cord, and to the chair Ivry forced Craig.

"Sit down, you, and keep quiet or you'll get a crack over the head," he snapped, swinging the long, silenced weapon. "Jules, tie his feet only. His hands are safe enough as they are. Then both of you clear out. In half an hour, come and get him. Let the Seine carry him off, but let him float."

"Oh!" said one of the two, with a laugh. "So he won't be drowned, then!"

"Not he," returned Ivry gruffly.

Craig was shoved into the chair. Sernine bent and lashed one ankle fast to it, Jules did the same with the other. Then they rose and left the room, closing the door.

Ivry, satisfied that Craig was now helpless, went to the door of a closet, and produced a small hypodermic outfit. He spread it out upon the bedside table, carefully dissolved a pellet, loaded the syringe. Then he approached Craig. His air was quite impersonal.

"If you struggle, *m'sieu*," he observed, "you'll get hit over the head—it will only make things harder for you. Let me assure you there will, otherwise, be no pain whatever. You have nothing to fear."

"Liar!" exclaimed Craig. "Didn't I hear your orders? Can you honestly mean to murder me like an animal?"

"Are you not an animal like the rest of us?" Ivry smiled a little, his eyes very cruel. "Myself, I do not see the necessity for all this; my way would be to put a bullet into you and have it over. But *M'sieu* Morell has ideas of his own. Come, now! A prick in the neck, and the thing is done. If you resist, the leg will do me quite as well."

Craig relaxed in his chair. His head drooped. Ivry came to his right side, and paused.

"Ah! I must remove the collar," he murmured. "One moment, *m'sieu*."

He leaned forward, twitched off Craig's black tie, expertly removed the wing collar and threw it aside. His fingers, coldly deft, pinched the flesh of Craig's neck. The syringe came forward, touched the skin—

At this instant, Craig's right hand shot up between his arms and fastened about his throat.

Ivry started back convulsively, but those fingers had gripped like steel hooks about the windpipe. His hands flew out, and the syringe fell to the floor.

Craig, unable to leave the chair, drew the dark, tortured face closer to him. The empty hands beat at him frantically, powerfully, wildly. Ivry's features became suffused with blood, choked, swollen. His eyes protruded. No sound escaped him, for the iron fingers were locked in his throat.

Gradually his struggles became weaker, more wildly desperate. His mouth opened and his tongue protruded; his face was horrible to see. He sagged suddenly, his body became limp, and he fell forward across Craig's knees. Loosing his hold, Craig let the man roll to the floor, and reached for the cords binding his ankles to the chair.

Only when he stood up, did Craig become aware how those flailing fists had beaten and mauled him. He was dizzy, weak, badly hammered about the head. He came to his knees, and in sudden panic reached out for the syringe that lay on the green carpet. He fumbled for the wrist of Ivry, plunged the keen needle under the skin, pressed the plunger home. Then he toppled over as everything went black before his eyes.

When Craig wakened, he rolled over and sat up. Memory rushed upon him swiftly. Whether he had been uncon-

scious for one moment or twenty, he had no means of knowing.

The room was unchanged. Beside him lay Ivry, breathing stertorously, unconscious, the syringe still hanging to his wrist by the needle. Craig came to his feet and paused before a wall mirror. His right eye was puffed up and badly swollen, his cheek was cut, there was a decided lump on his jaw; otherwise, he felt sound enough. Time must have passed, he knew. The two men had been ordered to return in half an hour.

As he turned, his eye fell on the silenced revolver, lying on the bed where Ivry had dropped it. He crossed swiftly to it, picked it up.

At this instant the door opened and into the room, laughing and talking, came Jules and Sernine.

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## CHAPTER VI

### The Pallbearers Arrive

THE two men walked in and slammed the door, before they perceived anything amiss. Then they halted abruptly.

Craig fired, without the slightest hesitation; fired again.

He was astonished by the feeble reports of the silenced weapon. Jules whirled around and dropped, shot through the head. With Sernine, it was different. He staggered under the bullet's impact, but his hand went to his pocket, and the pistol there exploded as he fell. The bullet went into the ceiling. The man lay sprawled out above his companion, motionless.

Craig, knowing that the pistol-burst would now give the alarm, darted to the door, turned the key, and re-crossed hurriedly to the windows. The only light in the room came from the lamp on the bedside table. He extinguished

this, coughed at the acrid reek of powder, jerked a hanging back from a window, and peered out. Directly before him was the sloping roof of the portecochère. He was on the second floor.

Flinging open the window, he crawled out, holding carefully to his weapon. Then, pocketing it with some difficulty because of its length, he worked his way along the roof.

From inside the house he heard a sudden tumult, a commotion of upraised voices. The entire building seemed to burst abruptly into explosive sound. The darkened room above gave vent to a crash, then another. They were at the door, breaking in.

Craig looked over and let himself slide gradually across the edge of the roof. There was no gutter. He had to chance it; and with a rush, let himself drop. The shock of the fall was terrific. Pain shot through him. He caught his breath, and it was like fire in his lungs. He had fallen on the heavy revolver.

Rolling off it, he sat up, clutched at the weapon, staggered to his feet. The house was aglow with lights now. He remembered the locked iron gates; useless to attempt escape there. Pain stabbed at him. Broken ribs, no doubt. Nothing else wrong. He could move, at least. He plunged into the shrubbery.

A voice rang from a window above, the same window he had left. Craig looked up, laughed grimly, lifted his weapon. He fired deliberately, then broke into a stumbling run. Heading for the river now. Thought of the cool, silent water was inviting.

A voice jerked his brain awake. It was the rich, deep voice of Morell, apparently from close at hand. He glimpsed something white, then heard the roaring explosion of a pistol. The

whining scream of the bullet rang in his ears. Craig faced about. The weapon in his hand spat fire, again and again, then clicked empty. The white patch went down with a crash. From somewhere came sharp shouts, the shrilling blasts of police whistles. Police! Impossible. They would not get here until some time in the morning—

He was running now, stumbling, reeling toward the dark river. Then almost before he could believe it possible, he was at the very verge of the water. It swirled below him, a few feet down from the stone-lined embankment. Without hesitation, without coherent thought, Craig plunged into it.

Forty minutes later, a late-cruising taxi returning from St. Cloud picked up a sodden, disheveled wreck whose American accent made a fat fare seem probable. Drunk and fallen into the river; well, these Americans were all mad, as the good God knew!

Somehow, Craig got home.

He remembered little more of what happened until, on the next afternoon, he wakened to a persistent ringing of his bell. Groaning, he got out of bed. He opened the door, to find the concierge there, an early edition of the *Paris-Midi* in his hand. At sight of Craig's condition the man gaped.

"Come in, come in," said Craig. "Just woke up. What the devil is it? You must get me a doctor—I had a fall and hurt my ribs last night."

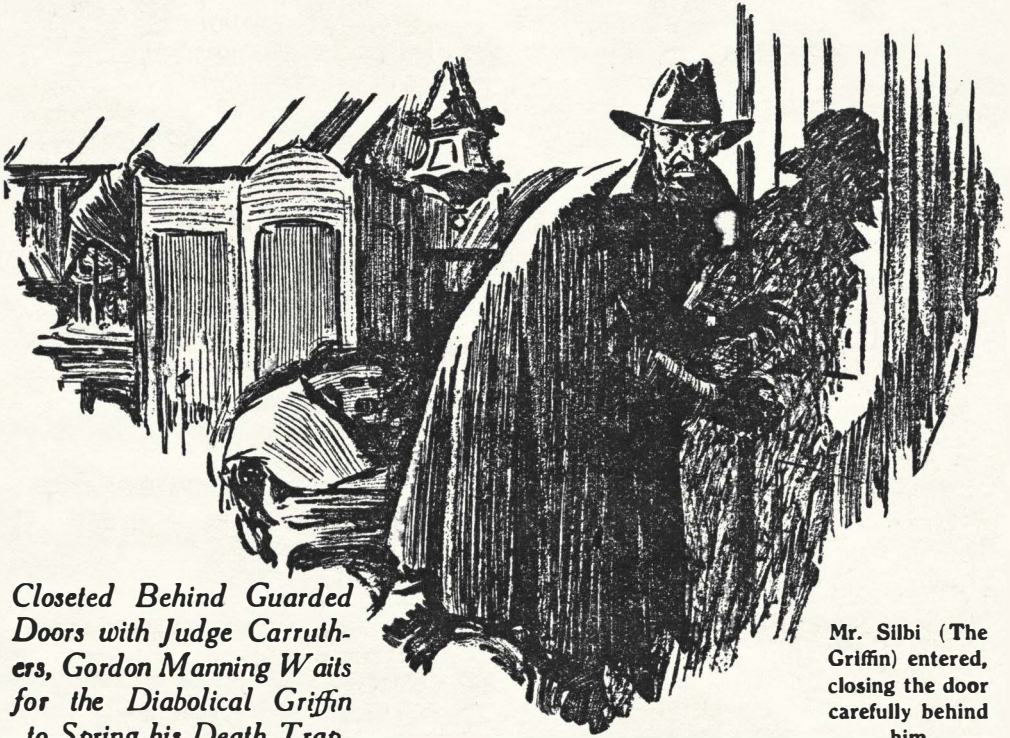
The concierge extended the newspaper.

Craig took the paper from him. His eye was caught by the screaming headlines about the Redskins, the well-known Morell and his entire gang taken for counterfeiting.

The guns of the Redskins were silenced forever.

# Death Silent and Invisible

By J. Allan Dunn



*Closeted Behind Guarded Doors with Judge Carruthers, Gordon Manning Waits for the Diabolical Griffin to Spring his Death Trap*

Mr. Silbi (The Griffin) entered, closing the door carefully behind him

GORDON MANNING was on his way, afoot, to his Wall Street office from the downtown gymnasium where he kept himself physically fit. His lean, long body strode along replete with vitality and purpose; his eyes were clear and keen as he acknowledged the greetings of those who knew him and others who did not possess that distinction, but recognized him from the publicity that had once again environed him.

It was publicity he was never eager to have thrust upon him, although the reluctance had nothing to do with the fact that the columns, topped with flash lines, carrying pictures of Manning, of the victim and scene of the latest

tragedy that had shocked Manhattan and all the nation bore the news that Manning had lost in his first encounter with the maniacal monster known as the Griffin, recently escaped from Dannemora.

It was Manning who had sent him there after a series of desperate encounters; after the police had despaired in the quest and Manning had been called in by the Police Commissioner to cope with the fiendish madman whose devilish genius had murdered one after another of the country's most brilliant and useful men.

Achievement, progress, benevolence, all seemed to arouse the Griffin to an



insane fury, as if he was indeed the fallen Lucifer, Son of the Morning, who now hated all that was honorable and noble, all that was good; with a brain inflamed, but of incalculable ingenuity, coupled with the venom of serpents spawned in the foulest spot in Hades.

There was trouble in Manning's eyes, there were lines in his deeply tanned, hawklike face, that had not quite been erased since the Griffin had been sent to the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane at Dannemora, Clinton County.

Now the Griffin was free; the monster was loose again—a creature of infinite evil—loose to plan and perpetrate his frightful purposes. Already "It" had struck and killed, despite the efforts of the police, warned by Manning; despite the last hour attempt of Manning himself to save the victim. It was Manning's intuition that had uncovered the substitute left by the Griffin in his cell while he made good his escape: a substitute excellent enough to deceive the prison authorities.

That availed nothing. The Griffin was out and he would strike again, with scanty and mocking warning. Until the Griffin should be heard from again, Manning's hands were tied. Every effort to trace clues in the last crime—the one in which the most powerful controller of politics in the State had been sent to a horrible death because the Griffin believed he had blocked his release from Dannemora—had utterly failed, vanished in thin air.

Traffic halted Manning on a corner where he stood until the light changed, gazing without especial interest into the window of a store that specialized in automobile accessories. The window was arrayed with devices for radiator caps, emblems suggesting flight and

speed. They had, most of them, been designed by excellent artists. Here were eagles, Mercurys, greyhounds, figures of men and beasts in headlong career. Some were ultra modern and symbolical, zigzags of shining lightning, a poised arrow.

The latest design of all held the center of the display. A beam of light fell upon it, distinguishing it from the rest. It was made of golden bronze and it was exquisitely fashioned.

It was a Griffin, sometimes called griffon, or gryphon—the rapacious creature with four legs, wings and a beak, the fore part resembling an eagle, the after part a lion. Portrayed by the Greeks and Syrians and Romans, shown in the cathedrals of France and Italy, in the temple of Antoninus. Herodotus claimed that the one-eyed Arimaspi waged constant war with them. Sir John de Mandeville described them as eight times larger than a lion.

Terrible beasts that could crouch for leap or flight; tear with talons and beak—supposed inhabitants of Asiatic Scythia—emblems of cruelty and death. Fit emblem of the inhuman monster who had adopted them for his title.

The device seemed alive in the ray of light. The sculptor who had first modeled it in clay had achieved a masterpiece. It embodied force and swiftness, the ruthlessness of perfect coördination. It hardly seemed adapted for an ordinary car ornament. It might have fitted a racing machine, or a tank of war. It was beautiful, but terrible.

**M**ANNING felt a clammy finger tracing his spine, offset by a swift tingling of his blood, as he regarded it. It was to him a symbol

that challenged all of his manhood. It summoned up a vision of the Griffin from his brain, where it always lived, never entirely dormant.

He was not a man who suffered from nerves or he would long ago have perished; explorer, scientist, adventurer, ex-major of the Military Intelligence Department, survivor of a thousand hazards on the field, in the jungle, by sea and land.

That varying tremor that went through him was a hunch, a warning from his subconscious mind where he automatically filed his observations, where the leaven of his experience waited for release.

He was going to hear from the Griffin. Once again he would be challenged; hear the mocking voice or read the high-flown message, tinged with the exaggeration of a grandiose dementia, that announced the Griffin's next fateful enterprise.

It was no surprise to him to see among the letters his secretary set in front of him an envelope of heavy, gray, handmade paper, the address inscribed with purple ink in a bold hand that, analyzed, showed the writer to be arrogant, forceful and abnormal.

Manning did not immediately open it. He took the letter and looked out of the window of his private office at the lofting spires and towers of the world's greatest city—at the spidery stretch of a bridge that was a web of human genius.

The envelope was sealed with scarlet wax in which was imprinted the upper part of a griffin's body, rampant.

The Griffin's resources were being reassembled. His old aerie with its corps of experts in science and mechanics, held under the Griffin's thrall by his knowledge of their lapses against the law, had been destroyed.

But the Griffin had proved that he still had followers, that he still possessed the master-key to power, money. Here was the old, too familiar, style of correspondence. The letter seemed to fairly quiver with hidden menace, as if it diffused a deadly odor.

It took a stout heart to break that seal, a stouter one to read the communication. But Manning did not falter though the lines in his face deepened and a white streak showed where his jaw was set. The look in his eyes was grim.

DEAR MANNING:

We have met once since my, shall we call it emancipation?—and we shall meet again. It cheers me to realize that you still have sufficient resource and enterprise to render you an interesting and rather amusing opponent in this game of ours, resumed after several months of idleness on my part. Idleness and recuperation, my dear Manning.

It somewhat lengthens the scores against you, but I shall delay that reckoning. Without you there would be no opposition whatever to my plans. They would be but tedious means to my ultimate end. What that is, in detail, I may tell you some day, but not at present.

Some day I shall eliminate you, Manning, when you cease to interest me. Meanwhile I have certain items to be balanced on my book of life. One of these I have checked off. You may be interested in the next.

I find that by horology and hepatoscopy . . .

Manning lowered the letter. Hepatoscopy! Divination of the liver. That meant that this half-crazed, but eminently dangerous being was still practicing unhallowed rites, endeavoring, perhaps, to justify his crimes to himself by consulting the stars and the livers taken, smoking, from still living bodies. They might even be human bodies, Manning considered. The incarceration at Dannemora had not alleviated, but aggravated his madness.

The Griffin invariably cast the

horoscope of his intended victim, deciding when the protection of the planets was weakest and their maleficence greatest. In these rituals he doubtless catered to his conviction that he was an agent of Destiny, so appointed by a supreme power.

Again Manning gazed out at the lower end of Manhattan, the mighty city that the terror of one man had once held in thrall and might so again. There had been times when dread of the Griffin, results of his crimes, had not only shattered the peace of society, but had rocked the foundations of the civic and financial worlds. He could do it again. His evil fame, his fearfulness, had been trebled by his escape. And they were looking to Gordon Manning to once again enchain this monster, to destroy him.

He should have been destroyed, Manning told himself. The Griffin was as inhuman as the creature Frankenstein created from the grisly relics of graveyard and dissecting room and endowed with vitality. The Griffin's mind was a charnel house. The judge who had sentenced him, much against his will, had told Manning that he lamented the law.

"He should be put to death," said the distinguished jurist, Bernard Carruthers. "There is no virtue in his living. He is of no use, save as an examination of his brain may teach scientists something. He should be put out of the way, painlessly and peacefully—perhaps without any preparation, anæsthetized out of existence, as one would chloroform a mad dog. Jurisprudence and science have yet to unite in a thoroughly modern code. Meantime we must uphold the present statutes. So long as he lives that man is a menace."

Carruthers had not spoken publicly,

but Manning wondered what he thought now, with the Griffin out. Manning resumed the letter.

I find by horology and hepatoscopy that the propitious moment in which he will be eliminated is close at hand. His hour has struck.

In ancient lore, as doubtless you are aware, but may have forgotten, griffins were consecrated to the Sun. They not only were held to have drawn the chariots of Helios and Jupiter, but also the car of Nemesis. You will see the allusion.

There is a man to whom I am directly indebted for long weeks of suffering, a man who poses as an upright judge, one who tempers justice with mercy, who clamors for the establishment of new prisons which shall be humane, sanitary, and upbuilding . . .

The bold writing had now covered three pages. Manning turned the fourth. The "allusion" was very clear. He knew the name he would read.

Carruthers!

Therefore this man, who so ruthlessly and arrogantly sentenced me, Bernard Carruthers, is now sentenced in turn. He shall shuffle off this mortal coil between dawn on Friday, the seventeenth, and dawn on Saturday, the eighteenth. He shall no more see the sun, nor the light of day.

Not even your vigilance and ingenuity, Manning, may avert this reprisal. It will be amusing to watch your efforts. In the meantime you should be glad to know that my scattered organization is being reassembled. I shall again prove a scourge to the unworthy. I, the Appointed One!

In place of a signature there was an affiche of thick scarlet paper in the shape of an oval, embossed by the signet of the Griffin. Thus:



**T**HE big studio on the top floor of the building was silent and dark. Some light filtered in through the great north-light and dimly revealed its

furnishings. Carved chests and chairs, a big refectory table. A yawning fireplace. A deep lounge, many cushioned. Faint glitter of arms on the walls, a suit of armor, vessels of polished bronze and copper. Rugs and draperies and screens. The typical studio of a successful artist.

The whole building above the ground floor was given over to artists: few of them successful, most of them commercial. It was an old edifice, but it stood in the commercial heart of the city on the corner of a main avenue and a one-way side street. That gave it two entrances. There was one elevator, but it did not run after ten o'clock at night. Nobody actually lived there except the new tenant on the top floor.

The original tenant, one of the family that owned the building, had been killed in a car accident in Europe. The studio had been left vacant, untouched. Depression came, the artist's relatives lost their funds. They were glad to let the place to the Mr. Silbi who took a lease, paid a good price for the furnishings and moved in promptly.

He was not often seen. Sometimes the janitor would see him gliding down the stairs after the elevator ceased running, a somber figure in a long cape with its collar well turned up and almost meeting the rim of a black slouch hat. His shadow looked like that of some great bird of prey, swooping on.

A beaked nose, dark, piercing eyes, a mustache and vandyke beard with hair untrimmed. The typical artist, eccentric, inclined to be theatrical, but generous with rent and a regular tip to the janitor, to whom he explained that an old servant of his would clean his studio.

Sometimes there were men—always men—who hurried up the stairs and knocked at the studio door; emerging

late in the night. The janitor listened now and then, a little fearfully, but there was a heavy drape inside the door and he heard nothing except murmurs, faint sounds of music.

The door opened now, with the key in the hand of the tenant, Mr. Silbi. He entered, closing the door carefully behind him, sliding additional bolts he had installed. He turned a switch and lights came on in oriental lanterns of brass filigree that hung in chains from the high ceiling, their glow ruby and amber through the glass insets. The stars winked out above the big skylight, it became only a blank of blackness.

Silbi touched a button and music sounded, softly — curious, exotic strains. They suggested barbarian encampments, music and marches, dirges and triumphal chants. He touched off the kindling beneath the cannel coal in a large brazier in the fireplace and held his hands to the gathering flames for a moment as if he were cold, though it was only late summer.

Then he tossed off his cloak and hat; he shed the mustache and beard and wig, all masterpieces of deceptive craft, and sank into a deep chair in front of the hearth.

It was the Griffin. He had found sanctuary here, a place in which to recoup lost prestige, to foster revenge, to plot evil machinations and arrange a fresh organization. His face showed the hollows, the emaciation of suffering, of physical and mental stress. But vigor still emanated from him. He was dynamic, capable of storing energy and discharging it. The memory of his misfortunes stimulated his inflamed brain, increased its phantasmagoria. His conceit was still colossal.

His face was far from pleasant as he warmed his hands once more. It

might have been that of Iblis, Prince of Darkness, the fallen angel of the Moslems, smitten by the curse of God for refusing to prostrate himself before Adam. Iblis, smitten but defiant, brooding in hell while its flames cheered him. Nor was it all coincidence that Silbi, (spelled backwards) was Iblis. There was no name on the door or in the hall, but the Griffin had signed his lease with that title in one of his characteristic moods of subtle irony.

Presently he filled the bowl of a Turkish pipe with tobacco that was finely cut and contained a blend of hasheesh. He lit it and held the tube of the hubble-bubble in one hand as the smoke came through the rose-scented water, sweet and soothing.

**W**ITH his other hand he picked up an object he had bought recently, the same radiator cap ornament that Manning had noticed. It appealed to the Griffin, but he frowned as he remembered the golden griffin that had once mounted an onyx base on the desk of his now destroyed aerie. The recollection of all came back, the circular steel chamber, the underground laboratories, the mute Haitian dwarf who had been his body-guard, the serfs laboring to carry out his commands.

Manning had demolished all that. There would be a reckoning with him some day; meantime the Griffin would use him as the antagonist, without whom the game would lack interest.

He still possessed his hidden sources of tremendous, incalculable wealth. He had been free only a few weeks, but already he had exterminated one against whom he held a grudge—the man who might have freed him—or, so the Griffin had imagined in his grandiose dementia. He had already

located some of his old slaves who had imagined themselves free men once again; brought them again under his thrall, forced to do his bidding because of the Griffin's knowledge of their lapses against the law; men trying to go straight, but caught again in his infernal net. Through them he would get others.

In forty-eight hours the judge who had sentenced him would cease to live. His death would prove that the Griffin was again regnant. Thousands would cower, millions shudder at the news.

He chuckled suddenly, a deep, ghoulisn chuckle. Michael, the Archangel, had flung Lucifer, Son of the Morning, into Hades, but Lucifer had risen, a mighty insurgent, a power for evil. So would he.

He touched another switch and a board became illumined. Tiny globes showed constellations. The signs of the zodiac glowed. An inset wheel spun, slowed down, clicking. Again the Griffin chuckled.

"It is so ordained," he muttered. "The stars in their courses fight for me and against thee."

There was a steel cage behind a screen, blanketed, set on a stand. The Griffin moved the covering, opened the door and a white monkey, little smaller than a chimpanzee, but infinitely more graceful and agile, sprang out, clung to his shoulder, chittering before it leaped to the floor and ran and crouched before the hearth, warming its paws, looking at the fire with eyes sad and curious, with gestures almost human.

"Alfar," said the Griffin. "Tonight I sacrifice you to the Cause. It will be a swift passing, if my genius has not forsaken me."

The white monkey turned and gabbled something. The Griffin went into another room. Here was his

kitchen and his laboratory. Off that, his bedroom and bathroom. He put on a long garment of black silk brocade weft with a design in gold. The pattern was that of chimæras, the griffins of China, whose images were set to guard the tombs of kings.

Next he unlocked a tall, shelved steel cabinet. With a metal spatula he took yellowish crystals from a glass vessel and smeared them on the surface of a banana he peeled and tipped. The crystals instantly dissolved in the juice of the fruit.

The monkey cried for the banana, reaching eagerly. The Griffin watched as the quadruman took one bite and almost instantly collapsed, curled up with its topaz eyes glazing before the fire they no longer reflected. It shivered once and lay still.

The Griffin chuckled again.

"I thank you, Alfar," he said. "Who knows but what, in your next incarnation, you may be a man and thank me for your evolution."

He tossed the rest of the fruit on the fire, put the carcass of the monkey temporarily back in its cage. Then he resumed his nargileh pipe and sat brooding while the flames cast lights and shadows upon his face, vulturish, like the features of some ancient High Priest of Egypt, the mystic power behind the throne of Pharaoh.

**M**ANNING had talked more than once with Judge Carruthers in the latter's chambers during the trial of the Griffin when the Law, rather than the Judge, let him escape the death penalty because of insanity. He found no difficulty in securing a private interview and close attention when he disclosed the reason for his call.

The distinguished jurist was a man

in his early sixties, florid, not unlike the portraits of Washington, save for the thinning gray hair on the nobly proportioned head. He was slightly portly, eminently dignified.

He had been recently proffered, and had accepted, the highest honor in the gift of the nation—a seat on the Supreme Court of the United States. He had contributed much to the cause of moulding old Common Law to modern conditions and to create a universal Code for the Union rather than the wide differences now existing between the States. He was strong in his condemnation of the prevailing prison system, with its unsanitary cells, the hard labor given entering convicts, largely young, with a big percentage of them high school and college-bred. He declaimed the word "penitentiary" a ghastly sarcasm. Judge though he was, he tried to temper justice with mercy, he was a supreme and constructive humanitarian.

That such a man should be swept out of existence at the peak of his career, the prime of his achievement, was a suggestion so colossally iniquitous that only a madman could have conceived the idea.

"I have not been altogether unexpectant of some such threat," said the judge, "ever since I learned of the Griffin's escape and his first murder of revenge. My hands were tied. It was another instance of where the Law is blind. Some day, medical jurisprudence will be both ethical and logical.

"The Griffin is a biological failure. Abnormal. He should have been destroyed, as a surgeon cuts out a cyst. What do you want me to do? I hardly think, with ordinary precautions, that the Griffin can reach me here. The apartment house is well run, with night and day protection against annoyance.

I have my own servants, who sleep out. I eat meals prepared by my own cook. Couple these facts with whatever holstering you propose, Manning, and I see no cause to worry. I place myself in your hands."

Manning made an examination of the premises, looked into the running of the Highland Apartments and the judge's own private menage. He found little in the way of upsetting Carruthers' idea of security. Little that was logical. But the Griffin was *not* logical. His schemes might be those of a maniac, but it was hard for a normal man to predict them, to fathom their infinite and fiendish cunning.

On the face of things the suite could be made a hundred per cent proof. The apartment house was modern in its appointments and service, but not so much so in its architecture. There were no stepbacks to its floors. The walls rose sheer. The judge's suite was twelve stories from the ground, five down from the roof. It had neither balconies nor fire escapes. The building was fire-proof.

"I want," said Manning, "to stay here from midnight between the sixteenth and seventeenth until well after dawn on the eighteenth. Dawn comes about five at this time of year. I shall have the place surrounded, under cover, by detectives. They will be outside in the lobby, on this floor, on the roof. Your servants, when they leave for the night, will not be molested though they may be trailed."

"They are good servants," said Carruthers. "I should not like to have them annoyed . . ."

"I understand," said Manning. "I shall be here myself on the inside. I am going to taste every mouthful before you do, meat or drink, merely as a matter of precaution. And I am going

to be sure of the source of supply. That may seem superfluous to you, but not to me. No need to do it ostentatiously, of course."

"I'm under your orders," said Carruthers. "I wouldn't mind being bait for the Griffin if I could be sure of his capture. Such a monster demoralizes the nation. They will take better care of him next time."

"NEXT time," said Manning. "If he gives us a chance to get to actual grips the only man who will have to take care of the Griffin is the keeper of the Morgue. That's the way the whole Force feels about it. So do I, an unofficial member. As for your being the bait, you are the goat tied under the tree, if you'll excuse the simile, judge; waiting for the tiger."

"And you," said Carruthers, "the chap in the machan; the man up the tree. I trust you'll shoot in time to save the goat."

"I hope so," said Manning gravely, "if it comes to shooting."

It was late that night when Manning reached his own house in Pelham Manor. He had been closeted with the Police Commissioner whose position and reputation was at stake already with the Griffin's last crime. Another successful attempt, aside from the sheer shock of failure, would mean a new commissioner.

Manning's commissions, both from New York City and the Governor of the State, were still in effect. The police as well as the public pinned their faith on his ability to once more cope with this cunning fiend. The Commissioner had promised him entire coöperation. Fifty men were detailed, picked from the squads. The manager of the Highland Apartments was enlisted. His first reaction was to insist that Judge Car-

ruthers leave, but they persuaded him not to do it.

"I wanted the judge to promise to spend the day at Centre Street," said the Commissioner. "You might as well ask Fighting Bob Evans to come off the bridge at the battle of Manila. His Honor was offended. He's a bit touchy about his dignity and his duty. We can take care of him, if you'll help us. It won't do you any harm if we land the Griffin. Let us put our own operators on your elevators, on your telephone board, and in your lobby."

The manager capitulated. He pointed out that there was a vacant apartment across from Carruthers' suite, which made their arrangements perfect. Aside from the servants, no one was to be allowed to leave the judge's quarters and even they would be shadowed. No one was to be permitted in on any pretext. Provisions would come up in the dumb-waiter and be inspected by Manning.

He realized that merely tasting the food might not be protection. A slow-acting poison might get him, as well as the judge, which would suit the Griffin just as well. The Griffin had always been fond of suggesting that Manning ran equal risks. Now, more than ever, Manning knew that the Griffin hated him with deadly enmity, that his maniacal mind might suddenly decide to include him in the murder. He intended to take along an analysis kit.

He was served a perfect meal by his Japanese servants. Afterwards he read and smoked, trying to relax enough to get some sleep. But the same prescience of oncoming disaster, ever coming closer and closer, like a hungry beast stalking its quarry—the warning hunch that had come to him on lonely jungle trails—possessed him now.

He overhauled his analytical ap-

paratus in his private laboratory, made some delicate experiments, but when he sought sleep it would not come to him.

He lay at last on a leather couch, in pajamas, a fan blowing air from a refrigerating atmospheric adjuster. The night was hot and muggy. Indian summer had come to the city.

At two in the morning the telephone rang sharply. He knew who it was. His spirit was tuned up, vibrant to that evil sending. He knew the mocking voice, deep, confident, but with a strident note that betrayed the abnormal. He heard once more the strains of exotic music.

"Manning?" asked the Griffin. "I have not as yet reconstructed all my methods, but the dialing system makes precaution unnecessary. I am close by. I am slowly getting re-established, Manning. The next time you pay me a visit I shall be better prepared to really welcome you, as a permanent guest, I hope.

"Your precautions are excellent, no doubt. It makes the game better worth winning. Only—you do not know my opening move, the fatal move, Manning." The voice broke off into low, diabolical chuckling through which the music sounded. "I trust the judge, as a lawyer, has made his will. If not, tell him to do so, Manning. Ha-ha-ha! Ho-ho-ho-ho!"

The mocking laughter ceased, the music died while Manning, still holding the receiver to his ear, sat with his face setting into a mask of grim resolve that, this time, the Griffin should not score. But still that inner tremor, as of an alarm, persisted.

**A**T eleven o'clock on the night of the sixteenth Manning was admitted to Judge Carruthers' suite by the latter's butler, Roberts. Manning had



already inspected the hidden guards, given final instructions. The protection seemed perfect, impassable.

"The judge is expecting you in the library, sir," said Roberts respectfully. "Shall I show you to your room first?"

Roberts was the perfect servant. A tall man, partly bald, in regulation black trousers and jacket with a vest cut high and banded with narrow wasp-stripes of black and yellow. Silent and deft. He looked pretty muscular. He might, Manning speculated, be handy for defense.

The butler hovered in the well appointed guest room with its private bath, unpacking Manning's bag—though not the locked case that held the analytical kit—laying out pajamas, hanging up dressing gown and extra clothes, disposing of toilet articles with trained dexterity. Then he left.

Manning opened the window of his bedroom and gazed out. There was a car drawn up to the curb, opposite, another close by. They held plain clothes men ready to spring to action. The protection force also included a police surgeon.

Roberts came out of the pantry as Manning entered the dining room, and ushered him through the big living room—off which was the judge's bedroom and bathroom—to the library. He knocked on the door and a dog barked.

"I didn't know we had a dog," said Manning to Roberts.

"No, sir. We didn't, sir. Not till yesterday, sir. It seems a car bumped 'im, downtown, just ahead of the judge's car, sir. It didn't hurt 'im much though he was a bit paralyzed, as it were, sir. The judge took 'im to the dog 'ospital and they found no bones broken. He 'ad a collar, but no tag. So the judge advertised 'im and brought 'im 'ome, temporary."

The dog, a wire-haired terrier, still a trifle lame, leaped on Manning, who patted him as Carruthers rose to greet him. The judge proffered cigars, ordered Roberts to bring ice and charged water.

"I still have some authentic and licit liquor," said the judge, clipping the end of his cigar. Manning followed his example. The butler picked up the automatic table lighter and gave them lights before he went back to his pantry. "What do you think of my latest acquisition? I confess to a most irregular hope that my advertisement will not be answered."

Manning fondled the terrier behind its ears.

"Bathed it?" he asked.

"No. Seems tolerably clean. Thinking of fleas?"

"I knew a man in Africa," said Manning seriously, "who had a tame serval cat. Also an enemy. The cat prowled nights. One day it scratched the man and he died, nastily. The serval's claws had been enameled with venom. The terrier may be harmless, but it is an outside element. We don't want any outside elements here for at least thirty hours."

"You think the Griffin may have planted it in front of a car at precisely the moment my car came along, downtown?" asked the judge with a smile.

"He would be quite capable of it," answered Manning. "I'm going to bathe it, particularly the claws."

Roberts helped him, found some creolin disinfectant, brought towels. The terrier sniffed a bit, but did not protest vigorously. Roberts was dismissed for the night. He would be trailed, but if he was in any way mixed up with the Griffin that trail would prove a blind one, Manning knew.

Meanwhile he was possessed with the

idea that the dog's presence was not entirely accidental. He made a final interior investigation. The judge was in the living room that looked out over the park. In the north the sky flashed sometimes violet, sometimes green. The low mutter of thunder sounded through the windows, slightly open for relief. The night was even hotter than the one before. When the lightning flared the trees in the park showed flat, like stage scenery.

The judge read a while, announced he would go to bed. The terrier followed him. Later Manning, inspecting, found him curled up at Carruthers' feet, with a beady and vigilant eye that opened and closed as it recognized Manning as a friend. The judge slept peacefully.

Gordon Manning envied him; he knew there would be no sleep for himself until the dawn had come and a new one followed it.

The first dawn arrived with a quivering of the purple sky, a fluttering of the stars.

Then the lifting sun colored pink the man-made cliffs of the high buildings on Central Park, West. Manning watched the trees get green, the derelicts crawling out from among the rock ledges, the early riders cantering along the bridle paths.

He stripped and took a shower, dressed and assured himself the men from Centre Street were on the job. Roberts had returned when he got back to the suite. The dog was friskily on hand. The cook and maid arrived. Breakfast was served with the judge unruffled.

Carruthers had work to do, he told Manning, who was content to have the judge closeted in his library. He was expecting to move to Washington at the end of the month and was getting ready

to render certain opinions to close his New York calendar.

THE hours dragged. Through all the sultry day Manning felt some unseen, inexorable danger waiting for its moment to pounce, to kill. Manning received hourly reports from the police, but he felt sure that the peril was already planted. It was like a bomb whose fuse was lit, the spark eating steadily towards the explosion. He could not believe otherwise that it must come from within and he could not place it.

The cook was a cheery, stout Irish-woman, incapable of treachery. Carruthers' household was well ordered, but the servants might be unwitting agents. Manning frankly explained the menace to Mrs. Moriarty, and she, though gasping and crossing herself, stood by, welcoming his analysis of the food. The maid and Roberts proclaimed themselves anxious to cooperate.

"I've heard, of course, of the Griffin; also of you, sir," said the butler. "I only hope you get him."

The terrier panted on a rug. The temperature mounted to a record. Carruthers, reading decisions, annotating, seemed the coolest of them all, transferring all responsibility to Manning's shoulders. He took a nap after luncheon. Manning wondered if he was a fatalist. He himself was not, despite his travels in the mystic East. He did not believe in magic—save as a manifestation of knowledge over ignorance—in horoscopes or divinations. But he felt the pressure of the hidden menace.

Dinner was served. Carruthers talked on his favorite topic, the inadequacy of the current law to meet modern requirements. Roberts was the perfect

servant. Neither ate much though the food was well chosen. The dog refused its meal.

"It looks as if it was working up for a bad storm," said the judge. "It may relieve conditions. Suppose we have coffee served in the living room? It's the coolest place."

Roberts brought coffee, also liqueurs. Manning refused to have the windows opened. Fans did their best to alleviate the heat. At last, with fresh cigars lighted, the butler brought ice cubes and charged water.

"Is there anything else, sir?" he asked.

"I think not," said Carruthers. "Have Mrs. Moriarty and her niece left?"

"Yes, sir."

Manning watched Roberts go into Carruthers' bedroom to see that the bed was opened, all ready for his master's retiring. The butler bowed to the judge.

"I'll change my things, sir, with your leave, and go home," he said. "Unless you want me further?"

"I think not, Roberts, thank you."

There seemed nothing less than a few hours of vigil. But Manning knew that when all seemed most serene, the Griffin was most to be feared. He had exerted himself to the utmost. He could see no flaw in the arrangements. Again he got reports from the police, vigilantly on duty.

Roberts left to change his clothes. It struck Manning as a little peculiar that the butler should have mentioned this ordinary function. It was only a small thing, but small things seemed to count, more and more as the time dwindled.

The terrier went to Carruthers, its tongue quivering.

"Thirsty," said the judge. "I'll get him a drink. Don't bother, Manning.

There's a chilled-water faucet in my bathroom."

Manning had noticed the same convenience in his own quarters. He watched Carruthers pick up the dish that had been chosen for the dog and go into his bedroom. He returned immediately with the dish filled with water and set it back of a settee. The thirsty terrier lapped eagerly.

"Do you mind if I finish up these papers, Manning?" asked the judge.

"I'd rather you stayed right here, for a while," Manning replied.

THERE was a tension in his voice that made Carruthers' eyebrows go up, but he said nothing as Manning passed quickly to the outer door of the suite and, opening it, saw the door of the opposite apartment open silently. He gave a brief order to the two men stationed there, and returned to the living room.

"Roberts generally say good night?" he asked.

The judge nodded.

Manning felt that the automatic in his shoulder sheath was loose. He took the same chair he had been using, from which he could see the dog behind the settee by the water dish. Roberts came in to make his regular formal farewell.

"Good night," said Carruthers.

"Good night, sir. You're sure you don't want me to stay 'ere tonight, sir? I'm willing, though it looks as if everything would be all right, with Mr. Manning 'ere and all."

The judge glanced at Manning, who shook his head.

"There's one thing you might do for me before you go, Roberts," he said.

"Yes, sir. Of course, sir."

"Get me a glass of cold water from Judge Carruthers' bathroom."

Roberts had a ruddy enough face, but it changed to the hue of chalk. His eyes became fixed, bulging. His voice was hoarse. He stared at Manning with his whole powerful body tense. Then he relaxed. Manning's voice had been perfectly casual, the request ordinary.

"I'll get you some from the pantry, sir, with ice," he said.

"I prefer it chilled, without ice, from the house service," said Manning evenly.

The butler's thin lips stretched, parted, showing his teeth in what might be meant for a grin. His eyes shone maliciously.

"Very good, sir," he said, and marched into the bedroom.

Manning made a warning gesture to the judge. The butler came back with a filled glass. He offered it to Manning.

"'Ere you are, sir," he said with his eyes baleful.

"It's for you, Roberts," said Manning. "*You* drink it. You understand?"

Again the blood receded from the butler's face. It rushed back again. His eyes narrowed. He took a step towards the door.

"That will do you no good, Roberts," said Manning. "They are waiting for you to come out. How did the Griffin manage to plant you here? You'll get off easier if you confess. You didn't kill the judge, you see."

Roberts' features were convulsed with fury.

"Damn you!" he cried. "Clever, but not clever enough, Mr. Manning."

He flung the glass, contents and all, at Manning's face and whipped out a flat gun from his hip pocket with the precision of long practice. He fired at Carruthers in his easy chair. The weapon had a silencer, it made no more sound than the popping of a cork.

The roar of Manning's service gun drowned it entirely. The water had checked him for a split pulse-beat. He did not know whether or not that hesitation in his own draw had been fatal to Carruthers. His bullet struck Roberts in the shoulder and spoiled the butler's second shot, this time at Manning.

The impact sent Roberts staggering back to the wall, one hand behind him to steady him. Manning wanted to cripple, not to kill him.

"Drop your gun," he ordered sharply. The men from across the hall had heard the report of Manning's weapon and they were at the outer door, hurrying to the scene when the lights went out and the room was plunged into darkness, only relieved by the vague light that came through the windows. Roberts' groping hand had thrown the switch he knew where to locate.

He and Manning fired simultaneously. A bullet zipped over the latter's head as he crouched, expecting the attack, trying to get the butler against the window. He knew he had scored. He heard a curse and the fall of Roberts' gun. He had got him in hand or arm.

Then he saw him staggering, swiftly making for the big window. He fancied he meant to leap through it, glass and all. Once more Manning fired and the butler toppled just as the plainclothes men broke in and blazed at the fugitive before Manning could stop them.

Manning found the switch and put on the lights, infinitely relieved to see Carruthers alive. The bullet had gone into the padded arm of the wing-chair, missing the judge by inches. Manning's lead had scored first, spoiled the assassin's aim.

Roberts was dead, riddled. The detectives put a rug over him. Manning

had hit him in shoulder, leg and the right wrist.

"Get the Medical Examiner up here," said Manning. "I'm sorry you killed him, though I think it would have been a tough job to make him talk."

"The Commissioner is downstairs," said one of the detectives. "Sergeant Morgan told me so last time I rang the lobby to report."

Manning nodded. He turned back the rug part way, then replaced it. He fancied there had been other, swifter means of Roberts killing himself than by jumping out the window when he saw the game was up. The Griffin would never tolerate failure.

The lucky shot in the wrist had prevented him from trying to get it, preserved it for evidence. But Manning was a stickler for routine. He would not touch the body until the examining surgeon came.

"IT was a diabolically ingenious device," said Manning. "The Griffin boasted to me once that the way to murder a man was to study his habits and take advantage of them. No doubt he has done so in this case. He knew of the chilled water supplied by the building for all bathrooms. No one but the judge would use the faucet in his bathroom. And he always takes a little bicarbonate of soda in cold water before retiring.

"So Roberts, or whatever his name is, mixed some of those yellow crystals from that little box we found in his vest pocket with grease and lined the *inside* of the faucet. Probably with his finger. You may find traces under a nail."

"But how did you discover it, man?" asked Carruthers.

"I didn't," said Manning. "I was convinced this was to be an inside job.

I sent the table cigar lighter down to Headquarters some hours ago to see if they could find a record of Roberts' fingerprints, which were nicely registered on it. We should have results almost any minute. Of course Roberts would have been shadowed again. I had no intention of letting you out of my sight, judge, until dawn came. But there seemed no harm in your getting water for the dog. It was the dog that saved you, Judge Carruthers.

"You put his dish back of the settee. You could not see it, but I did. I saw the dog drink. I saw it die, instantaneously. Its body is back of the settee now though it looks as if it was asleep, poor little devil. I imagine most of the poison—whatever it turns out to be, undoubtedly some alkaloid—dissolved immediately and entirely. There was only enough grease to hold the crystals in place. Roberts, of course, did not know that the dog was dead. I wanted to confront him with discovery to force the truth out of him by surprise, but he was a resourceful beggar."

"You saved my life a second time," said Carruthers. "He did his best to shoot me. Do you imagine the Griffin will warn me a second time?"

"There won't be a second time if I know anything of him," said Manning. "Remember, he is insane. Failure breaks him. Don't forget that he actually believes in his star readings and divinations. They have betrayed him. He will be infuriated. He will be dangerous only to himself for a while. Then he will strike again if we have not found him beforehand, but not in the same place."

The telephone rang. Manning answered it, listening attentively for two or three minutes.

"All right," he said as he hung up and turned to the rest. "They have

traced Roberts' prints," he said. "They had trouble doing so because they were not in the regular files. They were part of the batch of prints the Department made at the Griffin's aerie when we captured him. Some of those men he had working for him got away. This was one of them.

"The Griffin has been rounding them up. You told me you could guarantee your servants, judge," Manning went on severely. "He was a good butler, I grant. But where and when did you get him?"

Judge Carruthers looked almost sheepish.

"My man, whose name was also Roberts," he said, "had an accident six weeks ago. He was hit and badly hurt by a truck. As a matter of fact he never recovered consciousness after he was taken to the hospital. I was informed of it by this man. He telephoned me. He said he was with my Roberts and was his brother. He is about the same build and not unlike him in a general way. He told me that before his brother lapsed into his coma the main thing that troubled him was my being without a man. He offered to substitute. He showed me references, from abroad. The whole thing was so natural I never had the slightest misgiving. As you said, Manning, he was a good butler."

"Good also at observing your habits and reporting to the Griffin," said Manning. "You felt that it was unlikely that the dog might have been bumped by accident, and I agree with you. It was Fate and your own good fortune that it was hit where you saw it. But Roberts' injury and following death in the hospital was not an accident by any means. Thank God we found things out in time."

"Thank God, indeed," said the judge. "I might have taken a drink myself before I gave one to the dog. As a matter of fact I did think of it." He shivered. "I think a different sort of drink might do all of us good, gentlemen. How about it?"

They were in the library together. The Police Commissioner, Judge Carruthers and Gordon Manning. The grim procedure had been gone through. The body of the pseudo butler had been taken away. The plain-clothes men still kept the vigil that was nearly over.

Dawn was coming, graying the sky. Carruthers raised his glass.

"Give us a toast, Manning," he said. "I don't know whether we should drink to your health for preserving mine or to the failure of the Griffin."

Manning lifted his own highball.

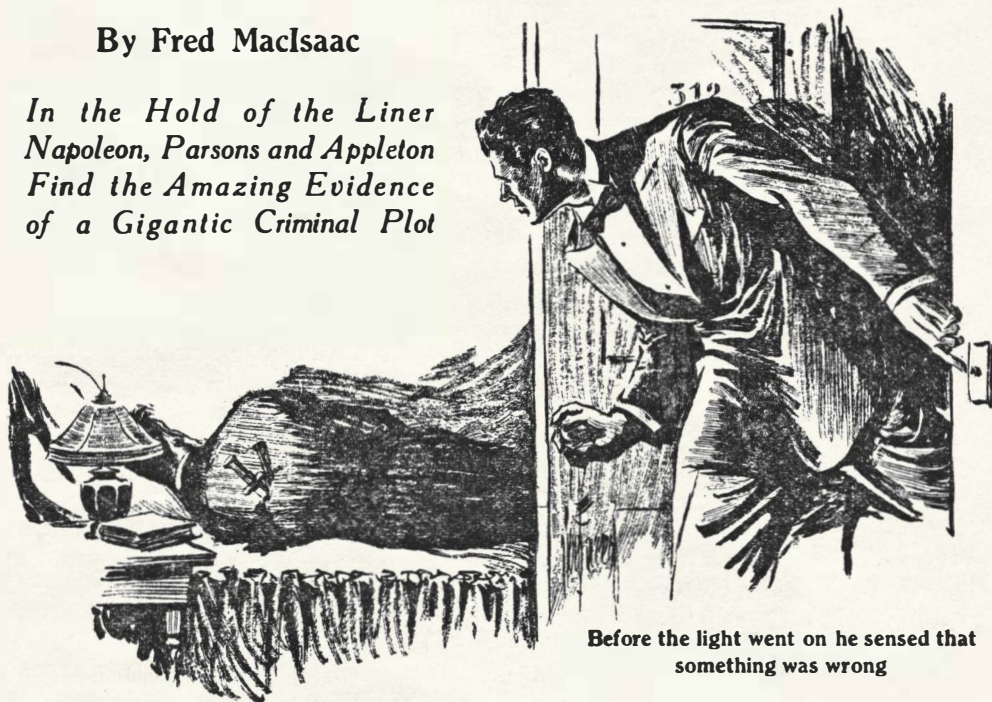
"I suggest," he said, "that we drink to the dog."



# Millionaires' Cruise

By Fred MacIsaac

*In the Hold of the Liner Napoleon, Parsons and Appleton Find the Amazing Evidence of a Gigantic Criminal Plot*



Before the light went on he sensed that something was wrong

DON'T MISS THIS STORY—BEGIN HERE

**H**ARRY PARSONS, socially prominent, but desperately broke, sailed aboard the luxurious liner Napoleon on a cruise of the élite to the West Indies; he sailed as a paid companion to a man who called himself Martin Donovan, of Chicago.

Adam Appleton, an insurance detective, warned Harry that the passenger list was studded with the fictitious names of international crooks, drawn to the cruise by the parade of fabulous jewelry.

Harry was attacked by two mysterious men, one of whom he threw overboard. He rescued Martin Donovan from a similar attack.

Francesca Roach, a mysterious and

beautiful woman, introduced Harry to Amos Timberly, wealthiest man in the world, who was traveling incognito. Shortly afterwards, Adam Appleton vanished from sight, and Harry was drugged and attacked again while he was talking to the enigmatic Martin Donovan. Harry woke up in a small cabin far below decks. He was trussed up. Next to him was Adam Appleton. The pair managed to break their bonds.

## CHAPTER XIII

### In the Steerage

**A**PPLETON tried the door of the cabin and it opened when he turned the knob. They were free; standing in a narrow pitch black

This story began in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY for October 22

passage. Neither of them had the slightest notion which was fore or aft or upon what deck they were.

"We'll go this way. We ought to come to a companionway if we keep on long enough," said the detective.

Guided by the handrail which runs along all ship passages, they moved slowly ahead for an interminable distance. It is possible they passed stairways opening on one side or other, but were not aware of it. The Napoleon was a fifth of a mile long and her steege or tourist cabin decks seemed to run the length of the ship. They had no means of telling how far they had proceeded when they came up against a blank wall.

Nothing to do but retrace their steps and they went back the way they had come without even knowing when they passed their recent prison. When they were almost in despair, the passage ended in a steep staircase to a deck above, and they climbed it with extreme caution. It turned them about and sent them down another long alley, at the far end of which they saw a faint illumination.

Their footfalls were noiseless upon the rubber tiles, and the light enabled them to make better progress. They arrived, at length, at the entrance to a huge dining room. Their passage entered it upon the starboard side and the light was coming from the port side.

Bidding Harry to wait, Appleton dropped on all fours and crawled into the room. Harry saw the top of his head appear above a table as he gazed toward the left. A moment later he was back and motioned to Harry to enter as he had done.

"Want to know if my eyes deceive me," he muttered.

Parsons crept into the room, lifted

himself, and peered. In the far corner were four men seated at a table upon which stood two bottles containing candles. Three of the men were in shadow, but the light fell strongly upon the face of the fourth man, who wore the uniform of a ship's officer.

Harry was gazing upon the face of the captain of the Napoleon. He could not be mistaken. He had seen him twice that morning.

He crawled back to Appleton.

"It's the ship's captain," he whispered. "What do you suppose it means?"

"It means that things are a thousand times worse than I thought," Appleton replied. "One of the others is the French thief I told you about. No wonder the damned captain didn't want to give me any coöperation. Quick, the party is breaking up."

They scuttled down the passage whence they came. A moment later they saw the beam of a flash lamp in the dining room opposite their entrance and then four shadows which turned left and exited from the far side of the dining room along a continuation of the passage.

"We'll follow them," said Appleton. "They'll show us the way out."

Giving them a long start, the pair crossed the dining room and slipped down the passage in their rear. About fifty yards further they turned left into a companionway and ascended a broad but steep staircase. They heard a door open and close, and the four were gone.

"Come on!" Harry exclaimed and darted up the stairs. At their head was a double door, which was locked.

Appleton swore softly. "Trapped," he muttered.

Parsons was fumbling for his penknife. Fortunately Donovan had not gone through his pockets.



"These locks were not made for conspirators," Harry said with a chuckle. He picked the lock as easily as he had that of the other steerage entrance the previous night. They stood upon "E" deck, Captain Lafarge and his companions were not visible.

It was no trouble to find the staircase to "D" deck and the exit was not locked. They ran almost into the arms of a steward with a tray who gazed at them curiously and remarked that passengers were not allowed on "E" deck. Appleton replied that he was glad to know it and hurried with Parsons to his stateroom, which was forward on that deck. Appleton was in evening clothes, but the shirt was filthy and he had to change at once to avoid comment.

Harry sat down in a chair and watched him glumly.

"What now?" he demanded. "If I go back to our suite, Donovan will surely throw me overboard. I would not dare to sleep in the same room with him."

"You and I will go to the purser, get permission to shift you to my cabin; we'll visit your suite together and collect your belongings and let Donovan make the next move. Donovan was not sitting at that table with the captain, was he?"

"I'm sure he wasn't."

"He's operating independently of the French gang. That's why they are trying to get rid of him and why he won't dare make a move."

"Well," Parsons said lugubriously, "I'll land in New York as penniless as when I came on board. My bargain with Donovan is busted."

"Listen, Parsons. If it wasn't for you I'd still be locked up below. If we foil these crooks, you're likely to earn a huge reward from the insurance com-

panies. And whatever is going to happen is rapidly coming to a head."

"**W**HO captured you, do you think?" Harry asked. "Donovan's gang or the others?"

"Donovan, of course, since we were jammed into the same prison."

"Yet I'm certain the men who carried me into the steerage were French sailors. How do you account for that?"

Appleton inspected the bow of his black tie in the mirror with dissatisfaction.

"I can't ever get these damn things right," he complained. "Fix it, will you? And I can't account for a hell of a lot. It's not beyond the bounds of possibility that the captain was in the steerage on legitimate ship's business. You don't know positively that Donovan drugged you. Maybe you just fell asleep."

"Don't be absurd," Harry said angrily.

Adam laughed. "Tomorrow afternoon we arrive at Kingston, Jamaica, where a pair of very competent New York police detectives will come on board. They will take ashore two men who, undoubtedly, have a finger in this pie, and I'll try to persuade them to carry off Donovan on your accusation of claiming to be a member of the Secret Service and giving you drugged champagne. It's a case of your word against his, but it will give them a chance to go through his belongings and maybe get something important on him. Let's go see the purser. What time is it? I forgot to wind my watch in that black hole below."

"Nine forty-five," Harry informed him. Adam set his watch and they left the cabin, walked swiftly forward, climbed to "B" deck, upon which the purser's office was located, and found

its windows shuttered. As they were turning away, however, Monsieur Magnin emerged from his cabin in the rear wearing full dress uniform, with its large expanse of polished shirt front. He glanced at Appleton indifferently, stiffened, threw open his door and motioned to them to enter his room. Immediately he closed and locked the door.

"Follow my lead," the detective muttered to Harry.

"Monsieur Appleton, or Green," said the purser severely, "may I inquire where you have been hiding? Are you aware that you have given the captain of the ship grave concern? Knowing you for what you are, we took your disappearance seriously. I should confine you in your cabin for the remainder of the voyage, and I shall do so unless your explanation of your behavior is satisfactory. Were you aware that your friend was in perfect health when you talked with the commander and myself this morning, Monsieur Parsons?"

"He was not," said Appleton quickly. "My disappearance was involuntary. I was knocked neatly on the head and woke up in an inside cabin in the steerage, Mr. Magnin. If you inspect the staterooms down there you will find one with some broken planking which will explain my manner of escape and verify my tale."

The purser's suspicion was replaced by grave concern. "Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "Can you describe your assailants?"

"No, but I have an idea who they are and they will be taken off your hands tomorrow when we arrive in Jamaica."

"Ah!" exclaimed Magnin, "but we do not arrive in Jamaica tomorrow. It will be ten days before we do."

Appleton and Parsons were too dismayed and astonished to speak.

"This is a fair weather cruise," explained the purser. "Having no special objective, and the comfort of the passengers being our chief concern, we have reserved the right to omit any port or to shift its position in the schedule for that reason. The captain has had radio reports of a terrific storm south of Jamaica and moving rapidly north. We have changed our course to the east to avoid it, and our first port will be La Guayra." He smiled. "Between ourselves, we have practically guaranteed a certain passenger against rough weather. Radiograms, cablegrams and mail awaiting our passengers at Kingston will be sent on by airplane to Venezuela. After touching at other ports of South and Central America we shall put into Kingston on our return trip."

"But Captain Lafarge knows that New York police officials expect to arrest two criminals on board at Kingston."

"He knows that, of course, but we have the men under surveillance and the policemen will find Kingston comfortable for ten or twelve days."

"I would like to send a radiogram. Are there any messages for me?"

"None. Of course you may send your radio. Give it to me and it will have precedence over everything else. In the morning the captain will want to talk with you regarding your experience."

"Mr. Parsons has reasons for wishing to shift from the suite he occupies with Mr. Donovan and occupy the extra bed in my cabin. There can be no objections, of course."

"Certainly not, though he is leaving luxurious quarters for less comfortable ones."

"I'll pack my things and move at once, sir," Harry said. He took his cue from Appleton, who apparently did not wish the purser to know that he had been imprisoned with him and had escaped with him.

"Very good, sir. Mr. Appleton, your presence on board was a source of comfort to the captain and myself and your vanishment cause for alarm. I assure you we are on the alert against any sort of criminal activity. Every steward and member of the deck crew is instructed to report instantly anything suspicious. At what time were you set upon last night?"

"Shortly before eleven."

THE purser opened a drawer and drew forth several report blanks. He selected two of them and studied them.

"From nine o'clock until one the two suspects were playing bridge in the after smoking room and did not leave their table. That is the report of the steward in charge of that room. So you are in error if you believe that they were responsible. Furthermore, the steerage and tourist quarters are sealed and it would be impossible for these men, who knew nothing about this ship, to have successfully penetrated into them with or without an unconscious burden."

"By 'sealing' you mean that they are locked with their ordinary fastenings?" replied Appleton. "I had no difficulty in picking the lock of one of the exits with a penknife."

"Tomorrow they will be fastened by heavy bolts and padlocks. I don't doubt your statement, sir. And it is obvious that these are not the only scoundrels among our passengers."

"My gun was taken from me. May I ask for a revolver from the ship's

arsenal, and also one for my associate, Mr. Parsons?"

"They will be delivered to your room in a quarter of an hour. Keep in touch with me. Above all, make no move which will create alarm among the passengers. We must keep the cover on the pot in which this hell's broth is brewing."

They shook hands and left the shrewd and competent officer who was responsible only to the captain for what went on in the passenger quarters of the great ship. They returned directly to Appleton's cabin, where they went into conference.

"Magnin is on the level, at any rate," declared the detective.

"Of course he is. Why did you conceal my share in the evening's entertainment?"

"Parsons, I had to explain my disappearance, but as yours had not been reported there was no sense in supplying him with information which he would pass on to Captain Lafarge. If Lafarge and Donovan are in cahoots, he will know it anyway. If they are not, there is no reason to persuade him that you are a person who merits the sort of treatment I received."

The little man reasoned shrewdly, and Harry was compelled to agree with him. He had taken the lead from the moment of their escape and Harry could not take exception to any of his actions. While he lacked Parsons' strength, he had just as much physical courage, and he was cheerful now when Harry was gravely worried.

"We're very much up against it," he remarked as he lighted a cigarette. "Of course I won't send that radio."

"Why not?"

"It would never be delivered. Whatever this plot is, the radio operators, or one of them, are in it as well as the cap-

tain. Do you understand the functions of a steamship captain?"

"Certainly. He runs the ship."

"Yes. He is an absolute monarch with power of life and death over every member of the crew and every passenger. In an emergency he is justified to take extreme action. For example, he could order you and me to be hanged and his orders would be obeyed. When I came on board this ship I expected a pleasant cruise. Oh, I thought some crook might get away with a necklace or a bracelet and I would run him down with the hearty cooperation of the ship's officers. Instead, the captain is a crook, and on this ship criminals command. I'm sorry I dragged you into it, my boy. Donovan wouldn't have bothered about you if he hadn't learned that you were more or less in my confidence. Something unpleasant will happen to both of us, in all probability. If they learn that we are aware of the participation of the skipper in the plot we're absolutely doomed."

"I'll fight for my life," Harry declared. "But it's a bad break that we are not putting into Jamaica tomorrow."

"Break!" Adam exclaimed. "Don't you see that omitting Kingston is part of the scheme? Jamaica is an island in the center of the Caribbean. The nearest lands in the vicinity are Cuba, Haiti and Porto Rico, other islands where law and order prevail. A fake radio weather report is an excuse for heading for Venezuela. Thieves can run far and wide in South America."

"But he can't get away with it," Parsons objected. "The New York office will have correct weather reports. If there is no hurricane near Jamaica, he'll get all kinds of orders from New York."

"This captain will have to jump the

ship. That's why he's heading straight for Venezuela. And it means that the biggest robbery in history is going to take place within a couple of days. Come in."

A steward entered with a package. Appleton tipped him, and, after he had departed, opened the package. It contained two American forty-five calibre revolvers and a supply of cartridges. They proceeded to load their weapons.

#### CHAPTER XIV

##### The Battle in the De Luxe Suite

"LET'S pay a visit to your suite," said Appleton. "Donovan is probably in the ballroom. While you pack, I'll go through his stuff and maybe find something illuminating."

"In that case, I'll go on deck, locate him, and come down and give you the word," Harry proposed.

"O K. Watch your step."

Harry ascended to the top deck, which was deserted, and went aft until he reached the great state ballroom. This was an enormous room, with a wide expanse of dance floor rimmed by small tables. A score of stewards were rushing about among the tables carrying trays of sandwiches and pewter pails containing gold-rimmed bottles. Dowagers and captains of industry sat at the tables, resplendent—at least the ladies were—while the floor was crowded with dancers. It took Harry several minutes to locate Donovan, who was dancing with Nancy Farmer. He lingered a moment or two for a sight of Francesca, but could not distinguish her among six hundred guests.

He wondered what would happen if this multitude of the richest, most intelligent, and most cultured Americans knew they were being conveyed to a remote and isolated section of the Carib-

bean for a sinister purpose. Probably there wouldn't be a protest at the omission of Kingston, Jamaica. These people didn't much care where they went so long as the fun and the wine held out.

At that moment two men in evening dress paused near him.

"Darn decent of the captain to avoid Jamaica," said one of them. "I've always thought it idiotic for a ship to poke her nose directly into a big storm, and upon a cruise of this sort it would be arrant stupidity."

"Sure," replied the other. "I've some important telegrams waiting there, but anything really big will be relayed by radio. The way the market is, I could cut off from it for a month without being any worse off than I am now."

"You took it on the nose plenty, eh?"

"You bet," said the second man proudly. "In October, '29, I was worth seventy millions on paper. I don't suppose I could scrape together six millions today."

"Reduced to penury," commented the other, laughing.

"And don't you think I'm not," replied his friend seriously. "I've only been able to reduce expenses to a million a year, and if the market doesn't recover in five years I won't have a nickel."

"But of course it will."

"Oh, sure," the other answered airily. "I'm not worrying. Let's go in and pick up some nice girls to dance with."

Parsons went down to "C" deck and entered Appleton's cabin.

"He's dancing," he said curtly. "Come on."

A few minutes later they stood at the door of Donovan's suite. Harry had the

key in his pocket still and unlocked the door and boldly entered. The lights revealed that it was untenanted. Harry's belongings were undisturbed and he set about the business of packing while Appleton proceeded to go through the contents of Donovan's wardrobe trunk methodically. Harry finished before he was through, and sat down to wait. Presently Appleton left the trunk and went into the closet where most of Donovan's wardrobe was hanging.

"Hurry up, can't you?" Harry pleaded nervously. And as he spoke he heard the door of the salon open. Appleton heard it, too, and closed the closet door on himself. Parsons rose and Donovan came into the bedroom.

"Hello, Parsons," he said blandly. "Not leaving the ship, are you? Why the suitcases all strapped and ready?"

"I'm changing my quarters, Mr. Donovan," Harry replied. "I'm through with you."

"Oh, yeah?" Donovan retorted easily. "Little crazy in the head, ain't you?"

Harry lost his temper. "Are you fool enough to think you can bluff through what has happened, Mr. Secret Service Chief?" he demanded. "Do you suppose I would spend another night in the same cabin with you?"

He knew positively that Donovan had lied to him, drugged him, lowered him over the rail into the hands of confederates on the steerage deck and thrust him into the steerage stateroom where he had already placed Appleton, and it was not to be expected that he could reappear without astounding him. Nevertheless, the man had not revealed by the movement of a facial muscle that he had not expected to find Harry back in the suite.

"You've served your purpose," Donovan replied. "Thanks to you, I've

met a dozen very entertaining people, so you can go to hell as far as I am concerned. But don't expect any payment from me. You're breaking our contract. Where do you expect to go?"

"I'm answering no questions, Chief," Harry sneered. "Exactly what did you put in that glass of wine?"

"Champagne, you young fool. I never saw anybody pass out on one glass before. You're a weak sister, Parsons."

**W**HILE they talked Harry was stewing with excitement over the predicament of Appleton and himself. If Donovan had come down to turn in, Parsons didn't know how he would get the detective out of the closet. He certainly would be discovered when Donovan went to hang up his clothes. Knowing him for a desperate man, Harry didn't want to go out and leave Appleton trapped in the place.

"I don't know what your game is, Donovan," he said. "I know damn well that you're not in the secret service and I'm very sure you're a crook. And you certainly drugged my wine. I demand that you come with me to the captain and let's each tell him our story."

He yawned in Parsons' face.

"Tell him anything you please," he replied. "If you're going, get out. You're not a bad kid, Parsons, but you're too nose-y. However, no hard feelings."

He came to the young man, smiling, with the right hand of fellowship extended. Harry placed his hands behind him defiantly, whereupon Donovan's fist closed and his arm whipped up in a vicious uppercut. He was hardly eighteen inches from Harry and nobody but a trained boxer could have saved his chin from that fist.

Harry swayed back a trifle, threw his head back, and the big fist missed the point of his jaw by a fraction of an inch. As Donovan was off balance, Parsons hooked him savagely in the stomach with his left, and when he staggered back Harry slammed his right to the side of his head with plenty behind it.

Donovan was a big man and a fair boxer, but he had never stood toe to toe and swapped wallops with a gorilla, as Parsons had in his various ring experiences. That right half stunned him and Harry followed it up with a rain of jabs, hooks and swings which drove him around the bedroom and finally sent him to the carpet. He fell heavily, whipped out his automatic, and by the glare in his eye would have sent three or four bullets into his opponent if Appleton had not intervened. The little detective darted out of the closet, came upon Donovan from behind, twisted the gun out of his hand, and covered him with it.

"I'd like a few words with you, Donovan," he said coolly. "Stay right where you are, please."

"Who the devil are you?" growled Donovan. "Parsons, that right of yours kicks like a mule."

"My name is Adam Appleton, if that means anything to you," stated the detective.

"Thought you went overboard," retorted Donovan, lifting himself on his elbow and eyeing the leveled automatic in a calculating manner. "What are you doing in my quarters?"

Appleton grinned. "Trying to get a line on you. I understand you claim to be Chief Owen of the United States Secret Service."

Donovan didn't bother to reply.

Appleton seated himself on the bed, still keeping the fellow covered.

"Things are going badly for you on this trip, eh?" he jeered. "You're not the only crook who thought he would find soft pickings. Just how does this change in our itinerary affect you?"

Donovan drew himself to a sitting position on the carpet. "Give me a cigarette, Parsons, will you?" he requested. "Light it for me. No harm in that, is there, Mr. Private Detective?"

Appleton nodded. Harry drew out a cigarette, handed it to him, scratched a match, bent forward and held the flame to its tip, and Donovan's arm went round his neck like a vise, he swung him so that he was between him and the detective. He rose like an acrobat from the floor, flung Parsons upon the little sleuth with such force that Appleton flattened on the bed and went out from the contact of Harry's head with his chin. Donovan darted out upon the private deck and went over the rail. Parsons recovered in a fraction of a second, rushed in pursuit of him and found a rope ladder down which his enemy was rapidly descending. As Harry swung his leg over the rail Donovan landed upon "D" deck, three decks down. Discretion caused Harry to draw back his leg. He knew Donovan had friends down there. He did the next best thing: unfastened the ladder and let it drop into the sea.

**W**HEN he went back into the bedroom, Appleton was sitting up and rubbing his chin.

"What happened?" he demanded stupidly. Harry laughed and told him. Adam snapped out of it quickly.

"Best thing that could have happened," he commented. "And lucky for you that you didn't follow him. We've forced that crook into the open and his course of conduct makes several things clear to me."

"We'd better be getting out of here," Harry said nervously.

"On the contrary, I think we'll spend the night here. It may be safer than my cabin. That was a wicked blow on my chin. Lucky it didn't break my jaw."

Harry sat down on the other bed. "Well," he demanded, "what does it make clear to you?"

"We know that the captain of this ship is conspiring with some persons, the identity of one of whom I know; the others are unknown at present. Donovan, by his action, has revealed that he is not one of them. He fled because he feared we would turn him over to the captain, who would put him in the brig on suspicion. Donovan came on board with several confederates for a criminal purpose. I suspect it is the theft of somebody's jewels. With his friends he had arranged some method of concealing them after they were stolen and getting them ashore. I doubt if he had wholesale theft in mind. He wanted you to put him in right socially so that he could inspect at close hand the gems being worn by these women and decide which he could dispose of for the most money and in the easiest manner."

"Go on."

"It is evident that he is well known in the underworld, even though I never crossed his path before, because he was recognized and his purpose guessed by other criminals on board who set out to dispose of a dangerous rival. As you were his roommate, they jumped to the conclusion that you were working with him, which accounts for the attack on you which resulted so badly for the Hopkins person. It explains the two attempts on Donovan's life.

"Donovan knew me, if I didn't know him, and went about to get me

out of the way until he had done what he wanted to. Finding you suspicious of him, he sent you below to join me.

"When he came in here and found us both, free and aware of who was responsible for our imprisonment, he jumped to the conclusion that we knew much more than we do and that the jig was up. So he joined his friends in the steerage. If the captain was on the level we could go to him and have the whole ship's company turned out to capture Donovan and his pals, but that's just what I don't want to do."

"Why?"

"Because the captain is mixed up in a plot much bigger than Donovan's. It is the captain's crowd which has been trying to eliminate Donovan. At any minute he can trump up some charge against me, confine me to my cabin with a steward on guard, and proceed with the big business."

"Just what do you think is the 'big business'?"

"I believe there is a plot to rob every woman on this ship of her jewels," Adam said impressively. "And we're heading straight for South America to give the criminals a chance to make their getaway with the biggest haul on record."

"Doesn't look as though we could do anything about that."

The detective shrugged his shoulders. "I'll do all I can," he said simply.

"I wish to the Lord I was back in New York," Harry said. "I've had nothing but grief on this cruise so far."

"You're in so deep that your only chance is to stick to me to the finish," Adam replied. "Don't think your assistance will be overlooked if we manage to defeat the most elaborate job ever conceived."

"Oh, I'll stick," Harry said ruefully. "I'm hungry."

Appleton looked surprised. "I haven't touched food or drink for twenty-four hours," he declared, "and I had forgotten it. I'm starving. Ring for sandwiches and a bottle of champagne. After all, these are your quarters as well as Donovan's."

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## CHAPTER XV

### Thanks from the Captain

**W**HEN the steward came Parsons ordered a bottle of champagne, caviar, cold meats and hot rolls, all of which were delivered with astounding rapidity. A table was spread in the salon and they proceeded to enjoy themselves in Donovan's abandoned quarters.

"A systematic search would rout him out," Harry observed.

"I don't know. There are six or eight hundred cabins in the steerage and tourist quarters, innumerable passages and hideaways, and that doesn't include the crew's quarters forward, where there is room for six or seven hundred seamen and stewards. Down below are the holds, vast black reaches extending from stem to stern, with the exception of the engine room space. The ship has no cargo, of course, and the cargo space is empty, save for ballast.

"It would take at least twenty-four hours and a big crew of men to search the ship thoroughly, and we know that some of the crew are mixed up with Donovan. And there is no chance that the captain will order such a search. He has other things on his mind."

"Some of the officers must be honest."

"Of course they are. The captain has been suborned, but it is unlikely that a dozen members of the crew are in the plot. However, the crew will obey any



order the captain issues, and if he thinks we are likely to be troublesome we'll be trussed up in short order and placed in the brig."

Harry sipped his wine and ate in silence for a few minutes, and then he had an inspiration.

"We're pretty certain that Captain Lafarge and Donovan are not working together," he said, "and we don't want the captain to learn that we suspect him. Why not go to him and make charges against Donovan for locking us up in the steerage. Tell him we are sure he is a jewel thief; ask him to help us apprehend him."

"Right!" Adam exclaimed. "Donovan's disappearance is certain to be discovered. We'll report that we attempted to arrest him, that he put up a battle and went down to the steerage deck by a rope ladder. The captain will suppose us totally in the dark regarding the main plot, which comes close to being the truth at that. Better put on evening clothes, because we may find him in the ballroom or the smoking room instead of in his quarters."

Parsons changed quickly, and in ten minutes they set out to obtain an interview with the captain. The purser was no longer in his quarters, but they found him in the after smoking room with two or three men passengers. Appleton asked for a word in private and told him he had important information for the ear of the captain.

"I'll phone up and ask if he will see you. He's sticking close to the bridge tonight because the glass is falling and we are in unfamiliar waters," said Mangin.

He phoned from the smoking room bar and was told to call a steward to escort the men to Captain Lafarge's cabin.

The skipper received them cordially

and immediately demanded of Appleton why he had disappeared for twenty-four hours.

"I reported what had happened to me to the purser, sir," Adam replied. "I am now ready to tell you everything and to make a serious charge against one of your passengers."

"Proceed," said the captain gravely. "Please be prepared to substantiate any charge you make."

Appleton cleared his throat.

"You have a passenger listed as Martin Donovan," he began. "It is my opinion that his purpose on board is robbery. He awakened my suspicion shortly after we sailed. Mr. Parsons, an old acquaintance of mine and a man whom I trust, confided to me that he did not know this man with whom he was sharing quarters. It appears that he was introduced to him by a New York broker for whom he had formerly worked, and offered free transportation and a thousand dollars to introduce him to wealthy friends among his acquaintances on board. Mr. Parsons is socially well connected."

"That sounds like a card sharp," commented the captain.

"Donovan learned of my association with Parsons," Adam went on. "He knew that I represented companies which have insured a large percentage of the jewels brought on this ship. Last evening I was attacked from behind, knocked down, and woke up in a cabin in the steerage."

"That I have heard. You have no evidence that Donovan was responsible."

"Yes. I didn't tell Mr. Mangin everything because I do not make charges without foundation. Mr. Parsons became suspicious of Donovan and demanded a show down. Donovan told him that he was Chief Owen of

the United States Secret Service on board watching jewel thieves."

"THE chief of the United States Secret Service?" exclaimed the captain excitedly. He pushed his long hair back from his forehead with an involuntary gesture.

"A lie," said Appleton quickly. "I know Chief Owen very well. However, he deceived Parsons, who took a glass of wine with him which was drugged. When he recovered from the effects of it, he was locked in the same cabin with me."

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Captain Lafarge. "Now you have evidence!"

"I'll say we have. Wait until you hear it all. Donovan's gang, not knowing much about ships, supposed we were safely confined. We broke through the board partition into the next stateroom and escaped."

"At what hour, monsieur?" asked the captain sharply.

"About ten o'clock." Adam placed their escape half an hour late.

"And you saw no one, no guards, nobody on the steerage decks?"

"Not a soul."

"But the exits to the upper decks were locked."

"We picked one of the locks with a penknife. After reporting my escape to the purser, I went with Mr. Parsons to apprehend Donovan. He put up a battle and escaped by means of a rope ladder from his private deck to the steerage deck openings below. A confession of guilt, sir."

The captain nodded. "Without doubt. Exactly what do you suppose his motive in coming on board may be? Do you know any particular jewels which he plans to purloin?"

"There are the Potter emeralds, which are worth a million, and dozen

other magnificent necklaces, brooches and bracelets. He may be after any or all of them."

"How can he expect to escape with them?" the captain demanded. "Upon report of a theft, a search of the ship will be made. While this is a mighty vessel, I assure you that every inch of it is charted; nothing can be concealed from us, nor can the thieves leave the vessel without passing before our officers."

"That I do not know," replied Appleton. "Have any losses been reported?"

"Nothing. I wish to thank you, gentlemen, for unmasking this criminal before he has had a chance to operate. I shall have the lights turned on upon all the lower decks and send the master-at-arms with a strong party below to capture this Monsieur Donovan and anybody who may be with him. You feel confident he has confederates?"

"He must have. Parsons was dragged into the steerage by two men in the uniforms of sailors."

"They could easily duplicate our uniforms," declared the captain. "There is a feature of this affair which is perplexing. Monsieur Donovan was attacked, injured about the head and mysteriously conveyed to the cabin of the ship's doctor on 'D' deck. How do you account for that?"

"I can't, unless there are other thieves on board. You know the identity of two of them. New York officers are waiting for them in Jamaica."

"Ah, but they are being watched. Circumstances have forced us to postpone our call at Kingston, but we shall keep them safe for the police. I thank you two gentlemen for your information. Please keep in touch with me. Very shortly I hope to lay hands upon

this Monsieur Donovan. Good night, gentlemen."

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Murder in Cabin 312

"SMOOTH customer," commented Appleton as they descended to the promenade deck. "Almost makes me believe he's on the up and up, but the combination of his conference in the steerage and the change in our courses makes that impossible."

"I can't understand how a man who has risen to become the commander of one of the most magnificent liners in the world could be fool enough to go crooked," Harry replied.

The detective laughed. "Have you any notion what this job pays him?"

"No, but it's a wonderful position."

"I doubt if he earns five hundred dollars a month," said Appleton. "And remember this; the captain of a liner is responsible for anything which happens to her. If she touches on a shoal, if she grounds on a mud bank in a harbor, if she ticks the end of a dock going in or out, if she sustains the slightest damage in a collision, the skipper is tossed on the beach, even if the ship is in charge of a pilot at the time."

"I didn't know that. Isn't it grossly unfair?"

"Certainly. However, the steamship companies figure that a skipper who has been in trouble loses his nerve. A steamer captain was telling me once that in the very rare cases when a captain is exonerated from an accident and left in charge of his vessel his judgment is so affected that he is certain to get into more serious trouble. So out he goes. Lafarge knows that his tenure of office is very uncertain."

"But I never heard of a dishonest steamship captain."

"You ought to be in the insurance business," replied the detective. "Many a captain has run his ship on a rock or allowed her to founder at sea so that his owners could collect the insurance and give him part of the ill-gotten gains. Assuming that a gigantic jewel robbery is on the cards, those who have planned it could afford to give this fellow a hundred thousand dollars, maybe more. A half a million would only be five per cent of ten million dollars' worth of gems. A hundred thousand is two and a half million francs. That would look pretty good to a poor sailor, eh?"

"But he couldn't go back to France. He would be a fugitive."

Appleton shrugged. "Rio and Buenos Ayres are not so hard to take for a rich man. And Morocco, while an independent country, contains a large French colony and is under a French protectorate, but has no extradition treaty with France. He could live there under an assumed name. The sea is getting rough and the wind is rising. Looks as we were going to have a storm, as the purser predicted."

"But the excuse for not going into the Caribbean was a storm."

"Yes; but Lafarge can claim he tried to avoid it."

They descended to Donovan's suite, but had hardly been there a couple of minutes when the purser entered with two stewards.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Monsieur Magnin. "I've just received orders to plant two armed men here to nab Donovan if he ventures to return. I'll have your luggage shifted to Mr. Appleton's quarters as you suggested, Mr. Parsons. It may interest you to know that padlocks are being placed upon all entrances to the lower decks, and in the morning, the master at arms is

going down there with a large party who will round up this rascal no matter where he is hiding."

"Don't forget," Harry remarked, "that Donovan went down to the steerage decks by means of a rope ladder from our rail outside."

"I am aware of that. I suggest that you gentlemen leave here now."

"Want to turn in?" asked Appleton.

"I'm not sleepy. I think I'll go up to the smoke room. It's only midnight."

"All right. I'm locking my door. Knock when you come down. I'm a light sleeper."

The smoke room was well filled. A dozen bridge games were functioning. Four or five sedate groups were clustered in cozy corners chatting in low tones. And two or three sets of very common sort of folks were conversing loudly and laughing raucously. Parsons saw several acquaintances absorbed in bridge. He looked in vain for Francesca, whom he hoped to find with the Farmers. It was going to be necessary for him to express his mind to Francesca regarding the disagreeable scene in Timberly's suite—without breaking off relations.

The Farmers were not in the place. He had no desire to sit alone and drink and, after moving slowly across the great salon he went out on the veranda café, where two or three young couples were located who regarded his advent without interest. A hot strong wind was blowing from the starboard side, impregnated with moisture. The great ship was rolling very languidly. Harry became aware that he was very tired.

This was the fourth night of the voyage, and so far, he had secured little pleasure from it. Tête à tête's on the boat deck, memorable dances in the great ballroom, shore trips with charming company, all his anticipations had

gone awry. He burned with resentment at the rôle he was playing willy nilly on the Napoleon. Suppose there was a great conspiracy. Suppose the crooked captain and his gang made off with all the wealth on board, would it affect his finances in the slightest degree?

It was certain that Donovan would have him murdered out of hand for unmasking him, and he was still at large. The knife man of the first night was prowling about somewhere. Timberly might carry out his threat to have him thrown into the ship's prison; Timberly certainly stood in strong with the captain.

On board were more than a hundred passengers worth robbing; five hundred were in no danger whatever. Why had Parsons been singled out for criminal attention? All he asked was to be let alone. He felt very sorry for himself as he stood on the deck outside the veranda café and looked out into the black, gusty night.

**T**HEN he began to wonder about Francesca. Appleton had accused her of being an adventuress; Donovan had warned him against her. Her own story was that she was a nobody from San Francisco, yet she was apparently on exceedingly familiar terms with Timberly, who had been rated as a billionaire before the stock market disintegrated, and who must still be worth several hundred millions. She was in his employ, probably a trusted employee, which meant that she earned plenty of money. Her only interest in Harry, apparently, was because he was associated with Donovan.

Timberly knew a lot about Donovan and he certainly was well informed regarding what transpired on the trip, considering that he lurked in his quar-

ters and never appeared outside of them.

Then Harry began to think about Adam Appleton. He was in a tough spot. Just about as capable of preventing the great crime he anticipated as Harry was of navigating this mighty leviathan of the sea. The salt moist wind was making him sleepy. Might as well go down and join Adam. Nothing was going to happen, and if something did happen, it was really none of his business.

Not caring to return to the main companion via the deserted deck, he returned to the smokeroom and descended to "C" deck by the after companion. He met no one save a watchman as he walked along the corridor and he reached the cabin without incident. He rapped softly and received no answer. He knocked more loudly. Appleton had boasted he was a light sleeper, but he must be in a deep sleep. What the deuce was Harry going to do? He considered. If Adam hadn't bolted the door in the inside, the watchman could let him in with a master key.

Almost mechanically he turned the knob as he was about to depart, and the door swung open. The room was dark and he switched on the light. At the moment he touched the switch and before the light went on, he sensed that something was wrong.

A man lay on one of the beds, his face to the wall. The hilt of a knife protruded from behind his shoulder blades. Upon the yellow silk coverlet beneath him was an eight-inch circle of blood, and red drops were still falling to widen it.

At the same instant that he realized what had happened he saw that the man was not Adam Appleton. This person was taller and he had black hair. Had he blundered upon a tragedy by

mistaking the stateroom? No. His own suitcases were placed against the wall between the two beds. It was Appleton's room, all right.

Ninety-nine people out of a hundred go through life without ever looking down upon the body of a murdered man, and it is impossible to describe to them Parsons' sensations at that moment. He was frozen to the spot. Cold sweat started out upon his forehead and things began to grow black. He fought off the attack of dizziness and slowly he backed from the room, out into the side passage, and then darted along the corridor.

The watchman was sitting on a stool twenty or thirty yards away in a position from which he could command a view of the main corridor and a cross passage. Harry waved his arms wildly at him as he bore down upon him.

"What is the matter, monsieur?" the watchman demanded in French.

"Murder!" Parsons exclaimed. "A man has been killed in room 312."

"*Mon Dieu!* How do you know, sir?"

"I saw him, imbecile."

"This is an affair for the purser," he declared. "Come with me, sir."

"Get the doctor. He may not be dead."

"The purser will do that, monsieur. Come quickly."

Harry followed him to the purser's cabin, upon which he knocked imperatively. In a moment Monsieur Magnin, in a nightcap, really, and a night shirt, opened the door.

"What now, Monsieur Parsons?" he asked testily.

"Murder! In C 312."

His jaw dropped. "Not Monsieur Appleton?" he exclaimed.

"No, no, I don't know where he is. I don't know who the man is."

"*Entrez*. I will dress. It will take but a moment."

He was muttering to himself as he pulled on uniform trousers, stuffing the night shirt over them, and thrust his arms into his white jacket. "Come," he said.

Harry laughed hysterically and pointed. "Your nightcap!" he exclaimed.

With an oath he pulled it off and tossed it upon his bed and pulled the uniform cap over his uncombed hair.

"A moment. I will call the doctor," he said, and grasped the ship's phone.

"Get the doctor at once and send him to cabin C 312," he commanded.

"Now, monsieur."

**A**S they started down the corridor, the purser demanded details and Harry told him everything he knew.

"Where is Monsieur Appleton?" he demanded.

"I don't know. He certainly was not there."

"But you say he told you he was about to retire."

"Yes; but he must have changed his mind."

They met the ship's physician as they approached the side passage leading to the cabin. Magnin took his arm and the pair entered the room ahead of Harry, who stood in the doorway until the purser pulled him into the room and closed and locked the door.

The doctor rolled the body over upon its back, after extracting the knife carefully to avoid touching possible fingerprints upon the hilt. It was a long, wicked looking blade, like that with which Harry had been attacked the first night out.

He uttered an exclamation as he saw the victim's face.

"Do you know him?" demanded the purser eagerly.

"I think—I'm sure of it. I don't know who he is, but he is one of four men who were put on board by a motor-boat when we were off the Battery in New York Harbor. Although he was not wearing his spectacles, he was the long, thin, stoop-shouldered dark man of the four whom Appleton and I saw come up the accommodation ladder."

"Is he dead?" asked the purser of the doctor.

The physician nodded. "The blade penetrated the heart. A downward stroke to the left. He has not been dead a half hour."

"I remember him," said the purser. "I cannot recall his name, but he has stateroom C 313, which is on the opposite side of the ship. Wait a minute; there were four who came on board." He thrust his hand into his breast pocket and drew forth a passenger list which he consulted.

"Hammond," he said after a few seconds. "Monsieur R. H. Hammond. I cannot abide the sight of corpses. Is there anything you can do, doctor?"

"Nothing," replied the physician.

"Then we shall lock the stateroom and go to my quarters. Come."

The steward on watch was standing outside the door when they opened it and the purser commanded him to accompany them. In a few minutes they were back in his cabin.

"Sit down, gentlemen," he said, and turned to the steward.

"When did you go on watch?" he demanded.

"At ten o'clock, monsieur."

"Did you see anybody go into the side passage leading to the cabin 312 in the last hour?"

"No, monsieur, with the exception of this gentleman."

"Ah, you saw him enter?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"At what time?"

"Just a moment or two before he came out and told me that a murder had been committed."

"Not more than a quarter of an hour ago?"

"No, monsieur."

"*Bien*. Return to your post. Attend to me. You will say nothing of this to any of your comrades. You will not open your mouth. Understood?"

"*Oui*, monsieur."

"Go."

When the watchman had departed Mangin regarded Parsons gravely.

"It is very astonishing how you appear to be mixed up in everything irregular, monsieur," he said.

"It is through no desire of mine."

"You are an assistant of Monsieur Appleton. Explain what has become of him."

"I am an acquaintance of Appleton's, but not an assistant or an associate," Harry said. "You don't suspect me of killing this man, I hope."

"But it is curious that he was murdered in the cabin which I consented to allow you to share with Appleton a few hours ago. Appleton came on this ship with unimpeachable credentials," he said thoughtfully. "There can be no question that he is a detective representing various insurance companies."

"None whatever."

"But he could have had an encounter with this man in his stateroom. Killed him, perhaps in self-defense!"

"In that case he would have been the first to report it."

The purser shook his head. "Then what has become of him?"

"It is possible, sir," Harry said

quickly, "that the murdered man, whom you say is in stateroom 313, which is on the other side of the ship, might have gone into that room by mistake and have been killed by some criminal lying in wait for Appleton."

"That's true. We have evidence that criminals are on board; your former companion, Donovan, for example. But the murdered man does not resemble this detective."

"If the room was dark—"

"That is so. He could have been struck in the back as he entered and his body thrown on the bed. That must be how it happened. It is lamentable. Captain Lafarge must be informed immediately. Monsieur Parsons, I must demand that you say nothing of this catastrophe to anybody on board."

"Appleton must be informed of it."

"Permit me to inform him when he puts in an appearance. I beg you to appreciate our position. Imagine the dismay of our passengers should word get out that one among them has been murdered. Already one has been lost at sea."

"You can't conceal a murder," Harry declared. "You've got to radio New York, to inform Hammond's relatives—"

"That will be done at once, but there is no reason why it should be known on board."

"I don't consider my own life very safe, Mr. Magnin. There is the question of where I shall sleep tonight. Whoever killed Appleton may be looking for me. I don't want to go into Donovan's suite."

"I appreciate that. There are some vacant rooms on 'C' deck aft. I'll put you in one of them for the night."

"I doubt very much if I shall sleep,"

Harry muttered.

**CONTINUE THIS STORY NEXT WEEK**

# ILLUSTRATED CRIMES

By STOOKIE ALLEN

## THE CROOKED KNIFE!

ONE NIGHT A FEW YEARS AGO IN MARSEILLES, A WATCHMAN ON THE DOCKS STEPPED IN THE DOORWAY OF A DESERTED BUILDING FOR SHELTER FROM THE WIND. LYING ON THE FLOOR WAS A DEAD MAN. HE HURRIED TO THE STREET AND SUMMONED A GENDARME, WHO RECOGNIZED THE DEAD MAN AT ONCE AS THE BRITISH VICE-CONSUL AT MARSEILLES, REGINALD LEE.



THE CASE WAS TURNED OVER TO INSPECTOR METTEFEW OF THE SURETE. HE LEARNED THAT LEE HAD BEEN WORKING SECRETLY TO DESTROY AN INTERNATIONAL DOPE RING, IT WAS SUSPECTED HE HAD BEEN KILLED BY SOME OF ITS MEMBERS BECAUSE HE KNEW TOO MUCH. METTEFEW DISCOVERED THE CHEST AND BACK WERE PERFORATED BY SMALL HOLES SUCH AS A RAPIER OR A FOIL WOULD MAKE.



INSPECTOR  
METTEFEW  
OF THE FRENCH  
SURETE.



HE HAD THE WOUNDS EXAMINED CAREFULLY BY A SURGEON WHO DEDUCED THAT THE HOLES HAD BEEN MADE BY A LONG CROOKED STILETTO. HE KNEW IT HAD BEEN CROOKED BECAUSE THE HOLES RAN ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE BODY IN A CROOKED LINE. METTEFEW NEXT EXAMINED THE POLICE FILES.

A REGULAR PICTORIAL FEATURE



HE FOUND THAT A YEAR PREVIOUS THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL MURDERS DONE IN A SIMILAR MANNER. ONE FRANCOIS AUBERT HAD BEEN TRIED FOR THESE MURDERS, BUT HAD BEATEN THE CASES. WITH PHOTOS FROM THE FILE METTEFEW SOON FOUND THAT THIS MAN LIVED NEAR THE DOCKS. ONE DAY WHILE AUBERT WAS OUT HE ENTERED HIS ROOM. AT FIRST HE FOUND NOTHING, BUT HE SAW THAT THE FLOOR WAS NOTHING BUT EARTH.



APPARENTLY IT WAS ALL PACKED HARD, BUT HE POURED WATER ALL OVER THIS FLOOR. AT ONE SPOT BUBBLES CAME UP. DIGGING THERE HE FOUND PAPERS AND MONEY THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THE POCKETS OF LEE. AUBERT WAS FOLLOWED THAT DAY UNTIL HE WENT TO THE HOUSE OF A WOMAN. METTEFEW THEN BROKE IN AND ARRESTED THEM BOTH.

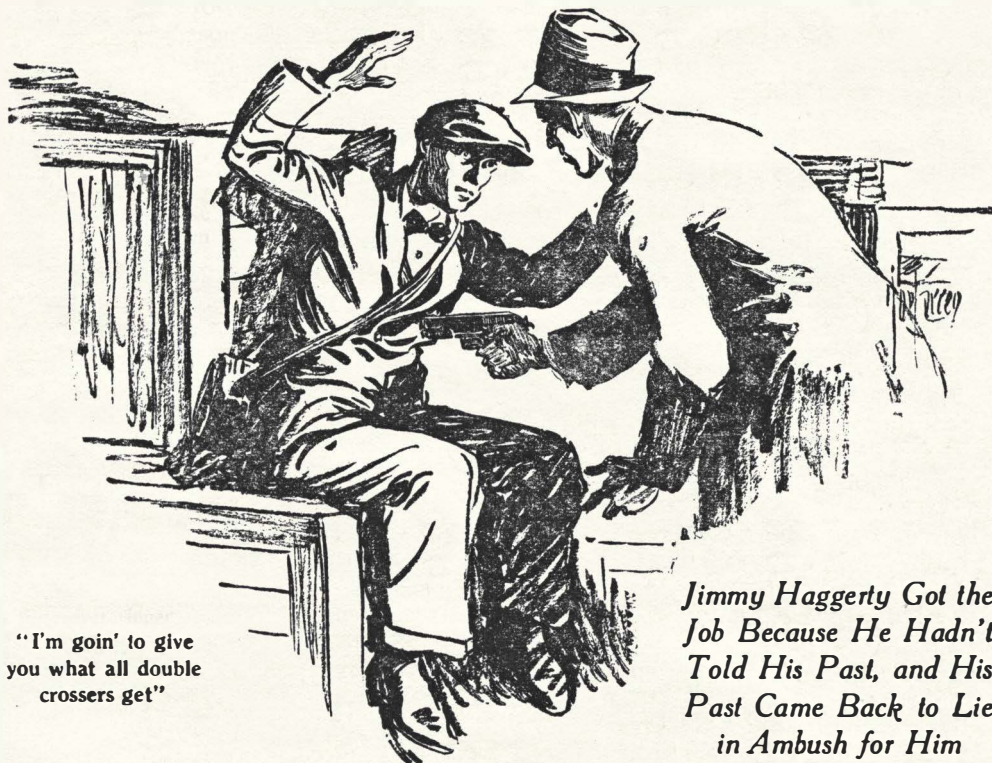
AFTER MUCH GRILLING THEY CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE PAID BY JIBU KITADE, HEAD OF A DOPE RING, TO KILL LEE. WALKING ON THE DESERTED STREET LEE HAD BEEN STOPPED BY THE WOMAN LURE. SHE HAD THRUST A SMALL BOX IN HIS FACE AND SAID, "LOOK, MONSIEUR." AS HE BENT OVER TO LOOK AT IT THE LID FLEW OPEN AND A JET OF POISON GAS SHOT IN HIS FACE. HE FELL AT ONCE. AUBERT STEPPED FROM A DOORWAY AND CARRIED HIM INSIDE AND FINISHED HIM WITH THE KNIFE. HE LATER BOASTED THAT HE HAD KILLED TEN MEN WITH THE SAME KNIFE. HE WAS EXECUTED. KITADE GOT A LIFE SENTENCE. THE GIRL GOT 10 YEARS.



**Next Week: THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE!**

# Bungle Trap

By Stanley Day



"I'm goin' to give you what all double crossers get"

*Jimmy Haggerty Got the Job Because He Hadn't Told His Past, and His Past Came Back to Lie in Ambush for Him*

**E**VEN before he was hired, Jimmy Haggerty knew this was no job for an ex-convict trying to go straight. The risks were too great. But with his belt notched tight against a stomach that cried savagely for a square meal, discretion never stood a chance. He took the job.

That was mistake number one. Mistake number two was in neglecting to mention his record. He didn't come clean. Here again hunger and memory of sleepless nights on park benches influenced him. He had lost out on other jobs by the too-frank exposition of a shady past.

Old Matt Peterson, the building

superintendent, looked like a good egg. That alone was enough to make Jimmy feel guilty. Because, despite his former mode of life, he had always shot square with people he liked.

Anyway, he took the job and said nothing about his dossier down at the Central Office, nor the four year bit he had completed up the river.

"To be perfectly frank with you," Peterson told him, "the job is dangerous. I've hired three men for it in the past six months. One of them was found dead—murdered. Another got cold feet and quit. And the third," the old man paused significantly, "the third is in jail because he couldn't say

no when a thousand dollars was waved under his nose."

That was when Jimmy should have cracked about an ex-con. But he let the moment slip.

"I'm game," he mumbled. "Jobs are scarce. A man has to eat."

Peterson nodded.

"Yes," he said. "A man has to eat." And then, slowly: "Can you handle a gun?"

"I can shoot," said Jimmy, shrugging. "I was in the army."

But it wasn't the army that had taught Jimmy Haggerty dexterity with a rod.

"I don't mean," elaborated Peterson, "that I want you to be a hero. The gun is for your own protection, that's all. I'd rather see the building emptied than have a night watchman murdered."

"Sure," said Jimmy. "I know what you mean."

"All right. Come tomorrow night and go to work."

The following night Jimmy did. It was the first honest work he had tackled in twenty-eight years. That is to say, in his life. But that jolt in Sing Sing had taught him that the words "sap" and "crook" were practically synonymous. From now on he was through with rackets.

"Now, you big heel," he told himself the day they sprung him, "get a job or starve."

And he did. Starve, that is. For nearly three months. But his determination to stay on the level had not abated. Now he was a night watchman in a loft building, his hand against the mobs, theirs against him. That was irony, Jimmy thought, though he called it something else.

He came to work at six o'clock in the evening and stayed on the job until

six the next morning. Long hours, but admirably suited to Jimmy's needs. His purpose now was to save up a small stake and get out of New York. As far out as possible.

The building was ten stories high, occupied mainly by silk dealers. To the loft robbing mobs the stocks in those lofts were rich plums. Just how rich, nobody knew better than Jimmy Haggerty. Before he went to Sing Sing he had admitted to being one of the smartest loft burglars in the business.

As time passed and he began to feel the effects of regular meals and regular sleep Jimmy wondered why it had taken him the best part of twenty-eight years to find out there was no percentage in running crooked.

For the first time in his life he was contented. No more restless nights wondering if footsteps coming up the stairs belonged to coppers; no more dodging here and there from the menace of the law.

That was about the way Jimmy looked at life the day Duke Halsey came to see him in his tiny back bedroom up on Seventy-sixth Street.

**I**N the old days the Duke and Jimmy had taken many a well stocked loft to split profits of fifteen or more thousand dollars on an evening's work. Now, however, the Duke was a Big Shot, a higher up.

"I got the smartest mob in New York," he told Jimmy complacently. "I'm in the gravy to stay. My outfit wouldn't consider a job worth under fifty G's."

"Yeah," said Jimmy politely. "Glad to hear it, Duke."

He wished the man would go away and leave him to himself. But knowing Duke Halsey as he did he sensed that

behind the lightly boastful talk was a serious purpose.

"They tell me you're a workin' stiff," the Duke said at last, his tone faintly sneering.

"Yeah," said Jimmy. "Night watchman."

"I know all about it, Jimmy. In fact, I know the spot. I've been inside of there several times."

"I hear some of those joints got taken for plenty."

"And they'll get taken for plenty more, Jimmy."

"You think so?"

"I know it."

"Maybe you're right, at that."

"Get wise, Jimmy. Get wise. Don't play simple with your friends. You know what I'm here for."

"I got an idea," Jimmy admitted slowly.

"I'm takin' one of them lofts next week," said the Duke flatly. "I got at the office today that there's a shipment of swell stuff comin' through from the coast. As soon as it's planted I'm steppin' in there to glom the works."

"So?" said Jimmy noncommittally.

"There's five grand in it for you, Jimmy."

"Not a dime, Duke. I'm through with the racket. For good."

"How can you be through?" said Halsey explosively. "Suppose somebody makes a break down there? What will the coppers think when they find out who the night watchman is?"

"That it was an inside job," said Jimmy soberly.

"Sure they will. And they'll hang it on you, too. You haven't got a chance, Kid. You might as well get yourself in on a split and lam. Otherwise—"

"I've thought of all that. And I

ain't workin', Duke. That's final. And if you or anybody else makes a break into that building I'm out to stop you. That's what I'm there for."

"Squealer, huh?" said Halsey disdainfully.

"Don't worry. I'm no stool. But if you get pinched don't say I didn't warn you."

The Duke laughed shortly.

"I never thought you were an um-chay," he said. "You talk like a mug, Jimmy. You know what always happens to these stubborn guys."

"I know all about it. But that don't change my mind even a little bit. I'm goin' to earn my dough down there."

"You think you are," said the Duke rising. "If you get wise, let me know, Jimmy. If you don't—"

"Okay."

This was exactly what Jimmy Haggerty had feared from the moment of being hired. Sooner or later one of the mobs would try to take the place. And if they got away with it, with or without his connivance, the Headquarters men assigned to the job would come to but one conclusion.

In their eyes it would be an inside job and Jimmy Haggerty the inside man. After that—well, the least he could expect would be the loss of his job, a spell in the Tombs awaiting trial for burglary and dismissal of his case for lack of evidence.

That would be the least. The most—if the breaks went against him and the cops managed to cook up a case—would be a conviction and ten years in Sing Sing.

As he thought it over he could see no way out without quitting his job. Back to the pavements and the park benches. The breadlines for Jimmy.

He could, of course, go to Matt Peterson and spill the works; all about

his past and about the Halsey mob's forthcoming attempt. But Jimmy had been a crook too long to turn squealer. He had to solve the difficulty unaided.

And then, after several days of racking his brains, he hit upon a possible solution. The fact that this solution involved the capture of at least part of the Halsey mob didn't deter him. He had warned Halsey what to expect. If after that the gangster chose to go ahead with his plans he could take what was coming.

Jimmy's scheme for the protection of the lofts was essentially simple once he had hit on the idea. Having been a loft burglar himself he knew the habits of the breed. He knew that, once having gained access to the building, the mob would proceed to the selected loft and transfer the loot to a freight elevator. The freight elevator would be run down to the ground floor and the haul shifted to motor trucks waiting in the lane.

It, therefore, occurred to Jimmy that if he could rig the freight elevator, of which there was only one in the building, to throw the power switch between the first and second floors on the way down he could block the movement of the silk and at the same time trap whoever happened to be aboard the machine at the time.

He would trap them between floors and they would be unable to emerge until the power switch in the shaft head had been replaced.

In the work shops of Sing Sing Jimmy had discovered in himself an aptitude for the mechanical that had been developed to a high point of efficiency before his term expired.

That knowledge now came in handy. After several nights' experimentation he developed a device that operated satisfactorily. And when, finally, it

worked beyond a possibility of failure, Jimmy was exultant.

Several times he ran the car down to the first floor and each time the switch was thrown and the car stopped. Without electric power the machinery simply could not operate. To set it right, Jimmy had to mount to the shaft head and replace the switch.

Now he had but to arrange the device so that instead of stopping the elevator opposite the first floor it would operate when the car was midway between two stories, thus forming a trap from which there could be no escape.

EVERY night for a week, upon coming to work, Jimmy set the trap. In the morning, before leaving for home, he detached the device so that the elevator could be operated normally throughout the day.

But the opportunity to test the worth of the idea did not come. Night after night he waited, half fearful, a trifle eagerly. And in the end he concluded, Duke Halsey, unable to make an inside contact, had abandoned the project. He was wrong.

Almost a month after the gangster's visit, while Jimmy was making his midnight rounds, Halsey struck. Passing the staircase on the seventh floor Jimmy heard a slight sound behind him, but before he could turn an unyielding substance was pressing against his lower ribs.

"Stick 'em up," someone commanded.

There was no need to wonder what had happened. Jimmy was as familiar with the routine in these matters as he was with the palm of his right hand. Someone had been planted in the building during business hours and had remained in hiding until this moment. Now the premises would be opened

from the inside to permit the entry of those waiting outside.

The watchman's arms went up and he held them there stiffly. Practiced hands felt over his body and lifted his gun.

"Face the wall," ordered the unknown.

Jimmy did that, too. He knew exactly how he rated. One suspicious move and he was a dead man. He knew that without being told. By the sounds he could tell there were two men behind him, but as yet he had seen neither.

"Stay here while I beat it down and open up," came a new voice.

The first voice objected.

"We better both go down. You can never tell—"

"Okay. Move along, you. Over to the elevator and take it easy."

Increased pressure from the gun muzzle guided Jimmy along the corridor to the passenger elevator in which he had mounted to the floor. Turning into the cage he saw both men and his heart turned over.

One of them was unknown to him. But the other, the man holding the gun, was Dutch Benny Edelman, one of the coldest blooded killers on the lower East Side. Killings were Dutch Benny's specialty. And he never went on a job unless someone had been marked for death.

As the elevator shot downwards, Jimmy Haggerty shivered. From the elevator he was marched along the ground floor to the rear of the building. He stood facing a wall again while the second gunman unbolted a pair of heavy doors. A moment later, following a conference, two more of the gang came in from the lane.

"The Kid himself," said a familiar voice derisively.

Haggerty's head turned involuntarily. Behind him stood Duke Halsey, grinning with faint amusement.

"I'm here, Jimmy," he said lightly. "Me and a few of my friends."

He turned questioningly to the man who had opened the doors.

"Everything okay?"

"A pipe," the man said confidently. "The joint's empty. Except," jerking a thumb towards the watchman, "for him."

"He don't count," said Halsey dryly.

Jimmy's heart contracted again. The words, "he don't count" were tantamount to his death warrant. When Duke Halsey departed he'd leave behind him a dead witness.

Dutch Benny's hand came up until his gun was level with Haggerty's neck.

"Will I—"

Halsey lunged, striking the gun aside.

"Use your nut," he said. "Suppose the coppers come in before we're through and find a stiff here? Do you want to let us all in for a murder rap? Give him the works just before we lam. But till then—well, lay off, get me?"

"You're the doctor," the gunman shrugged.

"Get moving, you guys," Halsey directed curtly.

One of the four disappeared down a flight of stairs to the basement; and a moment later could be heard ascending in the cumbersome freight elevator.

THE freight elevator shaft gave directly on to the warehouses of each floor. The car was stopped at the ninth and Dutch Benny herded the watchman out and into a corner of the room. Promptly Jimmy seated himself on an empty crate and allowed his tiring arms to drop.

"Keep 'em up," snapped the gangster.

"Act your age," said Jimmy contemptuously. "Do you think I'll start anything as long as you've got that rod in your mitt?"

Dutch Benny growled something unintelligible and swivelled the gun until its muzzle was trained directly on the watchman's stomach.

Indifferently Jimmy watched the others of the gang begin the work of clearing the warehouse shelves. Bolt after bolt of high priced fabrics was piled along the floor. Only the highest quality goods were taken; the rest, the cheaper goods, were thrown ruthlessly out of the way.

Shortly began the labor of removing the chosen silks to the freight elevator.

"Two loads will clean everything up," Haggerty heard Duke Halsey declare. "We should be out of here in half an hour."

He glanced significantly at the watchman and Jimmy shivered anew. Dutch Benny's eyes followed Halsey's and he grinned.

"Yeah," he agreed. "Two trips should take it all. And then—"

"Don't pull anything till I say the word," the Duke interrupted coldly.

A few minutes after that Halsey and his two helpers stepped aboard the big elevator and the metal doors clashed shut across the mouth of the shaft. The faint hum of whirring mechanism followed as the car started its trip downwards.

"Another ten minutes," said Dutch Benny tauntingly. "Another ten minutes and I'm goin' to give you what all the double crossers get."

Haggerty didn't bother answering. He lolled backwards on the crate. His ears were straining for sounds that would tell him the trap was sprung.

Would Halsey's voice carry this far, he wondered? Probably not. The distance was too great and the doors across the shaft opening too heavy.

Minutes passed like hours. To Haggerty the silence was electric. He lay back staring at the ceiling, waiting for he knew not what. His line of action would have to depend entirely on Dutch Benny's. If, when he discovered something had slipped, the killer decided to do a peaceful run out, all well and good.

But if, on the other hand, Dutch Benny deemed it wise to kill before he lammed, something drastic would have to be done. Haggerty had evolved no plan of action. What measures he would take to defend himself if defense proved necessary, he did not know. On the whole, though, he was of the opinion that Dutch Benny would be willing enough to depart peacefully and with great haste.

The wait was nerve racking. Time and time again Haggerty stifled overwhelming impulses to fling himself on the gangster and brave the consequences. Beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead and his finger nails bit deep into his palms.

By now, the watchman figured, Duke Halsey would have realized that he was in a jam; that he was trapped like a rat and would remain so until police arrived to put the bracelets on him; that his career as a big shot loft burglar was at an end.

"It won't be long now," said Dutch Benny. His voice, coldly mocking, cut through Haggerty's feverish speculations, dispelling them.

And then, as Haggerty was about to reply, he heard the familiar hum of the elevator machinery and his heart leaped to his throat. Hardly daring to credit his ears, he listened. But it was the

freight elevator, rightly enough. The trap had failed.

**T**HE utter unexpectedness of the thing knocked the watchman completely off balance. The room whirled. Then, pulling himself together, he forced his mind clear of chaos.

In the meantime the elevator had risen to the ninth floor. Haggerty heard the metal doors slide open and the deep rumble of metal truck wheels against the cement floor. Then came some low-toned instructions from Halsey and work of transferring the balance of the loot went on.

Jimmy's brain, crystal clear now, encompassed the situation and he saw there was no hope. His ace in the hole had proved non-existent. Shortly now, Duke Halsey would nod and Dutch Benny would raise his gun. The gun would speak once, perhaps twice, and Jimmy Haggerty would become a quivering corpse lying on top of a crate.

Well, if this was the end, he could take it. There would be no whimpering. His eyes, fixed blankly on the ceiling, became aware of a knuckle of pipe protruding through the white surface of the plaster.

Halsey had crossed the room and was holding a low-toned conversation with Dutch Benny Edelman. Their voices came clearly enough, but the words didn't register. Haggerty's thoughts were in another quarter.

But then, despite himself, the watchman heard Halsey's voice swell angrily.

"Not yet, I tell you. Not till we're ready to lam."

Jimmy raised himself on an elbow and stared at the speaker. He knew what that meant. Dutch Benny, the killer, was anxious to get to work. The blood lust was upon him.

"We'll be back again," continued Halsey. "You keep your shirt on."

Halsey went away after that and as Haggerty lay back he heard the elevator doors clash and the drone of machinery. His eyes fixed on the ceiling again. That knuckle of pipe fascinated them. It was part of the sprinkler system, he realized vaguely. Protection against fire. Too bad it wasn't protection against gunmen as well.

And then, out of thin air, came the germ of an idea. Wildly impossible, it was, Haggerty concluded at once. Yet—

He sat up abruptly and found Dutch Benny's gaze fixed on him with malevolent eagerness. He forced himself to relax again and as his head dropped back he drew up his legs until the heels of his heavy work shoes rested on the edge of the crate.

His mind went over the scheme carefully, elaborating on the details. Of course, it couldn't work. There wasn't a chance in a thousand of that. The result would be the same as if he did nothing at all. He would find himself riddled with bullets, dying, while Halsey and his mob faded from the scene. But it was better to go out scrapping.

By lifting his head just a little and peering between his bent knees he could just see the top of Dutch Benny's head. Then the sudden hum of the elevator dynamo told him Halsey was on the way up; and it was time to get busy.

He squinted carefully at the top of Dutch Benny's head. This was going to be like shooting in the dark. Of a sudden his legs straightened and his heavy heels sizzled forward.

Instantly Haggerty knew his feet had found their target. The sound of crunching bone told him that. As the watchman sprang erect he saw Dutch Benny catapult backwards.



Haggerty threw himself forward, fists clenched in readiness to finish what he had begun with his heels. But there was no need. Dutch Benny had taken the count.

The hum of the elevator ceased abruptly, reminding Haggerty the battle had only begun. In about four seconds flat Halsey and two more gunmen would be exceedingly active factors. As soon as those doors opened—

His eyes darted here and there wildly, seeking the gun Dutch Benny had dropped. Before he spotted it the elevator doors had already begun their noisy opening. He leaped and with a sweeping motion of his right hand retrieved the gun from the floor.

A single bullet spat viciously in uncomfortable proximity to his ear. As he dropped to his knees behind a pile of empty crates two more slugs hummed past like angry wasps.

Haggerty's eyes sought the ceiling—the exposed knuckle of pipe. It was thirty feet distant and a small enough target under the best of circumstances. Since before he went to Sing Sing Jimmy hadn't fired a gun. But if he was as good now as he was then this would be easy. In five years, though, lots of things can happen to a marksman.

Crouching low behind the crates he elevated the gun, bending his neck to squint carefully along the barrel. He fired two shots in quick succession. The knuckle of the sprinkler pipe twisted strangely.

Instantly lead hailed through the crate, scattering splinters, but Haggerty was barely aware of it. His eyes clung to the pipe. He almost choked with relief when he heard the sudden hissing noise. Water was jetting from the bullet-riddled knuckle.

And then, in a few seconds, the en-

tire ceiling was showering icy, needle-like streams down into the warehouse, drenching everything on the premises.

With the bursting of the sprinklers fire alarms would ring automatically. Within a few minutes, now, fire apparatus would surround the building and firemen would batter their way through the doors.

If he could stand Halsey off till that time, Jimmy knew he would be saved. Then, abruptly, he realized the place was strangely silent. But for the steady hiss of the sprinklers there was no sound.

Haggerty ventured his head around the edge of the crate to find the warehouse empty. Halsey, evidently realizing the significance of the open sprinklers, had retreated, making the best of a bad job.

THE next half hour was spent explaining to a squad of suspicious firemen just how the sprinklers had burst. Jimmy's explanation was at wide variance with truth. The firemen blustered and insisted upon investigating.

Luckily for Jimmy's intentions their investigations didn't go too deep. Not deep enough to uncover the fact that there were bullet holes through a part of the sprinkler pipe. They returned, finally, to their machines and departed noisily.

Immediately thereafter Jimmy Haggerty sat down to think things over. At the end of a troublesome fifteen minutes, grim lipped, he went into the superintendent's office and telephoned Matt Peterson, impressing upon him with a great deal of difficulty that his presence in the building was necessary at once.

When he hung up the receiver, Jimmy was through. Through with his

job, through with going straight. He had tried hard only to find that circumstances were against him all the way. Fate was forcing the issue.

If he stuck around and told the truth he'd be laughed at, the police would regard his whole story simply as elaborate fiction designed to cover up his activity as inside man for some loft mob. So, thieves' wisdom in the ascendency, he was taking it on the lam, heading back to the racket.

By leaving at once there would be ample time to elude the police. As soon as Peterson arrived and gave the alarm detectives all over town would be on the lookout. But by that time he'd be in a hide-out, he knew of, over in Jersey. There he could lie safely until this blew over and he had made some fresh contacts.

As he moved towards the rear of the building to make his getaway via the lane, Haggerty was a crook again and all the instincts of his kind were aroused in him. He walked furtively, alert for the slightest sound of danger. Nevertheless, he realized, there was something lacking.

Something was wrong; there was a feeling of awkwardness. He strove desperately to analyze the feeling. And in a flash the truth came to him. There was no rod in his pocket.

The realization brought with it an unpleasant chill. He was a crook again on the lam and he had no rod. Haggerty halted and made a sudden decision. Time was short. But a guy without a gun—

He swung in his tracks and started swiftly towards the elevator. The gun he had taken from Dutch Benny Edelman lay behind a crate on the ninth floor where he had kicked it out of sight of investigating firemen.

A dozen hurried steps took him to

the elevator and he stopped surprisedly. The freight elevator should have been at this floor. Halsey and his crowd had escaped in it from the ninth story to the ground and thence to their truck in the lane.

Yet the wide metal doors were shut tight. Applying an eye to a crack, Jimmy peered through into the shaft and found it dark. If the elevator had been there its lights would show plainly.

Using a hook kept for that especial purpose Haggerty released the mechanism that unbarred the doors. With his two hands he dragged them apart until there was an aperture large enough to admit his head. Head in the shaft, shoulders against the outer surface of the doors, he twisted his neck and peered upwards.

The car was half a story above him, between the first and second floors. Just where he had set the trap, he told himself as he raced for the staircase. He negotiated the first flight in about eight jumps.

A short wrestle with the elevator door on this floor enabled him to get his head through a narrow space and gaze downward. Through the grating that covered it he saw four men seated disconsolately on the floor.

As Jimmy's head jutted into the shaft Duke Halsey looked up at him and commenced to curse expressively.

"SO it worked—after all," said Jimmy tonelessly as he concluded his story. Matt Peterson, sitting at the desk, watched him narrowly.

"But how in hell it happened—" Haggerty flung up his hands.

"Well," said Peterson slowly, "you've got the men, anyway. That's something."

"But the stuff," Jimmy said morose-

ly, "is gone. I can't figure that angle of it at all. The truck should still be in the lane waiting for Halsey and the others. Instead—"

"It's nowhere to be found," finished Peterson briskly. "Well"—he reached for the phone—"let the cops figure it out. That's their business."

Jimmy kept silent while Peterson dialed a number.

"They'll be here on the jump," the old man said, pushing back the phone. And then grinning, "They ought to know the way by now."

Haggerty's jaw tightened.

"There's something," he began hesitantly, "I haven't told you."

"Yes?" Peterson's face grew serious again.

"I—I'm a con. Before I started to work here I did a four year bit in Sing Sing."

Peterson grinned widely.

"You're not telling me a thing, Jimmy. You hadn't been here a week before a couple of cops told me."

Haggerty looked at him in amazement.

"You knew that, yet—"

"You did your work, didn't you?" Peterson said.

Jimmy shrugged.

"I was on the up-and-up alright. But after tonight the cops will ride me."

"Sit tight, Jimmy," Peterson said slowly. "I'll see you through."

The old man's lips pursed reflectively and he drummed absently with his fingers on the desk top.

"Tell me if this is right, Jimmy," he ordered sharply.

The watchman faced him, waiting dumbly.

"They brought you downstairs in the passenger car?"

Jimmy nodded.

"Then," went on Peterson incisive-

ly, "four of them rode you up again to the ninth in the freight elevator. After that they made two trips down without springing the trap."

Again Haggerty assented mutely.

"But," said Peterson, his voice rising excitedly, "the third time down your trap stopped them. Furthermore, when you went outside there was no sign of a truck."

"That's right. But what—"

Peterson laughed aloud and fumbled in a drawer, bringing out a folded paper which he tossed across the desk.

"Have a look at that, Jimmy."

"A lease," Haggerty said puzzledly. "Dated a week ago. For the fourth floor."

"Listen," said Peterson eagerly, "the trap worked, didn't it?"

Once more Jimmy nodded.

"So the reason," Peterson went on with rising inflexion, "they didn't spring it on their first trip down was—"

"Because they didn't get as far as the second floor," interrupted the watchman, light breaking suddenly.

"They cached the stuff on the fourth floor," Peterson said positively. "That accounts for everything. Why the trap didn't work at first and why they didn't have a truck. And that new tenant on the fourth is the only one I wouldn't vouch for."

Jimmy sat down weakly.

"That's certainly a new wrinkle to me. I guess I'm getting old-fashioned."

"Not so old-fashioned you couldn't stop the Halsey gang," said Peterson stoutly.

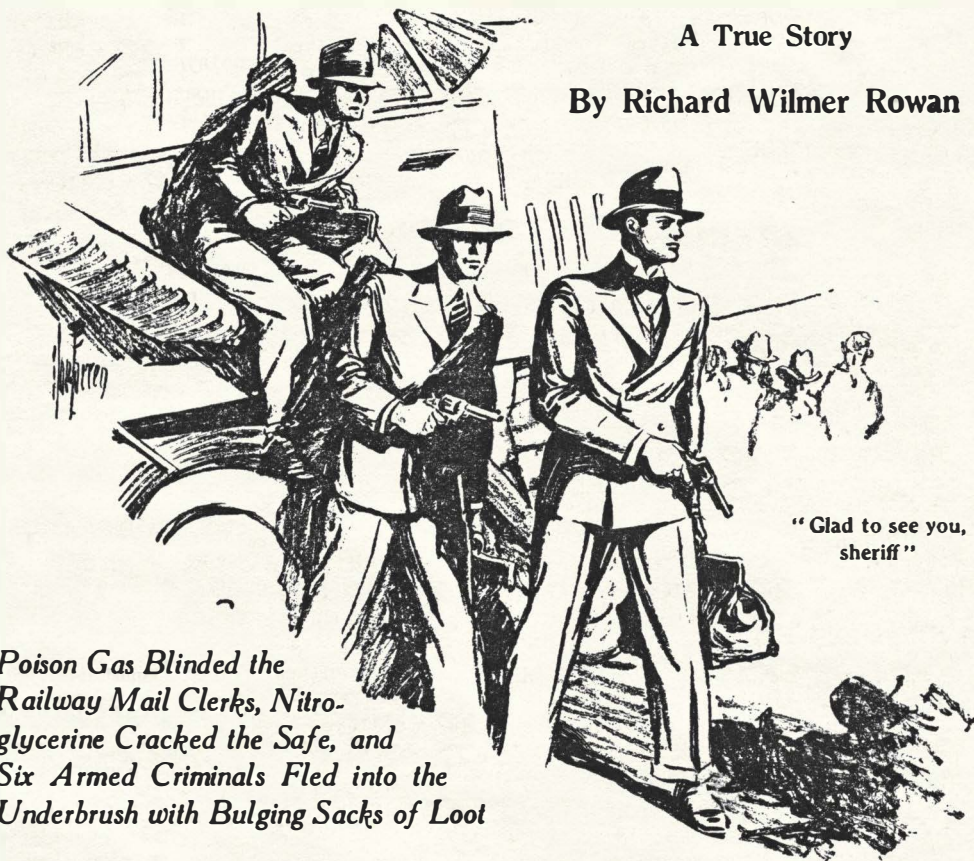
"Set a thief to catch a thief," declared Jimmy, grinning crookedly.

"Ex, Jimmy, ex," admonished the old man sharply. "And keep remembering that. Here come the cops. Let's go."

# The Jazz-Age Jesse James

A True Story

By Richard Wilmer Rowan



*Poison Gas Blinded the Railway Mail Clerks, Nitroglycerine Cracked the Safe, and Six Armed Criminals Fled into the Underbrush with Bulging Sacks of Loot*

**T**HAT crack train of the Illinois Central, No. 41, making its customary run from Chicago to New Orleans, slowed down at Paxton, Illinois, to take on water. None among the train crew or passengers suspected for a moment that it was also taking on a pack of trouble. In the mail car were shipments of gold and negotiable securities valued at more than two hundred thousand dollars. But this treasure was locked in the car's safe, a chilled steel affair of the most up-to-date design.

The mail car also was built of steel, its sides and its doors so stout and un-

yielding, a small field gun would hardly have taken them by force. It happened that the clerks on duty in the car were World War veterans, well armed and skilled in marksmanship. The car conveying the gold bullion and securities was, veritably, a garrisoned fort on wheels.

Yet six young criminals, counting on surprise and a truly brilliant plan of campaign, were waiting for that very mail car at Paxton. They were dressed to look like hoboes, and carried small bundles, wrapped in old, grease-stained newspapers and tied up untidily with odd pieces of twine. They had re-

heard the whole job carefully, and were ready to obey like soldiers the few necessary commands that their leader would issue according to existing circumstances. It was his extraordinarily keen mind and vivid, restless imagination that had perfected all the acute angles and nicely graded curves of the plot.

The six desperadoes crept aboard the tender. If they had by chance been observed their vagabond disguise would have seemed to explain their project. Stealing a ride southward! They clambered aboard between the tender and the mail car, but at once moved forward as the train got under way.

About eighteen miles from the city of Champaign, Illinois, there was a long trestle. The fast express was soon racing toward it. Two of the robber band caught a signal from their leader, and started scrambling over the lumps of coal, moving swiftly to invade the cab of the engine.

The engineer and fireman were not looking back, but ahead—along the right of way streaming before them.

"Buddy—stick 'em up! You, too! Make it snappy!"

A newspaper bundle had been ripped out at the end. Heavy automatics came forth, and were now leveled evenly, offering a second's choice between obedience and suicide.

This, according to the careful plan, was virtually the crisis of the whole affair. And the shrewd young leader had chosen his comrades well. The pair formidably confronting the engine crew had grim, belligerent faces and eyes that narrowed with dangerous hostility. Their threatening attitude was no mere amateurish bravado. A moment's resistance, and they'd start shooting—and shoot to kill!

Railroad enginemen are celebrated for their gameness. But all their training and experience concentrates on the one objective: safety of the train, that string of cars freighted with men, women and children. The two sinister faces, ugly as the muzzles of the two guns, warned the engine crew, and their hands went up. A wise surrender, without argument or struggle!

The express plunged on, now barely five hundred yards from the trestle spanning a broad valley.

One of the criminals gestured briefly with his gun. "Turn round, you!"—to the engineer. "Begin slowing down. You're to stop right in the middle of the trestle, see? Use your brakes and throttle all you need to—but no whistle get me? Snap into it!"

THE engineer turned, with the automatic pointing at his head. He worked the controls and levers—the heavy train lost speed gradually, then came to a jolting, air-braked stop—in the very center of the trestle—just as the robbers desired.

There was, of course, no semaphore at that particular point along the line. Such a sudden halt could mean only an accident averted by inches, or some illicit interference. The train crew spread through the coaches and Pullmans were frankly puzzled. No shrill signal came from the engineer's cab. But the clerks in the tough steel mail car knew their routine instructions, and carried them out to the letter.

Every bolt, bar and lock was quickly examined. The car doors were shut and fastened tight. The safe holding the gold and other valuables was closed and locked. After ascertaining these conditions of perfect security, the clerks in the steel car felt that, whatever the inexplicable cause of the

train's tarrying on the trestle, their own rolling fortress would withstand any mishap.

They were listening for the engine whistle. They heard nothing. It was a curious place to stop, there on the isolating trestle.

And then they heard something, indistinct at first, and suddenly, alarmingly distinct in another split second. Some one was walking over the roof of the mail car.

"Sounds like trouble, boys. Better get set—" the senior clerk advised.

He and his companions drew their revolvers, made certain of the loading, waited then, alert and anxious.

Whoever walked over the mail car had come to a halt. Then a crisp voice hailed them.

The leader of the robber band was crouching down by the ventilator on top of the car. He couldn't see into the steel compartment, but his voice carried all too distinctly.

"You buddies fought in the war, so you know a lot about poison gas. Get set to do some choking and dying, buddies—unless you want to come out and come out fast, with your mitts in the air. Here comes a little gift—of—Phos—of *Phosgene*—remember it?"

The leader was tearing away a crude newspaper cover. He was not an illiterate man and could readily pronounce the word *phosgene*, which was plainly printed on the small label he himself had pasted on the side of the glass grenade he now held in his hand. The newspaper wrapping floated away. He began inserting the grenade in a ventilator opening about three and a half inches wide.

By slowly spelling out the name of the gas that threatened them he had counted on a further weakening of the

mail clerks' morale. He would sound to them like a clumsy ignoramus, scarcely aware of the power he was wielding in the deadly tube of carbonyl chloride.

The frail glass grenade was nearly out of sight, and his hand had half vanished into the car ventilator opening.

"Better beat it!" he warned them, and his fingers slipped free. The gas bomb fell to the floor of the mail car, and broke with a slight splintering sound disproportionate to the harm that it spread.

"Good God!"

"Throw something over it! A coat—"

"No use," warned the criminal from the roof of the car. "You buddies take my tip—beat it outta there fast. And toss your guns out soon as you open the door."

Gas fumes filled the car. Some of the murderous vapor was already seeping out of the ventilator. The criminal leader, who had thought of everything, made haste to back away.

One of his men had remained in the cab to control the locomotive crew. The other four waited in pairs on either side of the mail car. Then the leader shouted from the roof, and one robber crossed under the car from the left to the right side. There a thick steel door was sliding open.

**P**OISON gas was here being used for the first time by professional malefactors during the commission of a crime. Only a few years before its terrors had been made known to the public as a major innovation of the World War. Tear gas—now a commonplace of police work—had not as yet been introduced into the war upon the underworld. And as no mail

car crew had ever before been attacked from above, through the small, un-screened ventilator opening, the surprise which the criminals achieved was complete.

The car door opened, and the mail clerks came staggering forth to surrender. They were blinded, gasping, half strangled and helpless.

"Take it easy," a robber warned. "We ain't asking you to leap off the trestle."

The clerks' weapons lay discarded on the floor of the exposed mail car. Resistance would only have meant that they offered themselves as easy targets, to be slaughtered by foes they could scarcely see. Two of the criminal band covered them and guided them out of the way.

The last and largest of the pretended hobo's newspaper-wrapped parcels was being torn open. The leader had climbed down from the roof of the captured car, and was briskly directing this final activity. Gas masks of the latest army model were produced—two of the band, who were expert safe-crackers, put them on. A kit of fine steel tools had likewise been uncovered.

"Go to it," the leader urged. "Don't be reckless using that 'soup'—but make it snappy as you can."

The cracksmen hurried to enter the gas-filled mail car, and, crouching down before the safe, set to work to burst it open. They handled their tools with such proficient speed that in a very few minutes they were carefully attaching the heavy charge of nitroglycerine. But then they hesitated, turning to look out at their leader. They were stopping at the sound of a revolver shot.

While they worked a Negro porter, overpowered by his own curiosity, had stepped down from a Pullman in the

middle of the train and started to walk stealthily forward along the trestle. What, he wanted to know, was the cause of this peculiar delay and silence up ahead?

One of the robbers standing guard over the mail car crew caught a glimpse of something moving. He turned a little and saw the approaching investigator, then thought fast—

"Hey, you!" he called. Such a diversion, at this critical moment of blowing open the safe, might revive some show of resistance in the subdued mail clerks.

The unfortunate porter, instead of coming straight on and putting up his hands, saw a shabby youth gesturing with a gun, and, swinging about frantically, tried to sneak under and take shelter beneath the Pullman adjoining the ravaged mail car.

The young robber held two guns ready. His right hand, as the porter wheeled to slip sideways, made a serpent-like, darting motion.

*Bang!* He fired but one shot. The uniformed figure of the porter gave a kind of wild, lurching bound. Shot through the head, he died instantly—but the heavy impact of the .45 bullet swept his body to the edge of the trestle. His lifeless arms swung about as though groping still for support, then over he toppled and down, the first hapless casualty of the hold-up.

**T**HERE would be no rebellion. The startled mail clerks were awed by their captor's shooting. The criminal leader called out sharply to urge on the men before the safe. Then they touched off the fuse, and sought shelter for themselves at the opposite end of the steel car.

The detonation was strangely muffled. The safe had been a tough

box to crack—yet crack it they had, using—as with the gas bomb—the latest scientific implements and chemistry.

The door of the railroad safe rocked open on shattered hinges. A third robber clapped on a gas mask, and snatched from around his waist a large sack which he had kept folded underneath his coat and worn like a sash.

Since a train seldom dares to run backward swiftly, an automobile driven by a seventh member of the band waited behind a clump of bushes at the end of the trestle near the rear of the express. And when the sack had been stuffed with gold bullion and securities and such cash as they found, the six adroit criminals began their retreat in close formation, the deadliest of their marksmen unhampered and still covering the mail clerks and engine crew.

Astonished passengers and trainmen stared from windows and vestibules. But none ventured to try to detain that compact, formidable group of thieves.

They backed out of range, and then the engine whistle shrilled a belated alarm. The defeated mail clerks found other weapons and started skirmishing along the trestle, firing as they came. But their foes didn't even trouble to return the pistol fire. They had reached a low point near the end of the trestle. One after another they leaped down, surrounded the precious sack again, then sped through some undergrowth, ran around the clump of bushes and found the motor car with engine throbbing.

"All set, Roy!" the driver exclaimed.

"All set, buddy! And they can't take that train off the rails and chase us."

All six were in the car at a bound. With a violent jerk it started, dust and shrubbery masking its line of flight.

The express train was now whistling wildly, but only backing very slowly as a flagman ran ahead of the last car to comply with strict regulations. Careful even about such trivial details, the robber chief had arranged every item of his program to give himself and his pals the maximum of advantage. Across the state of Illinois the criminals' car was speeding; but after travelling about eighty miles, the band scattered, abandoning that automobile and leaving no trace.

The Federal authorities take such artful raids with the utmost official seriousness. For weeks, for months, veteran postal inspectors and many shrewd government operatives worked upon the case. But not one of the bandits was ever to suffer for this expert outrage. Only long afterward did certain circumstances identify the leader of the band, and even then in such a manner that his conviction would have been impossible. An underworld reputation, known exploits subsequently detected—these were the fingers pointing out his always bold and resourceful participation.

**N**O one could learn offhand to direct a criminal enterprise—or, for that matter, *any* enterprise—with such perfect balance, foresight and decisiveness. What of the leader of the outlaw band before the sensational pillaging of the mail car of the Illinois Central express?

We have to turn back some years to that summer when the formerly mighty James J. Jeffries yielded at length to the many persuasions of a host of admirers and a flattering press and started his ordeal of "come back" and hard training. Jack Johnson, grown vastly unpopular with fight fans, was to be deprived of his title as heavyweight



champion of the world. Big Jeff was the man to emerge from his retirement and hand out the trouncing that Johnson's flagrantly rowdy behavior deserved.

The most celebrated physical trainers of North America were anxiously consulted about Jim Jeffries' conditioning, among them Mike Murphy, famous track coach of the University of Pennsylvania. All agreed that Jeff's wind and stamina and foot work must be improved, and to inject—as if that were possible—more spring and agility into his aging legs, a number of lively young sparring partners were hurried to the training camp at Reno, where Jeff was expected to drive them before him about the ring and practice trying to hit them.

One of the most skillful of those chosen to aid the former champion in his arduous training trials was a keen and promising middleweight who elected to be known as "Young Fitzsimmons." His past was shrouded in a certain mist of reticence, but his real name was said to be Gardner—Roy or Royal Gardner.

This young pugilist was showing no want of self-esteem in borrowing the name of Fitzsimmons, for the celebrated Ruby Robert had been Jeffries' predecessor as champion of all the world, and the only middleweight ever to win the preëminent heavyweight title. However, for a mere kid who yet would add to his weight and his reach, Gardner proved at once a dangerous and talented boxer. Competent observers came to the camp and were deeply concerned about Jeffries' disappointing though heroic attempts to recapture his vanished youth. But sometimes they paused to notice "Young Fitzsimmons," many remarking that he ought, if handled right, to learn to live

up to even the great name of the prize ring he had taken.

Gardner possessed a superb physique. Muscular force and nervous energy flowed together in a beautifully ordered athletic performance. Occasionally, with notables in camp, Big Jeff had to make a smart showing. The sparring partners took their subtle orders and then took a brief and impressive lacing. On other private occasions when Jeffries sought to improve his speed of foot, he chased Gardner about and seldom laid a hand on him. Perhaps many beholders suspected that "Young Fitzsimmons," grown just a little heavier, stronger and wiser in ring generalship, would one day accomplish the defeat of Johnson, himself a remarkable boxer, which poor old Jeffries was manifestly incapable of doing.

The unpopular Negro champion took Big Jeff apart in fifteen rounds. Had Jeffries regained the world's championship, "Young Fitzsimmons" as a principal protégé in his camp would undoubtedly march on himself to celebrity and a fat bank roll—middleweight, light-heavyweight, even heavyweight champion. Why not?

For Roy Gardner, in ring parlance, "had everything." Yet he lacked an essential patience. He was too restless, having his ambition clouded with a kind of vagabond aimlessness. The disappointments and setbacks of a ring career, or of any sort of career, provoked him to sudden, sharp detours—from which he never returned.

Gardner had formerly attended a medical school. His mind was as keen and alert as his body. The slower but more lasting rewards of a college education and professional training would assuredly have come to him. But he couldn't be bothered with all that tedious trying and enervating delay.

After he gave up wanting to be a physician, he became "Young Fitzsimmons," and after a brief and spectacular rise to discriminating notice in that field he became Roy Gardner again—and now tried his hand at crime.

At first he was an absurdly incompetent criminal. He walked into a fashionable jewelry shop on Market Street in San Francisco, made a good impression—as he invariably did—noted the price of a number of valuable articles and pretended to buy the lot. He even paused to write out a check, which was, of course, worthless. This flourishing ceremony concluded, he suddenly scooped up about ten thousand dollars worth of fine diamond jewelry and darted for the street door.

A clerk shouted and spread the alarm. Gardner on his way to some fancied haven encountered detaining street traffic, and then learned that, fleet as he was, the police of San Francisco were not awkward ex-champions when it came to pursuing him.

His conviction followed promptly; and the judge sentenced him to five years' penal servitude. Whereupon a much subdued "Young Fitzsimmons" was marched away to confine his footwork to the walled enclosure of San Quentin prison.

**A**S yet he had displayed none of the qualities or sharp characteristics that were going to make him one of the most remarkable criminals of his time. And once incarcerated at San Quentin, Gardner became a model prisoner, plotting nothing, obeying every regulation scrupulously.

One dull autumn day a riot broke out. The highly unpalatable quality of the prison bread rations gave certain malcontents enough excuse to foment

a furious outbreak. Now such "spontaneous" prison riots seldom do more than add hardships to the already hard existence of the average run of prisoner, who is normally docile and easily managed. Even carefully planned multiple prison breaks meet with slight success. But the ruthless veteran convict, a long-termer with nothing much to lose, will on occasion provoke a penitentiary uprising, standing shrewdly aside from it himself perhaps, but hoping somehow to profit individually. The ensuing commotion might cover a lone escape. It has frequently happened so.

An athlete also endowed with a very resourceful brain, Roy Gardner might have followed this same reasoning. San Quentin howled and vibrated. During the bread riot might he not seek some special hiding place, later to climb over a wall and so perchance steal away?

The amateur robber attempted nothing of the sort. He chose a course abhorrent to the professional underworld, to which he was still largely an untried outsider. He elected to hold with the authorities of the prison.

When Gonzales, a Mexican bandit, excited, livid and frantic, sought to arouse a stolid group of prisoners, so that the more distant turbulence would spread into a formidable riot, Gardner leaped forward to argue against it.

Two score hesitant, gray-garbed men paused to hear what he was shouting.

"What chance have any of you got? Nothing has been planned—"

"You're crazy!" the Mexican snarled.

"Nothing that any of us here know about. And all along those walls are guys now with Winchester rifles—"

Gardner made it very convincing. Sour bread might be a nasty diet—but what about digesting a stream of .30-

30 bullets? It was his first attempt as an outlaw leader—disputing in favor of good conduct and the strong arm of the law.

Gonzales and a rebellious pal raged at Gardner for his interference, called him "yellow" and a stool pigeon. Gardner's prize ring experience had not curtailed his vocabulary; and he retorted with a brief description of the Mexican crook that drove him and his comrade to fury.

With a high-pitched angry yelp the Mexican charged. The other convict moved more cautiously, having heard something of "Young Fitzsimmons." Clumsy prison shoes weighted Roy Gardner's feet, but there was nothing whatever to anchor his highly educated fists. As Gonzales sprang at him fiercely the left hook even Jim Jeffries had noticed with respect, followed instantly by a perfectly timed right cross, beat upon the black-visaged Mexican like sticks thumping a small, flapping rug.

Gonzales pitched backward, caroming off of his more careful pal and knocking him flat on his back. The Mexican sprawled close beside him, half dazed by his sudden downfall. Gardner merely grinned at the pair of them and then started examining a barked knuckle.

There came a shout:

"Hey, Roy—watch him!" One of the convict onlookers urgently warned!

Gonzales had snapped out of his temporary daze with all his hatred flaming. He was armed with a knife stolen from the prison kitchen, which he had hoped to use when chance permitted, preferably in slitting the throat of one of the warders whom he hated. But now the demands of immediate vengeance superseded other animosities.

Out flashed the knife he had kept

well concealed in the waistband of his dingy convict trousers. Roy Gardner saw his own danger, but knew of no pugilistic defense against a venomous foe sprawling a good ten feet away.

Gonzales, lying as he was, merely raising his head a little and his right arm, sent the kitchen knife swishing at Gardner's throat. The cruelly sharpened blade travelled like light—pointed, incredibly straight, and deadly.

Gardner jerked aside, saving his throat and probably his life by inches, yet taking a very ugly gash across the shoulder. All this while the uproar of the rioting continued. Prison guards were wholly occupied at vital points and along the frowning walls which ultimately decide every contest of the kind. Convict spectators standing near Gardner, who liked him and heartily disliked nearly every Mexican of the prison population, closed in around the still prostrate knife thrower.

"You're a treacherous rat, Gonzales," was the verdict of the group, and to show their disapproval they kicked the Mexican insensible.

**G**ARDNER lay in the hospital until his wounded shoulder had healed. The warden sent for him when he had recovered and thanked him for helping to confine the bread riot to its original instigators and their following. An account of Gardner's conduct during the crisis had already, said the San Quentin official, been forwarded to the parole board at Sacramento.

An extra time allowance for good behavior was the eventual recognition he received; and soon the gates swung open and "Young Fitzsimmons" walked out and was free. By promptly capitalizing his prison exploit he might have found work readily in

California. Or he could have drifted East, selected another new name from the honorable list of the prize ring's immortals—begun once again the uphill campaign leading to those pugilistic peaks nearly scaled by "Young Fitzsimmons."

But instead Gardner chose to disappear for a while. During this period of avoiding public attention he met an attractive girl of Napa, California, and they were presently man and wife. We may assume that he found liberty all that he had anticipated while serving out his sentence. But probably very soon he also found that his funds were running low.

Like so many others he had learned too much in prison from older inmates whose craft and experience ranged the whole underworld of lawless activities, and whose recollections made the furtive life of the professional crook with its risks, thrills and alleged "easy money" take on an altogether false glamour and appeal. Conscious of early shortcomings, since the jewel robbery in San Francisco had turned out a notorious "bust," Gardner set about perfecting himself for another journey toward a new career. Very soon he was supporting himself, as well as the bride he had to leave behind in a safe retreat, by a series of bold experiments in banditry.

Three men boarded a passenger train at Centerville, Iowa, proposing to steal fifty-four thousand dollars. Roy Gardner was one of them. According to a tip received by the trio of criminals, the money was being shipped in a metal-bound box that would be labeled with rather absurd pretense: *Ore Samples*. This box would travel in the baggage car along with trunks and express parcels of a less valuable variety. But a

special agent of the company was to go with it, and he would be armed.

The three men rode a short while in the smoker, then got up, one after another—for thus far they had not seemed to be acquainted—and began moving forward very casually. Just after the train pulled out of the next station, they suddenly crossed the platform of the forward passenger coach and together burst unceremoniously into the baggage car, which was just behind the locomotive.

One of the three spoke quietly: "Stay right where you are, boys. But reach higher—that's better—g r o p e around for the ceiling if you like. But don't neither of you try to get at that signal cord!"

Each robber held a revolver ready. Neither the special express agent, nor the regular baggage man felt disposed to resist such odds. The metal-bound box was discovered after a brief search. A few hammer blows smashed the lock. The lid came up, old newspapers were tossed aside, the fifty-four thousand in cash revealed.

A little farther along the line the leader of the trio stepped over suddenly and pulled hard on the emergency cord. With a terrific tooting of the whistle the engineer slammed on his brakes, bringing the train to a grinding, jolting stop.

**B**OOTH prisoners in the baggage car had been disarmed. The ammunition had been dexterously snapped from their guns, and the weapons kicked aside. When the three criminals leaped off of the rapidly slowing train not a shot winged after them. By the time the conductor had run forward and the engine crew come back to learn what was the matter, and a gulping, breathless explanation had been

mainly illustrated by pointing out the broken, rifled strong box, the perpetrators of the outrage were lost in the woodland flanking that section of the railroad line.

All during this exploit Roy Gardner had done nothing that made him stand out and said nothing causing him to be identified. He was not the commander of the enterprise. But he kept his eyes and ears open attentively, and, though merely an apprentice in crimes of daring and violence, he learned fast.

The three crooks separated after dividing the money into three equal shares. Roy Gardner drifted down to Mexico, there treating himself to a pretty steady whirl of faro and roulette. In two weeks' time, according to his own subsequent admission, he lost seventeen thousand dollars. By that experience alone he proved himself a typical criminal.

Back to the United States he came with his emptied pockets, and in a short time was pillaging again. Many of the stick-ups of that period have since been attributed to him. He operated alone, or sometimes with underworld allies. But the precise record of his outlawry has never been clearly determined.

The first typically individual crime of Gardner's career was sprung on the anxious police of North America with the robbery of the little bank of Glendale. One bright afternoon the residents of that small community in Nebraska were first surprised and then gratified to see an airplane coming to earth with the obvious purpose of honoring their new "airport." The town, however rural, was very much on the make, its population was growing steadily, business was good, bank deposits rapidly mounted. The "airport" ambitiously designated was nothing more than a broad stretch of

prairie adjacent to the fine new motor highway that gave the place its promising position in the county. But all the same there were floodlights, sparingly used, and large signs marking off the port. Now a plane descended to complete the picture.

Three men rode in the plane, and two got out of it. One was Gardner, expensively dressed, serious, reserved, giving an immediate impression of prosperity and commercial importance. He and his companion carried leather satchels, and what was more unusual—each carried a heavy revolver.

The roar of the plane's engine, and the news of its unexpected landing, drew a crowd to the roadside as the two strangers marched along.

Scott, the town marshal, presented himself—drawing his own gun and demanding a bit belligerently: "Hey, what's up? Why all that hardware?"

Roy Gardner, made up to look somewhat older than his age, addressed the officer in a guarded, impressive tone.

"Glad to see you, Sheriff. We've got nearly thirty thousand dollars in cash and bonds here—we're going to deposit it all in your local bank. And as we don't know these parts very well, we're not taking any chances."

"Right you are," said the marshal. "But you'd just better put the shooting irons away, men. I'm in charge—I know everybody in sight at this moment, and can vouch for 'em all. You ain't got to walk more 'n a hundred yards to get to the bank. You'll be safe as in church."

"Thanks," said the robber, and he seemed relieved as he pocketed his gun. The other man did the same. The town marshal turned aside, feeling both important and tactful.

He could have spoken severely to these fellows, as there was a strict local

ordinance about carrying firearms. However, the arrival of a plane bearing cash for deposit was a red-letter happening and no mistake. It would be the capital of strangers like this pair that made Glendale the city it was due to become. And the best way to attract capital was to be polite to any that hove in sight.

Gardner and his comrade—afterward believed to have been a smooth young highwayman called Sid Leslie—moved briskly to the bank entrance, leaving the curious in a throng about the airplane. That helpful circumstance had been counted upon in arranging and timing the whole neat affair.

**T**HE two entered the bank without question. Gardner walked over to the cashier's window and rested his satchel on the mahogany ledge. His companion did the same, standing close beside him, an unconsidered .45 bulging his coat pocket.

"We've come to open an account," said Gardner, impressing the bank man as he had the officer. "We wish to make rather a large deposit," he added. The satchel was open now, and he drew forth a bundle of documents that looked like Liberty Bonds. Certainly one Liberty Bond was on top of the packet, for the cashier saw it plainly.

"We'll be glad to accommodate you, Mr.—"

"Johnson," said Roy Gardner. "Ambrose T. Johnson. I guess we'll leave about thirty thousand with you this trip—"

The cashier shared the dream of his fellow citizens; and his own special dream of a large city bank seemed to have drawn appreciably nearer with the appearance of these men.

"Mr. Johnson, glad to meet you,"

he said. "Colonel Gaines, our president, is unfortunately out of town. But I wish you'd step into the office and meet Mr. Lang, our vice-president."

"Glad to," said Gardner, looking toward his friend, who agreed with an amiable nod that he also would be happy to enlarge his local acquaintance.

Both criminals followed the cashier into Lang's private office, and accepted a hearty introduction. They still carried the satchels, both yawning open. Gardner reached in his pocket as if to fumble for a match.

"A light, Mr. Johnson?" the cashier exclaimed. "Here you are—"

"No," said Gardner. "Don't either of you move!"

But their jaws moved, sagging down in uncontrolled bewilderment. Gardner's gun was out, and so was Leslie's. While the former covered Lang and the cashier, the latter rounded up an astonished teller and a trembling, elderly bookkeeper.

Gardner dropped his packet of alleged bonds back into the satchel, and then proceeded to stuff it with currency swept up from the cashier's and teller's cages and from out of the open vault. When that satchel bulged, the empty one Leslie had carried took its turn before the faucet formed by Roy Gardner's deftly plundering hands. More than ninety thousand dollars went into the bags, burying the lone decoy, a hundred-dollar Liberty Bond, and the paper bundled beneath it.

"Now," said the robber, "I'm not going to trouble to bind or gag you fellows. We'll just lock you in, and then be on our way. But we won't move fast, you understand—and the first one of you that so much as sticks his nose outside this bank in the next ten minutes will probably get it sawed off with lead."

Their guns went back into coat pockets, but were held there, pointed, bulging and formidable. The satchels, closed and locked, though heavier now were carried as nonchalantly as when the pair of investors strolled into the community.

But even so the manner of their retreat had to be watchful. If the plane hadn't been there they would surely have attracted immediate attention. Their accomplice, the waiting pilot, had managed while distracting a dense group of inquisitive onlookers with his polite answers to their numerous questions to keep watch on the bank entrance.

Repeatedly he glanced back over the heads of the tightly packed spectators surrounding him.

**S**UDDENLY he saw the pair emerge, walking kind of sideways, right hands deep in coat pockets, fat satchels clutched tight in the crook of the left arm.

"Well, we'll be on our way now, folks!" he exclaimed. "Stand back, please. Make room! One of you lads up there give the propeller a whirl. But mind it don't swish around and give you a haircut—"

Urging and joking, he got the crowd out of harm's way, and soon had his engine thundering.

"Come on," Gardner was exclaiming to his pal, "they'll be watching us from windows and will pop out as soon as they see they're out of revolver range."

He started to trot.

"And over there comes that hick constable," said the other. Both criminals increased their pace.

Straight into the startled crowd of bystanders they ploughed. "Out of the way, please—one side, please,"

Gardner kept barking, his voice hardly audible above the engine roar.

His expression was cheerful and friendly. "See you folks soon again—back in the plane, and give some of you a ride. Got to rush now—got to make Denver by three o'clock—"

Men had ventured from the bank, hailed the marshal and exploded tidings of the robbery.

Running toward the plane, the marshal drew his gun. He had to fire into the air to keep from hitting some one in the crowd spread out between the highway and the plane.

Gardner and his companion tossed the satchels in beside the grinning pilot, then clambered up into their former places. The pilot waved his arm, and many friendly gestures wished him a safe journey and happy landing.

Off roared the plane, bumping across the prairie; it gained speed, took the air, mounting swiftly in a long graceful curve.

The engine roar was less than deafening now. The voice of the town marshal at last was heard. "*Robbers! They're robbers—*"

He continued firing into the air, vainly popping away at the departing airplane. Inside the ravaged bank the officers were phoning desperately all over the county. Criminals, bank thieves of the boldest sort—escaping by plane!

Word of the daring adventure spread as fast as electric current could take it over the wires. But the plane was flying high, was virtually out of sight. Here and there a motor's faint drone was reported—going west, going north, going east. False alarms, probably! Gardner and his friends headed for Texas.

Hundreds of miles from the scene of the crime the plane next day was

found abandoned. It was in perfect condition, and, later, when sold at auction by the authorities, it brought twenty-five hundred dollars. That was the criminals' discount allowed for spot cash and the cleanest getaway of modern times.

**R**OY GARDNER, of course, was still unknown so far as his currently active criminal career thrust itself on the attention of the nation's detectives. He had disappeared after being liberated from San Quentin; and it was still fondly hoped that somewhere under another name he was developing his athletic prowess or his keen mind while faithfully practicing reform.

The remarkably well engineered robbery of the mail car of that Illinois Central express gave warning that a criminal leader of more than average astuteness and imagination was now at large. Gardner's name was never mentioned, however, when investigators gathered to discuss the probable identity of the underworld ace who employed planes and poison gas, and took into account even the smallest detail likely to lend advantage to his raids.

Meanwhile, Roy Gardner had to turn to crime again and again, for no matter how large a share he derived from any one stick-up, his greedy hands turned to sieves as soon as he came in sight of a professional gambler. The old story of every creature nourishing its own particular parasites!

Growing more confident of his genius, or perhaps needing such quantities of cash that he began to resent sharing heavily with accomplices, Gardner now struck out alone. He entered a mail depot adjoining the railroad station at San Diego, picked out a truck that appeared to have aboard

what he wanted, cowed half a dozen men with two revolvers and made off with sixteen thousand dollars.

Some of this loot was in the form of securities, and in order to dispose of them quickly Gardner ventured to trust an ex-convict whom he had known at San Quentin. The ex-convict hadn't been out of prison very long—just long enough to know that he would never again let himself do a stretch if by standing in with the police and the prosecuting authorities he could avoid the hazards of his large criminal acquaintance.

"Sure I can cash these for you, Roy," he agreed. He was ostensibly going straight, but not unwilling to turn a dishonest penny if he could manage it without incriminating himself.

He did manage it. Then he visited a detective at his home, revealed all that Gardner had told him, and dropped an invaluable hint concerning the robber's present program.

It seems that this ex-convict had been one of those smart crooks privately sponsoring the bread riot at San Quentin. Gardner by an heroic display of mere common sense had partly frustrated that outbreak in the prison enclosure. Now, while insulating his liberty and arranging an underground contact with his foes, the police, the ex-convict was working off an old grudge that Gardner himself apparently had forgotten.

He had only been an amateur, an outsider, there at San Quentin. But now he felt himself to be on the inside, far in, and a big shot, whose adventures kept many an underworld grapevine buzzing excitedly across half a continent.

Gardner took a train to Bakersfield. There were six detectives, three of them Federal operatives, at the station



when he bought his ticket, and all six boarded the train when he did. His reputation was such that, despite the certainty of the tip they were acting upon, it had not been thought safe to try to arrest him on a crowded station platform. A railroad coach itself offers every advantage of observation and surprise. But a woman with two small children took a seat directly behind the one Gardner occupied. And on account of the youngsters and the woman, the criminal rode unmolested for twenty miles.

Then, either because he felt safe—he was but slightly disguised and had been easily recognized by the men waiting to grab him—or because the prattling of the children disturbed his reading, Gardner rose and yawned. He casually surveyed the car, and seemed not to notice any of the travelers who had been very cautiously noticing him.

He strolled forward, heading for the smoker. Two men that looked like drummers got up, chatting, and inconveniently blocked his way. Ever alert, Gardner turned a little, as if to assure himself this congested state of the aisle was really accidental.

Then he knew. His arm began to swing downward.

"Stick 'em up, Gardner!"

An inoffensive looking man had emerged from behind a Los Angeles newspaper, and a very offensive service automatic seemed to pop out of a comic strip at the top of the folded page.

Gardner felt two guns jabbing his ribs. Those traveling men arguing in the aisle also had the drop on him.

Three more detectives crowded forward to subdue him.

"You win!" said the criminal. The car hummed with excitement. When he was searched, Gardner's pockets yielded two revolvers, but very little

cash. He had been dry cleaned, he chuckled, by a dice game on his way to the railroad station.

"We'd have taken you sooner if it hadn't been for those two kids there," said a detective.

"Yep, they were right in my line of fire," the desperado answered. "If they hadn't been I'd have done this and that the instant I saw you dicks." With manacled hands he curtly illustrated a vivid, sharp encounter in the aisle. "Maybe you'd have plugged me, too, but not till I had tattooed all of you with hot lead."

CONSIDERING only the San Diego offense, a Federal judge planted Gardner on McNeil's Island for a term of twenty-five years. Or that was what his sentence proposed. But the criminal had other ways of interpreting it.

The Federal prison on McNeil's Island near Tacoma, Washington, is a pretty well built and notably isolated institution. Escapes from it have never been frequent or numerous. An ideal point of sequestration for Roy Gardner, so it seemed.

He was duly handcuffed to a deputy United States marshal and **marched** to a private compartment on an express train bound north to the prison. Gardner could make such a trying and routine journey pass pleasantly. His anecdotes of the prize ring, his habitual good humor and friendliness made the deputy a little less vigilant as each mile of the roadbed clicked by.

They were approaching the Oregon line. It was half past seven in the morning.

"Well, when do we eat?" the prisoner queried.

"Now, if you like—diner's open—"

"Ring for the porter," said Gardner.

"I'm sick of being stared at. Tell him to serve breakfast here—"

"You ring," said the deputy, reminded of his place of authority. "Ham and eggs'll be mine—"

Gardner was leaning forward a little, reaching out with his free hand.

"If you live to eat 'em," he snapped.

His arm swung around, jolting the deputy with an uppercut. Moving like a tornado, he jerked hard with his pinioned wrist, then leaned over his dazed captor and snatched his gun from its holster.

"Come to, you—and make it snappy! Out with the key, take this bracelet off me!"

A gun at his throat, menaced by a pitiless glare—the deputy fumbled for the handcuff key and found it. The cuffs were unlocked. Gardner swiftly snapped the cuff he had just shed, making the officer his helpless captive. He gagged him roughly then, emptied his pockets, taking cash, tobacco, matches, a knife, a clean handkerchief. He borrowed the deputy's hat, having no time for other disguise.

As he came forth from the compartment it was his bad luck to meet the porter hurrying along the aisle. Deputy and prisoner were equally familiar to that porter by now. He recognized Gardner and saw the bulging pocket where the deputy's gun lay concealed. With a frantic gulp he turned and ran.

An alarm would spread quickly. Other armed men were on the train, other prisoners. But Gardner never even contemplated helping to liberate those others, possible allies in flight.

He went straight to the nearest car vestibule, turned the catch, swung the door open, climbed down to the step, leaned far out, holding fast with but one hand. The train was making better than fifty miles an hour. Gardner's

nerve was never more recklessly displayed. He heard shouts somewhere in the Pullman behind him. He leaned out just a little more, selected an on-rushing spot that struck him as a fairly favorable cushion—then jumped.

Down the embankment he tumbled, sprawling and half conscious. The train roared on. Shrill blasts of the engine whistle answering an emergency stop signal brought Gardner's quick consciousness flooding back. A train going at that speed couldn't be stopped inside of half a mile, he thought. It was already a mile beyond the point where he lay. That gave him a fair start. Very gingerly he moved his aching limbs. No bones were broken. He located the deputy's hat, then decided he wouldn't take it.

Far distant he saw the train slowing down. Men were jumping from the rear car as it came to a stop. They couldn't see him crouching beside the line. He could only see them as leaping, frantic specks. Rising painfully, but with happy determination, he left the right of way and made his escape through the tangled brush that sloped away for miles.

**T**HIS incredible exploit put the name of Roy Gardner on front pages all over the United States. Sheriffs, deputies, Federal officers, Secret Service operatives, city detectives, all were looking for him. His old San Quentin portrait was published. His past life was combed over and then his rather neglected young wife was located.

A fortnight later Gardner was heard telephoning to her in Napa. The call was traced swiftly, and two motor cars loaded with police and detectives sped to the junction from which the fugitive had put in his call. They missed him

by about **ten minutes**—a close shave, indeed.

Posses were hurriedly formed to try to take up his trail from that point. But they met with no success.

Gardner's own immediate success was going to prove sensational.

A week passed, and then a lone bandit wearing a mask boarded the Pacific Limited near Newcastle. He entered the mail car by a ruse, rapping on the door according to a signal familiar to but few of the conductors and other responsible trainmen on the line. Days were to be spent afterward in trying to learn who provided the bandit with this excessively "hot" tip. But none was incriminated; and police suspicion drifted off vainly in several different directions.

The lone bandit, of course, was Roy Gardner. His technique could not be mistaken. And his reward from the mail car was not less than one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars worth of negotiable securities!

He slipped away from the scene of this crime and was not traced more than a few miles. He appeared able to cope with the most overwhelming difficulties single-handed. Yet quick stabs of bad luck repeatedly overcame his native daring, dash and skill.

Unsuspected as the greatly wanted Gardner, he sat in on a card game at Roseville in Placer County. Peculiarly enough he was winning—perhaps a bad sign! He drew a blank hand and dropped out. Two other players chose to back their luck, and bet and bet—until, on the showdown, a violent argument ensued. A fight, in which Gardner had no part and very little interest, seemed about to interrupt the game.

Some one warned a passing deputy. The proprietor wanted no bloodshed in his place and eagerly admitted the

peace officer. He entered the card room as Gardner, disgusted, was cashing to leave. The deputy had a .45 in his hand, ready for anything. He had been a prison guard at San Quentin, remembered the bread riot, and knew Gardner the moment he saw him.

**E**VEN the quarrelling card sharps forgot their grievance. The deputy's lower jaw nearly fell off he was so surprised. But his hand never wavered as he held the gun. Gardner found only misfortune where gambling went on. He shrugged and surrendered.

"Fifty years!" said the Federal court, again naming McNeil's Island. And then with an absurdity of repetition that no writer of fiction would dare indulge in, Gardner made a second break on his journey to a lifelong cell.

Again he was handcuffed to a deputy marshal, and not the same one he had outwitted before. He wore, too, a stout ankle band of chilled steel, of the type called an "Oregon boot." But he had brief moments when at least one hand must be freed, and on such a slippery occasion he struck his captor, wrestled away the revolver drawn to subdue him, and compelled the removal of the manacles and leg iron.

He left the train as it came to a scheduled stop and got clear away. But when he turned up at a small hotel in Centralia, Washington, the proprietress knew him at once for the now notorious character he was. She notified the police, and a riot squad seized the criminal as he slept.

This time he was so near McNeil's Island the last stages of the journey were officially completed without further desperate event. Gardner's newspaper fame subsided as the gates at last

clanged shut behind him. But his adventures in the furtive realm of crime and escape were not yet at an end.

During a Labor Day baseball game he and two other Federal convicts made a sudden break for the water. Guards fired at them, two were shot and retaken, one dying of his wounds.

Gardner himself had rifle bullets in both legs. Yet it remains to be told that this really astounding battler managed to hide for five long days on the island apart from the prison. He attended to his own hurts, finally swam to Fox Inlet and contrived to lie hidden in a barn for many nights, milking the farmer's cows surreptitiously to provide himself with food and dressing for his leg wounds. Until at length he whitened his hair and, aided by this disguise, made his way back to San Francisco and a few amazed pals who joyously welcomed him.

Months passed. And then a stalwart railroad employee at Phoenix, Arizona,

caught a man starting to rob a freight car. It was Gardner, and still quick on the draw. But as he troubled to try to use a gun, the railroad clerk borrowed his own former tactics. One swinging punch to the chin—and he who had shone as "Young Fitzsimmons" years before in the Reno camp of the great Jim Jeffries toppled over backward and lay still, taking the count.

He was straightway put under arrest on complaint of the railroad company. When his finger prints were checked, a shout of surprise shook the dry Arizona air. "Roy Gardner, by all that's holy!" A double guard was immediately placed around the city's strongest cell, and Gardner, the underworld ace, was moved into it. After that he was turned over to the Federal authorities. They carried him very cautiously to Leavenworth—and from that prison he has not escaped—at least, he was there up to yesterday's count of the prisoners!



## Trial by Combat

**I**N 1371 Richard de Macaire, a gentleman of France, was suspected of having murdered Aubry de Montdidier, his friend. Suspicion was directed to Macaire because the dog of Montdidier always displayed the greatest enmity towards him. Macaire was required by Charles V to fight the animal in a judicial combat, which proved to be fatal to Macaire.

*Paul C. Dixon.*

# Patrolman Moran Goes Screwy

By Thomas Topham



With a wild shriek he leaped back out of the door

## *Moran's Rattlesnakes and Diamonds All Reminded Captain Melvin of the Man Who Wore Red Pants*

MRS. MINNIE WILLIAMS, the very estimable landlady of the Jonquil Rooming House, came down the stairs three at a time, yelling murder, fire, and police at every jump. She reached the sidewalk in an extremely disheveled condition, opened her large mouth, and gave voice to shriek after shriek. Naturally a crowd collected.

"Police!" she screamed. "Police!"

From a block away Patrolman Danny Moran came running. He pushed into the crowd. Mrs. Williams hysterically grabbed him around the neck. The officer tried to back away.

"Let loose my neck," he implored,

his face red. "Who do you think I am?"

"Snakes!" cried the woman. "Snakes!"

With considerable difficulty Patrolman Moran untangled the woman's entwining arms, and pushed her off.

"Snakes?" he asked. "Where?"

The woman pointed a trembling finger up the stairs.

"Up there."

"More'n one?" asked Patrolman Moran practically.

The woman shivered. "Yes. Plenty more. I went into a room an' one almost grabbed me—"

"Oh, pshaw," said Patrolman

Moran, taking the woman by the arm. "Come on, an' we'll see about these here snakes." He turned at the stairs and pushed back some of the most enthusiastic spectators, and climbed the stairs with the woman following hesitantly. In the upper hallway she pointed to room 211.

"In there," she said huskily.

Patrolman Moran removed his cap and scratched his head.

"How'd they happen to git in there?" he asked.

"A young man left 'em," replied the landlady, nervously eyeing the door. "I usually waited till noon to clean his room, but this mornin' I saw his door wasn't tight closed. I pushed it open to see if he was out, an—an' there was the snakes." The woman almost had hysterics again.

"Now, lady, calm down," advised Patrolman Moran. "I don't blame the guy fer gittin' out an' leavin' 'em, but we'll git these snakes, don't worry. I'd like to have an idear about how many there is. You didn't count 'em, did you?"

The woman gave the officer a withering look. "Count 'em? Not me. One was right by the door, an' I saw another over by the bed. I slammed the door an' got out."

"Yeah," smiled Patrolman Moran. "I could hear you way down the block. Now, I dunno what to do about these here snakes. I better call up."

Patrolman Moran shoved back some excited guests who had been attracted from their rooms by the landlady's screams, and went to the telephone in the hallway and called the sergeant.

"Got any snake ketchers?" he asked the sergeant.

"Any what?" roared back the astonished sergeant.

"Snake ketchers. Roomful of snakes up here, an' damn' if I know what to do about 'em. I ought to be on my beat."

The sergeant asked some questions and got an idea of the situation.

He said disgustedly, "Don't it beat hell what people leave in rooms? A couple months ago it was an alligator over in a hotel. Well, Danny, I'm up against it. There's been a fire in the business section an' I've had to send most of the reserves out to handle the crowd. I don't want to ask the dicks to go out on such a call. You peep in an' see what's goin' on, then if you've got to have help, call up again."

Patrolman Moran hung up and hunted up the landlady.

"We got to git 'em ourselves," he told her, generously including her as part of the police force. "What you got that'll knock a snake bow-legged?"

The landlady got Patrolman Moran a stout curtain pole. He cautiously opened the door of room 211, and slammed it shut as he saw a snake stretched on the carpet. He opened the door again, reached in, and gave the snake a poke. It wiggled, but not very much. Encouraged, the officer stepped in, and as he did so there was a flash and something struck his leg. Another snake was writhing about his foot.

"God Almighty!" roared Patrolman Moran, and with a wild shriek leaped back out the door, his action serving to unhook the snake, which dropped in the hallway.

Mrs. Williams jumped for the stairway and ran yelling again downstairs. Patrolman Moran backed up hastily and drew his revolver. With trembling hand he took aim and poured six bullets at the snake, missing it every time. Excited guests scattered, there were cries from down the stairs. And the

snake coiled itself for business and waited further developments.

"Where is it?" asked a guest, peering through the smoke.

"Right there," said Patrolman Moran, reloading his revolver. "I'll git him this time."

He was on the point of shooting again when he heard a police car siren. Someone had accommodatingly called more police.

**F**OUR detectives came dashing up the stairs, stopped at sight of the officer in uniform, and peered through the smoke.

"There it is," said Patrolman Moran. He leveled his revolver.

"Don't shoot in here again," said a detective. "What is it?"

"Snake. Rattler, too," Patrolman Moran informed him.

"Somebody ought to be arrested for leaving a snake around," declared the detective. "Somebody get me a club."

The landlady, who had followed the detective back up the stairs, rescued the curtain pole that Patrolman Moran had dropped. The detective took the pole and advanced toward the snake.

"I'll knock him cock-eyed," announced the detective, and suddenly stepped on a second snake that had crawled out the half open door, unseen in the smoke and semi-darkness of the poorly lighted hallway.

The detective went into the air with a wild yell, the coiled snake struck and fell short, and Patrolman Moran in the excitement pulled the trigger of his revolver twice, sending bullets perilously close to the brave detective.

The detectives, the patrolman, and the guests backed off from room 211, with the detective who had almost been shot, slinging a bitter line of conversation at Patrolman Moran. There was

the sound of much excitement downstairs. Two firemen came dashing up. One had a chemical fire extinguisher on his back.

"Where's the fire?" he asked.

"Snakes, no fire," croaked Moran.

"Where?"

Patrolman Moran pointed.

"I'll get 'em," said the fireman, and advancing with his fire extinguisher, effectually put the two snakes out of activity. "That's the way to handle snakes," he said exultantly.

A detective grabbed the fireman, who was getting ready to go.

"Wait a minute," he said. "We got a roomful here for you."

Patrolman Moran pointed to room 211. He took the curtain pole from the detective and carefully pushed the two limp snakes to one side. They were not dead, but certainly not dangerous any longer. Carefully he pushed back the door of room 211, stuck his head in the crack and surveyed the room. He pulled back his head.

"One more I can see, over by the bed," he said. "But look out. They're treacherous devils. One come from nowhere an' bit me on the pants."

The fireman went in cautiously and sprayed the snake. He looked around for more, but none was in sight, so he took his departure.

On the bed inside the room was an opened suitcase. It had holes in the side for air. Undoubtedly the snakes had been transported to the room in the suitcase.

The detectives quickly tumbled out the dresser drawers and looked in the closet for something by which to identify the former occupant of the room, but without success. There were some clothes in the closet, a few neckties and shirts in the drawers. They got

a description of the occupant of the room and then very carefully gathered up the half dead snakes with the curtain pole, put them in the suitcase, and packed themselves off to Central Station. So far as they were concerned, the snake incident was over.

## II

**P**ATROLMAN MORAN went back to his beat, wondering who had left the snakes. Might have been some kind of showman who had got in an accident and couldn't get back. But why had he left the suitcase open on the bed? The owner of the snakes wouldn't have done that. Then it came to him. The former occupant of room 211 had been a snake thief, one of the kind who hang around station waiting rooms and sneak grips and suitcases. He had sneaked this grip of snakes, unaware of what was in it, and upon carrying it to his room, had opened it—and then, of course, had disappeared.

With this theory in his mind the patrolman went back to the Jonquil Rooming House on his next round. The detectives, it seemed to him, had done more laughing and joking over the snakes than hunting for clues. They had made rather a sketchy investigation.

Patrolman Moran called the landlady. No; she hadn't cleaned the room yet. She had been afraid; probably she would call in a man tomorrow. She gave a description of the young man who had occupied the room, but it wasn't very illuminating, and his name, as she had it, was Bill Smith. He had been there over a month.

"Well, he'll never be back," said Patrolman Moran, with a grin. "Lemme have your key to 211. I want to look up something."

The officer went into the room, determined to make a thorough search to see if he could find any clue to the origin of the snakes. He jumbled things around in a dresser drawer. Neckties, half a package of cigarettes, some playing cards, odds and ends.

He went over to the closet, flashed his light in to be sure there were no snakes. A pair of trousers had been thrown in a corner of the closet. The patrolman eyed the trousers suspiciously. Fine place for an overlooked snake. He went out in the hall and got the curtain pole that had been left there, came back and poked at the trousers. No snake came forth, but his curtain stick struck a loose board in the corner.

He dragged the trousers out with the stick, stepped inside the closet. His foot struck the loose board, tilting it a little. He kicked at the board and suddenly a piece of the baseboard fell out.

Patrolman Moran jumped back in alarm, then grinned at his nervousness, and flashed the light in the corner. What he saw made his eyes pop half out of their sockets.

Tumbling out of the cavity were jewels—diamond rings, pendants, bracelets, all kinds of things, glittering there in the light of his flash.

Patrolman Danny Moran staggered out of the closet and passed a hand over a brow that was suddenly moist. He was dreaming, in the grip of a nightmare. Snakes and diamonds. His flashlight dropped from his nerveless hand and the light shattered. The officer slowly felt for a match, lighted it, and looked in the closet again. Yes; they were there. He continued to stare until the match burned his fingers and he came to sudden life, cursed heartily, and sucked his fingers.

He lighted another match and this



time he dared reach in and pull out some of the jewels. He scraped them out of the cavity, felt to be certain there were no more, and carefully gathering them up, laid them on the bed. Two double handfuls there were. Must be ten thousand dollars worth of jewels.

For a few minutes the patrolman wonderingly sorted over the jewels. He must get the news of his discovery to the detective bureau at once. Detectives could then get on the trail of the man, who was undoubtedly an important jewel thief. Without question he would come in for a very favorable notice over the discovery, and he could crow over the detective bureau.

But he had better not disturb things, better not even handle the jewels more than necessary, for the detectives would want to examine everything for fingerprints.

He knew that the rooming house telephone was in the hallway only a few steps from the door of room 211. Patrolman Moran left the jewels on the bed, stepped over to the door and out, closed the door, and went to call the detective bureau.

"Gimme the robbery squad," he huskily told Central, when he had got the police station. He waited for a few moments. "Lieutenant Watson?" he asked. "Say, Lieutenant, this is Patrolman Moran, No. 438. Say, Lieutenant, up in the snake room . . . Yeah, I said snake room . . . Yeah, up there I found a lotta diamints an' . . . Yeah, diamints, I said, up in the snake room . . . We found a lotta snakes in there. Say, didn't you hear about it . . . Don't git mad, Lieutenant. Hustle somebody up here to room 211, Jonquil Rooming House . . . Yeah, Lieutenant, they was real snakes, an' they're real diamints . . . **Yep, room 211 Jonquil . . . Oh, hell!**"

Patrolman Moran hung up the receiver and looked complainingly at the landlady, who had come up. "He hung up on me, yellin' somethin' about snakes."

"Did I hear you say you found some diamonds?" excitedly asked the landlady.

"Come an' look at 'em," invited Patrolman Moran, and led the way.

He opened the door of room 211, plunged in, then halted in confusion. There were no jewels on the bed.

For half a minute the officer stood and looked at the bed. It struck him that in his excitement he must have shoved them back in the closet. He dashed into the closet, struck a match. He staggered out.

"They're gone," he said hoarsely to the landlady. "The whole damn' heap of 'em. They've just disappeared."

"Well, somebody got 'em, then," said the landlady practically. "Things don't jest disappear."

Patrolman Moran frantically tumbled the bed pillows about. He looked under the bed. No jewels.

He would have extended his search to other parts of the room, but down the street wailed a police car siren and it was coming fast. He broke out in a cold sweat, then dashed into the hall as Lieutenant Watson and another detective came tearing up the stairs. Moran made for the lieutenant.

"They're gone," said the patrolman helplessly.

"What's gone?"

"The diamints."

**T**HE lieutenant shot a quick and suspicious look at the officer.

"Say, are you crazy?" he asked bluntly. "What's going on around here?"

Patrolman Moran nervously led the

lieutenant and the other detectives into room 211. He pointed out the cavity in the closet, told his story. It was an incoherent story. It would have been incoherent if told properly, but as told by Patrolman Moran it was a jumble. The lieutenant looked keenly at the patrolman, asked for a telephone, went to it and talked, came back.

"It's all right, Moran," he said soothingly. "I guess these snakes have upset you some. Come on, we're going to the station. I've asked that relief be sent up for you."

"They ain't no use for me to go in," objected Patrolman Moran. "I'll git back on my beat."

"No, I want you to tell your story to your captain," said the lieutenant, and Patrolman Moran, perforce, had to go.

At the police station Lieutenant Watson led the way to Patrolman Moran's captain. Captain Melvin, who had talked to the lieutenant on the telephone and knew something of the affair, looked sympathetically at his patrolman.

"He's upset, Captain," said Lieutenant Watson. "I found out that he did run into a mess of snakes this morning. Funny thing. Now he thinks he's found some diamonds and things that have disappeared. It's—well, I'm sorry, but it's an impossible story, and I think he needs a little rest. Snakes are likely to upset anybody."

"Tell me about it, Moran," invited the captain.

Patrolman Moran began with the snake affair, and progressed to the diamonds. His story did not sound very convincing.

What the captain actually thought was that the officer had knocked off a board in the dark closet, had flashed his light in the hole, and seeing something

gleam under the light, possibly a nail, had excitedly imagined that he saw jewels and had rushed out to report the find. The captain didn't think he was exactly crazy, but he felt that certainly Patrolman Moran was badly upset over the snakes, and that his imagination had run away with him.

"Moran, let's see how this thing lays," suggested the captain. "No doubt a sneak thief stole those snakes, and of course he beat it when he opened the grip." The captain grinned. "I'd like to have seen that. Now then, no cheap sneak thief is going to have a lot of diamonds. He wouldn't be out stealing suitcases if he had a load like that—he'd be fencing the stuff. Don't that sound reasonable?"

"Yes, it does," admitted the patrolman. "But I saw the diamonds, an' there's the hole."

"You can kick a hole most anywhere in those old, cheap rooming houses," said the captain. "God knows, Moran, from what I've heard about those snakes, it was enough to excite anybody. People see funny things, Moran, when they get excited, and it's liable to happen to any of us. Once I heard a cop describe a pair of pants on a man as being red, and you know nobody wears red pants." The captain got quite impressive as he ended with his example of an excited man, trying to drive into Moran's mind the fact that others had also "seen things."

But Patrolman Moran was angry and excited over the open doubt cast on his story, and the freely expressed belief of Lieutenant Watson that his head was a little turned.

"I expect they was red," said Patrolman Moran stubbornly. "I expect the cop was right. Did you ever prove they wasn't red?"

"No, I never proved they wasn't red," the captain said slowly.

"Well, I'd bet a month's pay they was."

"Well, we won't discuss the pants," said the captain soothingly. "You'd better take a little rest, Danny."

Patrolman Moran roared loudly at this decision. "Cap," he yelled, "I ain't screwy. My God, Cap, I know whether I saw diamints or not."

"You're upset, Danny," insisted the captain. "Take the rest of the day off anyway."

Patrolman Moran buttoned up his coat with trembling fingers.

"Captain Melvin," he said earnestly, "if I have to lay off because of a mess of snakes, you kin have my badge. If I'm crazy, I am. If I'm not screwy, why, I'm not. It's one or the other. I either go back on my beat, or I don't."

Captain Melvin looked with a sympathetic eye at his indignant patrolman. Patrolman Moran was a good, conscientious officer, and he didn't look crazy, albeit a little excited.

"You can go back on your beat," decided the captain. "I'm not going to tar a good man with a report he's screwy just because he gets mixed up with some snakes. I don't understand that diamond business at all, but at that you turned it over to the detective bureau, told them your story, and it's their affair. You drop the diamond matter, Danny, and let the dicks do as they choose. Now, you go back on your beat, and keep cool, Danny, keep cool."

Patrolman Moran straightened his collar, shifted his belt a trifle, saluted his captain, and marched out to go back on his beat.

And about the time that he left the police station, Jakie Thrapp, a little sneak thief, who had caused all the trouble in room 211 of the Jonquil

Rooming House, was turning into Bert the Barber's speakeasy, with his pockets full of diamonds and his mind in a mad whirl. He was looking for "Ironsides" Donnelley, well known as a "fence" who handled jewels skillfully and lucratively for all concerned.

### III

IT was too early in the day for Ironsides Donnelley to be around. He generally showed up around four o'clock in the afternoon. The bartender knew Jakie for what he was, and shrewdly figured that Jakie had run into a diamond that he wanted to capitalize quickly. Business was not so very good in the underworld and Ironsides might not want to miss even a small transaction.

"You go over to Ironsides' room," suggested the bartender, and gave Jakie his address.

Jakie waked up Ironsides, and spread before his astonished eyes a glittering array of jewels.

"How's that for a haul?" he asked.

Ironsides picked here and there among the diamonds and trinkets. "Pretty good for a cheap skate like you," he admitted, and then a glitter came into his eye. "Say, bo, where in hell did you get this stuff?"

"Oh, I lifted it," carelessly replied Jakie.

"Well, I'll tell the world you lifted something," said Ironsides. "It's some of the Layton stuff. It's hot—awful hot, an' if you or me was caught with it, bingo! They'd hang us for the Layton murder."

Jakie staggered back in horror, for the Layton murder and robbery had been a famous one and the slayer had never been caught. The underworld had been full of talk about the murder, but a lone wolf had per-

petrated the job, and none of the jewels had ever turned up. This one and that one had been suspected, but even the underworld had been unable to put a definite finger on the slayer.

"The Layton stuff," Jakie fairly croaked. "You mean that's some of the stuff that the guy who killed Layton got?"

"Just that. Some of it. About ten grand. But that guy who bumped Layton got more than fifty grand altogether, an' this is just part—just a little bit of it. Anyhow, it's enough to hang you if it was ever traced to you. They'd think you'd done the job."

"Where—where kin I ditch it?" asked Jakie, terror-struck. "Ironsides, you got to help me."

Ironsides sat and picked at the jewels.

"Gimme the low down on where you got it," he said suddenly. "You never lifted this in no ordinary way."

Jakie pressed his head in his hands, groaned, and decided to talk.

"Well, it come about in a funny way," said Jakie. "Me, I snatched a grip last night, a heavy one. Lugged it up to my room in the Jonquil. When I opened it, out popped a mess of snakes, rattlesnakes—"

"Snakes!" exclaimed Ironsides. "Real snakes?"

"Was they real?" said Jakie. "I'll tell the lop-eared world they was real. An' they come out boilin' mad. Bo, I beat it outa there on the jump an' I was afraid to go back for my things. I knew they'd be hell a-poppin' when the landlady goes in, an' this mornin' I laid acrost the street from the house to see what would happen. Plenty happened all right. They had cops an' the fire department—"

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" roared Ironsides. "I'd like to 'a' seen it."

Jakie didn't see much at which to laugh.

"They had a hell of a time," he said earnestly. "You can see what a nice mess it left me in. All my clothes up there, an' the dicks would git my description from the old lady an' be lookin' fer me as a snake thief."

"Yeah," said Ironsides. "You was outa luck. What'd you do?"

"Well, after a while everybody left an' it quieted down. I had counted the cops an' dicks who went in an' they all checked out, so I know they ain't watchin' the room, thinkin' I guess I wouldn't be damn fool enough to come back. I had a key to the room, havin' had a dupe made as I usually do, so when I move I kin go back an' sneak stuff. When all the excitement's over, I think mebbe I kin sneak back an' git some of my stuff an' scam out the winder on the alley. I picked that room fer that reason. You kin swing over from the winder, ketch a pipe, an' jump the fire escape, an' so git down—"

"You're pretty smart for a sneak," said Ironsides.

"Yeah. Well, I sneak up an' pipe the hallway. Nobody there, so in I go. I'm gatherin' up some stuff when I hear somebody at the door. Ain't time to git out the winder. I slide under the bed an' I see the legs of a cop when he comes in. I think I'm gone."

"In a jam, yeah," agreed Ironsides.

"I'll say I was in a jam," said Jakie, fervently. "The bull stalls around an' looks in the closet. Then he goes out the door an' I'm beginnin' to crawl out when back he comes with a stick, so I ducks back under the bed. He pokes around in the closet with the stick an' hits a loose board. Honest, Ironsides, I've stepped on that board myself a dozen times. The cop investigates.

From where I am I kin see him with his flash in the closet. He kicks around an' out comes a board in the corner, an' all these jools tumble out."

"An' then?" asked Ironsides breathlessly.

"Why, then the cop gathers 'em up, dumps 'em on the bed, an' goes out. I figger he's gonna phone the station. Me, I slide out from under the bed, grab the stuff, an' I'm out the winder."

**I**RONSIDES DONNELLEY chuckled.

"I'll bet there's a plumb screwy cop around this town," he said. "Say, everybody clear up to the chief will ride that guy if he reported in he'd found these jools an' then lost 'em." Ironsides sat back in a chair and looked thoughtfully at Jakie. "Well, we can figger what happened, how them Layton things got there. The guy that had that room before you, he was the bird who killed Layton. Somethin' happened to this guy; mebbe he got bumped off an' the stuff's been layin' there. Jakie, probably all the rest of the Layton stuff is hid somewhere in that room."

Jakie shifted uneasily under Ironsides' scrutiny.

"Too hot to handle," murmured Jakie.

"Not if we had it all," disagreed Ironsides. "I wouldn't take a chance on this dab, but if we had it all, more'n fifty grand, it would be worth takin' a risk for. We could unharness it, an' mebbe cut some of the rocks different. Do you reckon we could git in that room an' hunt?"

"I dunno," replied Jakie. "We'd have to wait till night anyhow."

"An' mebbe the room'll be rented by that time," snapped Ironsides. "This

is a rush job if ever there was one. Only thing is, I'm afraid now they got dicks there waitin'."

"You could go up an' ask to rent 211," suggested Jakie.

"That would be awful smart, wouldn't it?" said Ironsides scornfully. "Right there I'd get in a jam. That landlady would yell copper on the jump. It's a big haul, Jakie, an' it's now or never. If we hang around we might miss it. Brace up an' come on."

"We could sift over an' see what's doin' around there anyway," agreed Jakie. "I still got my key to the room."

The two crooks slipped warily over to a point across from the Jonquil Rooming House. All appeared quiet. Ironsides went across and entered the rooming house to take a look at things. He came back after a few minutes and joined Jakie.

"I rented a room," he told Jakie. "It's No. 216, not far away from 211. There ain't no cops there, I'm sure, an' if nobody's in the hallway when we go up you can sneak in."

They went softly up the stairs and reconnoitered. No one was in sight. Jakie opened the door of room 211 with his key. They entered and locked the door again.

The room had been pretty much tumbled about. Very carefully they began sounding the baseboards, the floor boards, the walls, looking for hiding places. And back of a baseboard behind the bed they found the rest of the store of jewels that, as Ironsides had surmised, the Layton murderer had hidden. A vast store it was, glittering, a king's ransom.

Ironsides, used to handling jewels, literally gasped at the hoard. He turned from the bed where they had piled the jewels, to Jakie.

"This guy," he whispered, "whoever he was, had that small bunch over in the closet where he could get at 'em easy. He was probably unharnessin' a few of the diamonds an' gettin' rid of 'em, but he had these others waitin' for his big getaway. He—"

Ironsides stopped his discussion as his eye caught something on the floor. It was a snake wriggling out from some clothes that the officers had tumbled close to the bureau.

"Look—look," gasped Ironsides.

Jakie looked and climbed hastily on the bed. Ironsides backed to the window. The snake was between them and the door.

"We'll grab the stuff an' git out here like you did," hissed Ironsides. He looked out in the alley, pulled back his head. "Can't do that," he said in a hoarse whisper. "They's a bunch of guys down there an' if they saw us they might call the cops. We'll have to kill that damn snake."

Ironsides reached for the curtain pole that Patrolman Moran had brought to poke in the closet. Cautiously he advanced on the snake, then jumped back as it coiled and struck at him. He got in a lick with the curtain pole, but did not kill the reptile. Then he aimed another blow, missed, and his stick hit the bed a resounding whack. The snake retreated toward the door.

So intent were the two men on the fight that they failed to hear heavy feet tiptoeing toward the door. Suddenly the door was flung open, and Patrolman Moran stood there, with the landlady peeping over his shoulder.

#### IV

**M**ORE snakes," croaked Patrolman Moran. And then his revolver came out as he saw the two men. "Who're you? Stay still

an' stick 'em up. Good gosh, lookit the diamints on the bed."

He would have rushed to the diamonds, but the snake was between him and the bed.

"I knew somebody was in the room," excitedly cried the landlady. "I heard 'em hittin' around, an' I listened at the door an' heard 'em talkin' low. It's a good thing I run down an' called you. I thought you never would come along."

"Yeah, it was a good thing," agreed the patrolman. "Lady, am I dreamin'? Are them real diamints on the bed? Is that a snake there on the floor? Is that a guy on the bed an' another by the winder?"

"Come to," said the landlady. "Them is diamints, an' that's a snake. We're rich."

"You guys," rasped Patrolman Moran, "who are you, anyway?"

"The one on the bed had this room," cried the landlady. "An', why, the other one just rented another room."

"Can I crawl on the bed?" asked Ironsides. "That snake is workin' this way."

"Yeah, but keep your hands high," said Moran.

Ironsides sat on the bed and swung his feet up, hands still high.

"Lady," said Patrolman Moran, "go phone to Captain Melvin of the police department. Get him personal. an' tell him I got a roomful of snakes an' diamints. Tell him I'll hold 'em all like they are till help comes."

The landlady went out in the hall to phone.

She came back shortly. "He said you was crazy," she reported, "an' he said he'd send up the ambulance for you. He wanted to know if you was violent."

"Didn't you tell him you seen it, too?" demanded the officer.

"He hung up," said the landlady.

However, it wasn't the ambulance that came. It was Captain Melvin himself with two husky patrolmen, to subdue the insane Patrolman Moran.

The captain brushed aside the landlady, and advanced cautiously toward the door of room 211, followed by the two officers.

"Now, Moran," said the captain, talking as he would to a child, "you know me, don't you, Cap Melvin, your old friend?"

"Sure I know you," replied Patrolman Moran without looking back, "but lamp what I got in this room."

"Sure, sure," said the captain soothingly. "I'll take a look. Let me have your gun, Danny. It might go off."

"Cap, come an' take a look or I'll shoot sure 'nough," threatened Patrolman Moran impatiently. "Stick your head in this door."

Captain Melvin decided that the only thing to do was to humor the patrolman. Obviously he was far gone. He tiptoed and peeped over the officer's shoulder, then his mouth dropped open, and hoarse curses gurgled in his throat. He started into the room.

"Look out for that snake," warned Patrolman Moran.

"Oh, yes, the snake," said the captain. He jerked out his revolver, leaned over as close as he dared, and shot off the snake's head. "That settles him," he said, blowing the smoke out of his revolver. "Any more snakes around here, Moran?"

"Not that I know of," replied Patrolman Moran, stepping in the room himself and fanning the smoke.

"Now," said the captain, "who're these guys and whose diamonds are those on the bed, and what's it all

about? Search those birds for rods, Moran."

PATROLMAN MORAN expertly searched Ironsides Donnelley and Jackie Thrapp. Neither had weapons. The captain went over to the bed and wonderingly picked up some of the jewels. He looked at them, put them down, picked around at others.

"My God," he said suddenly, "that queer pendant there! That's—why, I remember, that's one of the pieces in the Layton loot. Why, Moran—hell's bells, these are the Layton jewels. We've got the Layton murderers, and from the looks of it, all of the loot. Get some bracelets on those guys quick."

Patrolman Moran stared dumbly at the captain at this revelation.

"Handcuff 'em," snapped the captain.

The patrolman jerked out handcuffs and started for the men. At that Jackie Thrapp began to blubber.

"We didn't bump Layton," he quavered. "We—we found this stuff."

"Oh, yeah?" said the captain. "What's your names?"

Ironsides Donnelley still had some composure.

"I'll tell you exactly how we get mixed up in this," he offered.

"Shoot," invited the captain.

Ironsides told the captain Jackie's story. The captain heard how Jackie had stolen the grip of snakes; how he had sneaked back to get some of his things and was under the bed when Patrolman Moran had found some of the jewels, and had then disappeared through the window when the officer left the room; how the two of them had come back to look for the rest of the Layton loot and had got in the fight with the overlooked snake. His story

sounded true, and fitted in with Patrolman Moran's experience. At the end Captain Melvin scratched his head and rubbed his chin.

"Bring in that landlady," he ordered Patrolman Moran.

The patrolman found the landlady in the hallway, excitedly describing the jewels to a crowd.

He ushered her in.

"Who had this room before this man here?" the captain demanded, pointing at Jackie.

"Oh, a nice man," replied the landlady. "His name was Mr. Jackson. He paid for a month, and then he disappeared two weeks before his rent was up. Lots of my folks do that. After his rent was up I rented it again."

"Remember his looks?"

"Nice lookin' man, tall, smooth-shaved, an' had a way of shuttin' one eye every once in a while—"

"Squinty Behrens," breathed Ironsides Donnelley.

"Who?" shot the captain.

Ironsides Donnelley breathed deeply. He was caught with the Layton loot and he had no desire to hang. In a jam like that he let all of his underworld ethics go by the board.

"Squinty Behrens," he repeated huskily. "He's up in the big house for some kind of a jam he got in a couple months ago. That's why he never got this stuff. He copped a plea an' he got a year."

"Oh, ho," said the captain. "So he copped a plea, eh? Well, we'll see if

he can cop a plea on this Layton murder rap." And he began gathering up the jewels.

An hour after Captain Melvin had confirmed the fact that Squinty Behrens was in the penitentiary on a comparatively minor charge, and had demanded his return to face a murder trial, the captain called Patrolman Moran into his office.

"Danny," said the captain genially, "we certainly hung one on the detective bureau. Lieutenant Watson is raring around and claiming he ought to have been called. Squinty Behrens is the bird all right, and the insurance company is going to slip you a nice check for getting back those jewels. A fine day's work, Danny, but I sure thought you were as screwy as a loon all day."

"I did myself," confessed Patrolman Moran. "Yes, sir, a coupla times I thought I was plumb due for the booby hatch."

The captain laughed.

"Remember us talking this morning, Danny, about a guy, a cop, too, who described a man as wearing red pants?" asked the captain.

Patrolman Moran looked at Captain Melvin suspiciously.

"Yeah."

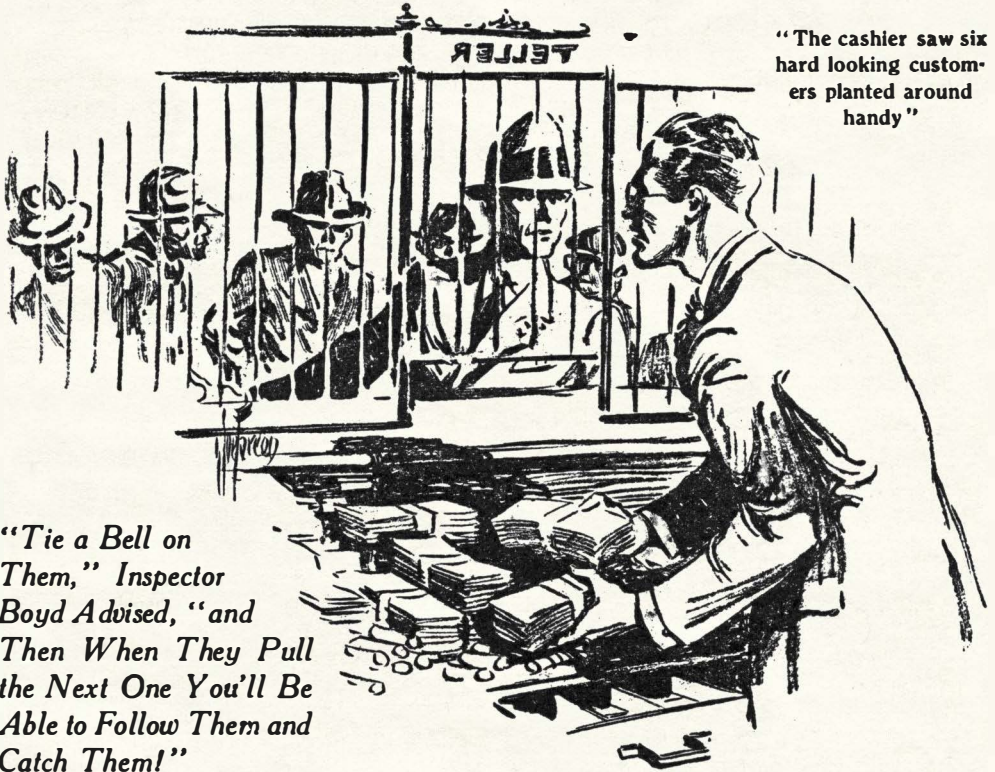
"I guess maybe, Danny, that guy did have on red pants," chuckled the captain. "When a harness bull goes screwy and solves a big murder with snakes and diamonds, why, I guess maybe a guy can wear red pants."





# Boyd's Bandit Cure

By Frank Piazza



*"Tie a Bell on Them," Inspector Boyd Advised, "and Then When They Pull the Next One You'll Be Able to Follow Them and Catch Them!"*

IT was tradition in the detective bureau that Inspector Boyd, homicide squad, never had finished a game of solitaire without interruption. Pink and plump, with Buddha-like face, and opaque, inscrutable eyes, he was a magnet for all the knottier mysteries of the department. From white-maned Chief Quinn to rawest rookie they all found the bland inspector cheerfully helpful, but, unfortunately, his advice was too often more puzzling than the case itself.

The robbery detail, Schoonover and Wiggins, approached him this morning just as he carefully placed a red ten

on a black knave, dragging comfortably meanwhile on a foul nickel cigar.

"Howdy, boys," he greeted affably through a smoke film. "How are all the bad bank bandits behaving?"

"That's what we wanted to ask you about," Schoonover said ruefully, his horsey face red. "We're having trouble."

"Yeah." Wiggins nodded, lips pursed morosely. "We're up against two smart young bandits this time. They've got a whole new bag of tricks and technique for knocking over banks. We're in hot water."

"There isn't anything new under

the sun," Inspector Boyd disagreed. "Crooks have never been smart. Try Mussolini's cure."

"What's that?" Schoonover asked hopefully.

"Castor oil! Repeat dose until patient is cured!"

Schoonover's face fell and he stared helplessly at Wiggins.

"But," Wiggins interposed practically, "how you going to do that if you ain't got 'em? They've pulled three hot, classy jobs right here in town and got away every time without anyone seeing 'em go."

"Three, eh? Hm! That being the case, tie a bell to them. When they pull job number four—and have no doubt that they will—you will be able to follow them and catch them!"

Inspector Boyd rolled his cigar between chubby lips and smiled benignly, for all the world like a chubby idol in a Chinese temple. Complacently he resumed his game.

"But," Schoonover tried again, "you don't understand. These new bank bandits are really clever. They ain't the regular kind of crooks. They ain't pulled one job that was earmarked professional. That's why we're stopped. Our stoolies ain't any use."

Inspector Boyd sighed and resignedly gathered up his cards.

"I've given you all the tips you need to run them down," he said mildly. "But never mind, tell me about them. Maybe I can give you some more."

Wiggins eagerly whipped a sheaf of typewritten reports from his pocket. "Here's the case so far.

"Three weeks ago Friday, at night, they jimmied into a vacant store next door to the Elmwood Bank. From there they burrowed through the plaster wall into the bank.

"In the morning, when the hired help arrived, beginning with the janitor at 6 A.M. and ending with the manager at 9 A.M., the two bandits met 'em with masks and guns. They forced the manager to open the vault. There was \$15,000 in the safe—that's a factory district and the bank had the payroll money. The two bandits tied up the bank employees and gagged them. Then they filled the janitor's bucket with currency and silver, spread the chamois over it, and walked out the front door. It was an hour before the bank manager worked loose and phoned us."

Inspector Boyd's cigar changed corners. "They wore masks? Left no fingerprints? And nobody saw them leave the bank? Right?"

Wiggins nodded, staring at him. "And they didn't get their crowbars and jimmys in this town. We checked that."

"Go on."

"**B**ANK job number two was the Farmers' Bank right down town. There's a state free employment bureau a block away, you know.

"A week ago Wednesday a well dressed young fellow appeared at the cashier's window with a brief case. He's snappy and full of business. He told the cashier to look the bank over. It don't take the cashier thirty seconds to spot six hard looking customers planted around handy, with the bossy look of men holding heaters in their paws. No guns were in sight, mind you, but the cashier knew his can wasn't worth two cents if he didn't come through.

"So he slid \$6,000 through the wicket and the snappy youngster stuffed the bills in his brief case and

joined his companion waiting at the door."

"And the six hard looking ones stayed behind?"

"How did you know?" Schoonover demanded.

Inspector Boyd's pink face was impenetrable. "Go on," he said to Wiggins.

"Well, when we got to the bank the six men were still there. They turned out to be just six dumb yokels. The two young bandits had picked 'em up at the employment bureau, promised 'em jobs in the country, and told 'em to wait at the bank while they got some money and ran some errands and then they'd all be taken to the farms. They'd a been waiting at the bank yet if the cashier hadn't screwed up enough nerve to tip off the president to what he'd done."

"That was neat," Inspector Boyd admitted. "Nothing rough, tough, or ugly, no guns, no threats—pure imagination. Nobody saw the bandits leave the bank."

"The cashier didn't snap out of his fear trance for a quarter of an hour. The bank bandits could have escaped on a horse in that time."

Inspector Boyd's slitted eyes were bright with speculation.

"Well," Wiggins continued, "the last job was yesterday at the Citizens' National. The same pair of bandits came in with a \$20,000 endowment insurance policy and asked for a loan of \$8,000 on it. They were shown into the president's office while the bank verified the policy with the insurance company. Everything was in order. The money was brought into the president's office.

"Twenty minutes later when his stenographer went into the office she found the old boy knocked cold with a

blackjack. Of course, the money, the policy, and the two young business men were missing."

"Some of the bank tellers saw 'em go," Schoonover said. "But they didn't pay much attention. They walked out slow-like, and the bank clerks didn't think nothing of it. Many people see the president during the day's business. Outside no one paid 'em any attention. Which way they went or how is a mystery."

"What do you think, Inspector?" Wiggins asked hopefully.

"People," Inspector Boyd said mildly, "are lazy. Why, even you two boys came to me hoping I'd do your thinking for you! Now, if you'll look into this bank case, you'll find that those bandits of yours are—lazy!"

"But . . ." Schoonover began, his face crimson.

"That's all there is to it," Inspector Boyd said. "I've given you three tips on this case—that's one for each job. Now get to work on it before I really begin to think you are lazy!"

A police clerk appeared beside him.

"Chief Quinn wants to see you, Inspector."

Inspector Boyd nodded and rose, big, broad, benevolent. In a rank cloud of smoke he sauntered off, leaving the robbery detail staring at each other in dejected puzzlement. As usual, Inspector Boyd's advice was more mystifying than helpful. Yet both knew, by sad past experience, that in the big detective's cryptic words was hidden all the clues needed to solve the case.

## II

"WHAT'S eating you, Chief?"

Inspector Boyd asked, his big feet planted firmly on his superior's expensive quartered-oak desk.

Chief Quinn ceased his feverish pacing and halted beside his ace detective, one hand on Boyd's broad shoulder.

"I hate to do this, Boyd," he said, "but orders is orders. The commissioner wants me to take you off homicides and put you on robberies."

Inspector Boyd's cigar rolled from port to starboard, glowed.

"Not bank robberies by any chance?"

"How did you know? Never mind, I might have known you'd be onto it. You never miss anything."

"What's the beef?" Inspector Boyd asked quietly.

"The bank association squawked. Three banks have been nicked for \$29,000 in three weeks—and we haven't made an arrest. Schoonover and Wiggins have flopped on this case badly. The bank association applied the squeeze, and the commissioner orders that I take you off homicides and sic you onto these bank robbers. That's what you get for being famous—you've got to live up to your press clippings!"

Inspector Boyd's pink, round face was unruffled as he rose leisurely. "Anything else?" he asked, casually.

"Yes," Chief Quinn said. "There's \$500 for expenses waiting for you in the treasurer's office. The association put it up."

At the door Inspector Boyd turned on his heel.

"As a favor to me, Chief," he said. "Don't say anything to the robbery detail about my being assigned to this case. Not until I tell you to."

The white-haired chief nodded, wondering what was passing behind those impassive blue eyes. Inspector Boyd was no publicity hound, no spotlight seeker. The praise that came his way

did so in spite of him. Chief Quinn shrugged. He would learn soon enough; the big thing was that Boyd was on the job now.

WITH \$500 in currency tucked into his capacious wallet, Inspector Boyd made the Elmwood Bank his first stop. He whirled up to the wide portals in his favorite taxicab, a dilapidated hack piloted by a gallows-faced ruffian. Only Inspector Boyd knew that the decrepit cab hid under its battered hood a powerful engine that hadn't come with the chassis. Or that the ugly visaged driver was "Speed" Wiley, a former dirt track racing champion, who had used his face as a sled in a disastrous pile-up of racing cars at Ascot. Wiley had retired from racing after that accident, his face a villainous ruin.

It was little bits of knowledge like these that Inspector Boyd gathered to him so easily—and used with such uncanny results.

Inside the bank the big detective flashed his diamond-studded gold buzzer and spoke: "Inspector Boyd from Headquarters. Tell me about the robbery."

The thin, nervous manager dry-washed unctuous hands and repeated the story Schoonover and Wiggins had told the inspector. The detective broke into the narrative.

"What kind of cars—if any—did you see parked outside the bank when you came down to work?" he asked.

The manager's brow drew together, frowning.

"I can't remember them all, but I know the janitor's flivver was standing right in front of the bank. Near by there was some sort of a fancy roadster, then a delivery truck—a cleaner's truck, I think—and a sedan,

and there were some others across the street."

The young bank cashier was more helpful.

"There were only three cars on this side when I arrived. It was ten minutes to eight. There was the janitor's flivver. A Packard roadster—swell job, all nickel and fancy paint—and a Buick sedan. I don't remember noticing those across the street."

The tellers hadn't noticed the cars, but the janitor, summoned from his home, verified the cashier's report. Inspector Boyd nodded affably, picked up his derby, waved to the manager and sauntered out to the waiting Wiley.

"The Farmers' Bank, Speed," he told the ex-racer.

"Fast or slow?"

"Medium."

But the inspector learned little new at the bank other than the description of the two young bank bandits. The cashier, a furtive, frightened, spare man, described the bandits as young, under thirty, well dressed, clean-cut, businesslike. They looked like bond salesmen, he said. The one who had secured the money spoke excellent English, without slang, smiled easily, and had been unafraid and unhurried. The other had remained near the exit smoking a cigarette.

Inspector Boyd found himself standing at the curb outside the bank, surveying the street. Opposite he noted a cigar stand and he strolled across, while Speed Wiley followed with the taxicab.

"What's the best weed in the house?" the detective asked the bright-eyed, wizened little proprietor.

"The Estrellita Havana—one dollar!" the man behind the counter answered promptly. "I sell a lot to the

bankers around here. But you don't look like a banker."

Inspector Boyd smiled and discreetly let the diamonds flash on his gold shield.

"You ought to be on the force," he complimented the gray little man. "I'll bet your eyes are sharp and your memory good."

"As for instance?"

"Remember a week ago Wednesday when the Farmers' Bank got nicked?"

"Go on."

"Did you see any automobiles parked across the street that you might remember?"

The mouse-like little man nodded shrewdly.

"Sitting here in this cigar store all day I get so I notice everything in the street," he said. "I remember things, too. On that day you speak of there were two flivvers parked in a red zone, a big newspaper truck double-parked, a black sedan, a cream-colored roadster, and a blue coupé with a trailer. A cop came along and tagged one of the flivvers just as the other sneaked out, followed by the truck and the sedan. That was about the time the rumpus in the bank started and the police came. I don't know when, but after things quieted down again I noticed the roadster was gone too."

Inspector Boyd drew out a five-dollar bill and stared at it, pink face thoughtful.

"I wonder," he mused aloud, "if you remember the make of that roadster and the sedan? Five dollars says you don't."

"The roadster was a Packard and the sedan a Buick."

Inspector Boyd sighed and laid the bill on the counter.

"You're wasting time behind that cigar counter," he said, and returned

to the cab, directing Wiley to go to the Citizens' National Bank.

### III

"WHAT about that insurance policy?" he asked the president, once inside the bank.

"It was a \$20,000 endowment policy in the name of Hubert Mack. The insurance company told me it was all in order. After the robbery the police and I went to Mr. Mack's home. Then we found that the policy had been stolen from Mr. Mack's car. He had had it in a brief case with numerous other papers and didn't know it was gone until we told him. He established a perfect alibi for his movements during the robbery, and he didn't look at all like either of the bandits. I am sure he had nothing to do with the robbery; he is well known as a real estate broker."

Inspector Boyd nodded and secured a description of the two bandits which tallied with what he already had. Then he left. In the street the smell of asphalt, orange peel, news ink still wet on noon extras, and exhaust fumes smote him and he strode towards the raucous-voiced newsboy on the corner.

"Hello, Onions," he greeted, smiling. "Some excitement in your block yesterday, eh?"

"Yeah, Inspector Boyd." The grimy urchin grinned toothily in recognition. He whipped a folded paper towards the big detective.

Inspector Boyd held up a silver dollar.

"It's yours, Onions, if your memory is good today. What cars were parked on this side of the street yesterday about the time of the bank robbery?"

"That's a pipe!" the newsie grinned, grabbing the dollar. "There was two Chrysler roadsters, a Model T, a Dodge

sedan, a Packard roadster, two Lincolns, a Buick sedan, and . . ."

"That's enough! The dollar's yours!"

Inspector Boyd permitted himself a tiny whistle as he went towards the waiting taxi.

"Speed," he said, climbing in, "you're getting rich off me. I think I'll rent a car for the rest of the day. Keeping you around is too expensive. Drive to that rent car station at Nineteenth and Franklin."

"Aw, Inspector, I ain't chargin' yuh much," Speed Wiley protested. "Say th' word, an' I'll drive yuh around fer nothin'."

Inspector Boyd's blue eyes twinkled.

"No," he said. "I'll be needing you soon. Go to your garage and wait for me. Here's a fin—keep the change."

AT the Kimball Drive-Ur-Self station he got out and sought the attendant in the tiny office.

"I see you're equipped with new Chevrolets and Chryslers," the detective said, pink face cherubic. "Haven't you got any heavier makes—Packards, for instance?"

"Nope. But we got two Buicks—a roadster and a sedan."

Inspector Boyd sighed and showed his police badge negligently.

"A Buick will have to do, then. Was the sedan out of the station three weeks ago Saturday?"

The grease-stained attendant glanced at a wall calendar and then scanned his records. "Yes," he said.

"And was it out again a week ago Wednesday?"

"Yes," the attendant said, after a moment's search.

"And was it out yesterday?"

"Yes."

"How many men in it? Two?"

"No. Only one."

"Same man all three times?"

"Yes."

"Young fellow, snappy, well dressed, smooth talker?"

"Why, no." The attendant shook his head. "An old fellow, thick-set, chunky. I'd say he was a mechanic or a garageman—his hands looked it. I didn't question him too much; we don't any more as long as they put up the cash deposit and give two good references. This fellow gave two good ones."

"What name and address did he give you?"

"Milton Sharp. Address 321 Elkin Avenue."

"Hmm." Inspector Boyd's blue eyes were opaque, his face expressionless. "How long did he keep the car when he took it out?"

"He always got the car in the evening, around five or six. And he usually returned it next day, from noon on. He was in here only about an hour ago."

"Does he drive far, can you tell?"

"No, that's a queer thing. The speedometer never registers more than twenty miles. And it hasn't been tampered with, either. Yet he keeps the car sometimes twenty-four hours. We charge him by the hour, but he never kicks. Pays right up."

Inspector Boyd smiled.

"I think I'll rent that sedan for a couple of hours," he said, drawing out his wallet. "I'm going to call on Mr. Milton Sharp!"

Making sure there were no fingerprints on the steering wheel, he climbed into the black sedan. He was thinking deeply as he drove out to the suburb where lived Milton Sharp.

Slowly he drove along the residential street, sparsely settled, gazing at the

house numbers. He halted at last before a weed-grown, goat-ravaged vacant lot, where number 321 should have been. There was no 321. The non-existence of Milton Sharp's address did not surprise Inspector Boyd. He had expected it.

He drove the sedan to the garage Speed Wiley made his headquarters and found the ex-racer waiting patiently. Together they went over the big sedan, searching it from front bumper to tail light. But their search was futile; there was not the slightest clue that would point to the bank bandits. Half an hour later Inspector Boyd drove to the Drive-Ur-Self station, followed by Wiley in his cab. The former dirt track champion was grinning, muttering something that sounded strangely like: "Whatta man!"

#### IV

INSPECTOR BOYD turned the big sedan in and spoke briefly to the curious attendant.

"Milton Sharp been in?"

"No."

"That address he gave you was a fake. No house there. But if he comes in again to rent a car let him have the sedan. Telephone me at Police Headquarters as soon as he's driven out. No one else is to get this car but Sharp. Understand?"

"Yes, sir!" A green bill vanished in the attendant's palm.

Together, Inspector Boyd and Speed Wiley enjoyed a belated lunch and then returned to the police station. Wiley drove into the police garage and the big detective issued orders for the installation of a siren on the ancient, battered hack. Then he sought out Chief Quinn in his office. It was barely four o'clock.

"What, already?" Chief Quinn de-

manded, staring in surprise at the chubby detective.

"Not quite, Chief," the inspector said, lighting a stogie. "How's the robbery detail making out?"

The chief emitted a loud snort.

"They're not making out. They're up against a blank wall—without a ladder. Wanted me to put a guard on every bank in the city! Can you imagine that—in a city of 500,000 population with more than fifty branch banks?"

"Hmm. Well, maybe I'll be able to help the boys out."

"You're certainly not going to give them the credit for anything you do, are you?" Chief Quinn exploded indignantly.

"All right, all right," Inspector Boyd placated. "Then you'll have to make the pinch. I'm not going to. I'd have Schoonover and Wiggins down on me for the rest of my days; and Lord knows I haven't got anything against them. They're nice boys, a little thick-headed, but they'll make good inspectors with more experience. Why don't you make the pinch, Chief, and ring Schoonover and Wiggins in on it to help you? They'll never suspect I'm mixed up in it."

"And what do you get out of it?" Chief Quinn demanded gruffly. "You're going to break this case. You should get the credit."

"Not at the expense of the robbery detail. I'll make out. If I step in and publicly crack this case and the newspapers find out, Schoonover and Wiggins'll never live it down. Be a good egg, Chief; you make the pinch."

"All right, if that's the way you feel about it. What do you want me to do?"

"When I tell you to get ready I want you to call Schoonover and

Wiggins into your office and to wait here. And I want any report of a bank robbery to be flashed first right in here from the switchboard. That'll be all."

"Done, you big, soft-hearted Irishman. Now get out of my sight before I break down and kiss you!"

THE next three days Inspector Boyd put in playing rummy in the squad room with Speed Wiley. Wiggins and Schoonover would have asked the big detective for advice, but the presence of Wiley deterred them and Boyd gave no sign that he was aware of their anxiety and bewilderment. They dashed in and out of the squad room several times daily, but no worth while arrests ever resulted from their mysterious journeyings.

As for Speed Wiley, he wore what he fondly believed was an amiable grin, but was in reality a distorted, baleful leer due to his race-track-ruined face. When the expected call finally came Boyd answered it with alacrity.

"Inspector Boyd speaking."

"This is Kimball's Drive-Ur-Self, Inspector. Milton Sharp just rented the sedan. He's gone now. Headed down Franklin Street. Want the license number?"

"No, thanks. That's all."

Inspector Boyd hung up and beckoned to the watchful Wiley. Together they went into the chief's office.

"Within the next twenty-four hours, Chief," Inspector Boyd said. "There'll be bank robbery number four. I want the robbery detail called in. You explain to them you've got a tip on the robbery. Then call me in and explain the same thing to me. Speed here will wait in his cab down in the garage. He'll take us out to the bank when the robbery call comes through."



Chief Quinn nodded understandingly and rang for Schoonover and Wiggins.

Dinner was eaten in the chief's office that evening. Wiggins and Schoonover were plainly puzzled, but dared not question the chief. Inspector Boyd's pink face was a bland mask hidden behind clouds of heavy, rank cigar smoke.

Thus the night passed slowly. They talked, dozed, listened to the police radio. Morning came, gray and chill. They yawned, sent out for breakfast. Then noon, and still no call. One o'clock. Two. Three. Chief Quinn fidgeted nervously and stared at the imperturbable Inspector Boyd. The banks closed at three.

Abruptly, two minutes after three, the phone shrilled. Schoonover and Wiggins jumped as Inspector Boyd answered it. He listened intently, pink face blank.

"Let's go!" he said curtly, hanging up. "Highland branch of the Citizens' National robbed. Two young bandits. Got away with \$12,000!"

They raced into the police garage and piled into Speed Wiley's impossible looking cab, Boyd beside the racing driver, the others inside. The battered cab swirled out of the garage, siren wailing, and raced like a bullet through traffic jammed streets.

Not for nothing had Inspector Boyd chosen Speed Wiley to drive him. As the evil-faced driver bent over his wheel, swerving, dodging, careening through traffic and signals, siren screaming, Inspector Boyd nodded with satisfaction. He knew when a job was well done. Almost before they realized it they were at the looted bank.

But Speed Wiley did not stop. Heedless of the milling crowd around the

entrance and the frantic bank manager's waving arms, the screaming cab raced right on past.

V

"HEY, stop!" Schoonover yelled, thrusting his horsey head through the glass panel. "The bank's back there, you idiot!"

"Shut up and sit down!" Chief Quinn roared, jerking him back. "Watch this—if you want to learn how to catch bank bandits!"

Speed Wiley slowed his mad pace and the siren stilled. Head thrust out of the cab, alert eyes raking the street ahead, he drove on more sedately. He hesitated at the intersections. At the first corner he turned left. Two blocks straight ahead, then two right. One left, two more right. Then for six blocks he drove without turning.

In the cab Schoonover and Wiggins glowered and fumed, hurt, angry, and bewildered. Chief Quinn kept his eyes straight ahead grimly, as did Inspector Boyd.

They were down near the waterfront now, a disreputable district filled with used car lots, garages, and automobile wrecking yards.

"Whoa!" Speed Wiley rasped suddenly.

With a swift, silent meshing of gears he reversed in the street and retraced his course for half a block.

"It's that garage!" he said, pointing.

Inspector Boyd nodded and loosened his service revolver in its holster under his left armpit. Wiley raced into the garage and the detectives piled from the cab, guns drawn.

"Halt!" Inspector Boyd leaped across the greasy floor and cut off a stocky, heavy-set man who would have fled. He snapped swift shackles on the prisoner and turned him over to

Speed Wiley. Then: "Come on, Chief! Out in the used car lot is where we'll find them!"

On the run, guns gripped tightly, the quartet dodged through a side entrance into the used car display lot. Rows upon rows of used cars filled the place, hopelessly awaiting a buyer. Inspector Boyd's searching blue eyes glimpsed what he sought.

"That black Buick sedan!" he rapped softly. "Get around it! Schoonover, you and Wiggins sneak up on it from behind!"

The robbery detail melted between the shielding rows of cars. With Chief Quinn at his side, Inspector Boyd stalked the sedan. So quiet was their approach that the two dapper young men busy changing license plates on the sedan were unaware of their presence until Boyd spoke.

Startled, they looked up to find themselves covered by four menacing guns. The leader leaped up, hard, desperate eyes glittering in a suddenly white face. Indecision made his pale, manicured hand flutter towards a shoulder holster.

"Better not, boy!" Inspector Boyd warned softly. "These police specials are awful on the stomach at this range! Just elevate your hands and keep them up. Search them, Wiggins!"

Two automatics came out in Wiggins' competent going-over. Schoonover snapped on the bracelets.

"Look in the sedan, Chief." Inspector Boyd lowered his gun.

"Good Lord!" Quinn said, inside the sedan. "They've got a grip stuffed with coin—silver and greenbacks. It must all be here."

"All on this last job," Inspector Boyd said. "You'll have to sweat the rest out of them. They didn't think anybody'd follow them into this used

car graveyard. The garage man here was in with them. He rented this sedan for them and drove it. This used car lot was the hiding place for the getaway car while they changed license plates on it—just in case some bright eyes might get a glimpse of the numbers. I'll bet these boys are new to this racket."

"Yes," the second young bandit spoke up. "We lost good jobs in Chicago and came out here to try our luck. Thought we could pull something new and get away with it. I don't know how you got us so soon—we figured we had everything covered."

Inspector Boyd's face was wooden and Chief Quinn hid a grin.

"All right, boys," he ordered Schoonover and Wiggins. "Take them in and book them. Find out where they hid the rest of the coin, and make a report of it, will you?"

The robbery detail nodded importantly, saluting. Taking the sedan they headed back for the jail with their three prisoners. In the taxicab, his foot on the siren button, Speed Wiley smiled ferociously.

"How did you do it?" Chief Quinn demanded, turning to Boyd.

The inspector shrugged his wide shoulders.

"I'll have to wait and see how the robbery detail figures it out!" he said blandly.

Chief Quinn swore explosively.

"All right! Just for that you turn in a report of expenses on this case!"

"Okay, Chief," and Inspector Boyd grinned to himself.

**I**T was Wiggins, still puzzled by the swift capture, who sought out the chief next day and demanded an explanation.

"I'm not as dumb as you think I am, Chief. I know Inspector Boyd had something to do with it. He advised Schoonover and me that when young fellows turned crooked we should try Mussolini's method and physic 'em. Then he said we should tie a bell on these bank bandits and we could capture 'em next time they pulled a job. And then he said something about people being lazy. I didn't get it. Do you, Chief?"

Wordlessly Chief Quinn passed over an expense form that had been filled out by Inspector Boyd.

It was brief:

Expenses on bank robbery case for bank association: Castor oil—\$500.

Wiggins stared uncomprehendingly.

"Mebbe I am dumb, Chief," he said. "I still don't get it. What did \$500 worth of castor oil have to do with catching bank bandits?"

"That," Chief Quinn said, "is what it's going to cost the bank association for having Inspector Boyd taken off homicides and put on robberies. Boyd put it in the crankcase of the getaway sedan the bandits used. That taxi driver, Speed Wiley, is a racing driver.

He could follow the smell of castor oil burned in an automobile engine through a perfume factory!

"That's why Boyd told you to use a physic and tie a bell on the bandits. He combined 'em. The castor oil was his bell. Any good automobile mechanic can follow the smell of burnt castor oil for ten minutes after the car has passed that way. It's like a strong scent to a bloodhound."

"I get it now," Wiggins nodded. "But what about that crack about people being lazy?"

"Well," Chief Quinn said wearily. "I ain't never yet heard of robbers—least of all bank robbers—making their getaway on foot. Inspector Boyd figured they'd be as lazy as the rest of us and have some kind of a getaway car hidden around somewhere near their jobs. And he found it."

"Damn!" Wiggins said succinctly. "If that big Irishman would only speak English when he hands out a tip like that!"

Chief Quinn grinned.

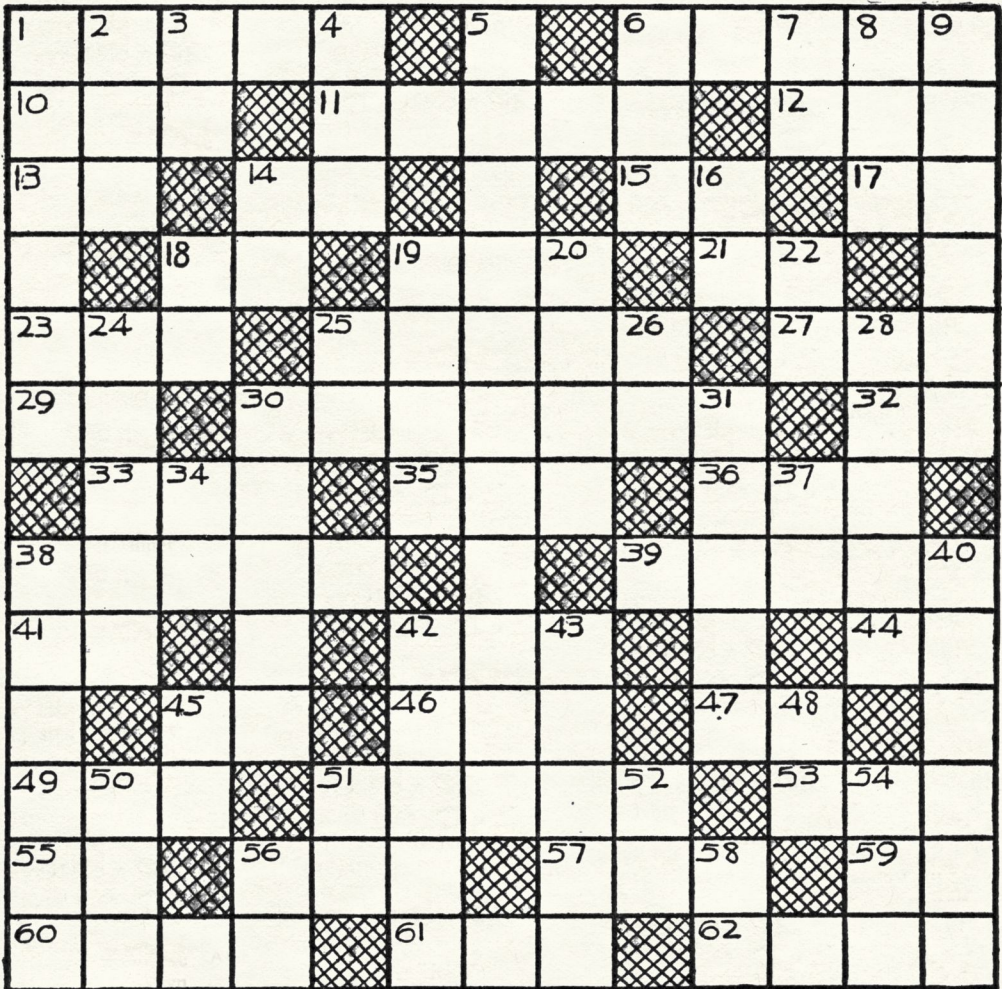
"That's right," he agreed. "What do you think the bank association'll say when I send in this expense sheet for \$500 worth of physic?"



# Narrative Cross-Word Puzzle

## THE CHIEF DID THE TRICK

By Richard Hoadley Tingley



**A—ACROSS**

**D—DOWN**

The sign over the door on the main street of a large city on Lake ..... read, in big letters: "..... Mulwitz and ..... Jewelers," and a smaller sign ..... a show window carried the information: "Dealers in Telescopic and Optical ....." It was .....

A 60  
 D 26(Initials)  
 A 55  
 D 16  
 D 40 D 45

old firm, ..... many years before, the present owner having once been considered a very rich man. "As rich as ....." some folks said. It was well known, however, that he had been a heavy ..... due to the depression, and was ..... from being wealthy now; in-

D 5  
 A 51  
 D 24  
 A 27

D 54 deed, that his resources were at a low . . . . .

D 2 A 39 Both Mulwitz and his wife . . . . . lived at a . . . . ., well known to be the best . . . . . of the city, where they occupied a sumptuous suite . . . . . rooms, enabling Mrs. Mulwitz, a leader of a . . . . ., boisterous set, to entertain . . . . . friends royally.

D 22 A 46 A 21 But depression or . . . . ., the revels continued, often lasting into the . . . . . small hours, . . . . . till old . . . . . broke up the party and sent the revelers off to bed. Sedate neighbors were apt to . . . . . their heads and tongues in disapproval, but what . . . . . the roisterers care?

A 35 A surprise came when it was learned that a . . . . . had broken into the Mulwitz store and had stolen gems . . . . . at a hundred thousand . . . . .!

D 1 A 30 D 6 There were . . . . . friends who did not express sympathy for the pair. "Too bad," they all said. "But . . . . . hope it will not end those entertainments, and we will be . . . . if the burglar who . . . . . the jewelry . . . . . caught and the goods returned."

D 38 A 61 D 4 But the Chief of . . . . ., the natural . . . . . of all crooks, and a man who never . . . . . sentiment interfere with business . . . . . care a . . . . . for maudlin sympathy, was skeptical. He suspected Mulwitz, for he knew him to be hard up, and there were things of . . . . . import about him that needed looking into. Without mentioning his suspicions, he assigned Sergeant Jim . . . . . to investigate, giving him . . . . . to round up the burglars . . . . . regardless of what might . . . . .

D 30 D 9 D 7(Prefix) A 11 A 53 A 18 " . . . . . sir, Chief, I . . . . . your man. Just leave it to . . . . ." boastfully declared Jim. " . . . . . suspicious of some of those Mulwitz revelers. I don't like the looks of . . . . . It's . . . . . guess they are not as straight . . . . . they should . . . . . Now there's that man . . . . . Mason, who hails from . . . . ., N. D., where he has a criminal record he can't . . . . . from the books. And there's

D 18 . . . . . Green, who came here not . . . . . long ago from New Orleans, . . . . ., where he ran a faro layout. But . . . . . to them if I can get something on them, and . . . . .! wouldn't I like to . . . . . it if . . . . . I get a chance. . . . . is time their shady careers were . . . . . in town, for their influence is . . . . .moralizing, and that is as true as the . . . . ."

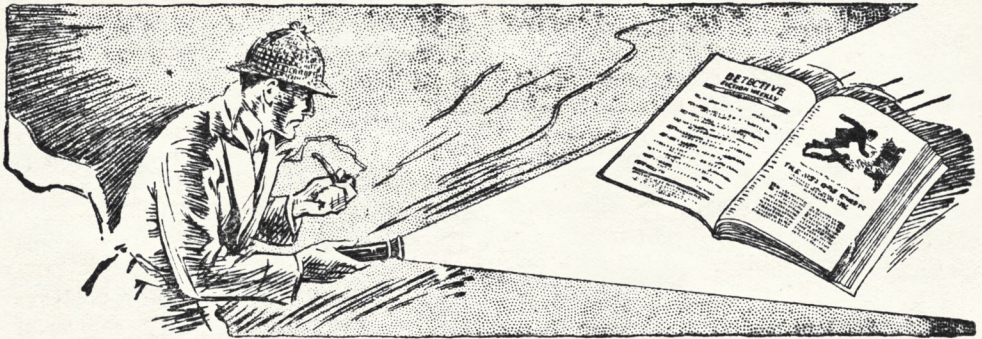
A 13(Abbr.) A 15 D 8 A 29 A 12(cont.) D 14 D 28 A 44(Prefix) A 25 A 10 D 25 A 23 D 34(Prefix) D 58 A 62 A 42 D 3 A 33 D 37 A 36

The Chief let the Sergeant have his own blustering way, and then, without much . . . . ., quietly acted on his own account, and almost before one could say . . . . .! had the mystery solved. In an . . . . . of an old . . . . .occupied building belonging to Mulwitz, . . . . . and behold, he found the jewels intact, which he recognized the instant he set his . . . . . on them. Under police pressure Mulwitz confessed that he had faked . . . . . robbery, and that Mason and Green were . . . . . sell the gems out of town as soon as it was safe to do so.

Having confessed, Mulwitz began to . . . . . for mercy, but little did he get from this hard-boiled Chief. Mason and Green had fled, but were captured and arrested . . . . . Raleigh, the capital of the . . . . . heel state, and were brought back to stand trial for conspiracy to defraud.

ANSWER TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

A	I	M	A	L	A	R	M	S	H	E	
B	R	O	W	N	T	E	A	T	E	N	
S	O	L	E	M	F	B	R	A	G		
O	N	E	D	A	R	E	D	A	L	L	
L	S	O	N	E	W	A	I	I			
V	I	T	A	L	S	W	I	N	G	S	
E	N	R	E	F	U	S	A	L	A	H	
T	O	T	I	M	E	S	O	N			
P	O	R	T	G	E	T	H	U	G	E	
R	E	R	A	D	H	O	T	A			
I	T	I	R	E	H	E	R	A	S		
O	H	T	E	L	L	E	R	S	R	E	
R	E	V	E	A	L	T	E	E	M	E	D



## FLASHES FROM READERS

*Where Readers and Editor Get Together to Gossip  
and Argue, and Everyone Speaks Up His Mind*

**A**BOUT a year or so ago DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY started publishing stories by a new writer, Stanley Day. His stories won a lot of praise, and we knew we had a young writer with promise.

And then stories quit coming from him, and we learned that sickness had put a stop to his work. He went to the hospital months ago to start a slow fight for the recovery of his health.

We got a Stanley Day story a little while ago. He was still in the hospital, but he was sitting up, and he had started writing again. And here's the story in this week's issue of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY—"Bungle Trap."

He's still in bed, and expects to be there until Christmas, but he is writing. Stanley Day is making a plucky fight, and we wish him all success. And we know our readers will feel the same way.

### DOWN IN MEXICO

GENTLEMEN:

A little over a year ago while traveling through Mexico I came upon a discarded issue of D. F. W. Being hungry for English literature I read the magazine from end to end and I enjoyed it very much, so much that I placed my order for D. F. W. through my dealer in Nogales.

I have read and not missed an issue since. Among the stories I like best are *Señor Lobo*, *Fluffy McGoff*, *Lester Leith*. Sidney Herschel Small's are all right, but just a little too much, as we say in Mexico.

Soon I shall depart for Mexico and I can assure you that I will get my D. F. W. as regularly as any other mail and if I do not, you can get one of your writers ready to write a real murder story.

Yours truly,

ED. A. SOTO,  
Nogales, Ariz.

### SERIALS NOT EQUALED

DEAR SIR:

Keep D. F. W. the same as it is—it couldn't be better. I always read Stookie Allen's page first; then the true stories. Your serials are not equaled in any other magazine I have read.

Keep up the good work, and give us more MacKinlay Kantor, Erle Stanley Gardner, J. Allan Dunn, and Milo Ray Phelps stories.

Sincerely,

WM. J. GILFILLAN,  
Methuen, Mass.

### A CORRECTION

GENTLEMEN:

While I have enjoyed DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY for many years, this is the first time that I am sending in a few lines.

I enjoy every story you print. There is no necessity for criticism from any angle. I take it as pure divertimento, and therefore do not look for stark realism. I enjoy the *Mongoose*, MacIsaac, Gardner, in fact, all. However, I want to make a correction in the issue of September 17—

page 51—"The Packet of Death," line 18. It is acute "Suppurative" osteomyelitis and not "Superative."

With best wishes, I am,  
Truly yours,  
CHARLES GRAD, D. D. S.,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

**HUMOROUS MYSTERY**

DEAR EDITOR:

The *Mongoose* and *Ollie Bascomb* are my favorite characters, although stories by Gardner, MacIsaac, and Landon hit the high spot also.

Humorous mystery and amateur detective stories are the best, but there's not enough.

Cordially,  
JACK BOND,  
Pensacola, Fla.

**THE MONGOOSE**

DEAR SIR:

I always like the stories in your magazine, and have found the *Mongoose* particularly interesting. And what I want to say now is that I like the things done by the author of a recent serial called "Murder by Messenger"—Judson Philips. I have read previously done stories of his and I consider him to have one of the bigger and better imaginations and also a keen sense of plot. Not that the latter shows up as well as sometimes in this last story. But he always has some fresh attack, I think, and my family agree.

I am,  
Very truly yours,  
DANIEL THORNE,  
Tarrytown, N. Y.

**A RAMBLING MAGAZINE**

DEAR EDITOR:

Have been a constant reader of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY since the first number I read some eight years ago. After I finish it it goes to my sister, then back to me to be given to four different families who live near me, then to a friend who has a tavern on the desert. After he and his family have read it it is passed from place to place out there until every one for miles around has read it. I think I shall call it my Detective Fiction Circulating Library.

Very sincerely yours,  
OLIVE G. SIMMONS,  
Santa Monica, Calif.

**A D. F. W. FAMILY**

DEAR EDITOR:

My brother and I have been reading D. F. W. for the last few years and have enjoyed every issue to our hearts' content.

Our heartiest congratulations to Erle S. Gardner on his ability to write such wonderful stories about *Lester Leith*. By the way, what has be-

come of him? We also like stories about the *Mongoose*, *Red Duke*, *The Kid*, *Satan*, *Ollie*, and *Fluffy McGoff*.

Your serials are great. So are Tingley's narrative cross-word puzzles. D. F. W., in our opinion, is the best magazine in its line.

Yours sincerely,  
CHARLOTTE PERZLEY,  
Linden, N. J.

**COMPANION TO ARGOSY**

DEAR EDITOR:

We sure thank you for the way you arrange the stories in D. F. W. as a companion magazine to the good old ARGOSY. It is the "stuff," no foolin'.

Thanks,  
A. W. HOFFMAN,  
Huntington Park, Calif.

**SATAN HALL AND WENTWORTH**

DEAR EDITOR:

I have only read your magazine for about three months, but I find that it is by far the best magazine on the market

I wish you would print more *Satan Hall* stories, and some more *Wentworth* ones.

BILL EISEN,  
Pasadena, Calif.

**"HERE'S MY VOTE"**

Editor,

DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY,  
280 Broadway, N. Y. C., N. Y.

The stories I like best in this issue of the magazine are as follows:

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

Name.....

Street.....

City.....State.....

Fill out coupons from 10 consecutive issues and get a large DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY drawing.

This coupon not good after Feb. 4, 1933.

# SOLVING CIPHER SECRETS

*A cipher is secret writing. The way to solve ciphers is to experiment with substitute letters until real words begin to appear. In solving, notice the frequency of certain letters. For instance, the letters e, t, a, o, n, i, are the most used in our language. So if the puzzle maker has*



M. E. OHAVER

*used x to represent e, x will probably appear very frequently. Combinations of letters will also give you clues. For instance, affixes -ing, -ion, -ally are frequent. Read the helpful hints at the beginning of this department each week. The first puzzle each week is the easiest.*

**I**N the following cleverly written letter one of our fans gives some "inside dope" on how to solve cryptograms. Beginners are cautioned to exhaust all other known systems of analysis before resorting to Mrs. Gray's very involved processes! This week's Inner Circle cipher is also by this correspondent. But use your own judgment about applying her methods of solution!

DEAR SIR:

I understand that you have a yen to know how we do these crypts. I work them differently according to their construction.

With an easy one I retire into an alcove, place the crypt against my brow, and go into the silence. Automatically I write the answer! If the pungent phrases fail to penetrate the too solid bone, I use numerology. I run all the letters together and divide them evenly into nines. Then I look up all the nine-letter words in the dictionary—and there you are!

For a harder example I use logic plus mathematics. I cut the crypt into three equal parts and designate them as "M," "N," "X." Then I play both ends against the middle and multiply the result by the sum of the indices. This is an old and reliable method.

A still more difficult cryptogram must be dissolved by the law of relativity. Suppose the ninth word of a crypt looks like "skizzerinktum." Anyone acquainted with the law of relativity (no one ever becomes familiar with it!) would interpret this word at once as "blunderbuss."

Some day when time hangs heavy on my hands I am going to solve this now "depression problem."

MRS. W. D. GRAY,  
Chicago, Ill.

The groups ECCB, DCBS, and DSBS provided an entering wedge in last week's challenge cipher, No. 263, by U. U. Jeff. Frequencies of 1-5-5-7 in ECCB pointed to C as probably a vowel. S could then readily be spotted as also a vowel upon comparison of the three groups mentioned. The heavy finality of S favored *e*. While doubling and use once as a final suggested *o* for symbol C.

ECCB (-oo-), DCBS (-o-e), and DSBS (-e-c), upon trying different consonants for the missing letters, would then yield *poor, more and mere*, respectively, thus checking with ABCD (-rom), evidently *from* by its context with *poor*. Context similarly could decide AFB D (*f-rm*), where F could be *a* or *i*, leading to BFMS (*ra-e*), *rate*; and so to the message in full.

Magi opens this week's puzzles with something new in a long division problem. The novelty here consists in a key of eleven letters instead of the usual ten. The first ten letters of the key signify the ten digits from 1 to 0. But the eleventh keyletter is a "re-



peater," being used only when a digit occurs two or more times in succession. How do you like the idea?

The first of the current crypts, by Scheherazade, provides ingress through comparison of LURL, LUD, and LG. Having guessed these words, try for the pattern ZDLLDA, noting ZD. Compare NL and NL'O (note the apostrophe) for a starter in Scorpio's crypt. Follow up with OYY, LRR, and LUNO. Words 4, 10, and 17 may then be tried; and so on.

Mrs. Robert De Noyelles provides a valuable clew to her crypt in the endings -XOR and -XDO. With symbol D identified, you might turn your attention to ZDDBDD and EBDD, giving the exclamation points due consideration. L. R. G. contributes a neat problem in all three-letter words.

No. 264—Cryptic Division. By Magi.

W L A O ) D E O G E W H D ( T D H S  
 L T W L D

---

O A T A W  
 O G D S C

---

W L G T H  
 D C O W C

---

D H O G D  
 D C O W C

---

H W A

No. 265—Recreation. By Scheherazade.

"LUD FYTE GHOUL PGFDLYFDP LG ZD EYXDALDE, LURL YL FRW ADLHAT LUD ZDLLDA LG LUYTVYTO."—\*SURD-EAHP.

No. 266—Bargain. By Scorpio.

JRB OPAY: PMLR HNLU VYKL JBPWY, OLBNXXYT DYPBO, PKT LHNOLYT SBPKZOUJL, VML RKA E NK JPNB OUPXY RLUYBHNOY. OYY LUNO SPB VYJRBY NL'O LRR APLY! NL SPK'L APOL ARKD!

No. 267—Last Fall. By Mrs. Robert De Noyelles  
 "EBDD, \*RAOUPW \*M. \*SUAEEEXO!"  
 FUXAM MXTTQ SPUAKXF, PE BA HNC-SAM VUDC JNAAU, JNPXOK PNKDR-QUD, FXUFWXOR TAOXKBLPUM. EAPUFBAUE VDU SPKXAOK VDNOM BXC ODK. ZDDBDD!

No. 268—The Law Saw. By L. R. G.

JUG BUS BOY RUN RUM, USG LUG LOT UKG LKB TXJ JXP HUT. GAX RXY JKR EUG, JAY HUF CUE VXJ. EXO DXT YEX, ELX SXE UTO CUG!

No. 269—Dressed to Kill! By Mrs. W. D. Gray

CORRAL DENH BFMGE THEMUSE,  
 SFC RENTAL JFHGS UFMUS GFJSG;  
 REM CEKTHLHE OMR BEMUSE;  
 BOUP TEGS JNMC—QL HFRL  
 GEMFJSG!

**LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS**

258—Key: I 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0  
 A P S E U D O N Y M

259—Who said "depression"? Let's lop off the "de," then cross out the "i." For we've only just to "press on," grin and bear it!

260—The moving picture "Spirit of Notre Dame" was made as a memorial to Knute Rockne, famous football coach.

261—In preparation against possible communistic disorders, police stationed patrol units at definite strategic points near Capitol grounds.

262—Unwelcome remark unfortunately excites heavyweight champion. Sayer, noticeably without deliberation, shrewdly scampers toward residence, earnestly pursued.

263—From poor farm hand unto rich bank head! Such luck must rate more than mere talk amid wise news cubs.

All answers submitted to this week's puzzles will be credited in the November Cipher Solvers' Club. A single answer will enroll you! But send us as many answers as you can get! The answers will be published next week.

# COMING NEXT WEEK!

## THE SEER OF SIVA—By T. T. Flynn

**L**IKE a knife cutting through the crimson glow in the eerie room of the Swami came the cry: "Murder!" And at that instant Detective Bill Ryan was plunged into one of the most curious and breathtaking adventures of his career. Here is a thrilling and unusual novelette.

## TRUMPS—By Erle Stanley Gardner

**T**HE troubled look in a woman's eyes and the red marks on her neck lead Señor Arnaz de Lobo and El Mono Viejo into a hailstorm of bullets. Read how the chivalrous Lobo and his valiant lieutenant cross swords with a ruthless gang of swindlers.

## FADE OUT—By Milo Ray Phelps

**A**T the stroke of midnight, Fluffy McGoff and Sam Smitz played star rôles in a ten-grand safe-cracking drama on the Greenbaum picture lot in Hollywood. If you can't imagine Fluffy McGoff in front of the Klieg lights, read "Fade Out" and get the picture!

## BEHIND THE GREEN MASK—By Edward Parrish Ware

**W**HEN the third headless body, with the right foot also missing, was dragged from the swamps of Cypress Creek, Tug Norton buckled on his gun and went out to find the killer. And behind a smoke-screen of six-guns Tug finds a significant clew. Don't miss the thrilling tale of death, mystery, valor and Tug Norton.

In the same issue, a new series unmasking swindlers by Julien J. Proskauer, author of "Spook Crooks," and stories by MacKinlay Kantor, Fred MacIsaac, and others.

## DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY—November 12 (on sale November 9)

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, published weekly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1932. Required by Act of Congress of August 24, 1912.

State of NEW YORK }  
County of NEW YORK } ss.:

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared WILLIAM T. DEWART, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Vice-President of the Red Star News Company, publisher of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in Section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations. To wit:

That the names and addresses of the Publisher, Editor, Managing Editor, and Business Manager are:

Publisher—The Red Star News Company, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

Editor—Howard V. Bloomfield, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

Managing Editor—None.

Business Manager—H. B. Ward, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

That the Owners are: (If a corporation give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of the total amount of stock.)

The Red Star News Company, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

The Frank A. Munsey Company, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

C. W. H. Corporation, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

William T. Dewart, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

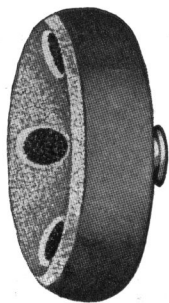
That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders, owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are:  
None.

That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. WILLIAM T. DEWART, Vice-President.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1932.

GEORGE H. BOLLWINKEL, Notary Public,  
Queens County. Term expires March 30, 1933.  
Certificate filed in New York County, Queens  
County No. 170. Queens Register's No. 5208.  
New York County No. 117. New York Register's No. 3B58.

{ SEAL }



Suction - Cell Retainer is the newest invention for rupture. No bulk, no slipping. Holds and lets Nature heal.

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## *Light as a Feather* **Yet... Holds Rupture!**



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**N**OW rupture victims can abandon the needless pain and discomfort of torturous trusses. Science has at last developed a tiny, comfortable appliance of tremendous interest for every rupture sufferer. This device is called "Suction Cell Retainer." It has been developed and perfected as a result of having made more than a million rupture appliances.

With it comes an astounding natural help for putting real strength into the abdomen, so as to aid Nature in preventing recurrence of rupture.

Results with Suction Cell Retainer are often so remarkable, so quick, so simple, that you too may marvel. It has no leg straps. It expands and contracts as easily as your own flesh. When you walk, run, bend, or exercise it tends to squeeze itself, not the part of your body it rests against. It is so entirely lacking in bulk and weight that even some ruptured men's wives have not known they were ruptured.

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Suction Cell Retainer must give the results that you expect or you simply return it. If your rupture is not actually and positively reduced in size during the free trial we allow, send it back and demand the return of your deposit as agreed. If 30 days trial are not enough, write us and we will extend the time to 60, 90 days or even four months if you desire.

Think what the above words promise, not only in new comfort and immediate relief, but also the possibility of ultimate FREEDOM! No system like this ever devised! At last, comes sensible relief. Pleasant. Solid comfort. Natural way. Reasonable in price. And you don't need to wait forever for results!

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Send no money. Just mail coupon and you will receive our newest book about rupture, together with our attractive, bona-fide offer of special FREE appliance, all in plain packet. It will open your eyes.

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Address.....

City..... State.....

Print address and be sure of reply



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# In this High-pressure Age smokers want a *Milder Cigarette*

**WE** LIVE in a fast-moving age. We work harder and play harder. And we smoke quite a lot more cigarettes.

But . . . they have got to be milder today. In this high-pressure age, smokers don't like strong cigarettes.

About four miles of warehouses are filled with mild, ripe Domestic tobaccos stored away to age for two years to make them mild and mellow for CHESTERFIELD Cigarettes. The greater

part of 90 million dollars is invested in these tobaccos.

Then . . . they are cross-blended or "welded together." This permits every kind of tobacco used in the CHESTERFIELD blend to partake of the best qualities of every other type.

CHESTERFIELDS are milder . . . never harsh . . . That's why, in this high-pressure age, more smokers are changing to CHESTERFIELDS every day.